Texte 2

A MUSEUM LENT AN ARTIST $84K – SO HE KEPT THE MONEY AND CALLED IT 'ART'

When an exhibition about the future of labor opened at a Danish art museum on Friday,

visitors should have seen two large picture frames filled with banknotes worth a combined

$84,000. The pieces by artist Jens Haaning, were meant to represent the average annual

salaries of an Austrian and a Dane – in euros and Danish krone respectively. But when the

Kunsten Museum of Modern Art took delivery of the artworks, gallery staff made a surprising

discovery: the frames were empty. Indeed, Haaning says he is keeping the money – in the

name of art.

The "new" conceptual piece, which Haaning has titled "Take the Money and Run," is now

at the center of a dispute between museum and artist over labor, contractual obligations and

the value of work – all fitting themes for the exhibition. Haaning says: "I saw, from my artistic

point of view, that I could create a better piece for them than what they could imagine. I don't

see that I have stolen money... I have created an art piece, which is maybe 10 or 100 times

better than what we had planned. What is the problem?"

As well as lending Haaning the money for the cash-filled artworks, the Kunsten Museum

had agreed to pay a further $1,571 for his work, as well as covering costs like framing and

delivery. But the artist said the project would still have left him out of pocket, due to studio costs

and staff salaries.

Kunsten's director, Lasse Andersson, maintained that the museum has upheld its side of

the agreement. "It's really important for us because we have always been known for honoring

contracts and also paying artists a reasonable fee," he said. Haaning said he has no plans to

return the money and is "not worried" about possible consequences. Andersson said the artist

has until January, when the exhibition ends, to repay the loan, after which the museum will

consider legal action.

For now, the museum is displaying "Take the Money and Run" as it is, putting it on a

platform to be considered and critiqued. In the art world, works that question the value of art

itself – like Maurizio Cattelan taping a banana to a wall, or Banksy shredding a painting at

auction – are nothing new. Neither are invisible works of art, with the late Yves Klein exhibiting

an empty room to thousands of people in 1958.

Still, the museum director would like to see the cash returned. "It's not my money – it's

public money, it's the museum's money," he said. "So that's why we need to make sure it's

coming back to us."

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Adapted from CNN

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