

New special exhibition:

## Quivery Heart – A film cabaret by Kirsten Astrup

Official opening: 20 September 17.00 – 19.00

Exhibition period: 21 September – 21 December



### Railways, cabaret and social critique

The exhibition *Quivery Heart – A film cabaret by Kirsten Astrup* tells the musically seductive story of a crumbling welfare society.

On 20 September, the Museum of Contemporary Art will officially open the special exhibition *Quivery Heart* by Kirsten Astrup (b. 1983). Using papier-mâché characters, drag-queen train attendants, model train accidents and an all-new film cabaret, Kirsten Astrup outlines an alternative portrait of Danish welfare society in 2018.

*'The work is about the changes happening to a welfare society due to political myopia, growing privatisation and the gradual loss of solidarity. All these things manifest themselves as a creaking fatigue throughout the bodywork of the public sector,'* says Kirsten Astrup.

#### Camaraderie among train attendants

The main hub of the exhibition is the tragic-comic work *Quivery Heart – A film cabaret* featuring eight new pieces of music composed by Kirsten Astrup and a series of satirical lyrics and texts written by Maria Bordorff.

The work is based on interviews with former railway employees and train attendants sharing their concerns about the devastating effects of various efficiency measures and their lack of respect for the professional insights of specific disciplines. They also tell anecdotes about the sketch shows they staged back in the 1990s, making jokes about job conditions, hot dogs, collegiate camaraderie and trolleys making a dash for it through the train.

The cast includes actors Danica Curcic, Rosalinde Mynster and Kenneth M. Christensen, mezzo soprano Nana Bugge Rasmussen and more than forty other performers.

## About the film cabaret *Quivery Heart*

The film follows various protagonists, including a group of train passengers whose journey is interrupted by what is presumably a derailing. We also meet a flock of property developers looking for investment opportunities in an old railway building. And then there are the train attendants, of course, dancing and singing inside an original 1936 train car of the kind used for special outings: *'Take care of yourself / for society's sake / We're all collectivists, right?'*

One of the scenes of the film cabaret takes place in the Royal Waiting Rooms at the Copenhagen Central Station. The queen, played by mezzo soprano Nana Bugge Rasmussen, is shown listening to a serious radio programme featuring two guests speaking about welfare policies. They conclude that *'...we ought to raise our expectations of politics instead, demanding that our political infrastructure becomes far more spectacular.'*

The duration of the film is 35 min.

## About the exhibition

In addition to the main feature, *Quivery Heart*, visitors can also see a model train set that defies the idyllic cosiness usually associated with such models: this one includes a dramatic derailing of a passenger train. A local model train association, Roskilde Model Jernbane Forening, has helped Kirsten Astrup create a train wreck especially for this exhibition.

Moreover, visitors can delve into Kirsten Astrup's research material and learn more about the artist's working process. For example, they can watch clips from an original sketch show staged by train attendants as well as range of photographs and other historical objects that unfold the stories behind the work.

*'We feel a strong obligation to support the young art scene in Denmark, which is teeming with talent. It is important that these artists have the opportunity to show a wide audience what they can do. At the same time, we introduce the general public to the most recent developments within the field of art. We hope that other museums will pick up the mantle, too, enabling the young generation to move on, out into the country and out into the world. I am confident that Kirsten Astrup will do exactly that,'* says Birgitte Kirkhoff Eriksen, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

*Quivery Heart*, a solo show by Kirsten Astrup, is on at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde from 21 September to 21 December 2018.

## Practical details

For additional information and images, please contact

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Press photos are available as downloads from the museum website [samtidskunst.dk](http://samtidskunst.dk)

## Facts

**About the artist** – Kirsten Astrup (b. 1983) holds an MFA from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts from 2017. In 2018 she was awarded the Danish Arts Foundation's three-year grant. Astrup works with video installations, music, performance art and cabarets. Kirsten Astrup's previous works have often addressed subjects such as gentrification, how technology changes the labour market, privilege, working conditions and the demise of the welfare state.

**Previous works** – The video installation *Du er et mønstereksemplar* (You are a prime example) about the artist precariat, exhibited at The Museum of Contemporary Art in 2017. *Troe og Agtsom* (Faithful and Diligent), 2016, presented as Astrup's contribution to the MFA Degree Show in 2016. The work was about the Central Post Office building in Copenhagen, which served as the main office of the Danish postal services from 1912, but was sold to a Norwegian billionaire in 2016.

*'Seeing Kirsten Astrup's work at the Academy's MFA Degree Show was an extraordinary experience. She received no less than four awards for that work. And she later also received the Danish Art Foundation's three-year grant. We now present Kirsten Astrup's first solo show at a museum, and this time it's about the railways. We all have something to look forward to here,'* says museum director Birgitte Kirkhoff.

## About *Quivery Heart* :

**Cast** – Includes actors Danica Curcic (*Silent Heart* by Bille August), Rosalinde Mynster (from TV's *Badehotellet*), Kenneth M. Christensen (from TV's *Arvingerne*), mezzo soprano Nana Bugge Rasmussen and more than forty other performers. The work was filmed at DSB's central workshop at Otto Busses Vej in Copenhagen, The Danish Railway Museum in Odense, Midt- og Vestjyllands Jernbanemuseum in Struer, and the Royal Waiting Rooms at the Copenhagen Central Station.

**Title** – The Danish title of the work, 'Urolige hjerte', is a reference to a novel sharing that same name by the Danish writer and railway worker Johannes Buchholtz. The novel centres on a young man who works at the railways, but dreams of becoming a poet. Johannes Buchholtz inspired one of the characters in Kirsten Astrup's film cabaret, and parts of the film were shot at Johannes Buchholtz's former home in Struer.

**Research** – *Quivery Heart* is based on in-depth interviews with representatives of e.g. the Danish Railway Museum, Dansk Jernbaneforbund (the Danish trade union for railway workers), DSB, Banedanmark and a number of former train attendants who did their own revues from 1992 to 2003.

**Music** – The music featured in the film cabaret was written by Kirsten Astrup. It comprises eight compositions spanning various genres, all performed by professional musicians from the gypsy-rave band Tako Lako. The lyrics and texts are by Maria Bordorff, Kirsten Astrup's regular collaborator.

**Album release** – To coincide with the exhibition, the Museum of Contemporary Art will release an album featuring the music from the film cabaret. In the summer of 2018, the music was performed live by the original cast as a performance presented on the Gloria stage at the Roskilde Festival. The album is supported by Sonning-Fonden, Augustinus Fonden and the Danish Arts Foundation.

**Learning and education offerings** – The museum offers a 'School Photos in Drag' programme aimed at 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> graders. For details, visit [samtidkunst.dk](http://samtidkunst.dk).

**Funding** – *Quivery Heart* is supported by the Danish Arts Foundation, Det Obelske Familiefond, 15. Juni Fonden, Ernst B. Sund Fonden, Konsul George Jorck og Hustru Emma Jorck's Fond.

**Admission fees** – Adults: DKK 50, OAPs and students: DKK 40. Under 18: Free.