

**NATIVE, EXOTIC,  
NORMAL/  
CIRCLE OF FLAGS**

HESSELHOLDT & MEJLVANG  
HORSENS ARTMUSEUM



This autumn you are able to experience the art installation "Native, Exotic, Normal / Circle of Flags" (2016) by the Danish artist duo Hesselholdt & Mejlvang. The installation will be placed in front of Horsens Art Museum, in the park, from the 19th of September. The artwork has been exhibited widely across Denmark. First time was in 2016 as the solo-exhibition "Native, Exotic, Normal" at Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art in Copenhagen. Same year, it was exhibited as a satellite project at Roskilde Festival Art Zone. It has also been exhibited in the city of Randers in 2019, as part of the exhibition "FLAG – objekt, ikon, symbol" at Randers Art Museum.

Hesselholdt & Mejlvang is the name of the artist duo behind the artwork. The duo was formed in 1999, by Sofie Hesselholdt (1974) and Vibeke Mejlvang (1976), who met at The Royal Danish Academy of Art, where they both graduated in 2006.

"Native, Exotic, Normal / Circle of Flags", focuses on the problems concerning that Denmark once had a colony in the Caribbean, called Danish West Indies. With the artwork, Hesselholdt & Mejlvang also debates the contemporary focus on multiculturalism. To this day, we can still see the huge impact the Danes' abuse of power in the Caribbean, has had on our society and culture. We still see examples where ethnicities and the color of our skin separates us, instead of bringing us together.

The artwork consists of twelve flagpoles with flags, lined up in a circle. Characteristically for the flagpoles and flags, are that they consist of six different skin colors, which goes from light to dark. There are two flagpoles with flags in the same color nuance for each of the six skin colors, which together marks twelve flagpoles.





The artwork is inspired by the Fitzpatrick's scale, which is a classification scheme for the human skin type, developed in 1975 by the dermatologist Thomas Fitzpatrick. The scale identified six different skin types, based on responds from UV lightening. Though the scale is not defined based on ethnicity, the lightest skin color still ranges as Type I and the darkest skin color ranges as Type VI. The title of the artwork "Native, Exotic, Normal / Circle of Flags" is taken from the cosmetic - and color trade industry, where they define and then distinguish the skin color from each other, where some are seen as "normal" and other as "exotic". The goal of Hesselholdt & Mejlvangs artwork is therefore to challenge our prejudices about skin color, nationality and belonging, to remind us that these are still problems we must deal with in modern society.



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