

VIKTOR IV



‘The Second Quality Construction Company’

by Anne Marie Huibregtse

In 1972 a new activity was initiated by Viktor and Ina, which they soon called ‘The Second Quality Construction Company’. Starting in a small way, it soon grew to wild proportions. Strange constructions on rafts alongside the ship, with masts, sheds, primitive cabins and waving flags were rising as an enormous threedimensional collage of found materials, showing letters, numbers and signs all over, with texts like ‘Unnecessary’ or ‘Who Needs The Pacific Ocean?’.

Many of the materials Viktor used were leftovers from the famous nearby Waterlooplein flea market, where he went every day at closing time. It was not because of a lack of money, but inspired by Thoreau, that Viktor IV took pleasure in collecting all sorts of discarded rubbish, that he would recycle in his ‘Second Quality Construction Company’. Also the garbage containers were an inexhaustible source of material. He thought they were goldmines and felt (and acted) as if he were robbing a bank.

**BIOGRAPHY
EXHIBITIONS
PUBLICATIONS**

**‘IKONS’
AND OTHER OBJECTS**

‘LOGBOOK PAGES’

**‘THE SECOND QUALITY
CONSTRUCTION
COMPANY’**

‘BULGAR TIME’

FOUNDATION



Rafts

As a foundation for the rafts Viktor used tree-trunks, empty oil barrels and plastic jerrycans (like the mayonnaise containers used by cafeteria’s). Instead of rope to tie it all together, he used nylon stockings and men’s neckties, also amply on hand in the garbage containers of the daily Waterlooplein flea market.



In the course of the seventies the rafts grew in breadth rather than upwards. Luxuriantly overgrown with grass, shrubs and water-plants, together with a continually changing menagerie of cats, doves, chickens, ducks and sometimes even swans, the rafts gave the impression of an idyllic floating garden.





Ship's hold

Entering the log-cabin like interior of the boat, where Viktor lived with his Danish wife Elisabeth Munck (Viktor called her 'Ina'), the first thing one noticed was straw on the floor and a smell of tar. The healthy sound of hammer and saw, as Ina once described it, a typewriter and an old sewing machine. Quiet doings, hot soup, toasted bread, a burning stove and a note of Schubert. As there was no running water, Ina would go to the bathrooms of the nearest movie theatre to wash her hair. The four 'Canal paintings', which currently make part of the collection of the Amsterdam Historic Museum, were bound together and officiated as a partition.



The rafts, assuming enormous proportions, caused quite a sensation in Amsterdam during the seventies and eighties. Intrigued pedestrians would stop on the Blauwbrug, to watch the green oasis down below. During those years 'The Second Quality Construction Company' was the most photographed attraction for tourists in the Amsterdam cruise-boats.

Every now and then the Amsterdam port authorities would protest against the growing constructions on the water. Viktor however, was always amenable to reason when a conflict threatened.

He appreciated so much the freedom he was granted, that at the stern of his boat a Dutch flag, bearing the words THANK YOU AMSTERDAM blew in the wind.

Today, many years after Viktor died, the ship has been converted into a hostel for students of the Danish Architect League. The same flag is still flown from the stern.



Ref: Viktor IV. Ad Petersen & Ina Munck. Ed. Meulenhoff/Landshoff & The Second Quality Construction Company 1988