



Henrik Plenge Jakobsen

SIMON SPIES (1921-1984) TRAVEL KING Simon, Simon, what did you do? You took everybody for a ride. You sent off the new streamlined coaches to Costa del Sol, a Spanish caravan breaking in adventurous post-war Scandinavians for a new kind of vacation. Regulated holiday excess and the greatest populist welfare cliché – "grisevester" (barbecues), sign of the times. Pale tourists roasting under the sun and partying like pigs in Franco's Spain. Even your airline company, a second-hand acquisition with a fleet of DC-7s, was baptised Conair. Here comes the con man, coming with his con plane! Was it hereditary in some way? Your dad ripped off the bank he worked in. Divine voices made him do it. His son would become one of Denmark's wealthiest men. Check out the Aston Martin, folks, and the easy ladies. You went for it Las Vegas style with two university degrees under your belt (which made you even more amoral).

As in some mythological symmetry your perfect counterpart was Eilif Krogager, the pastor from Tjæreborg, whose sober Lutheran mind made charter tourism all right. If you wanted good clean family entertainment you went with Krogager. If you wanted to party and live it up you went with Simon, "Spies travel and be happy". As the demon you were you ridiculed Krogager with grating innuendos: "Well, you know, I never wanted to be the Pope".

But hey, let us not forget you took the cloth yourself! China had Mao, Denmark had Simon Spies, self-proclaimed chairman, psychedelic tycoon. Total meltdown of the playboy role, transgressed every norm from the top of the pie. Had your entourage dressed up like you, the ladies in grey beards and suits; shooting a movie backwards, starring yourself.

The images stick in your mind: Simon buying a seat for his walking cane at The Royal Theatre. Billionaire Timothy Leary dandy performer, affected hedonist: insane amounts of laughing gas went down at your parties, later on messing you up on a daily basis. What annoyed you most during those years was the rumours of your impotency. Invaluable free publicity: "Bad PR is better than no PR at all". Perhaps you even fooled yourself.

—LARS BANG LARSEN

IASPIS GALLERIET

15 Oktober – 7 November 1999

Vernissage 15 Oktober 17-19

Konstakademien, Fredsgatan 12; oppet: ti-fre 11-17, lø-so 12-16

I.A.S.P.I.S. – Internationell Artistas Studio Program in Sweden
Mailing address: Box 16 10, SE-111 86 Stockholm
Visiting address: Konstakademien, Fredsgatan 12, Stockholm
Tel: +46 8 402 35 77; Fax: +46 8 402 35 92; E-mail: ih@iaspis.com