

Kannenfeldplatz 6
CH-4056 BASEL
+41 61 322 10 00

Pasteurvej 8
DK-1799 COPENHAGEN
+45 31 66 86 96

John Wood & Paul Harrison
We Built This City
von Bartha, Copenhagen
26 May – 13 July

info@vonbartha.com
vonbartha.com

With We Built this City, the first solo exhibition at von Bartha Copenhagen by John Wood & Paul Harrison, the British artist duo presents their large-scale installation, *A Film about a City* (2015).

“We’re not really into master plans” the duo declares when speaking about the work that mimics the model-based planning of an urban landscape. Unlike other master plans, Wood & Harrison’s proposal was intentionally not conceived to develop beyond the presented architectural model, which, according to the artists, is a collection of poorly laid plans.

The installation, which at von Bartha Copenhagen takes up the entire exhibition space, invites the viewers to discover all of these flawed or even impossible inventions and circumstances, which on further inspection, reveal themselves. The imaginative playfulness of these architectural proposals recalls childrens’ games and childlike imaginings of being a tiny person in a wonderland.

Such a wonderland might be found in the installation *A Film about a City*. Here, one may imagine moving about between and in and out of the miniature plywood building blocks, experiencing firsthand the struggle of trying to cross the highly inconvenient bridge connecting two parts of the same factory or hanging out in the penthouse apartment of a high-rise that has no other apartments – only the most profitable residence at the top. Or maybe realizing that the long ramp one has been treading along isn’t leading anywhere.

Wood & Harrison’s interest lies in the meeting between the perfect ideas from the architectural drawings and models and the not-so-perfect people who will inhabit them. The duo states: “We like the beautiful mistakes, the beautiful takes, the improvised uses, and misuses, the comedic moments. The bits and pieces in between.” It’s all these bits and pieces between other bits and pieces and the encounter with them that make up the work, and that make up a city.

Just as Wood & Harrison’s architectural model is made up of many well-known, basic architectural elements, the other works featured in the exhibition reference different kinds of pre-existing, basic elements that the artists have been playing around with since they began working together in 1993. Thus, the exhibition presents a new series of paintings that each mimic everyday objects such as the visual language of the pictogram, a light switch, and the marks from a notice removed from a wall. Moreover, the video work *101 Reasons to Stand Somewhere* (2020) offers a multitude of different takes on the otherwise simple position.

VON BARTHA

Kannenfeldplatz 6
CH-4056 BASEL
+41 61 322 10 00

Pasteurvej 8
DK-1799 COPENHAGEN
+45 31 66 86 96

info@vonbartha.com
vonbartha.com

Alongside the exhibition in the gallery, Wood & Harrison will present the outdoor light installation *ON/OFF* (2023) on the façade of the gallery building. Visitors will be able to access the work both day and night.

The exhibition is conceived in the context of this year's World Capital of Architecture initiated by UNESCO and International Union of Architects which declares Copenhagen the world's capital of architecture in 2023. Wood & Harrison tackle this by offering an alternative, sometimes funny, sometimes ironic, approach to what the general public might imagine an architect's job would look like.

John Wood & Paul Harrison

John Wood b. 1969 Kowloon, Hong Kong / Paul Harrison b. 1966 Wolverhampton, UK /
Live and work in Bristol, UK

John Wood & Paul Harrison both studied at the Bath College of Higher Education and have been working together since 1993. The video works, which include performance of the Harrison & Wood duo take a position between tragedy, comedy and irony. These works, which are minimalist, sculptural and have elements of installation and performance, oscillate between failure, calculation and randomness. They are experiments with the size, the volume and the movement of the human body in relation to the surrounding architecture, which the two artists have usually built themselves.

VON BARTHA