

ARTISTS AT ROYAL DJURGÅRDEN 2021: ELMGREEN & DRAGSET

Princess Estelle Cultural Foundation is pleased to announce the artists of this year at Royal Djurgården in Stockholm, Sweden: ELMGREEN & DRAGSET. An eight-meter high site-specific sculpture which is acquired by the foundation will be included in the future sculpture park in the Rosendal area.

Artists Michael Elmgreen (b. 1961 in Copenhagen) and Ingar Dragset (b. 1969 in Trondheim) live and work in Berlin. Since the beginning of their collaboration in 1995, they have had a distinguished international career, and they are among the most significant and multifaceted artists of our time.

"We are really looking forward to presenting Elmgreen & Dragset outdoors at Royal Djurgården this summer. They have a unique ability to portray important topics in an unexpected and surprising way," says Sara Sandström Nilsson, Executive Director, Princess Estelles Cultural Foundation.

Elmgreen & Dragset often refer to everyday objects in their artworks, and they explore what happens when these objects are placed in new unlikely constellations and contexts. With a mixture of absurdist humor and social concern, the artist duo encourages the viewer to reflect and to reconsider habitual interpretations.

One of Elmgreen & Dragset's most famous works is "Prada Marfa" from 2005 – a full-scale replica of an eternally closed luxury store, permanently placed alongside a desolate highway in the West Texas desert. "Prada Marfa", which can be interpreted as a commentary on our consumer culture, has become a global attraction and thousands of visitors go to the site every year to experience the surreal mirage. Another famous work is the bronze sculpture presented on the fourth plinth of London's Trafalgar Square in 2012, in the form of a little boy on a rocking horse who contrasted with the nearby monumental sculptures of equestrian war heroes. The same year, the artist duo's acclaimed male version of Denmark's unofficial national symbol "The Little Mermaid" was installed on the coast of Helsingør. Both works break with the conventional powerful and athletic ideals for masculinity. The artists' latest public work "The Hive" was installed in Moynihan Train Hall, a new section of Penn station in New York in December 2020.

In addition to numerous public works and exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world, Elmgreen & Dragset has participated in biennials in Bangkok, Istanbul, Liverpool, Singapore, Moscow, Venice, Gwangju, São Paulo and Berlin. They curated both the Danish and Nordic pavilions at the Venice Biennale in 2009, as well as the entire Istanbul Biennale in 2017. In 2015, Elmgreen & Dragset was awarded honorary doctorates from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Their last exhibition in Sweden was shown at Malmö Konsthall in 2007.

"This past year has proven once more how incredibly important public space is, as a gathering point and as a sign of community. As many museums and cultural institutions have had to close, we are extra thrilled to be invited to present an outdoor work at Royal Djurgården, in a unique urban park environment that is accessible day and night and free for all", says Elmgreen & Dragset

The choice of artist is made by the Board of the Princess Estelle Cultural Foundation, which is assisted by an artistic council consisting of Richard Julin, Artistic Leader of Accelerator in Stockholm, Iris Müller-Westermann, Director of the Moderna Museet in Malmö and Lars Nittve, former Director of the Tate Modern in London, Moderna Museet in Stockholm and M+ in Hong Kong. The Artistic Council's statement for 2021 reads:

"Elmgreen & Dragset are known for their innovative way of challenging traditional interpretations and mirroring them against larger social issues. With witty humor and critical gaze, they take on familiar phenomena and structures and give them an eye-opening twist. Their recent work is often rooted in a concern about an overly individual-centred future where they worry that the human community is at risk of being lost."

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For more information and images, please contact:

Sara Sandström Nilsson, Executive Director, Princess Estelle Cultural Foundation

e-mail: press@preks.se

Website: preks.se

Instagram accounts: [@preks_kulturstiftelse](https://www.instagram.com/preks_kulturstiftelse) , [@elmgreenanddragsetstudio](https://www.instagram.com/elmgreenanddragsetstudio)

ABOUT PRINCESS ESTELLE CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Princess Estelle Cultural Foundation was founded in autumn 2019 on the initiative of the Crown Princess couple. Its purpose is to promote cultural activities in Sweden. This is in line with a royal tradition to support culture life and the conviction that art and cultural activities are essential to an open, modern society. The Crown Princess couple wish to highlight this and demonstrate their long-term commitment with this Foundation. The initial focus of the Foundation will be to establish a permanent sculpture park in the Rosendal area at Royal Djurgården together with the Royal Djurgården administration. The first work in the collection, Alice Aycock's "Hoop-La", was acquired in 2020, thanks to donations from the Foundation's patrons.

Elmgreen & Dragset's new sculpture will be the second artwork commissioned by the Princess Estelle Cultural Foundation. The Foundation relies on private donations for its activities. Board of the Foundation: H.K.H. Prins Daniel, Elin Annwall, Lena Josefsson, Staffan Larsson. Chairman: Johan Ericsson.