

## **Søren Dahlgaard: DOUGH PORTRAITS**

**Saturday, August 23, open workshop between 10:30-14:00 (or longer), room 22.0.47**

*Dough Portraits* is a photo portrait series created in collaboration between the artist and the audience.

When you pick up the lump of dough and place it on your head, you shape the dough and create your own identity.

Identity, the social aspect, the collaboration with the audience and the process are all crucial factors this project wishes to investigate, discuss and explore. Another aspect in this performance is the time and the artwork. As a result of the collaboration with the audience there will be a series of *Dough Portraits* photographs.

These works will be exhibited after the event on the website [www.interregnum.dk](http://www.interregnum.dk).

Earlier works in this on-going project are displayed in the lobby of building 22.

### **Dough portraits, by Judi Lund FINDERUP**

10 kilos of dough on my head. It really is a bit odd. And crazy. Will it get stuck in my hair and clothes? Will I be able to breathe? I'm not really very happy about the situation, but the dough isn't sticky. It is dry, soft and heavy. "Am I doing it right?" I wonder as I sit down on the chair and lay the dough over my hair and face. It weighs heavily, and I sit up straight to maintain some sort of dignity. I am in a room full of people, who are all looking at me. Søren Dahlgaard is sitting behind the camera, ready to capture the moment in a portrait. The mood is light with an undercurrent of anxiety, for what have I said yes to? I have never done anything like this before. When the dough surrounds my face, something unexpected happens: I feel calm. There is laughter in the distance, but it has got nothing to do with me, even though I know that it is me they are laughing at. I am protected. At this moment, there is only me. I have disappeared, but am intensely present at the same time.

### **Where did the identity go?**

One of the first things we recognize when we are born is faces. Researchers in the field of neuroscience study how people decode each other, and the greater part of decoding has to do with the face. But what do we do about the dough portraits, where the face has gone and we can only see the body, first name and age?

Our decoding apparatus is disabled, and it is both disturbing and stimulating. Perhaps that is where the portraits become interesting? We try to decode the person in the picture and create an entity from the scanty information we get. When there is dough in front of the face, then we begin to look at the shape and texture of the dough, the traces of fingers, and we are more observant of other parts of the person – the hands and body-language. Are the shoulders tense? Are they relaxed? What do the clothes tell us about the person?

### **Where is the work? Who is the artist?**

The Dough portraits do not constitute the work alone. The co-operation and the process are part of it. "The process from idea to final result is what I think is most interesting. I like to discuss my ideas with other people, and alter them if something is better. I am not fixed in my views. All for the sake of the project," says Søren Dahlgaard, who has also got a clear attitude about who the artist is; "Every portrait is a tiny work of art created in collaboration between the model and me. I have got

the idea, the dogma, and am the director, but what happens thereafter is created by the individual participant...That is also the reason why people themselves must sign the print they can buy.”

**[www.sorendahlgaard.com](http://www.sorendahlgaard.com)**