

Interview w/ Steen F. Hansen

Empty Offices vs. Homeless

“On a cold night we went out to the harbour front of Copenhagen and broke in to one of the great empty offices. We stayed there over night and video filmed everything we did and talked about.”

The squatting was part of a project that the artists Peter R. Callesen and Kenneth A. Balfelt did in co-operation with Mia, Steen and Michael – three users of “De Hjemløses Hus” (The House of The Homeless) in the Northern Borough of Copenhagen. The artist did not come with an idea for the project, but wanted to create something together with someone that had another knowledge and insight than themselves. Together with three users they developed an idea for a TV programme about that there are so many empty offices at the same time as there are homeless! Only because of the contribution of everyone’s knowledge they managed to make the TV programme. It was broadcasted on Kanal København (local Copenhagen TV channel) in the Fall 2003.

Steen Flemming Hansen

Peter Callesen: What do you think about the process of the project?

Steen Flemming Hansen: It was a nice experience. Everything actually, really fun. Once we all were “on” it was cool, then something happened!

Peter: Do you not think we were “on” all the time?

Steen: Oh yes, but in the editing phase some relaxed and some “took a vacation”. Me too.

Kenneth A. Balfelt: Yes, it was a bit tougher in the editing phase.

Peter: Steen, is there something you think got out of it, something that can be used in the future?

Steen: Yes, yes, I want to be more consistent towards “closed doors”.

Kenneth: In what way?

Steen: Well, if they are not open, I will open them myself.

Kenneth: That is, to get through with something?

Steen: Yes, e.g. to go directly to a superior or actually kick the door in. That is what I have thought about.

Kenneth: It was really nice when we declared the film for finished and you said, “If you have patience then it works out”?

Steen: Yes, that is right and it gave a satisfaction with the work.

Peter: Would you like to make such a project again?

Steen: Yes, I would like to see a proposal for an idea, a storyboard.

Kenneth: In this project it was you that got the idea to what it should be about.

Steen: Well yes, that’s right.

Kenneth: So it could be that you got a new idea! You have been a good driving force in the project. And good to come with ideas and discuss them and get them into a realistic shape!

Steen: I am not so good to praise myself, but yes, it is possible that I have been good to that!

Kenneth: By the fact that we come from different backgrounds, you from a homeless and drug users background and we from an artist background then you have been quite good at seeing it all from above and been able to see the mechanisms that goes on. And that proved quite important in the process?

Steen: Yes... But now I got to go...