

# Darri Lorenzen

Written by: Margrét Elísabet Ólafsdóttir

Whether situated in a New York gallery (*Round Here*), the hills around Prato (*Contours of Site*), a school gym in Reykjavík (*Mið*), or a parking lot in Basel (*Composite* and *Folds*), Darri Lorenzen's works never fail to interact with the locations in which they are exhibited. The artist's preparation for each piece begins with researching the history of its location, though such research might not pertain directly to the work itself. Darri does not make use of exhibition space in a conventional manner; instead, he uses his surroundings as a stage set for happenings, which are documented through photography, video, or tape. This recorded material is then projected onto or played within the exhibition space, often in the precise location of the original recording. For certain works, Darri also constructs new architecture within a given space, adjusting the viewer's approach.

Regardless of the medium Darri chooses, photography, video, sound, and structure function as defining factors of space, and they create a time gap wherein space and sound are repeated as a sort of reproduction of the place in which they were recorded. With such superimpositions, the artist directly affects the experiences of the viewer, who is placed in the middle of the work. The spectator is in fact key to these works, which would be incomplete without the presence of a viewer. Indeed, even the word "viewer" can hardly be used in discussing Darri's work, since such a term connotes passive experience—far from the participatory experience of being situated at the center of his work.

In *Converge* (2008), installed first at Reykjavík Art Museum and subsequently in Galerie Garten in Berlin, museum guests are invited to enter a half-open door in a temporary wall dividing the room in two. A sign indicates that upon entering through and closing the door, the door will remain shut for five minutes, and it will not be possible to leave again until these five minutes have passed. The participation—which changes the guest from a viewer evaluating possibilities into an active participant—is the decision whether to respond to the artist's challenge to cross the threshold into the art space. Should the guest accept, he or she immediately becomes part of the scene, an actor on the center stage framed by the installation. However, there is

neither a script nor a particularly visible series of actions or noticeable activity. The room is empty and the role of the guest is undefined. His or her position is akin to Vladimir and Estragon's wait for Godot, where initially nothing remarkable happens. What unfolds later is not an event in and of itself, but rather a subtle change that can be experienced in different ways depending on whether the guest is alone in the room or in the company of others. If one is alone, five minutes may seem unusually long, stretching one's senses to their limits.

On the other hand, if a number of guests enter together, and especially if they do not know one another, impatience will almost certainly give rise to small talk—and thus they might not notice that the light begins to fade little by little while the sounds of breathing are amplified. In both this piece as well as *Mið* (2007), Darri uses sounds recorded in the space itself, and when the light is dimmed and darkness unfolds, the recording's perceptual effect is the feeling of an expansion of the room. Upon entering *Converge*, the white space is lightened, and though brightness dwindles until it becomes total darkness, after five minutes the light does return and the door opens. No such conclusion was to be found in *Mið*, a one-night installation in a gym in Reykjavík. Here, the viewer entered through a thick tent into complete darkness. Nothing could be seen save for a small light on the ceiling; nothing could be heard save for an obscure murmur. The interplay between this sound, the darkness, and the small light source that seemed to move, light up, and fade out sporadically caused guests to lose their sense of direction and find themselves disoriented in the small room. By reorienting and adapting oneself to the conditions of the room, participants in both *Converge* and *Mið* are forced to sharpen their senses and, at the same time, deepen their understanding of the nature and scale of space.

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Born in Reykjavík, 1978 // Studied at: Iceland Academy of the Arts / Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weissensee // Selected solo exhibitions: 2006 *Through out*, Kunsthalle Loppen, Brugge / 2007 *Contour of Site*, Project Gentili, Prato / 2008 *Converge*, Galerie Air Garten, Berlin // Selected group exhibitions: 2007 *Stadtfinden moderne*, Berlin / 2008 *Experiment Marathon*, Reykjavík Art Museum.

## Converge

2008

Installation with light, sound,  
and auto-locked door  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy the artist and  
Project Gentili, Prato





*Site Scene*  
2005  
Site-specific installation, National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavik  
Collaboration with Elín Hansdóttir



*Round Here*  
2007  
Site-specific photographs, glass, and circling light-bulb  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy the artist and Project Gentili, Prato



*The Unnamable Point of  
Being There*  
2008  
C-print  
62 x 83 cm  
Courtesy the artist and  
Project Gentili, Prato



*UPPI*  
2005  
Installation  
Courtesy artist and Project  
Gentili, Prato