

We Walked the Earth
Danish Pavilion
Venice Biennale 2022



Having basked in modernistic exhibitions at the 51st Venetian Biennale, I was ill-prepared for the intimacy of the Danish Pavilion. I approached a structure reminiscent of rural areas... maybe a farmhouse. Someone's home. Ah. Connotations of safety and escape from outside pressures.

Artist Uffe Isoolto revealed the ending of a drama about a family of centaurs, humanoid horse beings of the future. I was drawn to the tragic beauty of the dead female centaur, eyes open. I watched for breath as she seemed so real. This centaur had recently given birth and the newborn remained in the sack. I was unable to determine if the being in the sack was a centaur. Did she die during birth? A male centaur in the adjacent room, hanging by the neck from the ceiling. He has taken his own life; a chain holding the weight of both man and horse. No explanation for the family tragedy.

On the floor were farm tools that had been readapted for new purposes, attempts to adjust to the changing world. Farm produce oozed blue liquid. Healthful? Harmful? A medication to cope with reality? I revisited the courtyard which, albeit unkept, seemed in keeping with a traditional Danish home. Instruments and tools which no longer worked in the new environment lay abandoned on the ground. Information here, but I could draw no conclusions.

I left the Danish pavilion grieving what is familiar to us, and apprehensive of the struggle with future change.