

The Sixth Sorrow – Sevenfold Pietà with angel and deviations

In The Sixth Sorrow – Sevenfold Pietà with angel and deviations SIGNA explores the role of the mother, specifically the Pietà motif, through a total installation. In art, the Pietà is known as the motif where the Virgin Mary holds the dead body of Jesus Christ after the crucifixion. The Sixth Sorrow refers to one of the Virgin Mary's Seven Sorrows, specifically this tragic event.

The exhibition unfolds the Pietà motif across seven dark and meticulously constructed tableaux. These scenes resemble natural history dioramas, museum displays, or life-sized dollhouses, but their content is far from idyllic. In each tableau, we encounter a mother in an abandoned room, surrounded by traces of loss and decay.

The bodies of the dead sons are crafted from various materials—plaster, clay, stitched-together towels—and appear in different stages of decomposition. These details situate the scenes in their own temporality, leaving viewers uncertain how long the mothers have been waiting or mourning. The mothers, with their expressive faces resembling death or grief masks, are stripped of the sanctity usually associated with the Virgin Mary. Clad in stained pajamas, worn ballgowns, rubber gloves, and surrounded by kitchen elements, they are placed in a domestic context where these objects evoke both familiarity and discomfort.

From each tableau, echo lament voices, forming a haunting sonic backdrop that amplifies the exhibition's evocation of disbelief, resignation, and defiance.

The exhibition challenges us to reflect on our own losses, our relationship with grief, motherhood, and farewells.

The Sixth Sorrow mirrors the universal pain of confronting loss while questioning the impermanence of time, space, and humanity. Horsens Art Museum and SIGNA invite you to step into a disquieting and captivating universe, where psychological motifs from our shared cultural memory are examined.

Exhibition Concept: Signa Köstler

Exhibition Design and Construction: Arthur Köstler, Lorenz Vetter, and Signa Köstler

Artistic Collaboration: Tristan Kold

The extensive soundscape of *The Sixth Sorrow* is created by Elias Gottstein, Christian Bo Johansen, and the Danscher Choir.

Acknowledgments

The exhibition is generously supported by:



About SIGNA

SIGNA is an art collective based in Copenhagen, founded by Signa (b. 1975) and Arthur Köstler (b. 1972). The group is renowned for their performance installations, where the audience is invited to interact with—and in some cases influence—the works. SIGNA's site-specific projects, often performed in non-traditional institutional locations, explore structures of power, identity, and desire through improvisation and richly sensory environments. Their works, ranging from six to twelve hours non-stop, dissolve the boundary between performer and audience, creating deeply immersive experiences.

Signa Köstler has been nominated for several prestigious awards:

The Reumert Award for *Salò*, 2010 and *Seven Tales of Misery*, 2006
Invitation to the Berliner Theatertreffen in 2008 with *Die Erscheinungen der Martha Rubin* (selected as one of the 10 best theatre productions of 2007)
The Bisballe Award in 2005
Recipient of the Danish Director's Award in 2006
Invitation to the Berliner Theatertreffen in 2022 with *Die Ruhe*
SIGNA received the Faustpreis for Best Set Design for *Das 13. Jahr* in 2023

In 2024, Signa Köstler was awarded the Danish Arts Foundation's Lifetime Honorary Grant for Performing Arts