



## **The background for Alt\_Cph**

Each year, the alternative art fair is the subject of debate. Each year, it must verify itself: Are you really an alternative? Are you not, in fact, just as commercial? And each year, we must argue for the validity of our existence.

Each year, we organize the art fair from new angles, each of which is an answer to some of these questions.

### **Alt\_Cph 2006**

Alt\_Cph aims to throw light on that contemporary art scene which exists in the alternative spaces and in the smaller galleries, because we want to focus on how important it is that they exist. Alt\_Cph is tugging gently at Copenhagen's ears, with this art fair, since the city is somewhat lagging, unfortunately, in its understanding of the role which contemporary art plays in society.

### **Alt\_Cph 2007**

Why do we find it necessary to gather spaces we consider to fit into the alternative category? And what does the word alternative really cover?

It is our wish to show and communicate how imperative the alternative role is, and to emphasize its potential as a philosophy for society. Perhaps we have never been in more need of an alternative strategy than today. The world's resources are limited, and together, we need to work out a new world order, if we want to survive. The ability to create alternative ways of living, and understanding the global correlations, will perhaps turn out to be indispensable for our future existence! This is why it is important to be aware of, and to nurture, the potential of the alternative. It is, therefore, a mistake to understand the alternative as being outside the economic realm of the art market, since this is neither the case, nor the point. Ultimately, the alternative is part of the whole.

### **Alt\_Cph 2008**

The Factory for Art & Design organizes Alt\_Cph, because we consider it crucial to take care of the collective spirit behind the independent artistic environments, and to provide exposure for these innovative projects. This platform is an opportunity for artistic initiatives, which exist across national borders, to present their projects in one common space. Alt\_Cph was launched in order to give the participants a chance to expand their knowledge about their Nordic colleagues. Additionally, Alt\_Cph gives its visitors the opportunity to gain insight into the diversity of projects which exist in the artist-run and non-profit-based section of the Nordic art scene. The aim is that Alt\_Cph will provide inspiration, strengthen networks between the Nordic art scenes, and pave the way for new co-operations.

### **Alt\_Cph 2009**

Alt\_Cph09, a guide to the root network of the Danish/Swedish/Norwegian art scene.

The alternative art fair in 2009 regards it as its project, to illuminate a small, discreet part of the art world, and promote initiative as the primary driving force and foundation.

The focus and primary incentive for Alt\_Cph09 are the Nordic art world's profit-free initiatives. Market mechanisms are, seen from a capitalist perspective, the driving force of modern societies, yet many artists, galleries, exhibition spaces, etc., develop conscious strategies which allow the art and creativity to be the energy and motivation for their initiatives. It is these profit-free, alternative and artist-driven initiatives, the non-commercial idea and the creative energy implicated in it, which are the main concern of Alt\_Cph09.

Alt\_Cph09 wishes to show, strengthen and promote such initiatives which, for the most part, exist outside the established institutions and commercial exhibition spaces.

### **Extract from Tone O. Nielsen's opening speech at Alt\_Cph 2009:**

"Alt\_Cph can also change the terms and conditions of existence for the alternative as such.

The exposure of alternative and artist-run art galleries, project spaces, art publishers and artist-based initiatives which takes place here today, can hopefully lead to a better understanding and de-mystification of the alternative per se. For this is the only salvation of our culture. Alternative, critical art remembers, that which the public realm forgets, represses or ignores. It is the place where blind spots become visible, where ignored voices can be heard; and it is also the place where wounds can be healed, and traumas can be overcome. It teaches us to re-think the ideological, and shows us alternatives to what is now; in short, it can imagine the world different".