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Interview by Liberty Paterson
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Interview: Mads Lynnerup

U-TURN
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Mads Lynnerup's excellent contribution to U-TURN took two and a half months to realise and the skills of a private investigator. The work, aptly titled "Routines (Sønder Boulevard)", uses video, performance, drawing and installation to reveal elements of people daily routines in Copenhagen. Now back in the USA kopenhagen caught up with Mads on Skype to find out more about the ideas behind "Routines" and his working process as an artist.

Mads Lynnerup's work ingeniously draws the viewers' attention to daily situations that might otherwise go unnoticed. His works are a result of his own concentrated observations and can simultaneously be both affecting and amusing.

Mads Lynnerup was born in Denmark (1976) and lives and works in USA. He recently completed a MFA at Columbia University, New York and received a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute in 2001. He has shown his work at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; P.S. 1, New York; Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw and is in the collections of the Blanton Museum of Art, Miami Art Museum, Orange County Museum of Art and the San Jose Museum of Modern Art.

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Installation view at U-TURN, Carlsberg Tap E

Can you tell me about the ideas behind you work "Routines" at the U-TURN exhibition?

I was observing people outside my window. There is a dry cleaner across the street from where I live in New York. Every morning there is a series of co-ordinated exchanges between the people dropping off the dirty laundry and the people picking up the fresh laundry. They would do exactly the same things everyday, from the way they parked vans to the way they exchanged laundry and drove off again. That made me think about routines, the things we only notice if it happens in front of us everyday.

Simultaneously to being invited to participate in U-TURN I was invited to do a show at Storefront for Art and Architecture. The exhibition was curated MA students from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. They wanted to make an exhibition about the area around Storefront. In response to this I focused on routines in the area and produced a work that got the exhibitions visitors to re-enact the routines that were happening around them outside. The work at U-TURN was based on a similar idea although the video was less instructional and more focused. The entire project in Copenhagen took about two and a half months to realise. I came at the beginning of June and stayed at a new residency in Sølyst Artist in Residence Centre in Jyderup until mid-September.

So you sat in Sønder Boulevard and researched people's routines for two and a half months?!

The actual research was one and a half months. I realised that you have to develop a routine in order to observe other peoples routines. I would start out at one end of Sønder Boulevard and then work my way up, sitting in the same spots. I began noticing the same people everyday.

Once I had identified people I followed them to make sure they were doing the same things everyday, I quickly became like a private investigator. It's a strange experience when you start looking out for people, and your thinking "where is this guy? Is he coming

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round the corner?" and then when he does its like "WOW", a peculiar sense of fulfillment!

Did anybody notice that you were there observing them?

Yes I think a lot of people did. I found more routines than was featured in the U-TURN exhibition.



Mads Lynnerup: Routine, 2008, poster installed on Sønder Boulevard,

How many do you think you found?

Maybe 30.

How did you select the location?

It was collaboration between me and the curators at U-TURN. They proposed the site. It's an area which my sister used to live in so I was familiar with the opportunities it could offer. It's a diverse area with a lot happening. Maybe the diversity is disappearing but I like the area because it was not too specific, there's not a certain type of person who lives their.

The work in the U-TURN exhibition combines a wide range of elements, installation, performance, performance, video, why do you use this range of media to tell your story?

I chose my media depending on what seems suitable for the idea.

I was also wondering about the bench?

The bench is a prop but it also has its own existence in the space, it is from the place where I was sitting a lot of the time. Benches can be used strategically in exhibitions, to make people pause and sit down and spend a little more time. I also wanted people to have that experience of observing something happening.

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Mads Lynnerup: Routines, 2008, installation view at Carlsberg Tap E,

Did you make the sketches on location or were you taking photos then making the sketches from the photographs?

I made drawings from photographs. The drawings were less revealing than the photographs. The photograph gave away too much, they told too much. I wanted to leave it open for people to recognise certain parts of the drawing and say oh that's that area, but I also wanted to make it a little more foreign to people, subtle hints, this could be the place you walk through everyday.

Was it important to show daily routines in the location of the exhibition?

I am curious to see what would happen if I took the video at U-TURN and showed it in San Francisco. Would it make sense to someone outside its context? I think it would. But it adds an extra perspective when people recognise the area. I like to activate something by putting it back into the place where it took place. The viewer is thinking and observing something else but then they recognise something familiar. There is something powerful in that.

You have lived in a few different locations. Have your experiences of living in different places affected the way you observe?

I think so but I can't say for sure. I feel that when I stay in one place for a long time I start to get the same ideas. Going somewhere you don't know puts you on new tracks. I think that when you are making work site-specific it challenges you to move out of the familiar. It's good when someone asks me show a project in another location because it starts a new life. I could not describe the U-TURN project until a month before the exhibition. That makes it stressful for the organisers of an exhibition but it's also the beauty of the project, it has the ability to transform.

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What interests you about routine?

I am interested in taking something that everybody knows and twisting it a little so that people look at it in a different way. That's what fascinates me at the moment.

Thank you.