INVITATION TO PRESS OPENING
THURSDAY 28 JUNE 2012, 10 A.M.

New Nordic
Architecture & Identity
29 June - 21 October 2012

Welcome to the press opening of the exhibition New Nordic – Architecture & Identity, Thursday 28 June 2012, 10 a.m. The director of Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Poul Erik Tøjner, will welcome the press, after which curator Kjeld Kjeldsen will introduce the exhibition.

Studio Granda, Iceland, Johan Celsing, Sweden, Jarmund/Vigsnæs, Norway, Lassila Hirvilammi, Finland, Lundgaard & Tranberg, Stig L. Andersson from SLA and Jan Gehl from Gehl Architects, Denmark, will be present at the press opening.

At 12 noon the museum invites the press to lunch in the Louisiana Café.

New Nordic – Architecture & Identity is the first exhibition in a new series at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, which will explore the relationship of architecture to culture and identity. The series deals with architecture as a field where collective memories and narratives are reflected materially and spatially. This exhibition attempts to reveal whether certain special ‘Nordic’ features recur in architecture, and whether this involves a fundamental formal idiom that is regularly reinterpreted.

Is there a Nordic identity? Does The Nordic Way exist? Can one, despite the tendency of globalization to erase national and cultural differences, still understand identity as something that is associated with particular places? And if that is the case, how has the Nordic identity developed alongside the development of the rest of the world? These are some of the questions that the exhibition spotlights.

Through three themes the exhibition explores how the latest developments in the five Nordic countries are taking form. The themes stress the new Nordic, including a rediscovery of the tradition. But now the geographically specific qualities are being used in new ways: the traditions are being interpreted anew and old boundaries are being transcended rather than defined sharply. The Nordic is perhaps mainly evident in the clash between the architect’s cultural roots and professional tradition on the one hand, and on the other the fact that the global perspective is an inevitable condition for humanity today.

‘Nordic theatres’
The exhibition initially asks the question What is Nordic for you?, and the answers are manifested in a number of small ‘Nordic theatres’ where several cultural personalities from the five Nordic countries each contribute content to a box that offers a suggestion for Nordic identity today. The content may be objects, a film or something else that can be shown in the box.
Theme I: Reassessing the site-specific
The first theme of the exhibition is reinterpretations of the place-specific. The introduction to the theme is a film where the Swiss architect Peter Zumthor and his Finnish colleague Juhani Pallasmaa discuss Nordic culture and identity. In the Nordic countries there is great variation in places and landscapes, and architects are showing widespread interest in understanding and interpreting the surroundings in their buildings. The architects share the view of place as a mutable entity in which they can interweave physical, cultural and mental processes to renew place-specific building culture.

A number of films are also elements in the narrative of the place-specific: the video artist Elina Brotherus deals with the concept of place as something understood through action and memory; the film-maker Pi Michael has put together a video about the Nordic atmosphere in architecture; and the film producer Wilfred Hauke from dmfilm, in collaboration with ARTE, has focused on the Nordic landscape.

Five Nordic Houses
To show similarities and differences in the Nordic countries the museum has invited five Nordic architects to build a house each: Studio Granda, Iceland, Johan Celsing, Sweden, Jarmund/Vigsnæs, Norway, Lassila Hirvilammi, Finland and Lundgaard & Tranberg, Denmark. Each house is an expression of the regional identity and experience from which the individual architect comes. The rules for the project have been simple: each drawing office has been asked to relate to what Nordic identity can be, and to their ideas of the place-specific in architecture.

Theme II: Reinterpreting community
Abroad, the welfare system is what is usually associated with the Nordic countries. How are the welfare ideals manifested in present-day architecture? This section tries to point to some tendencies in public building that reflect the distinctive Nordic sense of community. The Nordic welfare model is viewed here as a processual, mutable entity that helps to form what is perceived as Nordic identity and culture: where is the community going, and what new institutions represent the welfare society of the future?

Today a wealth of new institutions are seeing the light of day; many architects are mixing functions that are normally separate. The hospital is moving towards a more home-like atmosphere, the library is becoming a concert hall, culture house and citizens’ service centre all in one. Many public buildings are conceived as icons of brand new or renovated older neighbourhoods.

Theme III: Reclaiming public space
The third and last theme in the exhibition focuses on specific articulations of public space, and on how values in the Nordic countries are expressed in the way the city is arranged. Among other things, this theme presents visions of temporary and experimental urban spaces.

For this section too, two important installations have been created. In the first the architectural firm SLA has created an artificial landscape as a setting for a number of narratives about how one can bring landscape elements into the city to create sustainable environments where nature and landscape are combined in integrated ways.

The second installation, with the title ‘Life Between Buildings’ is about the architect Jan Gehl’s ideas on everyday life in the spaces of the city. His research on how city space is experienced and used has resulted in specific proposals for ‘human solutions’. Compared with a traditional working process where buildings and traffic are at the centre, Gehl turns things on their head and looks – in descending order – at life, space and buildings.
Catalogue

Louisiana Magasin no. 36 (only in Danish)
Louisiana Magasin no. 36 features the articles “Under egne himmelstrøg” by Michael Asgaard Andersen and “Er menneskeskabte byer skabt for mennesker?” by Jeanne Rank Schelde and Benedicte Brocks.

Lectures
A series of lectures will be given in connection with the exhibition. The events will be announced at www.louisiana.dk. Press releases will also be sent out about the individual events.

Participating architects

Contributors to ‘Nordic theatres’
Photographer Trine Søndergaard, designer Cecilie Manz, Playdead, chef and entrepreneur Claus Meyer and multimedia designer Henrik Vibskov, film director Otto Rosing, designer Karen Fly and artist Julie Edel Hardenberg, the design team Gudrun & Gudrun, video artist Petra Lindholm and video artist Elina Brotherus, photographer Sigurgeir Sigyrjónsson, the design team Fanney Antonsdóttir and Dógg Gudmundsdóttir, designer Gudrún Lilja Gunnlaugsdóttir, artist Kristinn E. Hrafnsson, designer Srúli Recht, author Hallgrímur Helgason, photographer A. K. Dolven, photographer Dag Alveng, designer Cathrine Kullberg, the design team Arne & Carlos, the design team Permafrost, author Erlend Loe, photographer Lars Tunbjörk, designer Mats Theselius and author and TV producer Staffan Bengtsson.

The exhibition is curated by the museum curator Kjeld Kjeldsen and Michael Asgaard Andersen, architect MAA and Ph.D. Exhibition architects: Luise Hooge Lorenc, Maya Lahmy and Mads Kjædegaard.

The exhibition has been realized with support from Realdania, sponsor of Louisiana’s architecture exhibitions.
Further information about the exhibition *New Nordic – Architecture & Identity* is available from the curator Kjeld Kjeldsen, assistant curator Michael Asgaard Andersen or the undersigned. **Press photos** can be downloaded from [www.louisiana.dk](http://www.louisiana.dk). A [log-in](http://www.louisiana.dk) can be ordered from the undersigned. M: +45 2858 5052 or e-mail: press@louisiana.dk.

Yours sincerely

LOUISIANA

Susanne Hartz
Head of Press

Bodum. Main sponsor of Louisiana.