



Jakob Kolding, *Spatial Assemblages of Power*, 2000, collage on paper, ca. 28¼ x 43¼".

and Brutalist architecture with pop references and evocations of the suburban housing of Kolding's childhood and youth in Copenhagen during the '70s and '80s. There are soccer players and their adolescent fans, DJs, skaters, cartoon figures, graffiti, and insignia of consumer culture such as the McDonald's sign, but also quotations from recent sociological investigations of urban planning. While the compositions recall the bold designs of El Lissitzky or Moholy-Nagy, they reveal on closer inspection a rich system of references in which early modernist architectural visions and their adaptation in the swiftly erected suburbs of the '60s and '70s fuse with the present. The collage elements, especially the building facades shown in contrarotated perspective—now strewn about the sheets, now patterned in the silhouette of a circle—undermine the illusion of a hierarchically structured space.

These suburban housing schemes arose in the '60s and '70s as a continuation of the urban visions of modernist architects like Le Corbusier and are to be found in almost every big city in Europe. Kolding's collages imply a critique of these "ideal cities" born on a drawing board: The utopian ideal or wish to design all areas of life and to fulfill all needs could be imposed only at the expense of those who do not meet its expectations. Besides, an environment so thoroughly planned out seems to provoke only boredom in its inhabitants. But Kolding avoids the facile conclusion that modernist architecture is responsible for inequality, ignoring other social, political, and economic factors.

Thus Kolding wittily draws our atten-

tion to those moments in which the imaginable future order is interrupted. He illuminates the thinking of urban planners by integrating into his image sequences an official battery of questions—about traffic planning, potential meeting places for adults, teenagers, and children, and additional measures "to either promote or discourage certain patterns of behavior among the residents." At one point he juxtaposes this questionnaire with the rendering of an abstract facade painting for a high rise. At another he connects it with a photograph of teenagers spraying graffiti on a building wall—a casual but pointed commentary on the superficiality of official art programs, which so often merely serve as surrogates for actual solutions to social problems. The graffiti writers, for their part, disregard the program of use prescribed by the planners and so contradict the fantasy that behavior patterns can be completely mapped out and regulated. As Kolding shows, even critical investigations of urbanism and city planning can be cashed in, as when the motto "Conformity and the built environment" is affixed to a teen's jacket. This conformity to the built environment, which always already represents "spatial assemblages of power," here seems to have been effectively altered through the daily activities of the inhabitants. The extent to which Kolding's collages nevertheless still appeal to an empowerment beyond individual praxis, as their recourse to the formal language of Constructivism would suggest, remains an open question.

—Astrid Wege

Translated from German by Sara Ogger.

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Architecture and urban planning as the design and organization of social space, as an intersection of the aesthetic and the social—these are the central themes of Jakob Kolding's works on paper. Kolding's collages (all works 2000), grouped in sequences of four sheets each or pinned as single sheets directly to the wall, combine starkly juxtaposed black-and-white photocopies of details of functionalist