ALMINE RECH

The Story of Public Art

Oct 9, 2025 — Dec 31, 2026 | MAPS – Museum of Art in Public Spaces, Køge, Denmark

MAPS completes the museum's largest international exhibition to date, 'The Story of Public Art'

On October 9, 2025, MAPS will present new works as part of 'The Story of Public Art', thereby concluding one version of the multifaceted history of groundbreaking artistic experiments in public space from the 1950s to today. The exhibition now includes more than 90 artists from over 40 countries, all of whom have challenged the traditional frameworks of art by creating works in urban spaces, landscapes, and digital realms.

'The Story of Public Art' shows how artists' work in public space reflects social currents across time and geography. The first chapter, 'Dancing in the Streets (On Power)', opened on March 22, 2025, and presented performances, actions, and media interventions in cities across the world – from Warsaw and Rio de Janeiro to Tamale and Times Square – as well as in media ranging from 1980s Spectacolor billboards to today's AI worldbuilding.

The new stage of the exhibition focuses on artistic experiments in landscapes and in the intersection between nature and culture – from the explorations of remote areas in the 1960s to today's climate-critical and political manifestations. MAPS presents, among others, Heinz Mack, one of the earliest European pioneers of Land Art, whose work in the desert predates by a decade the American artists typically associated with the genre, including Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt, who are also represented in the exhibition. With Agnes Denes' iconic work *Wheatfield – A Confrontation* (1982), nature is brought into the city – and now into the museum.

The works range from Mack's early light-reflecting installations in the Tunisian desert and Judy Chicago's feminist projects in California to Joseph Beuys' tree-planting program in Kassel and Santiago Sierra's anarchist flags at the poles, marking a political turn within Land Art. Today, the tradition is carried forward by artists such as Jens Settergren, who has created *Harvest II* for the exhibition – an oversized wheat stalk, sleek, artificial, and staged, standing as a piece of domesticated nature. At once seductive and unsettling, the sculpture points to an understanding of nature as both a backdrop and a resource – something that can be manipulated and optimized without limits.

'The Story of Public Art' presents works by:

3Nós3 (Hudinilson Jr., Mario Ramiro, and Rafael França), Agnes Denes, Aki Sasamoto, Allan Kaprow, Alfredo Jaar, Alex Mlynarcik & Stano Filko, Anicka Yi, Anna Halprin, Barbara Kruger, Basquiat, Big Tail Elephant (Liang Juhui, Lin Yi Lin, Chen Shaoxiong, Xu Tan), Bjørn Nørgaard & Lene Adler Petersen, Bulldozer exhibition: Oscar Rabin, Youri Jarkikh, Alexander Gleser, Chanseung Chung & Kangja Jung, Collective Actions, Concept 21 (Jian Jun Xi, Sheng Qi, Zheng Yu Ke), Curtis Cuffie, Danh Vo, Daniel Buren, Daniel Felstead with Jenn Leung, DIS, Doug Aitken, Erik van Lieshout, Ewa Partum, Franco Mazzucchelli, General Idea, Gordon Matta-Clark, Graciela Carnevale, Guerrilla Girls, Günter Brus, Göksu Kunak, Heather & Ivan Morison, Heidi Bucher, Heinz Mack, Hélio Oiticica, Hi-Red Center (Genpei Akasegawa, Natsuyuki Nakanishi and Jiro Takamatsu), Ibrahim Mahama, Jens Settergren, Jenny Holzer, Jeremy Deller, Joseph Beuys, Judy Chicago, Kader Attia, Kukjin Kang, Kara Walker, Lawrence Lek, Maria Hassabi, Marta Minujín, Michael Rakowitz, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Nadya Tolokonnikova, Nancy Holt, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Peggy Diggs, Peter Bonnén, Pope.L, Pussy Riot, Rachel Whiteread, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Rosemary Mayer, Sanja Ivekovic, Santiago Sierra, Susanne Ussing & Carsten Hoff, Suzanne Lacy, The Neo-Dada Organizers (Masunobu Yoshimura, Kinpei Masuzawa, Ushio Shinohara et al.), Theaster Gates, Thomas Hirschhorn, Trisha Brown, Vito Acconci, Wolf Vostell, Yoko Ono, and Yvonne Rainer.

About MAPS – Museum of Art in Public Spaces

MAPS is Denmark's only museum dedicated to art in public spaces. We develop exhibitions, site-specific art projects, research, education, and public programs that connect people and places – in Køge, across Denmark, and internationally.

With the exhibition 'The Story of Public Art', MAPS offers audiences a historical foundation for understanding, experiencing, and discussing how public art has shaped – and continues to shape – our shared spaces.