



**PRESS RELEASE**

Peter Wandel (ed.)

**Niels Nedergaard**

Photographs from Cairo

**Publishing date:** 11 March 2022

**Scope:** 80 pages, lavishly illustrated

**Price:** DKK 199.95

**Publisher:** The David Collection, on commission with Strandberg Publishing

**Design:** Studio Claus Due

**Languages:** Danish and English

In 1979, the Danish artist Niels Nedergaard (1944–1987) set out for Cairo and settled there. For the next seven years, the Egyptian capital was his permanent base, and his direct access to the pulse of Cairo's city life and its Arab architecture and ornamentation prompted him to create a distinctive vein of painting unparalleled in Danish art. *Niels Nedergaard. Photographs from Cairo* is the book behind the upcoming exhibition of the same name, opening at The David Collection on 11 March 2022. The book and exhibition both present, for the first time ever, a selection of the photographs taken and collected by Nedergaard during his years in Egypt. While few in number – comprising a handful of rolls of films and a smattering of slides and prints sent home as greetings to family and friends – these photographs poignantly depict the life led by the artist, his environment and the city in itself.

Niels Nedergaard was primarily known as a painter, but the photographic medium was not unknown to him. Indeed, his photographs revolve around some of the themes he had visited in earlier work. Examples include the interest in systems and order which was an extension of his and fellow artist Viera Collaro's project *1000 colours*, and studies of the human body in motion, a theme he had explored in artistic decorations, paintings, installations, experimental photographs and videos. Other subjects featured in the Egyptian photographs include architecture, lights, local residents, young men and the bright, gaudy colours of Cairo.

During his stay in Egypt, Nedergaard fell in love with the geometric aesthetic of Islamic art, combining its historical patterns with the neon colours of Cairo nightlife in his own works. In Denmark, people adored his patterns, which ended up on posters and on textiles such as curtains and tablecloths. The process took him from being a relatively unknown artist to becoming incredibly popular. He was even visited in Cairo by the Danish Queen Margrethe II, who acquired two of his works. In 1986, Nedergaard left Cairo and returned to Denmark. Here he died the following year at Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen due to an AIDS-related illness. Niels Nedergaard is represented at numerous Danish art museums, including The National Gallery of Denmark, Fuglsang Kunstmuseum and Trapholt.

In addition to a foreword by the museum's director Kjeld von Folsach, the book contains texts – in Danish and English – by art historian and exhibition curator Johan Zimsen Kristiansen, Professor Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, film director May el-Toukhy and by the book's editor, curator Peter Wandel. Based on Nedergaard's life and work, the topics covered include the art scene of 1980s Cairo, homosexuality, Sufism, the bright lights of city nightlife, and, not least, the geometric art of the Islamic world.

#### **Information and contact**

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Cover and photos from the book can be downloaded at: [strandbergpublishing.dk/presse](http://strandbergpublishing.dk/presse).