

# HONORARY PRIZE 2025

## Sebastian Møller Jørgensen

*The Yellow Room* (2025)



*The Yellow Room*, 2025 © Mikkel Kaldal and Sebastian Møller Jørgensen © Davy Denke, Rytter & Denke

Sebastian Møller Jørgensen is awarded the 15 June Foundation's Honorary Prize 2025.

The 15 June Foundation's art jury has selected Sebastian Møller Jørgensen on the basis of his graduation work at the Jutland Art Academy: *The Yellow Room* (2025).

The jury consists of Mikkel Bogh, professor and center director at the University of Copenhagen, Tore Hallas, visual artist, and Mai Misfeldt, art and literature critic.

Motivation text by Mai Misfeldt.

Out in the city space, one sometimes encounters *The Yellow Room* on excursion. Slightly stressed pedagogues accompanied by a buzzing swarm of brightly colored little individuals, each in their own emotional state of the day. One smiles at them and with them, perhaps feeling a touch of sympathy for the teachers, while watching the group move on—either further out into the city or back home to the institution's cube.

If one works at or is a parent of a child in *The Yellow Room*, the institution fills a great deal of one's life—until it no longer does. In recent years, parenthood has entered art in earnest, long having been present in literature, yet the representation of children's everyday lives has remained largely absent.

Sebastian Møller Jørgensen's work consists of 24 lifelike child-sized dolls and 4 large adult dolls. The figures are made of wood and foam in 1:1 scale, dressed in ordinary children's or adults' clothes—whether it's a four-year-old with an elephant backpack or a young man in a cap functioning as an assistant teacher. The group represents diversity in ethnicity, gender, and age.

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It feels almost ironic to write a motivation text for *The Yellow Room* at the very moment the media is boiling over with the results of a new study showing that only one in ten kindergarten classes are rated “good.” The shortage of trained staff means that, on average nationwide, there are 22.4 children per trained pedagogue—a number that in the most under-resourced institutions creeps up toward 50!

Yet Sebastian Møller Jørgensen’s project does not seem driven by a critical agenda, but rather by a sharp attentiveness to the life, the many small and large relational exchanges, and the socialization that takes place in *The Yellow Room*, where some 160,000 children aged three to five spend a full “workday” every day.

At Graduation 2025, Sebastian Møller Jørgensen’s children’s group filled almost the entire front hall of the Aarhus Art Building. No matter where one stood in the room, something was unfolding in the periphery of one’s vision. The whole space was activated in a surprising way, with many small scenarios held in one gesture. Entering the room and the work was strangely moving; surrounded on all sides by human figures, one became a figure within the crowd oneself. It would hardly have been surprising had one of the little characters suddenly tugged at one’s coat or slipped a hand into one’s own.

The work focuses on interactions, negotiations, and power relations within the institution’s space. Sebastian Møller Jørgensen has observed the children he recreates in soft foam. He has registered movements, expressions, negotiations - all that takes place simultaneously in a single room. The child by the door gazing longingly out of the institution, the child sheltering behind and holding tightly to the young assistant’s trouser leg, a child comforting another, a boy kneeling, a pensive girl, a child lost in play, a girl with her unicorn plush keeping to herself. An adult and a child at a huge pile of outerwear, another child already bundled into a screaming pink snowsuit, pressed up against the wall.

The approach recalls Duane Hanson’s hyperrealist sculptures such as *Supermarket Woman*, or in a Danish context, Kurt Trampedach’s figures. Human figures of a certain realism exert an effect simply by the mirroring they expose us to.

There is, quite literally, a softness, a curious openness, and an attentiveness to detail in Sebastian Møller Jørgensen’s extensive work that makes it a promising beginning to an artistic career. On that basis, it is our pleasure to award Sebastian Møller Jørgensen the 15. Juni Foundation’s Honorary Prize as encouragement for and support of the further development of his artistic practice.