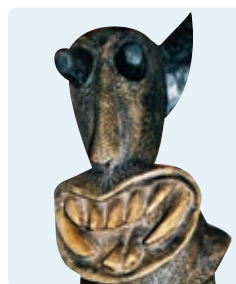


ART AND ARCHITECTURE

AT THE ACADEMY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN OLLERUP





ART AND ARCHITECTURE

AT THE ACADEMY OF
PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN OLLERUP

PREFACE



First-time visitors to the Academy of Physical Education in Ollerup will notice that the overall aesthetic appearance of the Academy has been kept in mind from its beginnings in 1920. The neoclassical style, the symmetry and the interplay between buildings and park – primarily dating back to the 1920's and 30's – are characterized by a visionary line of thought combined with far-sightedness. The buildings include the first indoor swimming pool in Denmark from 1926 as well as a sports hall from 1933, which is still one of the largest in the country - and the quality of the buildings has ensured that they are still fully functional today. Throughout its history,

the Academy has had the courage and ability to excite its surroundings with constructions that were progressive in terms of usability while also living up to architectural and aesthetic standards that have proved to be an inspiration for posterity.

As time went by, the buildings and park were enriched by numerous works of art inspired by Nordic mythology and ancient Greece; and recently, considerable donations by the New Carlsberg Foundation as well as the foundation Realdania have ensured that our art collection has been both expanded and renovated.

Surroundings matter when it comes to education, and in our daily work at the Academy we feel the inspiration from previous generations' fondness of the aesthetic dimension. Our predecessors have created a setting that is suitable for teaching while also illustrating the Academy's commitment to both professional and general education.

As a modern and well-functioning folk high school, we owe a big 'thank you' to former employees, students, 'bisser', architects and donors for providing us with the opportunity to welcome expectant students and course participants into these historic facilities. They

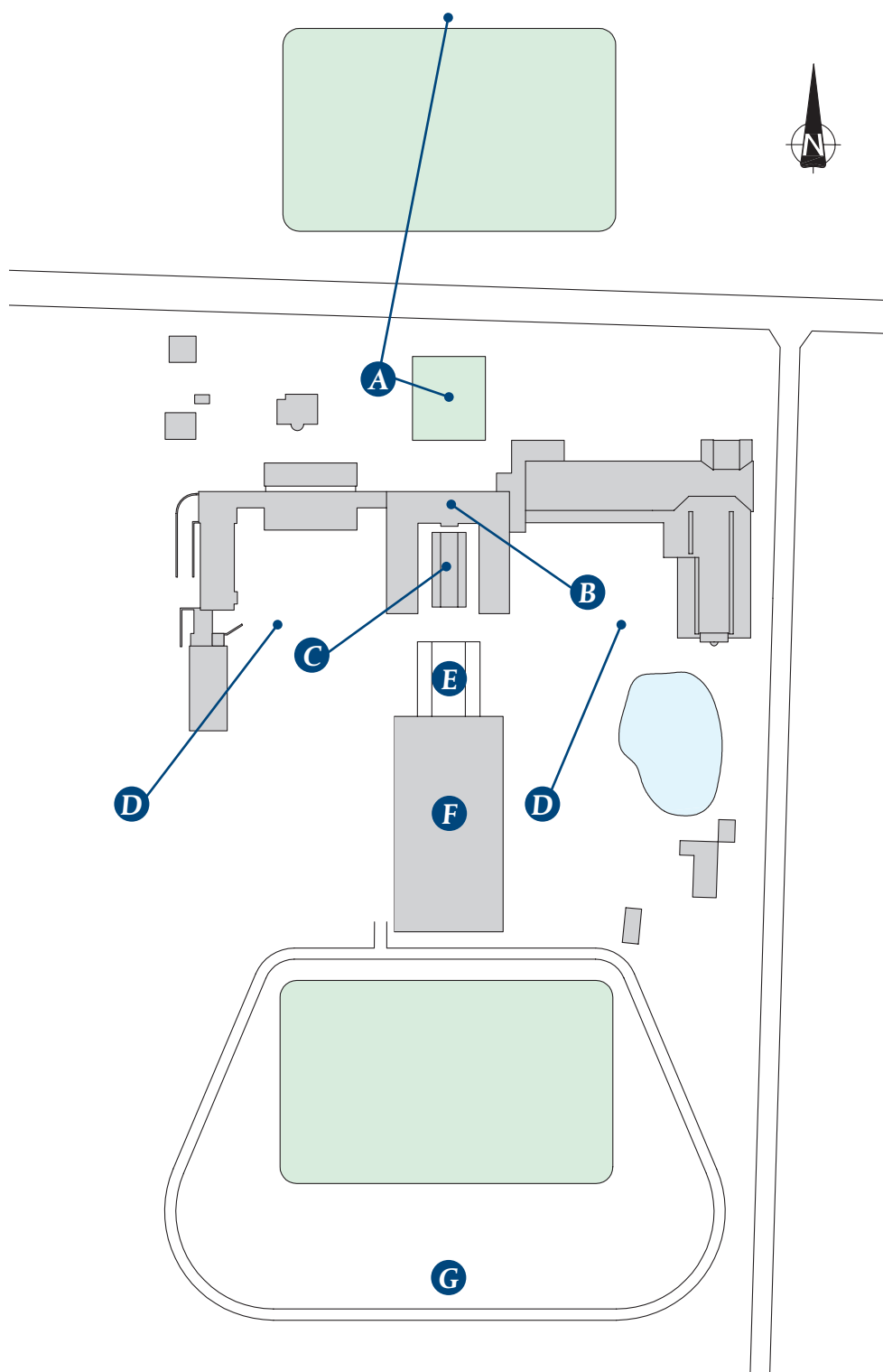
add a relevant and meaningful dimension to our work.

On this background, I am happy to present the reader with this publication, which – in an unpretentious language – describes a selection of buildings and works of art at the Academy of Physical Education in Ollerup. I would like to thank the authors of this publication and at the same time dedicate it to all those who have been a part of the vigorous history of the Academy.

*Ollerup, March 14, 2007
Uffe Strandby, Principal*



OVERVIEW



Today, the art and architecture at the Academy of Physical Education in Ollerup appear as a mix of old and new, stylish and crooked. Right angles follow rounded shapes, and classical bronze figures stand side by side minimalist concrete figures.

Following a donation by the New Carlsberg Foundation, new works of art have been put up at the Academy during the years 2005 to 2007, and during the same period the Academy's indoor swimming pool has been fully renovated. This has resulted in a reinterpretation of early, neoclassicist intentions and tightened up the Academy's architecture and art. Originally, the architecture appeared very pure, and all parts were incorporated into a uniform whole; for example each window had to be shaped and placed in a way that made it fit the overall appearance of the building. With the erection of modern art, this whole has been underlined but at the same time its appearance has become more complex. According to one of the artists, Hein Heinsen, the 'heroism' has been 'wounded'.

Viewed from above, the majority of buildings and outdoor works of art constitute a cross. The northern sculptures, the main building, the indoor and outdoor swimming pools, the sports hall, the windrow area and

the southern sculptures have been placed around a longitudinal axis. From the Academy's beginnings in 1920, the intention has been for this line to ensure symmetry and clear perspective lines.

The east-west axis across the Academy has been created through the erection of new art as well as the restoration of some of the older works of art. This transversal axis cuts through the main building and the outdoor swimming pool. The Academy's buildings and facilities primarily date from three main periods: the buildings on the longitudinal axis are from the 1920's and 1930's; the wings west of the main building were built during a period of 15 years from the late 1960's to the early 1980's, while the tumbling center facing east is a building from the new millennium. The massive and monumental buildings from these three periods have not been harmonized in terms of style, and the artists behind the new works of art, Stig Brøgger, Mogens Møller and Hein Heinsen, saw it as a challenge to come up with a project recreating a connection of some sort. Thus, the end result was site specific art – sculptures and paintings relating to the shapes and ideas of the existing building complex. Not in order to imitate but in order to comment.

INDEX

- A North, page 6 B The main building, page 8 C The indoor swimming pool, page 10
D The transverse axis, page 12 E Around the outdoor swimming pool, page 14
F The sports hall, page 16 G The windrow, page 18



Far north, at the Academy's stadium, you can find Carl Bonnesens' bronze sculpture, *Riding Amazon*. It was donated to the Academy in 1931 by the New Carlsberg Foundation and moved to its current location in 2005, when the sculpture *Omorica* was set up in front of the main building.

In Greek mythology, amazons were a people consisting of women only. According to the myth, boy children were not allowed to survive, and the young females were subjected to a strict military upbringing. Amazons were strong warriors fighting against Greek heroes.

Carl Bonnesens *Riding Amazon*, however, stands out as calm and non-hostile. Moreover, in contrast to conventional portrayals of amazons, she has two breasts - not just one. Due to a misinterpretation of the word, the view arose that amazons had only one breast in order better to handle bow and arrow.

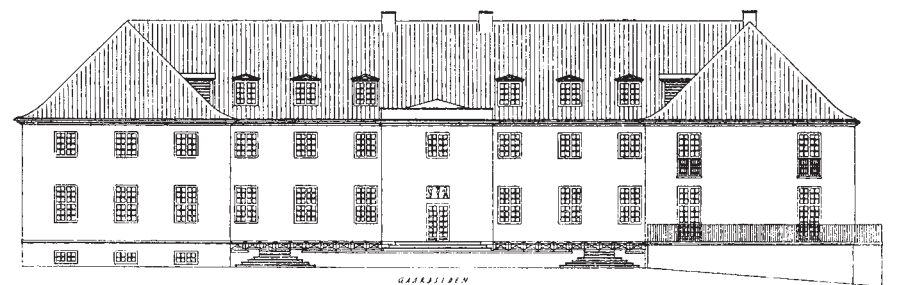
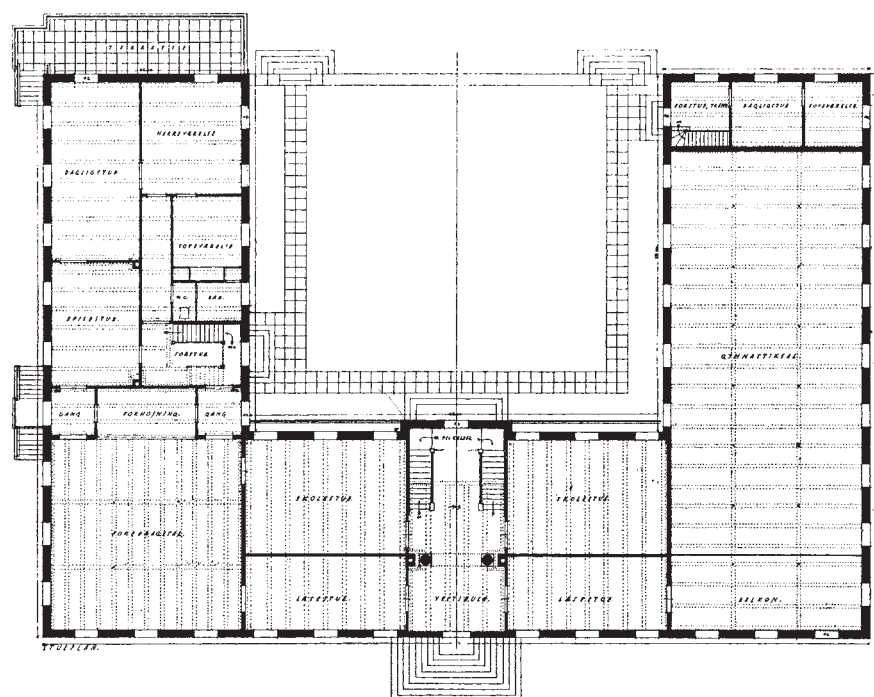
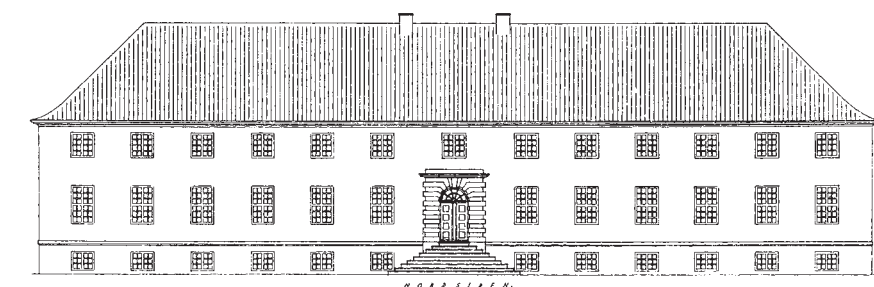
Next to the sculpture there is a big stone, which was dragged to the Academy by 200 students in 1934. The founder of the Academy, Niels Bukh, is depicted along with hard-working students dragging the stone as well as him.

Both *Riding Amazon* and the big stone are placed at the Academy's stadium, which was inaugurated in 1923 with King Christian X as one of the participants. The stadium as

well as the park were designed by the garden architect Gudmund Nyeland Brandt, who had a significant influence on the development of garden design in Denmark at the time. The stadium was built in a neo-classicist style: it is located symmetrically on the Academy's north-south longitudinal axis and was originally decorated by statues portraying Greek athletes et al. These are now located south of the Academy's main building.

On the lawn in front of the main building, the 9,5-meter tall sculpture *Omorica* towers up. *Omorica* from 2005 has been designed by painter and sculptor, Professor Stig Brøgger, and consists of four large concrete bricks as well as two omorika spruces made of bronze. The concrete bricks have been placed in a staggered arrangement on top of each other as an indication of gravity, heroism, insecurity and instability. The spruces hint at the Danish and Nordic attachment to counterweight the dominating Greek inspiration behind the Academy. Hence, the sculpture points north and has been placed on the Academy's longitudinal axis, where *Riding Amazon* used to be. Apart from the sculpture's massive appearance, the artist has attempted to integrate movement and life: the shadows are constantly changing and the spruces become coated with verdigris, thus leaving their marks on the bricks by 'melting' on them.

THE MAIN BUILDING

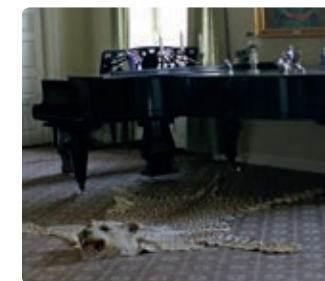


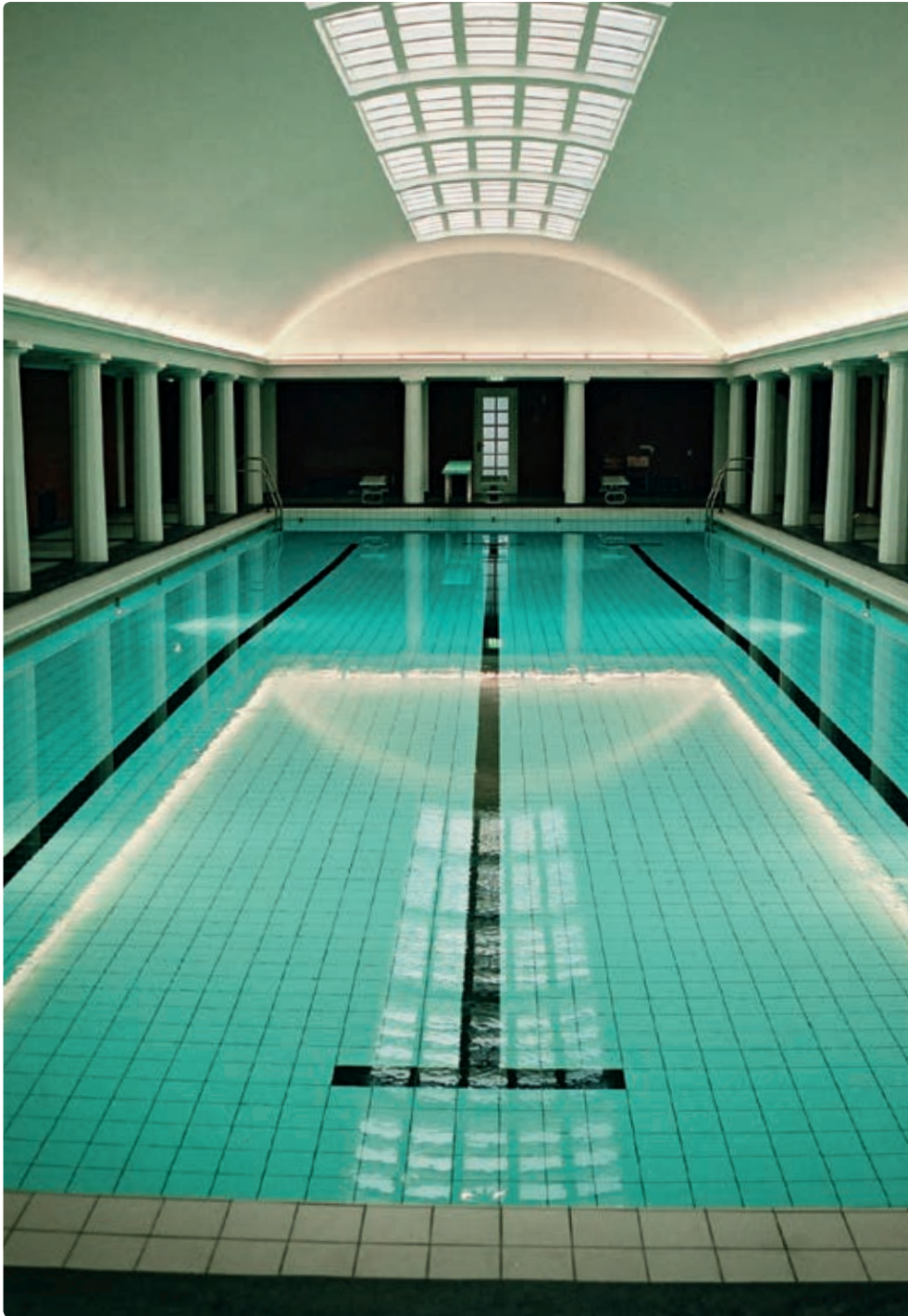
The main building had been finished in time for the Academy's inauguration in 1920. It was drawn by the architect Ejnar Mindedal Rasmussen and sets the tone for the dominating neoclassical style. The three-wing building folds itself symmetrically around the main axis. Originally, it appeared even more stylistically consistent: the windows were barred, and with the originally plastered front as its background, the main entrance stood out more distinctly. The beautifully attuned proportions are also clearly felt in Ejnar Mindedal Rasmussen's own drawing of the main building. Unfortunately, during the 1970's, the main building underwent an extensive renovation, which did not show any consideration for the history and style of the building. It is the hope of the Academy that it will be restored to its original appearance in the future.

The centrally located main stairway was renovated in 2005 and leads to the entrance hall which was originally supported by two white pillars. However, examples of neoclassicism can still be found in the hall; two copies of reliefs from Bertel Thorvaldsens's frieze

Alexander the Great's Entry into Babylon from 1812 are hanging on the walls.

From the entrance hall, the building is symmetrically divided into the east and west wings. The assembly hall is located in the west wing, and here many of the fine architectural details have been preserved, including the design of the ceiling. In the assembly hall there is also a large mural by Troels Trier which points to another of the Academy's sources of inspiration: Nordic mythology. The painting dates back to 1926 and shows Idun handing out apples of rejuvenation to the gods. In this wing, one will also find the old gymnastics hall, with its balcony facing south. Despite its name, the old gymnastics hall has undergone some changes, including larger girders that have been put up in the ceiling. In the east wing, the old living rooms and winter garden of Niels Bukh have also been preserved. Portraits of the Academy's principals are hanging on the wall, and works of art brought home from all over the world by Niels Bukh or received as gifts by the Academy can also be found here. The old living rooms are still used for singing, story-telling and receptions.





THE INDOOR SWIMMING POOL

The indoor swimming pool was inaugurated in 1926 and was the first of its kind in Denmark. The idea for its construction was conceived by Niels Bukh during a journey to the United States in 1923. Similar to the main building, it was designed by Ejnar Mindedal Rasmussen and is located in the basement floor between the two wings precisely on the middle axis of the complex. The classical inspiration is clear from the Doric pillars and white pilasters (flat, pillar-like structures on the wall). More precisely, the swimming pool takes its inspiration from Pompeii and the Pompeian baths; an inspiration which is reflected in the arched ceiling, the saturated colours and the division of space. Despite the perspective lines and clear proportions, the swimming pool does not appear monumental. The rigorous logic is broken by the sensuous appeal of the colors, materials and light. A window section in the arched ceiling lets the daylight in. The white pillars are contrasted by the Italian red walls and the characteristically black and white terrazzo floor with

patterns closely following the divisions of the space. Simplicity walks hand in hand with a flair for details, and the whole is very finely orchestrated.

Already in 1928, the swimming pool earned Ejnar Mindedal Rasmussen a silver medal in the architectural competition held at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam. During 2005-2006, the swimming pool underwent an extensive renovation and has now been listed for preservation.

The terrazzo floor and its patterns and mosaics are part of the Pompeian inspiration. At the main entrance of the swimming pool, there is a mosaic of a swastika in the floor. Due to the later use of the swastika, it has been much debated, even though it is reversed compared to the Nazi symbol. When it was drawn by Ejnar Mindedal Rasmussen in 1926, he was referring to the old symbol of the sun or fertility meaning 'sign of good luck'. In front of the sauna, there is another mosaic with a pentagon - a five-pointed star - signifying 'perfect harmony'.



THE TRANSVERSE AXIS

South of the main building, at the center of the Academy, an axis cuts through the north-south longitudinal axis. This axis was created in 2006 due to the erection of new works of art, two jars and a so-called "eclipsed" item, as well as by moving the *Niels Bukh Memorial* - a sculpture from 1959 - a few meters from its original location.

The two jars have been created by sculptor and Professor, Mogens Møller, and symbolize ancient Greece and the Academy's classical ideals. With its pure shape and color, the smallest jar (facing west) has a relatively simple

appearance. East of this, one will find the large jar, which is also made of bronze but stands out as a more complex work of art. It rests on a 10-meter tall pillar made of bluish-black limestone, and the jar itself has a height of no less than four meters. According to the artist, the jar has a lid on it in order to encapsulate secrets such as dreams, wishes and hopes that are fundamental to human identity. Three eggs are placed on top of the big jar and are meant to represent the life-giving qualities of its content, and beneath the gilded tripod six snakes guard the elevated secret.



The western limit of the transverse axis consists of Gunnar Hansen's sculpture in granite *Niels Bukh's Memorial*. It was inaugurated by Jørgen Jørgensen, who was the Minister of Education at the time, and more than 2000 of the Academy's former students participated in the event. The sculpture depicts the founder and first principal of the Academy, Niels Bukh, surrounded by students.

Mogens Møller chose a location right next to this massive sculpture for one of the ecliptic figures that were put up around the outdoor swimming pool as well as on the transverse

axis itself in 2006. These minimalist and timeless objects are made of concrete, and their function is to point out and frame the existing works of art. Furthermore, the artist wanted to use the two-meter tall eclipse next to *Niels Bukh's Memorial* as a way of breaking the 'self-satisfied order and enclosed atmosphere' of the granite sculpture.



AROUND THE OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOL

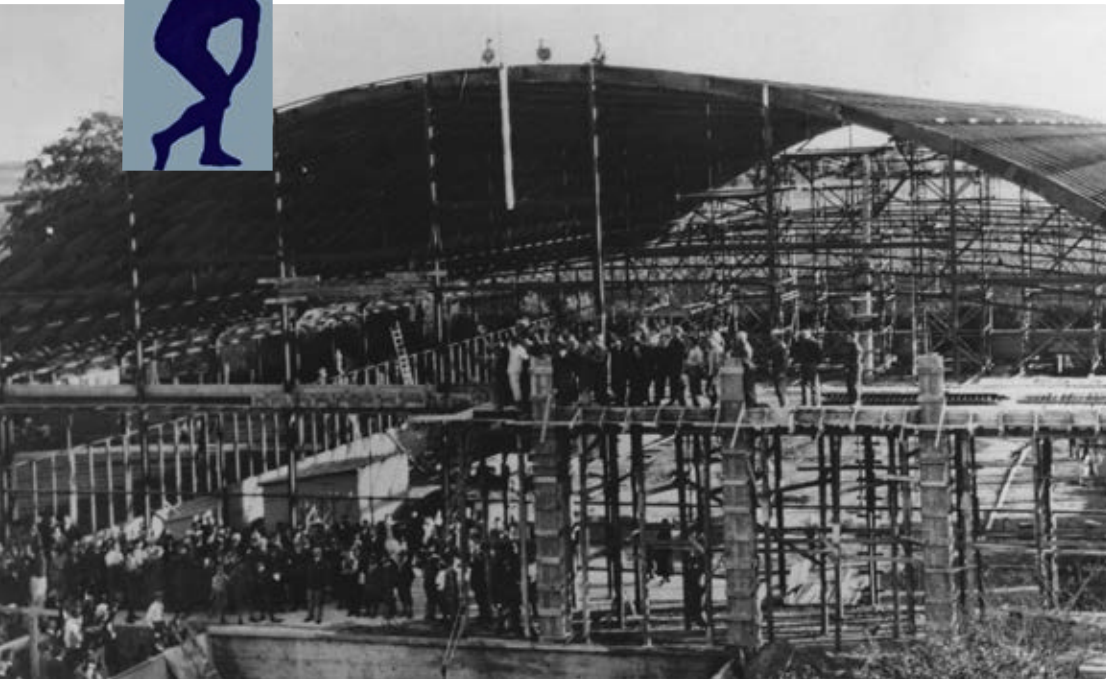


In 1933, the Academy was augmented with an outdoor swimming pool and a large sports hall. The swimming pool was dug out by 'bissers' – former students doing voluntary work for the Academy.

Today, seven Greek sculptures can be found around the swimming pool. Except for *The Discus Thrower* from 1923, all of these were put up in 2007. Similarly to the modern works of art, these have been donated by the New Carlsberg Foundation. On each side of the pool, three male and three female sculptures have been placed opposite each other, while *The Discus Thrower* is situated on the longitudinal axis of the Academy.

- *The Discus Thrower*. Replica by Myron, c. 470–450 B.C. The athlete is a symbol of popular, ancient athletics, and the sculpture is worth a study due to its fine, rounded shapes.
- *Diadouméne*. Replica by Polyclète, c. 420 B.C. An athlete ties a diadem around his forehead as a proof of victory.
- *Sandal tying Hermes*. Replica by Lysippos, c. 300 B.C. Hermes ties his sandals after participating in a sport event. In Greek mythology, Hermes is the god of merchants and thieves as well as the gods' messenger.
- *Sophocles*. Replica by unknown artist, c. 330 B.C. Greek poet and author of tragedies living in the fifth century B.C. Among other plays, Sophocles wrote *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King* and *Electra*. His main emphasis was the power of the gods and the virtue of moderation.
- *Amazon*. Replica by Polyclète/Kresilas, c. 430 B.C. In Greek legends, amazons are strong belligerent females – see p. 7 for more information.
- *Aphrodite from Ostia*. Replica by unknown artist, c. 360–350 B.C. In Greek mythology, Aphrodite is the goddess of love and fertility.
- *The Lady from Herculaneum*. Replica by unknown artist, c. 300 B.C. Woman from the ancient village of Herculaneum wearing chiton and jacket.

The erection of these six sculptures has been undertaken by Mogens Møller. Simultaneously, he has created the big ecliptic sculptures framing the pool area as well as the smaller ones complimenting the classical sculptures. The eclipses have been conceived as timeless, discrete objects pointing to the Greek sculptures and their surroundings. Along with the jars on the transverse axis, the artist has attempted to make the spectator experience a leap – from the classical to the modern and from low to high.



The sports hall was inaugurated in 1933 along with the outdoor swimming pool. Aided by an engineering company, Niels Bukh himself participated in the design process. With its three transverse handball courts, it was one of the largest sports halls in northern Europe. Originally, its architecture was meant to reflect a neoclassical temple, but its final shape – including square concrete pillars and visible roof construction in metal – reveals that the sources of inspiration also include the railway stations and airplane hangars of

the industrial age. Forty 'bisser' were working on the building for a year, and parts of the roof were bolted together at a height of 16 meters. The impressive roof construction consists of 2,500 iron segments held in place by 30,000 bolts.

At the end wall, in the middle of the north-south axis, Stig Brøgger's painting *From Here to There* can be found. It consists of horizontal and vertical hand painted plates made of lightweight metal. They are separated by regular spaces creating a number of partitions.

THE SPORTS HALL



Likewise, there are a number of repetitions and reflections. The title of the painting reflects the way it relates to the present room as well as geography and history. The words 'here' and 'there' take on different meanings depending on where, how and by whom they are uttered.

Measuring 37 meters, the large painting covers the full width of the wall and follows the curve of the roof construction. The choice of colors shows consideration for the inflow of light as well as the colors in the hall. The

motifs also relate to the surroundings. For example, the 'here' of the discus thrower refers to a 'there' which consists of the athlete's own repetition in the painting, but it also hints at the discus thrower by the outdoor swimming pool and the statue's connection with ancient Greece. The discus thrower of the painting thus 'participates' in the sport and movement taking place in the hall, while simultaneously providing and 'taking' colors from the activities in the room.



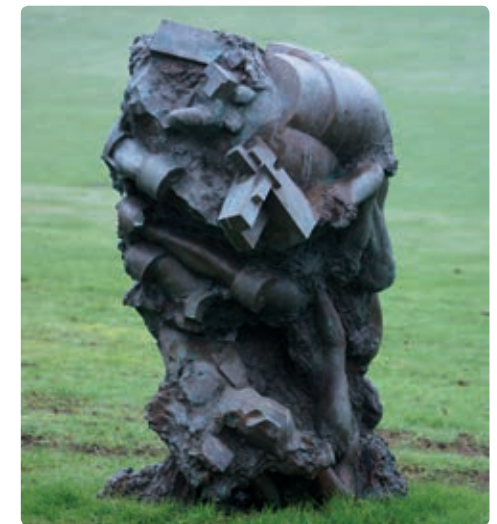
THE WINDROW

The windrow was built for the 'Landsstævne' (Danish Festival of Sports and Culture) in 1935. The event was hosted by the Academy and named 'The Nordic Olympics' by Niels Bukh. The construction work was done by 'bisser' using an excavator and a tip wagon train. It was conceived as a location for festivities with a capacity of 50,000 spectators. The windrow constitutes the southern border of the Academy's complex, and the work of art marking the limit of the north-south axis is painter and Professor Hein Heinsen's *The Grand Pointers* and *The Spectator*.

Weighing 24 tons each, *The Grand Pointers* firmly anchor the Academy of Physical Education to its roots and location, while at the same time pointing to the world outside. They also remind Ollerup of its cultural heritage by pointing to cities that have influenced Western culture: Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, 'Utopia' (the dream of an ideal city), Paris, New York and Los Angeles. Hein Heinsen thus sets out to present his art within 'the largest space imaginable' – that of perception and cognition. Rather than having a personal feeling as his point of departure, he has therefore chosen to conceive some principles of logic that fit the remaining windrow area. The effect on the spectator is nonetheless a sensuous one, and the most interesting aspect of the pointers is not their shape but the fact that they create an intense feeling of presence. Similarly, the massive overhangs – hovering more than six meters above the ground – maximize the feeling of suspense. Originally, Hein Heinsen's intention was that all the pointers should

point south, but it turned out that New York and Los Angeles are both located north-west of the Academy. Since all the pointers were to follow a geographical principle, each one sways compared to the others. According to Hein Heinsen they sway with their full weight and thereby provide a new dynamism.

The Spectator is a bronze sculpture placed below the pointers. Its design is based on fractures of bodies and objects, and with its maladaptive shapes it stands out as a contrast to the square angles and smooth concrete surface of the pointers. Hein Heinsen has consciously attempted to work with insecure and doubtful aspects as opposed to the perfectionist tendencies of Niels Bukh's gymnastics and the complex that he created. *The Spectator* raises the question: "what is the right shape?" The heroic has become vulnerable.





**Art and Architecture
at the Academy of
Physical Education in Ollerup**

Text Camilla Damkjær
and Simon Finnerup, 2007
Photos Hanne Birkedal, Camilla Damkjær,
Arne Garbøl and Simon Finnerup
Translation
Lasse Petersen

Gymnastikhøjskolen i Ollerup
Svendborgvej 3
DK-5762 Vester Skerninge
Telephone +45 62 24 12 30
www.ollerup.dk

Printed by www.SvendborgTryk.dk
The publication has been
sponsored by Fynbo Fonden





THE ACADEMY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN OLLERUP
SVENDBORGVEJ 3 DK-5762 VESTER SKERNINGE
WWW.OLLERUP.DK