

**IBEN LILLERIIS
ANDERSEN, JONA
BORRUT, CURRENTLY
FICTIONAL, SIF
HEDEGÅRD, JOHANNE
HELGA HEIBERG
JOHANSEN, JONNA
LJÓSÁ, JACOB MORELL,
SARA PLINIUS, KATTI
PÄRKSON-KULL**

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WITNESS**

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MATERIAL WITNESS

**Det Fynske Kunstakademi
Afgang 2015**

Introduktion

Katarina Stenbeck

Ti billedkunstnere færdiggør i år deres uddannelse fra Det Fynske Kunstakademi. Det femårige forløb de har været igennem, kulminerer med en afgangsdudstilling på Brandts 13, hvor de præsenterer nye værker som markerer afslutningen af deres uddannelse. En sådan type udstilling rummer altid et element af vilkårlighed, idet der ikke er tale om en gruppe værker sammensat ud fra et særligt kunstfagligt kriterium. I stedet er det en række tilfældigheder, der gør at netop disse ti studerende ender med at tage afgang det samme år. Dette tilfældighedsprincip resulterer i en udstilling med stor diversitet i værkernes tematikker og de materiale- og formmæssige valg. Værkerne kommer vidt omkring fra en fiktiv brevudveksling med Frida Kahlo over en monumental trækonstruktion med kig ind i evigheden til undersøgende registreringer af materialer, sproglige systemer og den måde, hvorpå vi omgås hverdagsobjekter. Men på trods af den tematiske og formelle mangfoldighed er der en form for fællesnævner, idet værkerne udspringer af en særlig måde at tænke kunstens forhold til sine omgivelser på. De studerende har derfor valgt at give udstillingen titlen *Material Witness*, for at pege på en fælles forståelse for det billedkunstneriske arbejde.

I amerikansk jura henviser termen *material witness* til et vidne, som har væsentlige informationer, der kan afgøre udfaldet af en retssag. Men *material witness* kan også forstås i en mere konkret forstand, som et materielt form for vidne, som et materiale, der bærer vidnesbyrd om vigtige hændelser. Titlens dobbelt betydning peger både på en forestilling om kunstneren som vidne og på kunstværket som vidne, på værket som et materiale, hvori der er indlejret et vidnesbyrd om verdens begivenheder.

Udstillingens værker tager på forskellig vis afsæt i disse forestillinger om kunstværket og kunstnerens forhold til sine omgivelser. Titlen *Material Witness* skal således ikke forstås som et tema for udstillingen, men snarere som den tilgang til kunstnerisk praksis og værkforståelse, der forbinder årets dimittender. På hver sin måde udgør værkerne eftertænksomme betragtninger over de store perspektiver, som vores nære og umiddelbare omgivelser rummer.

Introduction

Katarina Stenbeck

Ten artists graduate from Funen Art Academy this year. The five-year programme culminates with an exhibition at Brandts 13 where they present new works to mark the end of their art school education. This certain trope of exhibition always contains an element of randomness because the works on display have not been gathered from a particular art professional criterion. It is rather, a series of coincidences that have led to these ten specific students graduating the same year. This principle of coincidence thus results in an exhibition of great diversity with regards to the works' thematics, and the material and formal choices. The works range from a fictive letter correspondence with Frida Kahlo, a monumental wooden construction with a view to infinity, and on to investigative registrations of materials, linguistic systems and the way we engage with everyday objects. In spite of the thematic and formal diversities there is in fact a kind of common denominator in that the works originate from a certain way of thinking art's relation to its surroundings. As a result, the students have chosen the title *Material Witness* for the exhibition in order to point to a shared understanding of the artistic work.

In American law, the term material witness refers to a witness who has essential information that can determine a trial's outcome. A material witness can however also be understood more literally: as a material kind of witness, a material that witnesses important events. The title thus possesses a double meaning since it can point to an idea of the artist as witness and to the artwork as witness, as the material substance, which bears testimony to world events.

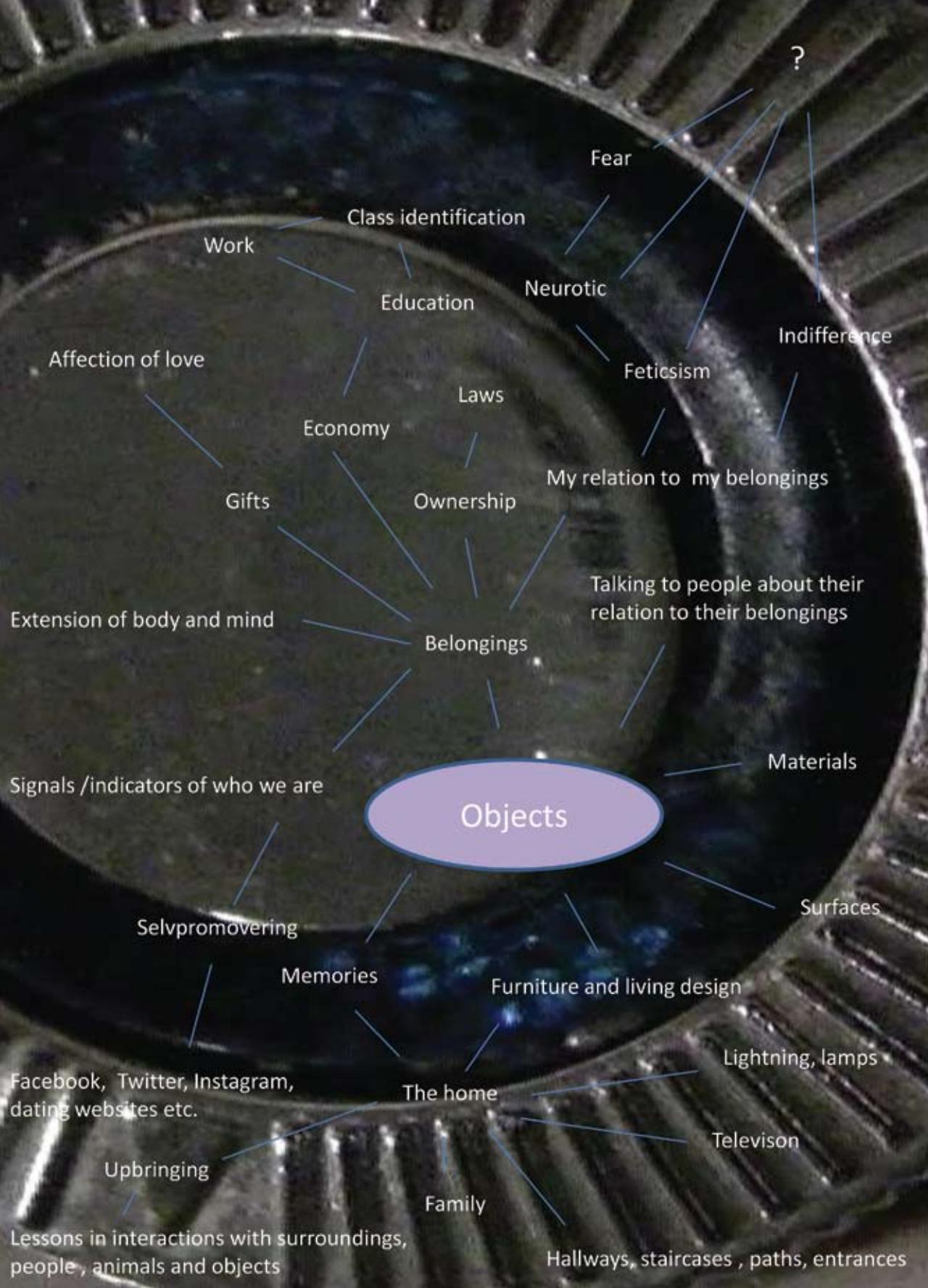
The works in the exhibition are in different ways based on this idea of the artwork and the artist's relations to her surroundings. The title *Material Witness* should therefore not be taken as the exhibition's theme, but rather as the unifying approach of the graduating artists towards their practices and artworks. In their own particular ways, these works constitute thoughtful reflections on the great perspectives, which our close and immediate surroundings possess.

Iben Lilleriis Andersen

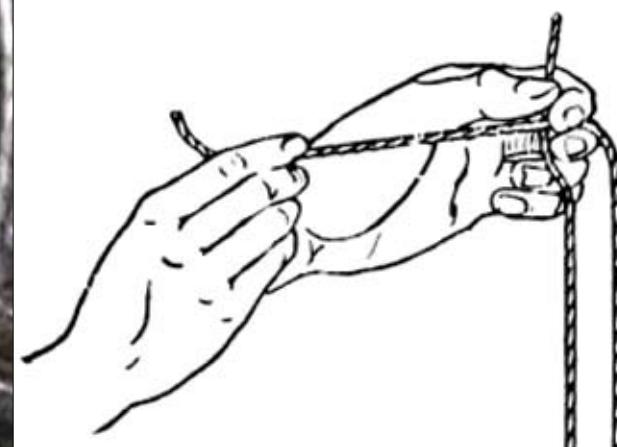
Touching Objects

Iben Lilleriis Andersen er optaget af vores forhold til de hverdagsgenstande, vi omgiver os med. I en serie videoværker ser hun på, hvordan vi interagerer med forskellige objekter i vores hverdag. Disse objekter er alle brugsgenstande med en funktion, men hvordan påvirkes vi af deres uformning og materialer? Vi kender alle den særlige følelse, der knytter sig til berøring af genstande, vi er glade for. Denne status er dog kun få objekter forundt. De fleste ænses end ikke og lever et udsat liv præget af udskiftelighed. I vores materialistiske kultur bruger vi ting som vigtige markører for status, livsstil og identitet, men overser ofte de andre værdier og affektioner, vi knytter til banale hverdagsgenstande.

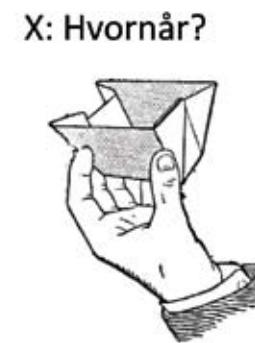
Iben Andersen is invested in our relationship to the everyday objects we surround ourselves with. In a series of video works, she examines how we interact with various everyday objects. These objects are all utility items with a function, but the question is how are we affected by their design and materials? We all know the special feeling associated with touching an object we are really fond of. Yet there are very few objects, which acquire that status. Most of them are hardly even noticed and live a precarious life characterised by interchangeability. In our materialistic culture, we use things as important indicators of status, lifestyle and identity. But, we often forget the other values and affections we attach to banal everyday objects.



X: Knapper du den øverste knap?

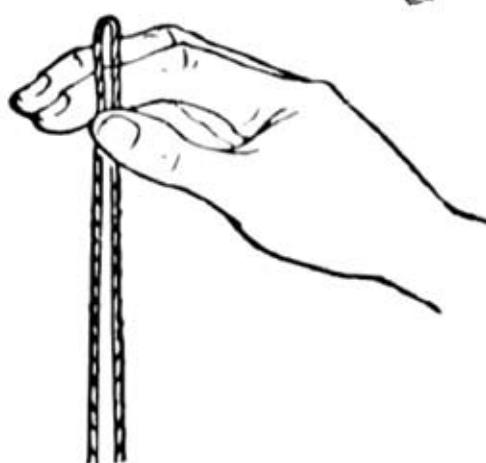


Y: Nogle gange



X: Hvornår?

Y: Til vigtige møder og højtidelige sammenkomster



Hånden i lommen omgives af stof. Trygheden strammer nogle dage,
let på oversiden af hånd eller håndled.

Varmen fra låret trænger gennem lommens tynde stof.

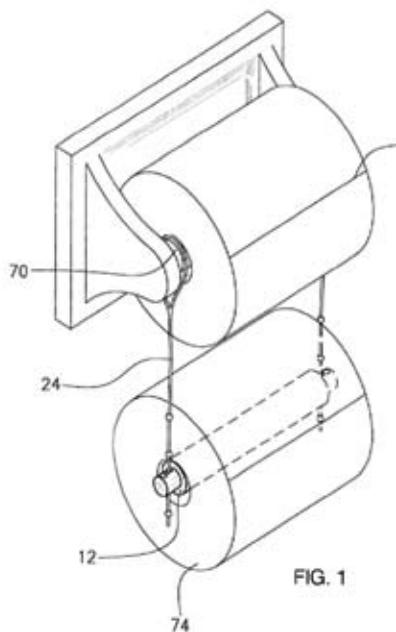
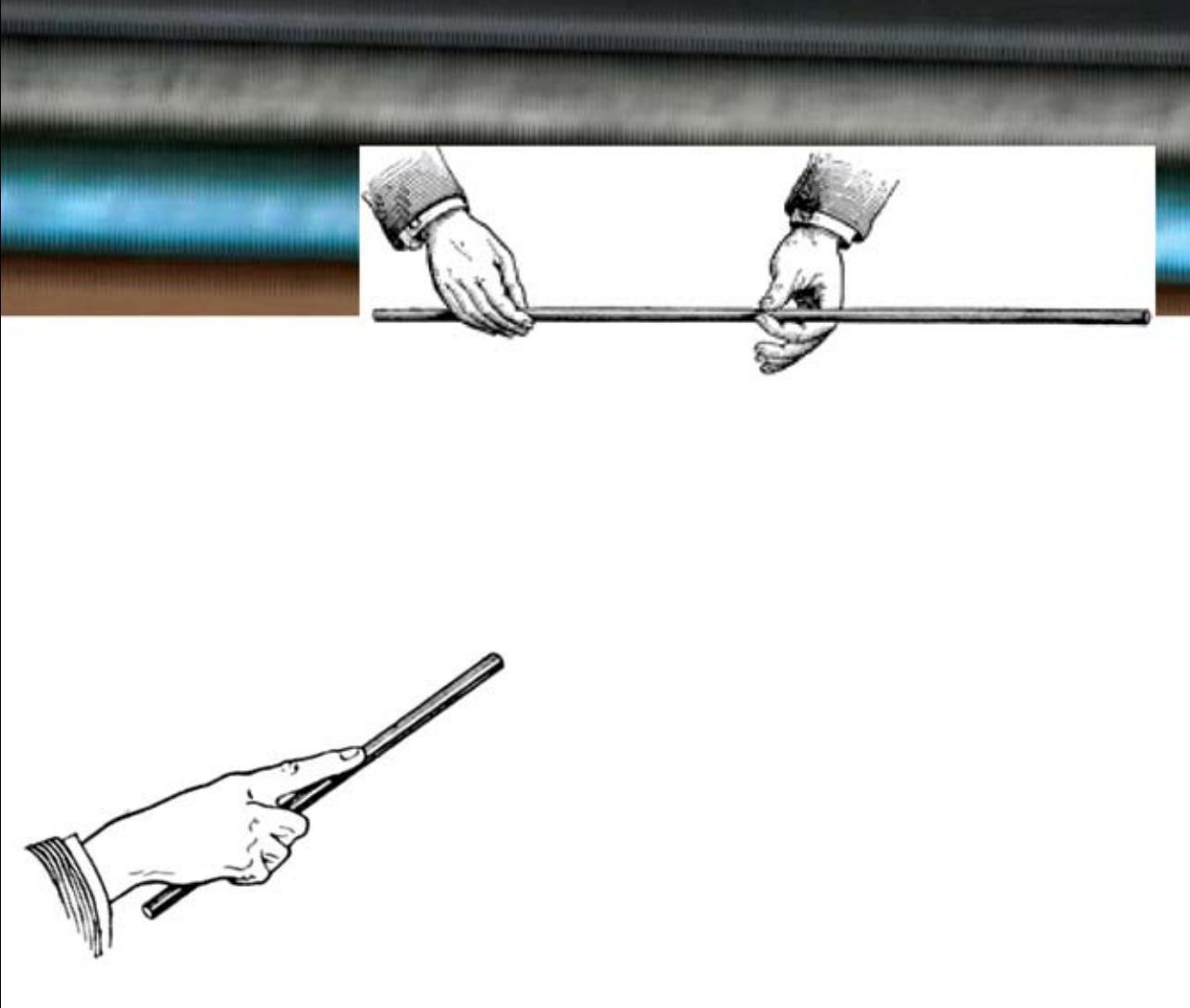
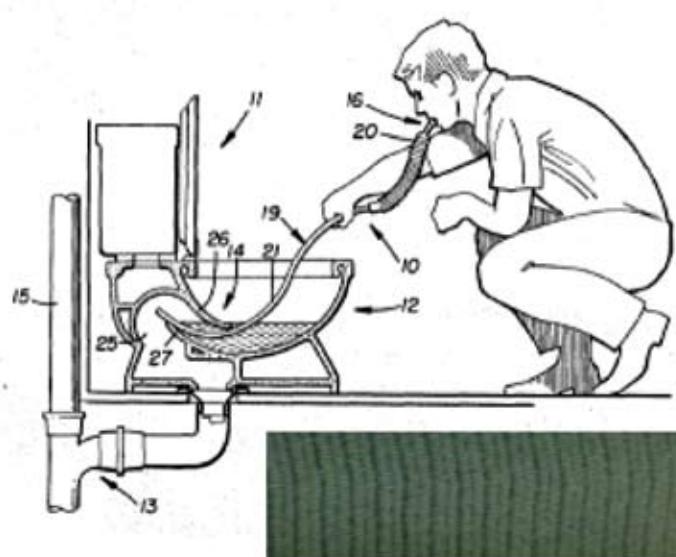


FIG. 1



S. W. DODD.
WRAPPING OR TOILET PAPER ROLL.

No. 459,516.

Patented Sept. 15, 1891.

Fig.1.

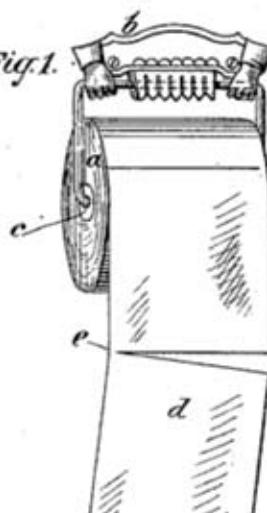


Fig.2.

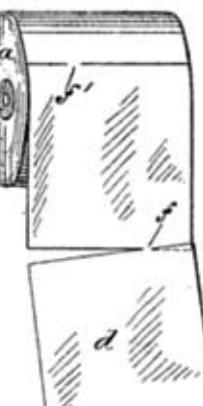
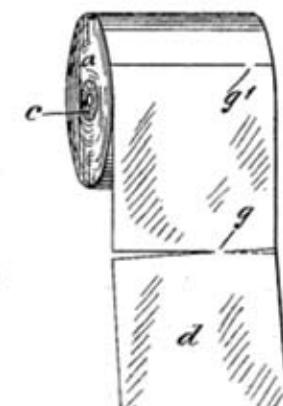


Fig.3.



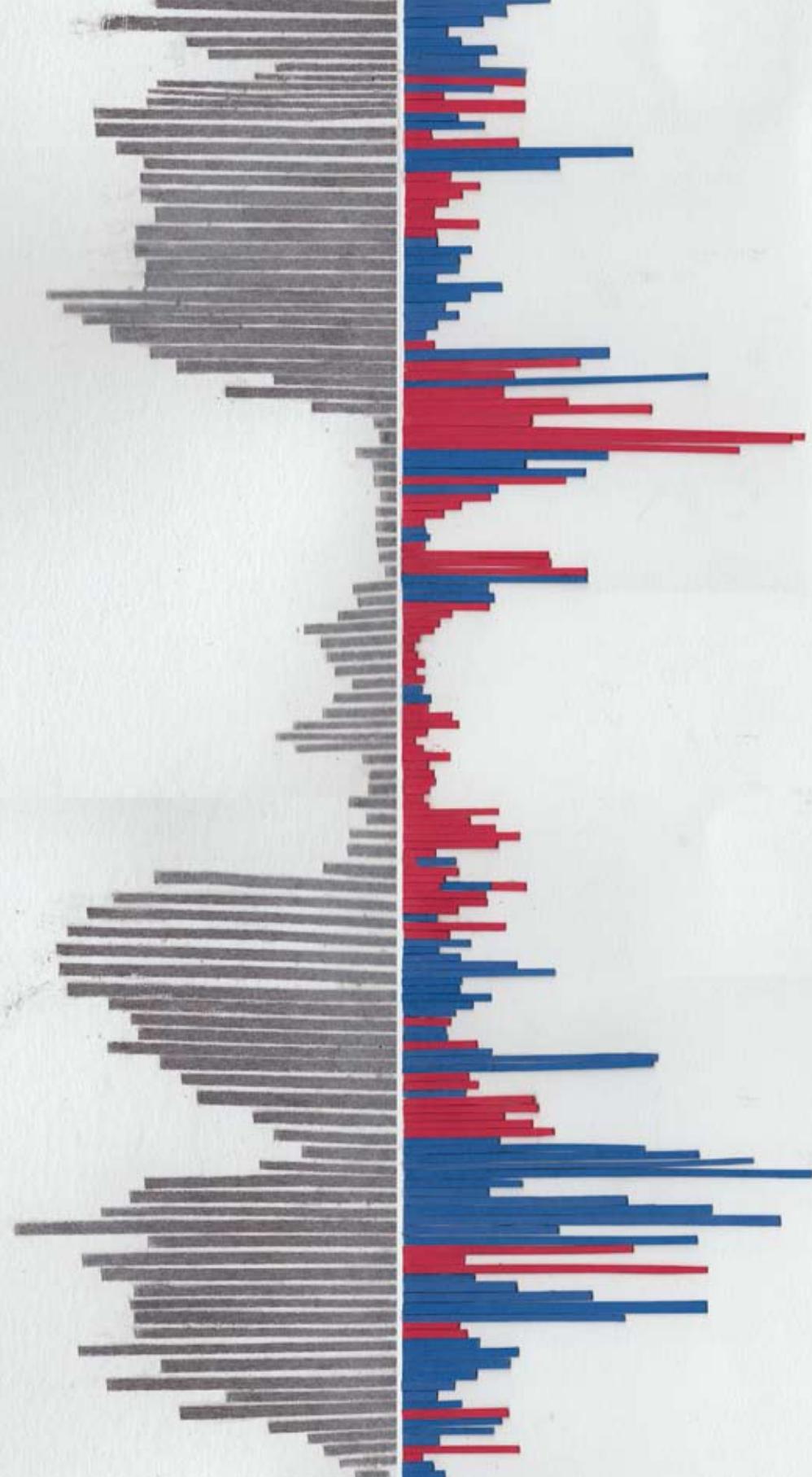
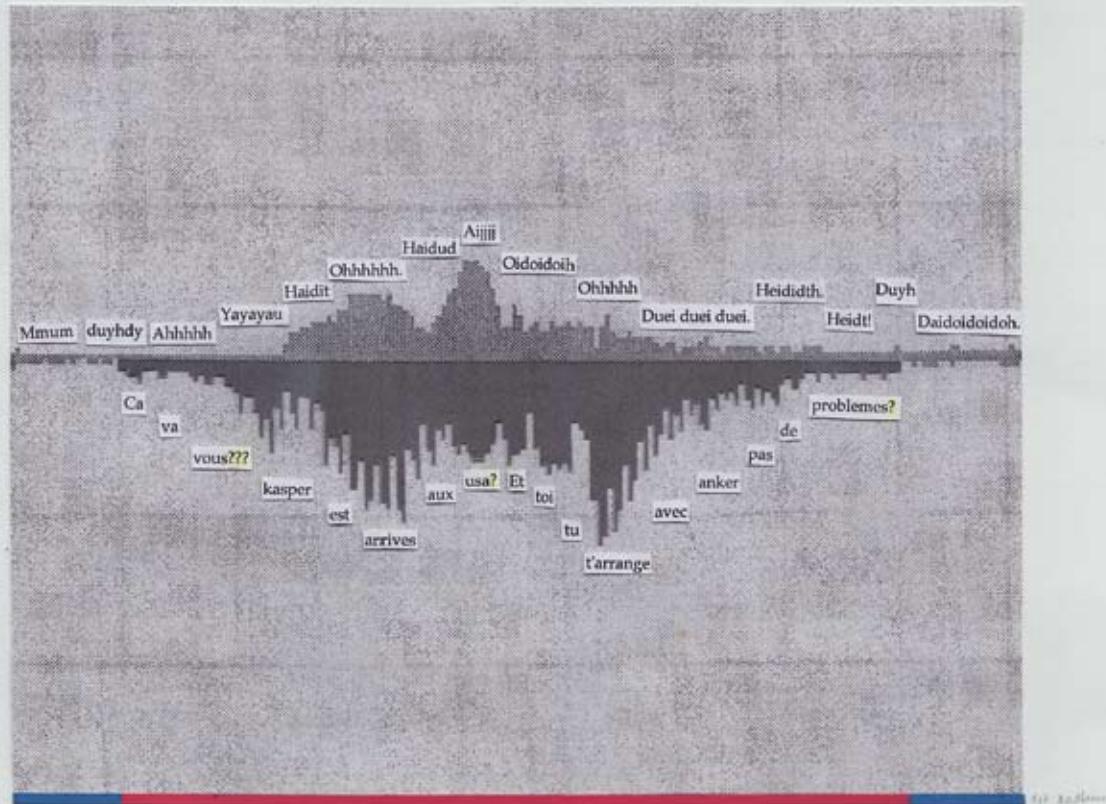
Jona Borrut

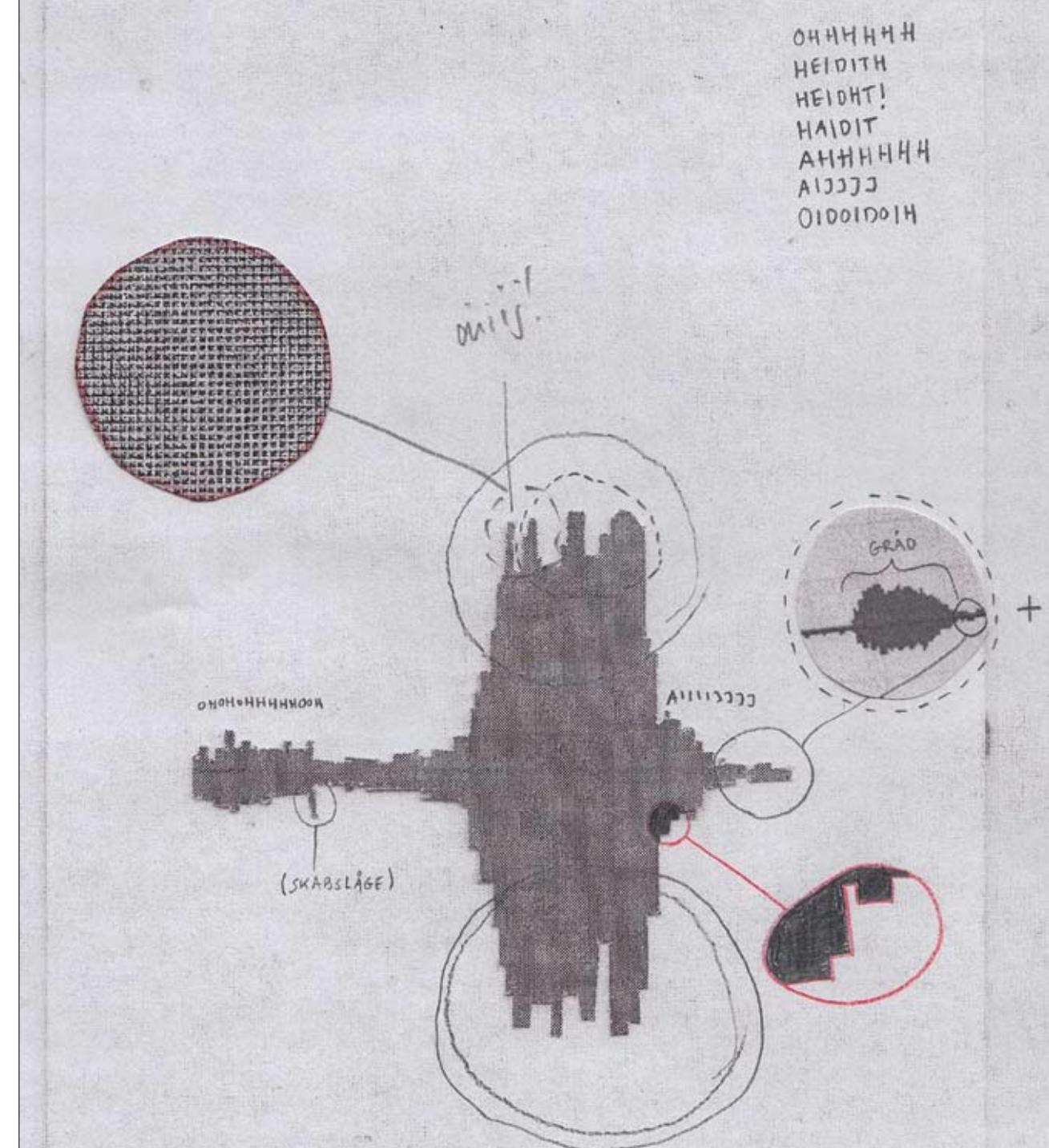
The Mother Project

Omdrejningspunktet for *The Mother Project* er to former for kommunikation henvendt til kunstneren – hendes egen søns uforståelige pludren og hendes mors jævnlige e-mails. Borrut har behandlet disse to kommunikationsformer som data og foretaget forskellige analyser af den. I arbejdet med at prøve at forstå sammenfaldet mellem disse to sproglige systemer har Borrut benyttet sig af metoder, der har resulteret i forskellige typer visuelle registreringer og kortlægninger. Borruts oversættelse af de to sprogsystemer til analyserbar data skaber et nyt system, en ny kode, der også må lades med betydning for ikke blot at forblive abstrakte tegn. Dette paradox peger på, hvordan virkeligheden konstant undslipper vores positivistiske tilgang til at begribe den.

The focal point of *The Mother Project* is two kinds of communication directed at the artist – her son's incomprehensible babbling and her mother's frequent email correspondence. Borrut has treated these two kinds of communication as data and carried out different analyses of them. Working to try and understand the identities between the two linguistic systems, Borrut has made use of methods which have resulted in different types of visual recordings and mappings. Borrut's translation of these linguistic systems into analysable data creates a new system, a new code that likewise must be charged with meaning in order for it not to remain merely abstract signs. This paradox points to the way reality constantly slips away from our positivistic approach when trying to grasp it.

ERIK R. DE
Optagelse 09:





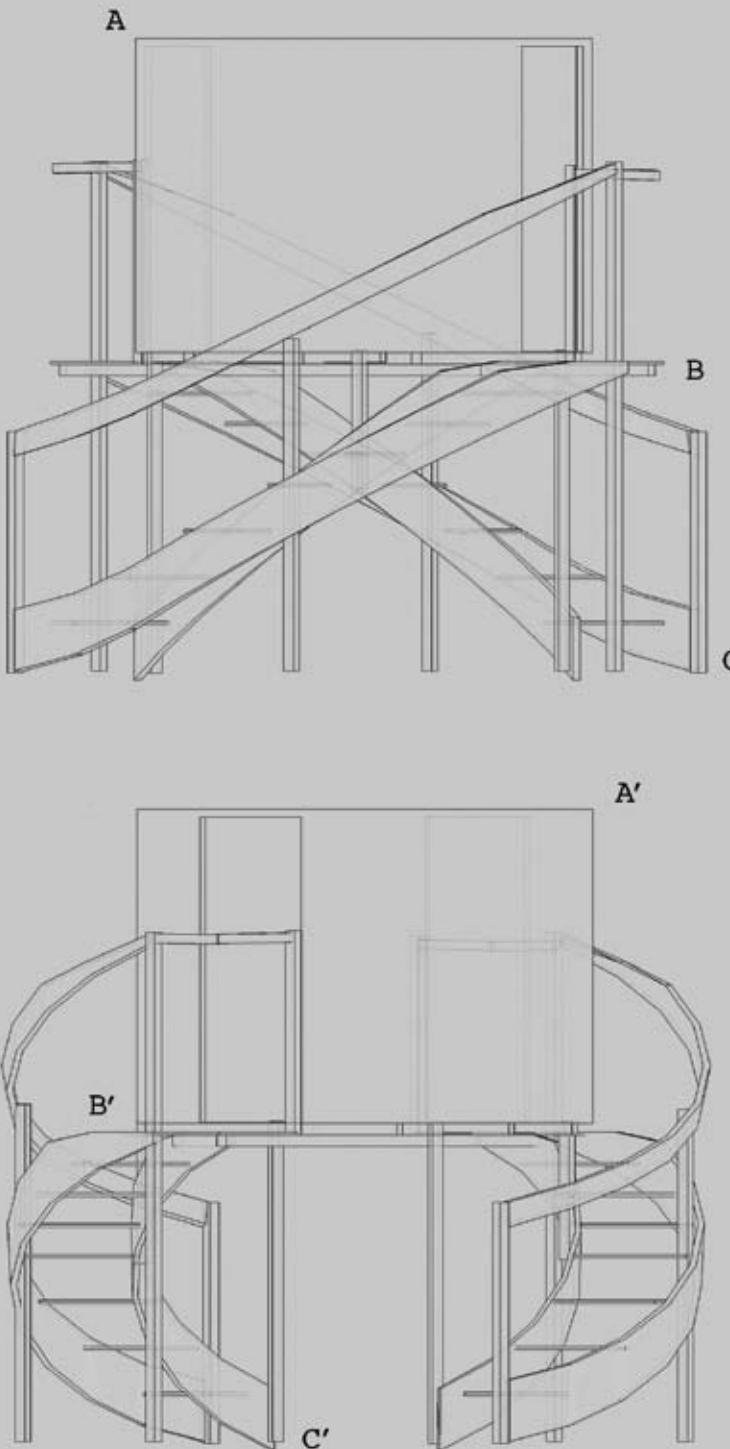
Currently Fictional

(Gustav Bisgaard, Sarah Ridao & Oscar Yran)

The Threshold

The Threshold er en rund trækonstruktion, der minder om en silo placeret på høje ben. Konstruktionen når næsten helt op til loftet, og med sine tre meter i diameter har den en markant tilstede værelse i rummet. Fra de to trapper der snor sig omkring silo-formationen, er det muligt at gå op og ind i den. Midt i bygningens eneste rum mødes man af en lysende brønd, og en bænk inviterer en til at sidde ned. Hér, i denne besynderlige arkitektoniske struktur, får vi mulighed for at fordybe os i den tilsyneladende endeløse brønd og spekulere over uendeligheden.

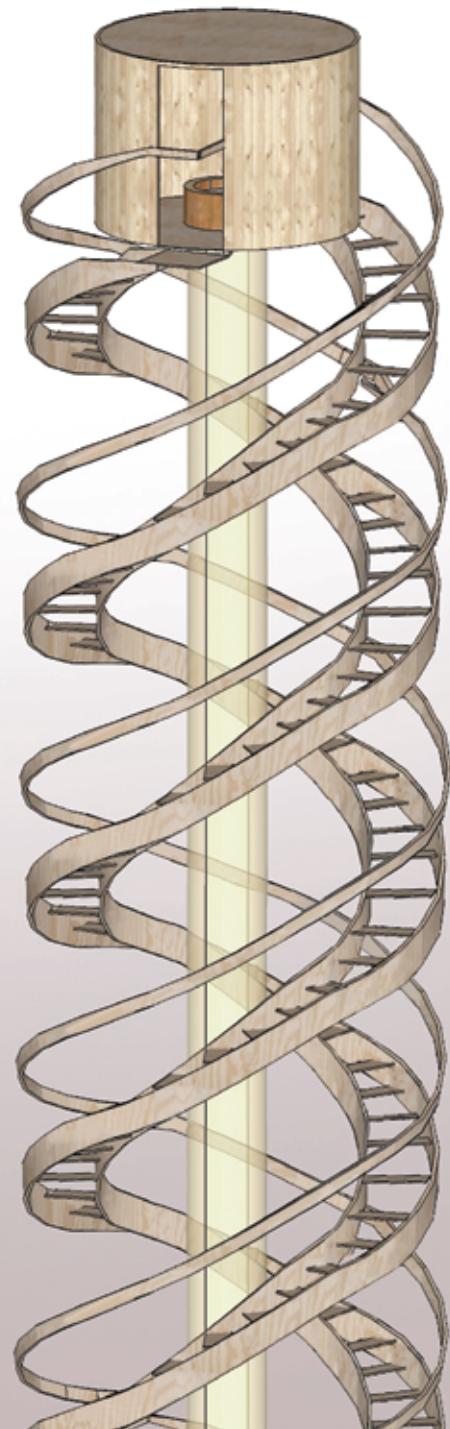
The Threshold is a round wooden construction which looks like a silo on tall legs. The construction reaches almost to the ceiling and with a diameter of 3 metres, it has a significant presence in the room. From the two staircases winding themselves around the silo formation, it is possible to go up and into it. In the middle of the building's only room a shining well meets you and a bench offers a seat. Here, in this bizarre architectonic structure, we have the opportunity to look deep into the seemingly endless well and meditate on infinity.



WRITER: My dear! The world is absolutely dull, and that is why there's neither teletransportation, nor ghosts, nor life on Mars... and there cannot be anything of the kind. Iron laws control the world and it's intolerably boring. And these laws, alas, cannot be broken. They're not able to. So don't even hope for life on Mars. That would be all too interesting.

LADY: And what about the Bermuda triangle? Are you also going to argue that...?

WRITER: I am going to argue. There's no Bermuda triangle. There's a triangle ABC, which is even to a triangle A'B'C'. Do you feel, what a doleful boredom this statement rooms? However, in the middle ages it was interesting. In every home there was a house-spirit, in every church - God... People were young! Now every fourth is an old man. Boring, my angel, oh how boring.



Lady: But didn't you say yourself that the Threshold is an outcome of a supreme civilisation which...

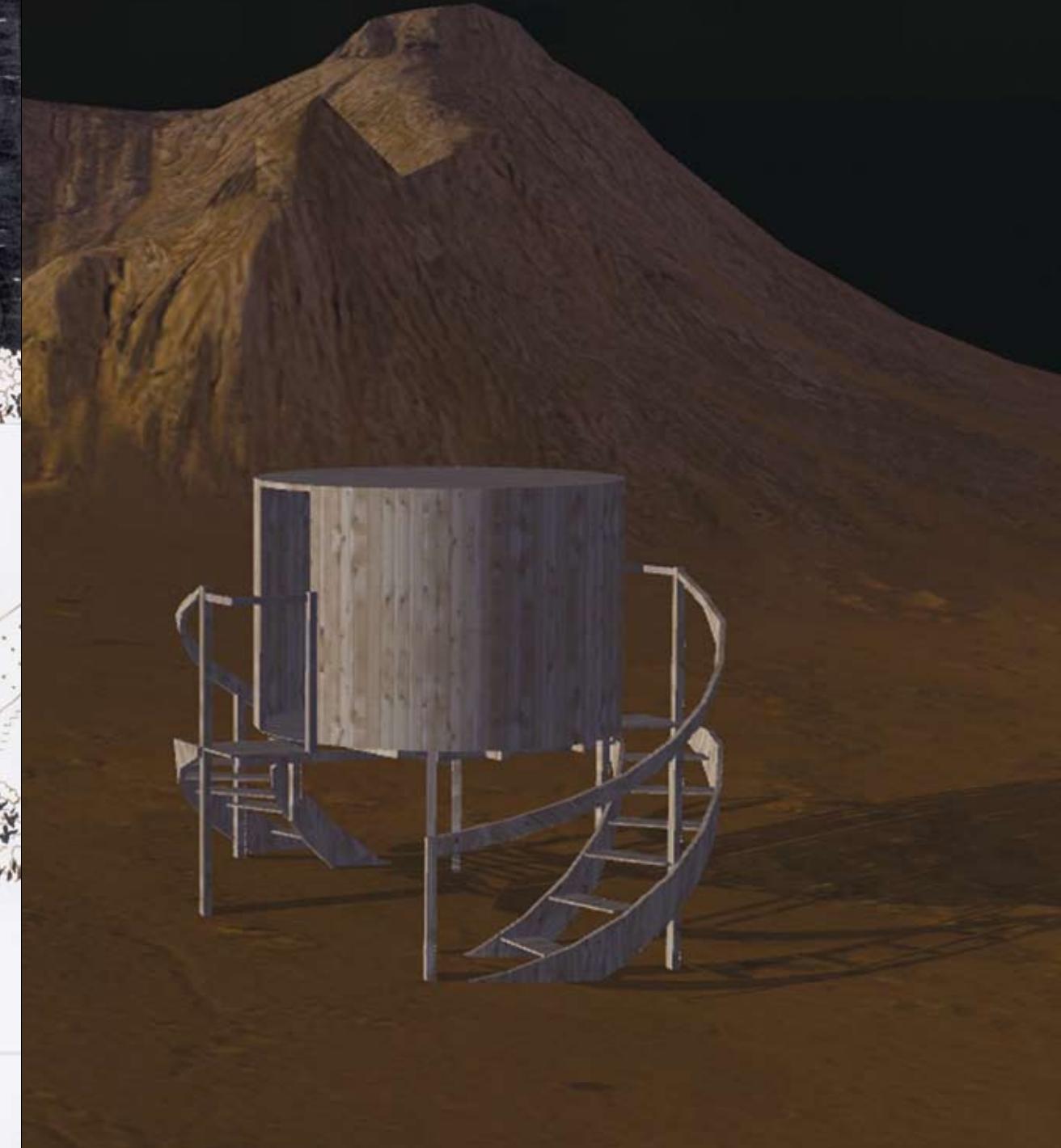
Writer: That's probably also boring. The same sort of laws, triangles, and absolutely no housespirits and, of course, no God. Because in case God is the same triangle... hmm, then I simply do not know...



WRITER: Ah... He's here. Wonderful! Good-bye, dear friend. Ah... I'm sorry, mm... This man kindly agreed to go with us to the Threshold. He is a brave man. His name is ... ah ... I'm sorry, I think, your name is ... ah...

MAN: So you did get drunk after all.

WRITER: What do you mean? I just drank a little, as half of the world's inhabitants. The other half, yes, gets drunk. Women and children included. And I simply drank a little.



Sif Hedegård

Compassion Fatigue

Crusty Past – Crispy Future

Compassion Fatigue præsenterer beskueren for en person, som fortæller en historie, der viser sig ikke at lede nogen steder hen. Billedsiden udgøres af fundet materiale, som ligeledes ikke synes at pege i nogen retning. Værket akkompagneres af *Crusty Past – Crispy Future*, to tekstilværker med applikationer af kropslige former og beklædningsdeler. Værkerne kredser om forholdet mellem narration og betydningsdannelse og undersøger, hvor få komponenter der skal til for at skabe meningsfulde relationer mellem usammenhængende informationer.

Compassion Fatigue presents the viewer with a person telling a story that turns out not to lead anywhere. The images consist of found objects, which likewise seem to have no direction. The work is accompanied by *Crusty Past – Crispy Future*, two textile works featuring appliqués of body-like shapes and garments. The works circle around the relationship between narration and the formation of meaning, and explore how few components are needed to create meaningful connections between unrelated information.



I like porn because it is so real. It is much more real than a movie. You can easily read the strain and the hurt on the faces of the actors. Actors in movies are not real. They are fictional to me the viewer, because they play fictional characters. You do not see the hurt of fictional characters. A porno actress is not acting. She is a girl with a body in a movie.





Johanne Helga Heiberg Johansen

Dear Frida

Projektet *Dear Frida* er en fiktiv brevudveksling mellem den mexicanske maler Frida Kahlo og en ung billedkunstner, der lige er blevet mor. Gennem breve og tegninger får vi indsigt i den unge kvindes trivielle hverdag, hvor børnepasning og praktiske gøremål opsluger den energi og kreativitet, hun skulle bruge til at lave kunst. Værket tematiserer de høje krav om succes i både hjemmet og på arbejdsmarkedet, der stilles til moderne kvinder, og peger på fiktionens terapeutiske potentiale.

The project, *Dear Frida* is a fictional exchange of letters between the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo and a young artist who has just become a mother. Through letters and drawings, we gain insight into the young woman's trivial everyday life, where looking after a child and doing chores swallow up the energy and creativity she should be using to make art. This work thematises the tall claims of success facing modern women at home and in the workplace, and points out the therapeutic potential of fiction.

Darling .

Here I'm leaving you some doodles I drew to see if they're any
use to you.

I send you millions of kisses with them.

Frida

I consider an artist

is simply
working

don't you think?

try to start

I think it is the best

Don't work too much, take
good care of your eyes.

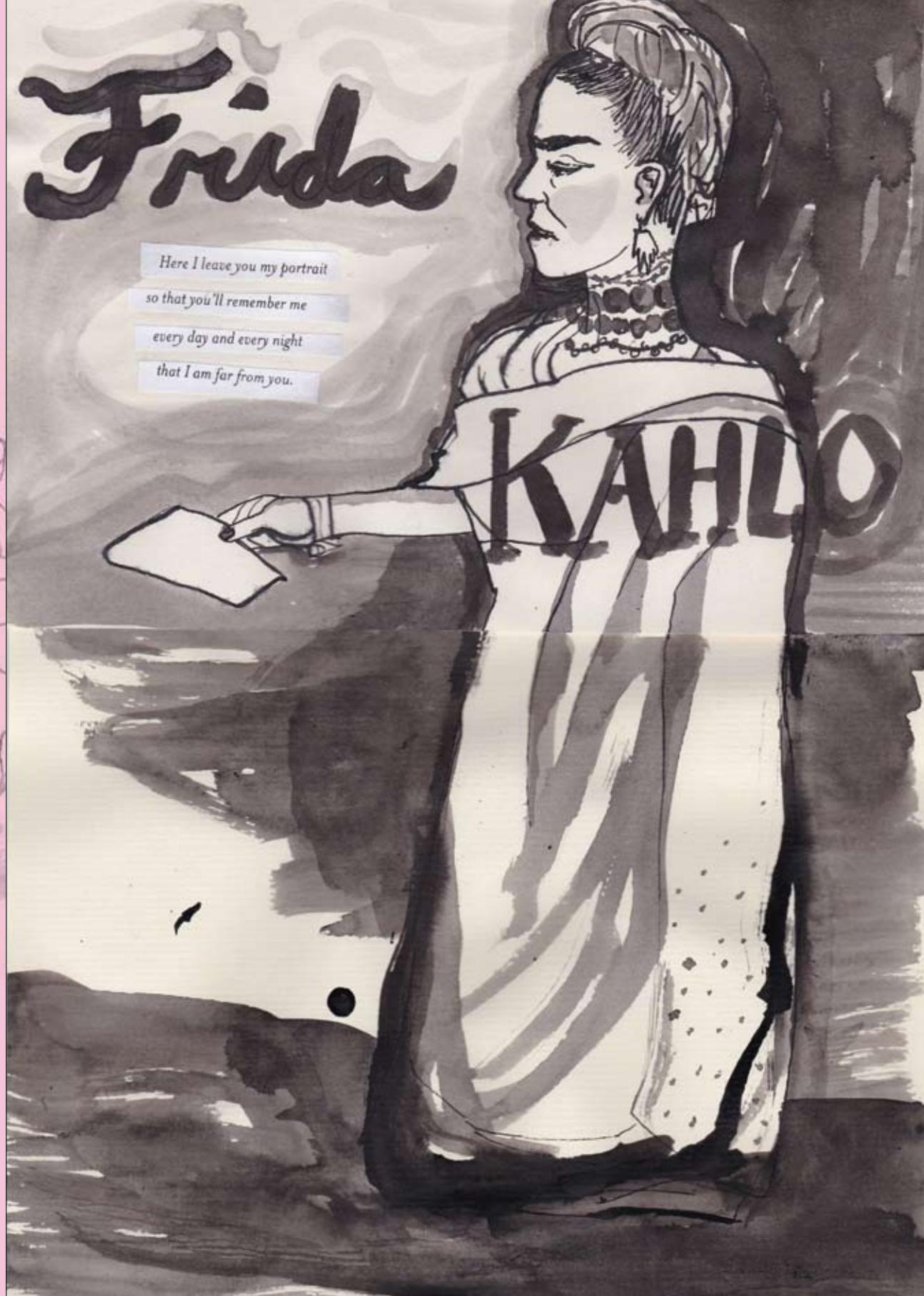
I send you, as always, all my heart

Your

Frida

Dear Frida





Jonna Ljósá

***Black Contours on Aquarelle Paper
Interaction with stone 1, 2, 3***

Untitled

De tre videoer, *Interaction with stone 1, 2, 3*, viser en række undersøgelser af, hvordan sten reagerer på forskellige simple handlinger, som kunstneren udfører med dem. I en næsten meditativ repetition af disse handlinger ser vi to sten, der bliver slået mod hinanden, en sten, der laver mærker på en anden sten og to sten, der forsøges stablet oven på hinanden. Med samme gentagende manøvre har Ljósá i værket *Black Contours on Aquarelle Paper* bearbejdet konturerne af de fjeld, der omgav den færøske by, hun voksede op i. *Untitled* er den sidste del af værkserien og udgøres af en sten fundet i Danmark, som demonstrerer stenens på mange måder banale karakter, samtidig med at den rummer en fascinerende historie om forbindelser til færøske fjeld og andre geologiske epoker.

The three videos, *Interaction with stone 1, 2, 3*, show a series of studies depicting how stones react to various simple actions that the artist performs with them. In an almost meditative repetition of these actions, we see two stones being hit together, a stone that makes marks on another stone, and two stones being stacked alternately on top of each other. With the same repetitive manoeuvres, Ljósá has drawn the contours of the hills that surround the Faroese town she grew up in *Black Contours on Aquarelle Paper*. The last work in the series is *Untitled* and comprises a stone found in Denmark, which demonstrates the, in many ways, banal character of the stone, while it also embodies a fascinating story about connections to Faroese hills and other geological eras.





stone

/stəʊn/ ⓘ

noun

1. hard solid non-metallic mineral matter of which rock is made, especially as a building material.
"the houses are built of stone"
2. a piece of stone shaped for a purpose, especially one of commemoration, ceremony, or demarcation.
"a memorial stone"
synonyms: [gravestone](#), [headstone](#), [tombstone](#); [More](#)

verb

1. throw stones at.
"policemen were stoned by the crowd"
2. remove the stone from (a fruit).
"add 50 g of stoned black olives"

Rock (geology)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Rocks" and "Stone" redirect here. For other uses, see [Rocks \(disambiguation\)](#) and [Stone \(disambiguation\)](#).

In [geology](#), [rock](#) is a naturally occurring solid aggregate of one or more minerals or mineraloids. For example, the common rock [granite](#) is a combination of the [quartz](#), [feldspar](#) and [biotite](#) minerals. The Earth's outer solid layer, the [lithosphere](#), is made of rock.

Rocks have been used by mankind throughout history. From the [Stone Age](#) rocks have been used for tools. The minerals and metals found in rocks have been essential to human civilization.^[1]

Three major groups of rocks are defined: [igneous](#), [sedimentary](#), and [metamorphic](#). The scientific study of rocks is called [petrology](#), which is an essential component of geology.

mountain

/'maʊntən/ ⓘ

noun

1. a large natural elevation of the earth's surface rising abruptly from the surrounding level; a large steep hill.
"we set off down the mountain"
synonyms: [peak](#), [height](#), [elevation](#), [eminence](#), [prominence](#), [summit](#), [pinnacle](#), [mountaintop](#), [alp](#), [horn](#); [More](#)
2. a large pile or quantity of something.
"a mountain of paperwork"
synonyms: [a great deal](#), [a lot](#), [heap](#), [pile](#), [mound](#), [stack](#); [More](#)

To see, watch, perceive, or notice and register it as being significant. Especially, to pay attention and pay strict attention to what I perceive and learn. Both are continuous in action. To witness, foremost to be present when something is happening. To give an account as evidence. To mention, follow, fulfill, and celebrate and/or to keep, I consider carefully and watch steadily.

Jacob Morell

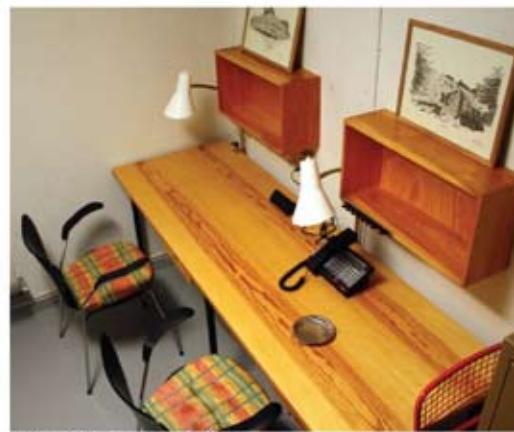
The Shield of Perseus

Udgangspunktet for filmen *The Shield of Perseus* er det nu nedlagte Regan Vest, en atomsikret bunker, de danske myndigheder opførte i 1960'erne som opholds- og arbejdssted for regeringen og kongehuset i tilfælde af krig. Anlægget er en underjordisk miniby placeret 60 meter under jorden i Rold Skov i Jylland, som ud over beboelsesfaciliteter bl.a. rummer et konferencelokale, en lægevagt og en radio- og politistation. Morell er interesseret i de genstande, dette anlæg er indrettet med, og de forestillinger om national og kulturel identitet, der knytter sig til udvalget af møbler, dekorative objekter, litteratur og film. Lydsiden er uddrag af musik, som DR's nødradiostation skulle sende i tilfælde af krig for at berolige befolkningen mellem nyhedsinformationerne. I arbejdet med værket har Morell været optaget af betydningen af alt dette – hvis en atomkrig udraderede alt andet, hvad ville dette eftermæle sige om os?

The point of reference for the film *The Shield of Perseus* is the now closed Regan Vest; a nuclear bunker, which was built by the Danish authorities in the 1960s as a residence and workplace for the government and the royal family in the case of war. The compound is a subterranean miniature town 60 metres below ground level in Rold Skov, Jutland. Apart from residential facilities, it houses a conference room, emergency treatment service, radio station and police station. Morell is interested in the objects that fill the compound, alongside the notions of national and cultural identity, which accompany the selected furniture, decorative objects, literature and films. The musical score comprises excerpts of music, which the national emergency radio station planned to air in case of war to appease the general public between news broadcasts. Working with this project, Morell has been occupied with the meaning of all of this – if a nuclear war eradicated everything else, what would these remnants say about us?



Bedroom



Prime Minister office



Arne Jacobsen: T-chair



Dining room



Dining room



Lounge



Verner Panton: Bachelor Chair



Lounge

BEREDSKABS STYRELSEN

23. februar 2015

I mail af 06. januar 2015 har du rettet henvendelse til Beredskabsstyrelsen med en anmodning om at få mulighed for, at lave filmoptagelser til en kunst dokumentarfilm om regeringsanlægget i udflytningsanlæg Vest - Regan Vest.

Beredskabsstyrelsen kan desværre ikke imødekomme din anmodning.

Begrundelsen er, at det som led i indgåelse af aftale om redningsberedskabet er blevet besluttet, at Regan Vest skal overdrages til anden side med henblik på at åbne anlægget for offentligheden.

Som følge heraf afsår Beredskabsstyrelsen, efter aftale med Forsvarsministeriets departement alle anmodninger om besøg, der ikke direkte har en sammenhæng med den kommende afhændelse af anlægget.

Denne afspørgsel kan påkøges til Forsvarsministeriet, Holmens Kanal 42, 1060

København K.

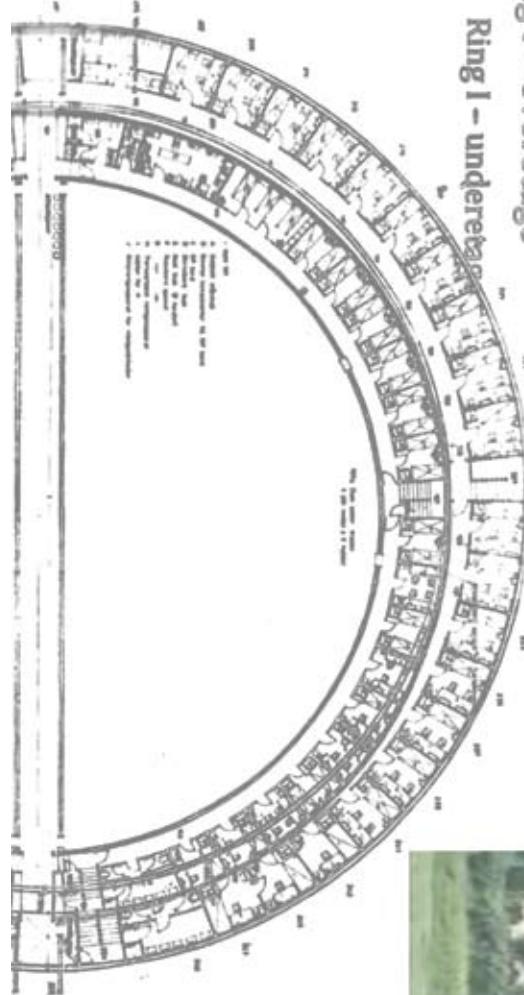
Ring I - Overetage



The house at Røde Møllevej, Skørping

Med venlig hilsen

Mohammad Al-Badry
Intern Servicecenter



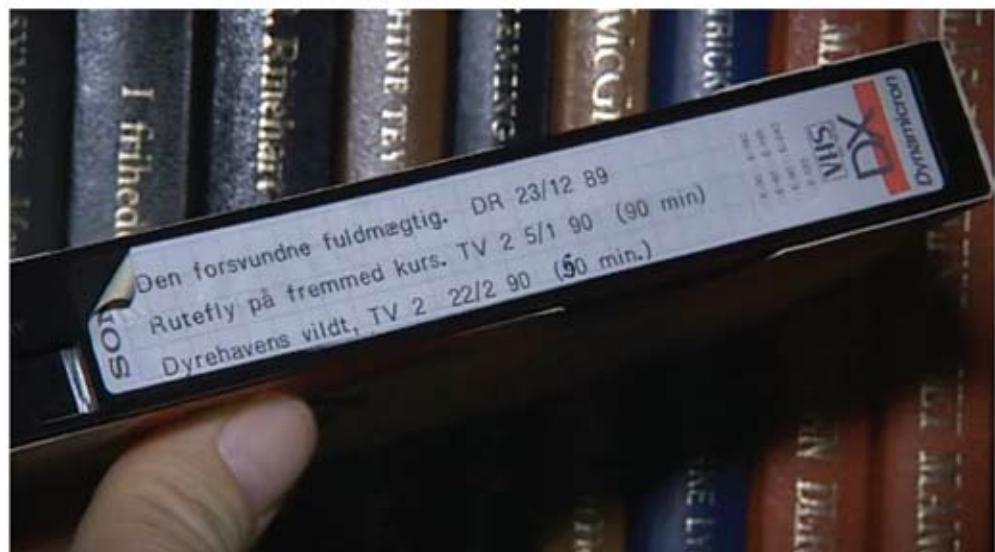
Overview of Regan Vest. The house at the entrance is marked with yellow.



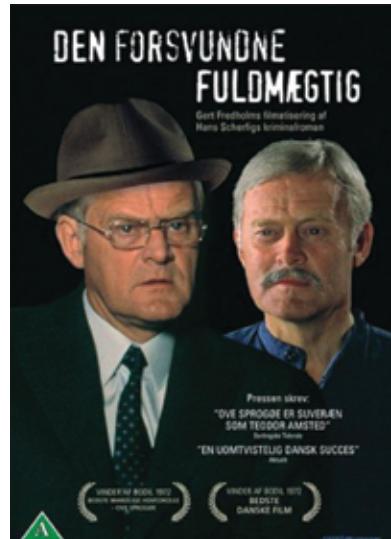
Goldstar cassette player with birdsong cassette.



Bang & Olufsen BeoCord VHS80 VHS VCR



VHS from lounge



Kære Jacob Morell,
Tak for din henvendelse.
Jeg har fået følgende info fra vores Logistik-afdeling:

Den forsvundne fuldmægtig, DR lørdag den 23. december 1989

Filmatisering af Hans Scherfigs klassiker om den pæne embedsmand, der får mulighed for at fingere sit eget selvmord og således begynde en friere tilværelse under ny identitet. Det er ikke så let, som han troede. Politiet finder ham, men tilværelsen i fængslet viser sig at være den tilværelse, det borgerlige uddannelsessystem bedst har forberedt ham på.

Rutefly på fremmed kurs.

Original titel : Coded hostile/ Tailspin: behind the korean airliner tragedy

En dramatisering af begivenhederne den 1. september 1983, hvor et koreansk passagerfly blev skudt ned af et russisk jagerfly.



Behind The Korean Airline Tragedy

It might have started World War III — and it nearly did. In 1983, the downing of KAL Flight 007 over Soviet air space threatened to turn the cold war hot.

Was it simply a case of mistaken identity or pilot error? Was this a civilian jet on a spy mission for the CIA? Why was the black box never recovered? Were there military targets aboard?

TAILSPIN is gripping and hard-hitting — the shocking story that two governments were afraid to tell. From the high-tech spy posts of the North Pacific to the intricate workings of the Soviet military, it's all top secret, terrifying, and true.

Fra Granada – TV film

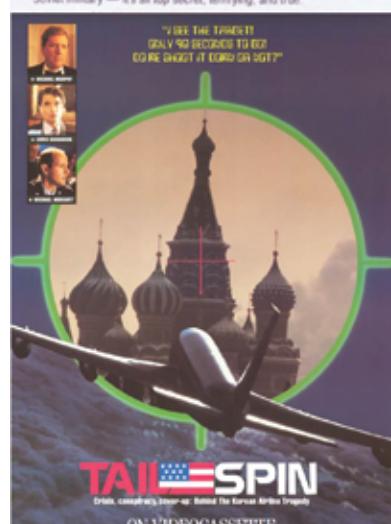
Dyrehaven vildt. (Hjortenes konge) TV2 torsdag den 22. februar 1990
Titel: Dyrehavens Vildt

I Dyrehaven nord for København findes én af verdens fineste bestande af kronhjorte og dåvildt. Fra hele verden modtager vildtforvaltningen hér forespørgsler om køb af dyr, men det er kun få, heldige interesserede, der nogensinde får lov til at købe dyr herfra. Priser på 15.000 US-dollars for en buk er ikke usædvanlige. Prisen afspejler, at kronhjortene i Dyrehaven er af usædvanlig god standard og at man verden over har behov for at tilføre egne bestande nyt blod; nye, gode arveegenskaber.

I foråret, når naturen skifter farve, sker der også noget med dyrene. Ny pels - men fremfor alt et nyt gevær. Efteråret er den tid, vildtet ruster sig til brunstperioden, der ofte rummer voldsomme kampe mellem hanerne.

Dyrehaven, der som levested for vildt er et usædvanligt sted set med internationale - og danske - øjne, og det skildrer også den årlige udtyndning i bestanden og indfangningen af hjorte til eksport.

Produceret af Nordisk Film Broadcast.



Med venlig hilsen
Annette Kamper
Projektleder
Seersekretariatet

Sara Plinius

Beat

I arbejdet med *Beat* har Sara Plinius været interesseret i traumet som en psykisk skade og de konsekvenser, det har for mentale og fysiske evner. Frem for udelukkende at betragte traumet som en menneskelig emotionel tilstand har Plinius overvejet, om også objekter kan blive traumatiserede, som en reaktion på voldsomme oplevelser og overgreb. *Beat* udgøres af fem skulpturer i gennemfarvet akryl, der forestiller løbende ben i størrelsesforholdet 1:1. Gennem skulpturerne indbyrdes relation og materialemæssige betingelser undersøger Plinius, hvordan vi kan tænke grænseoverskridelser og tilknytning i forhold til objekter, og spekulerer over, hvordan vi kan forstå effekterne, de menneskelige handlinger har på omgivelserne.

Working with *Beat*, Sara Plinius has focused on trauma as psychological damage and the consequences it has on our mental and physical abilities. More than viewing the trauma entirely as a human, emotional state, Plinius has considered whether objects can become traumatised as a reaction to violent experiences and assaults. *Beat* consists of five sculptures of painted acrylic, which represent running legs on the scale of 1:1. With the relations between the sculptures' and their material conditions, Plinius investigates how we might approach barrier-breakings and affinities towards objects, and she asks how we may understand the effects that human actions have on our surroundings.

Page 2-4: Collection of quotes from Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev *On the Destruction of Art – or Conflict and Art, or Trauma and the Art of Healing*, No040, Agnes Martin Writings, Christopher Edley Jr. and Jorge Ruiz de Velasco *Changing Places. How communities will improve the health of boys of color*, Daniel Birnbaum Documenta 13, W.G. Sebald *Saturns Ringe* and Judith Herman *Trauma and recovery*.



There are innocent objects and objects that have lost something, destroyed objects, damaged objects and indestructible objects...hidden or disguised objects, objects on retreat, objects in refuge, traumatized objects. "Trauma" in Latin, as well as the Greek (trayma), from which the Latin derives, indicates a perforation, a wound made by a sharp object; it is related to the Indo-European root-a "passing through" of an object or body. What do the rubble and the stones at the foot of the empty cavities in the cliff where the Bamiyan Buddhas once stood, prior to their bombing in 2001, see and feel? How do they speak, and how is their speech related to ours? A psychic wound caused by an act of violence or an accident, or by any deeply

At every moment we are helpless and defeated
and at every moment we are commanded forward by inspiration.

disturbing experience that causes shock, distress, and disruption of one's life. With the First World War, he writes (Walter Benjamin), was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent – not richer, but poorer in communicable experience?

Such works are speechless, numb witnesses of conflict, traumatized subjects unable to tell their stories. Post-traumatic stress disorder was first coined by Bessel A. Van der Kolk as a severe anxiety disorder, a sense of a biological assault on the body that interrupts the flow of one's experience to the degree where one is overwhelmed.



cannot cope with the situation, and "shuts down" emotionally, losing the capacity to engage with one's environment. Conflict is a sharp contrast that explodes into violence, either physically or psychologically. The word indicates the struggle between opposing peoples. When we experience a state of emotional tension or pain, our impulse is to remove it psychically.

We are all born with a certain potential.

Trauma theory is a relatively recent concept that emerges in the healthcare environment during the 1970s, mostly in connection with the studies of Vietnam veterans and other survivor groups (including Holocaust survivors, abused women and children, disasters survivors, refugees, and victims of sexual assault).

Art can function as distraction and withdrawal from conflict within the legacy of a therapeutic notion of art. A conflicted person is a divided person, within whom incompatible urges or impulses are hosted.



Traumatized artworks appear to be on standby; they are silent, withdrawn from visibility and discourse.....abandoned by humans and waiting in a suspended time for the end of the war and the return of its inhabitants.

What does an object feel when it is attacked or destroyed or ignored or misunderstood, or even misplaced? In classical psychoanalysis, conflict is an internal struggle between basic impulses, such as hunger or the need for reproduction, and our social and moral prerogatives. It expresses itself through many psychic mechanisms such as removal, sublimation, and transformation.

What would it mean to think that things could have stories as trouble as those of people?

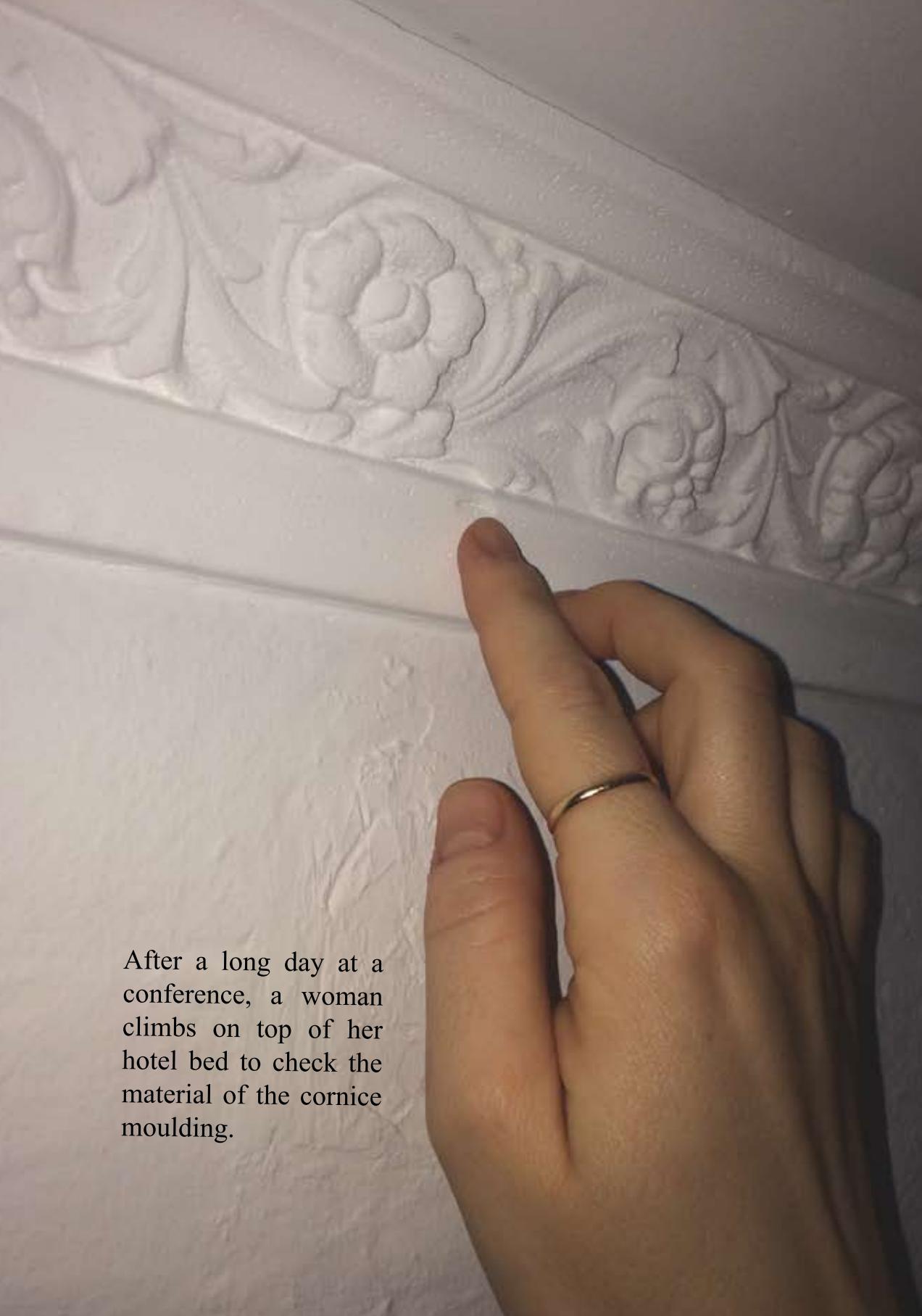
Samt i formodningen om, at fiskenes særlige fysiologi betød, at de var fri for den frygt og den smerte på legeme og i sjæl, der hjemmøgter de højrestående arter i deres døds Kamp. Sandheden er, at vi ikke ved, hvad en sild føler

Katti Pärkson-Kull

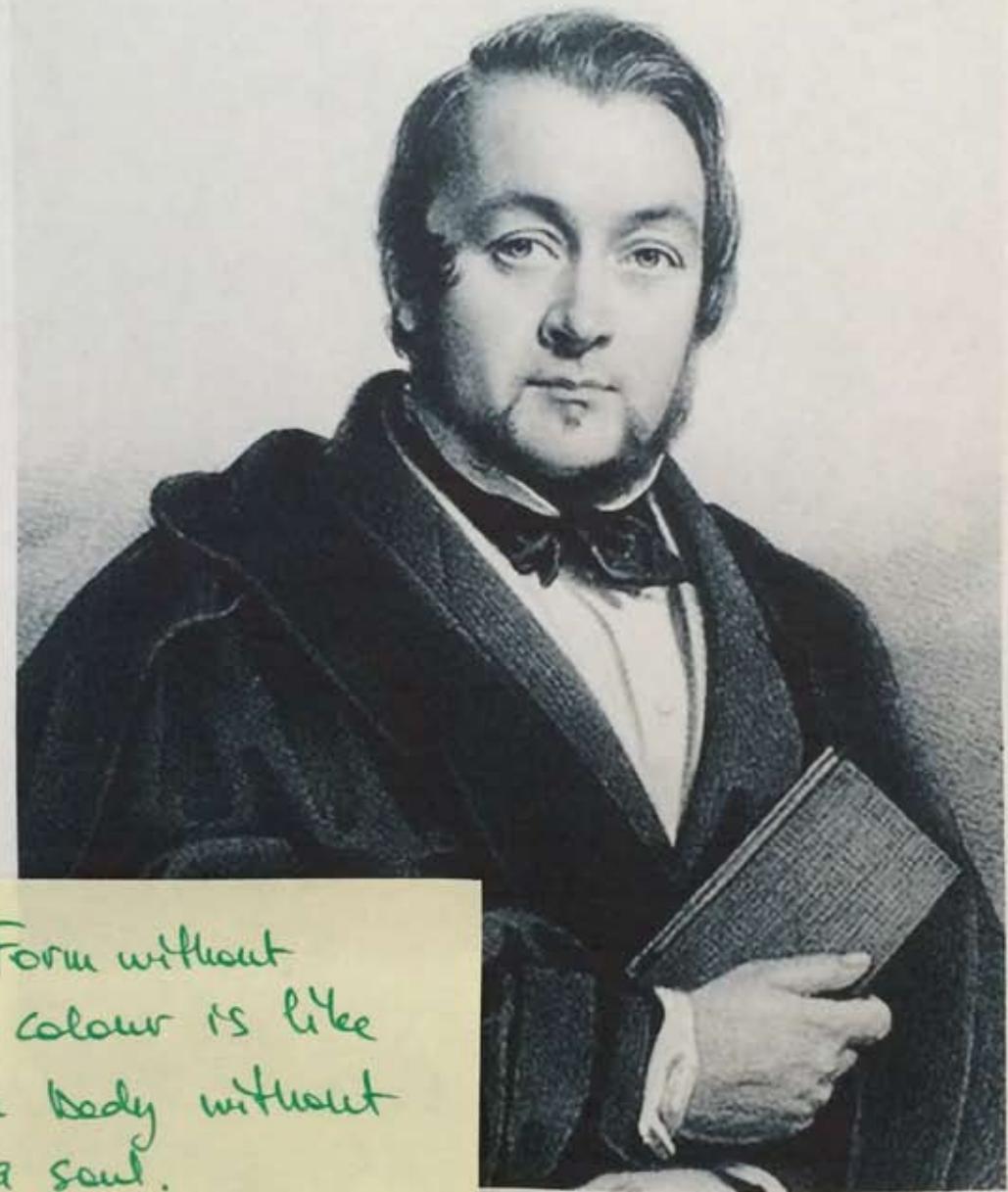
False Principles

Omdrejningspunktet for *False Principles* er de flamingostukplader, der bruges til at dekorere vægge og lofter i hjemmet og som kan købes i byggemarkeder som et billigt gør-det-selv alternativ til traditionel gipsstuk. Flamingoplader er lavet af ekspanderet polystyren, som bl.a. bruges i byggeindustrien og udgør en stor miljøbelastning på grund af de store mængder olie, der anvendes til produktionen, og materialets lange nedbrydningstid. Katti Pärkson-Kull har farvelagt et antal plader med naturmønsteret "Forår" i hånden, en tidskrævende og på mange måder absurd proces, hvorved hun tilfører det masseproducerede materiale en kunstnerisk værdi. Det er netop paradoxer som dette, Pärkson-Kull er optaget af i forhold til stukpladerne – det kunstigt fremstillede materiales belastning af miljøet og pladernes hyldest til naturens ornamentik.

The focal point of *False Principles* is the Styrofoam stucco used for home decoration of walls and ceilings, which can be bought at a DIY centre as a cheap alternative to traditional stucco. The Styrofoam sheets are made from expanded polystyrene plastic, which is also used in the construction industry. It has a serious environmental impact owing to the large quantities of oil involved in its production as well as a long decomposition rate. Katti Pärkson-Kull has hand-coloured a number of sheets in the nature-pattern 'Spring', a laborious and in many ways absurd process in which she adds artistic value to a mass-produced material. It is precisely paradoxes like this that interest Pärkson-Kull with regards to the stucco sheets – the environmental harm of the artificial material, which pays tribute to nature's ornaments.



After a long day at a conference, a woman climbs on top of her hotel bed to check the material of the cornice moulding.



Form without colour is like a body without a soul.

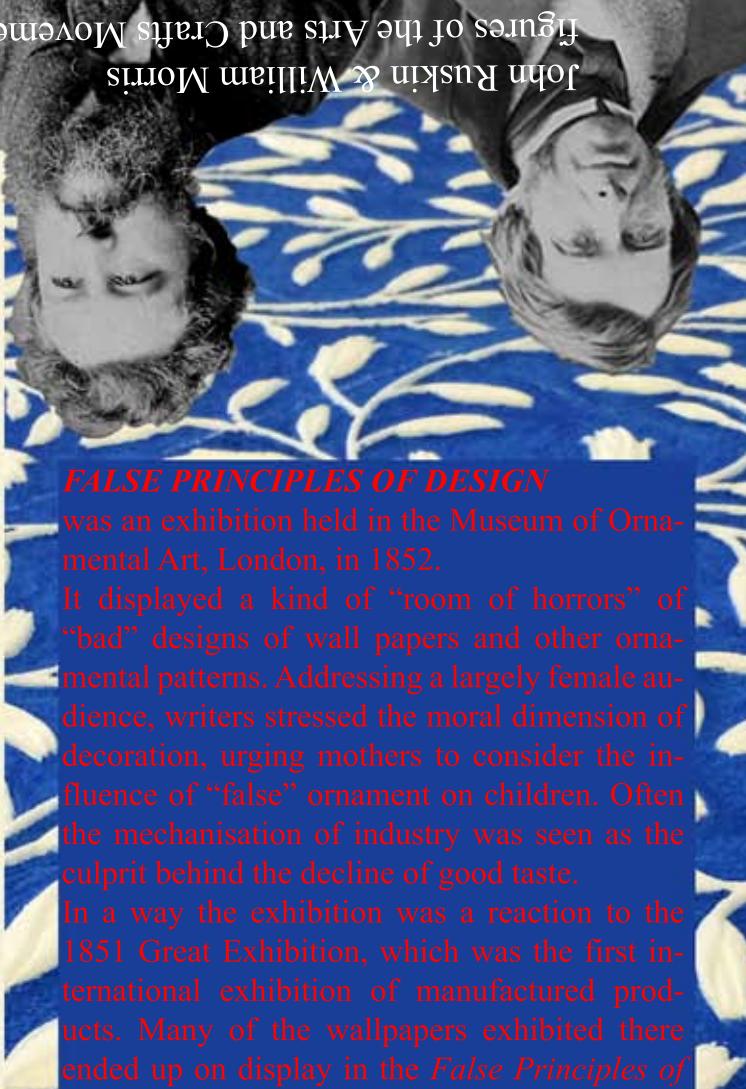
Owen Jones, 1865

Owen Jones, architect,
author of *The Grammar of Ornament*,
interior designer for the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Figures of the Arts and Crafts Movement

The Arts and Crafts Movement (ca.1880 - 1910) was a movement born of ideals. It grew out of a concern for the effects of industrialisation: on design, on traditional skills and on the lives of ordinary people. In response, it established a new set of principles for living and working. It advocated the reform of art at every level and across a broad social spectrum, turning the home into a work of art filled with functional handcrafted furniture and textiles and wallpapers using naturalist ornaments.

The two most influential figures of the movement were the theorist and critic John Ruskin and the designer, writer and activist William Morris. Ruskin examined the relationship between art, society and labour. Morris put Ruskin's philosophies into practice, placing great value on work, the joy of craftsmanship and the natural beauty of materials.



FALSE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

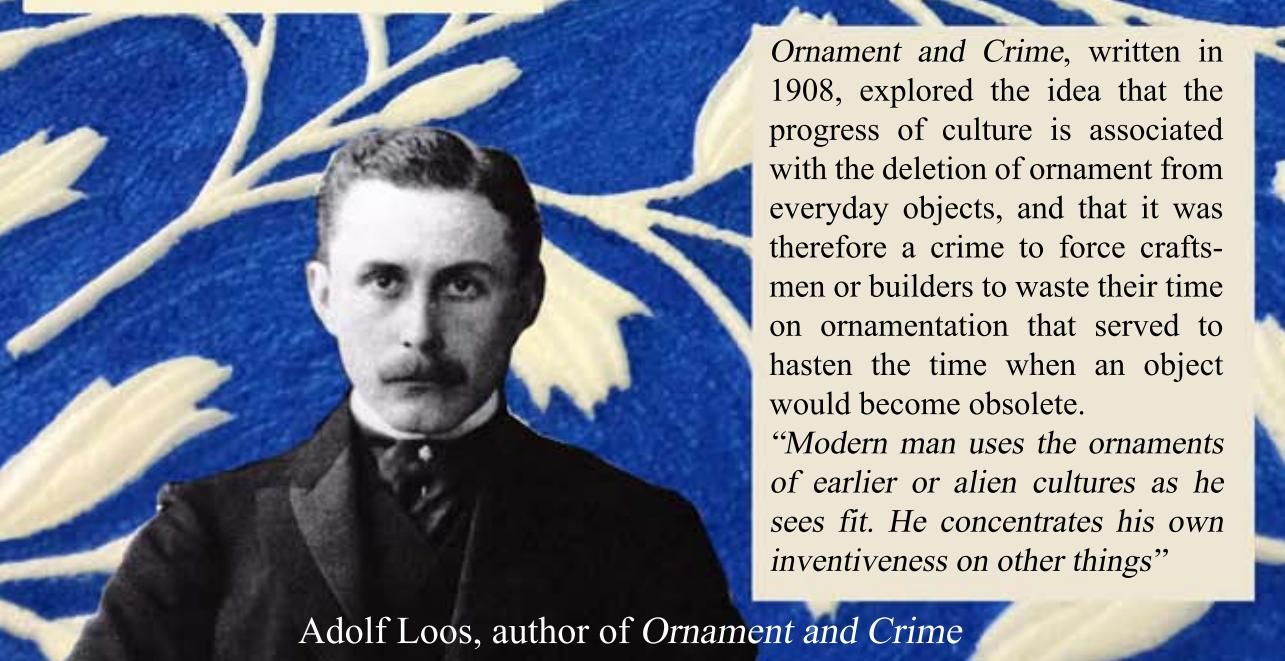
was an exhibition held in the Museum of Ornamental Art, London, in 1852.

It displayed a kind of "room of horrors" of "bad" designs of wall papers and other ornamental patterns. Addressing a largely female audience, writers stressed the moral dimension of decoration, urging mothers to consider the influence of "false" ornament on children. Often the mechanisation of industry was seen as the culprit behind the decline of good taste.

In a way the exhibition was a reaction to the 1851 Great Exhibition, which was the first international exhibition of manufactured products. Many of the wallpapers exhibited there ended up on display in the *False Principles of Design*.

Ornament and Crime, written in 1908, explored the idea that the progress of culture is associated with the deletion of ornament from everyday objects, and that it was therefore a crime to force craftsmen or builders to waste their time on ornamentation that served to hasten the time when an object would become obsolete.

"Modern man uses the ornaments of earlier or alien cultures as he sees fit. He concentrates his own inventiveness on other things"



Adolf Loos, author of *Ornament and Crime*

John Ruskin & William Morris

Polystyrene is a petroleum-based plastic. It is lightweight, offers good insulation properties that keep products cold or hot, and keeps things safe during the shipping process without adding weight.

Being lightweight and therefore floating makes polystyrene also the main component of marine debris. When released to nature, it appears to last forever (or at least 500 to 2000 years). Some of the elements used in the manufacturing of polystyrene are human carcinogens as well as contributors to global warming.

From July 1, 2015 single-use polystyrene food packaging is banned in New York city, following the examples of Washington DC, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Oakland, Portland, Albany and Seattle. This is mostly due to the fact that environmental benefits of and possibilities for recycling polystyrene are limited. In Denmark polystyrene waste is burned along with other non-recyclable household trash.



Rachel Carson,
author of *Silent Spring*

Published in 1962, the book documented the environmental effects of using pesticides and fertilizers, eventually leading to the banning of DDT and inspiring the beginning of the environmental movement.

At signere himlen og kalde den sin

Torsten Bøgh Thomsen

Ph.d.-stipendiat, Institut for Kulturvidenskaber, Syddansk Universitet.

Du kender den slags feedback-lyde, som elektriske apparater kan lave. Feks. de første sekunder, når en taler træder frem foran mikrofonen, og den giver skingre mislyde fra sig, indtil der er blevet justeret på teknikken. Eller en radio, der skratter, når man går ind foran signalet – en tv-skærm, der viser sne. Det er ubehageligt, måske endda en lille smule uhyggeligt. For hvorfor er apparaterne ikke bare stille, når de ikke fungerer? Hvorfor skal de give den her skratten eller skrigen eller flammer, som var de elektroniske genfærd, der havde besluttet sig for, at deres måde at hjemmøge på skal se lige præcis sådan her ud og lyde lige præcis sådan? Det er ikke for ingenting, at indgangen til den anden verden eller spøgelsesdimensionen i filmen *Poltergeist* lige netop viser såkaldt *white noise*.

I mindre grad kender vi det måske fra situationen, når en DVD er færdig, og man ikke lige får slukket for afspilleren, hvilket får titelmusikken til at begynde at loope. Det er rædselsfuldt! Måske ikke for alle, men i hvert fald for mig. Og jeg styrter af sted for at stoppe spektaklet. Det er, som om de ting, jeg altid har opfattet som passive og døde, pludselig viser en selvstændighed og virker tilbage på mig, selvom det kun var meningen, at det var mig, der skulle handle med dem. Objekterne viser en skyggeside, en ukendelighed og irrationalitet, når det, vi har opfundet til bestemte formål, pludselig viser sig at have andre udtryksformer, der tilsyneladende ikke har noget formål, og som vi ikke har tiltænkt.

Det er skræmmende, når tingene lader til at have et eget liv og en egen vilje. Det er det, fordi det er trygt at tænke, at det kun er os, der har bevidsthed, eller i hvert fald en kalkulerende bevidsthed, at det er os, der handler med tingene, og ikke dem, der handler med os. Vi er vant til at tænke materialerne som det, der tager imod vores aftryk, det, som vi sætter vores præg på, og som derfor bærer vidne om vores færdens.

Stjernestøv i kødcomputeren

I bund og grund består alt, vi kender, af den samme mængde materiale, skabt ved universets fødsel og rekonfigureret gennem tiderne. Intet er forsvundet og intet tilføjet. Vores kroppe er stjernestøv, der igennem milliarder af år har befundet sig i utallige konstellationer – som har antaget og afgivet form i stivnende og opløsende processer, der både foregår på så ufatteligt store og små skalaer, at det er umuligt entydigt at afgøre, hvad der er hvad.

Forestillingen om at mennesket skulle repræsentere noget unikt eller adskilt i forhold til verden er, fra et såkaldt deep time-perspektiv, absurd. Det er et perspektiv, hvor man forlader den menneskelige tidshorisont og tager jordens skala i betragtning – jorden som astronomisk fænomen. Det er et perspektiv, der ydmyger menneskelige tidsligheder og selvværdurende forestillinger om unikhed og autonomi. Med et sådant skala-forhold bliver mennesket ikke andet end karbon koaguleret omkring mineraler, en livsform som så mange andre der har eksisteret, og som, ligesom mineralerne, indgår i processer med verdens andre materialer. Der er ikke bevidstheder på den ene side og materialer på den anden, men et fletværk af menneskelige og ikke-menneskelige intentioner, bevægelser og former.

Kunst kan på mange måder ses som en praksis, der er særligt bevidst omkring dette kollaborerende forhold mellem menneskelig intention og materialernes iboende egenskaber og bevægelser. I nogle perioder har forestillingen om den vekselsvirkning imidlertid ledt til den misforståelse, at mennesket og navnlig kunstneren bemestrede materialet – at forholdet var præget af monolog fremfor dialog. Den materielle virkelighed sås som en smidig masse, der tjente til at realisere den kunstneriske vision så nøjagtigt som muligt. Men sådan en forestilling om verden som uendeligt passiv og plastisk ignorerer det faktum, at ingen bevidsthed er fritflydende æter, der fosterer tankekonstruktioner ud af ingenting, hvor meget vi end ville ønske, at den var. Bevidstheden er, ret beset, intet andet end kemiske og elektriske udvekslinger i en kødcomputer, hvis umådelige tankepotentiale har forledt os til at tro, at den er immateriel. Men når alt kommer til alt, er intet andet end møder mellem atomer. Der er ingen adskillelse, som gør en monolog mulig. Der findes ingen steder, hvor du kan tale i enrum. Alle vegne er du altid allerede viklet ind i et kor af stemmer, tidsligheder, modstande, skalaer og systemer, der griber ind i hinanden.

Fiskeolie og yoga

Vi er på mange måder vant til at tænke materialer som vidner til verdens begivenheder, hvilket de også kan ses som på adskillige planer. De ligger som dokumentation for menneskelig handling – kulturelle artefakter, der kan skrives historie ud fra. Hvad jeg imidlertid kunne ønske er en udvidelse af begrebet vidne, så det ikke fremstår så statisk, som det har en tendens til. Et vidne er typisk den passive observatør af en hændelse, hvilket bliver en problematisk position at forestille sig i en verden, hvor intet er statisk og alt er hierarkisk jævnbyrdigt – en verden, hvor det i stigende grad er svært at opretholde hierarkier som det, der skelner mellem (primære) handlende og (sekundære) vidner.

Det virker mere perspektivrigt at tænke begrebet vidne bredere end denne adskillelse mellem aktører og vidner, der fastholder den materielle virkelighed i en passiv tilstand, hvor den som en blank side tager imod de aftryk, vi har tænkt os at sætte. Den forestilling overser nemlig, at materialerne foruden at være den (på ingen måde blanke, men) allerede heftigt overtegnede side, også er stempelpuden, der leverer blæk til fodsporene og fødderne selv. Materialerne er verden. Uden dem intet os og ingen handling.

Handling er bare materie, der skifter plads, som tager og mister form. Universet der lægger kabale. Og bare fordi vi er i stand til at tænke en kontur omkring vores egne atomer og se dem som udgangspunkt for en unik formgivning, er det hverken ensbetydende med, at vi er de eneste, der gør noget, eller at resten af verden sidder måbende fikseret og "bevidner" det. Alene vejforholdene det sidste årti kunne vidne om, at mennesket ikke er det eneste aktive, handlende, i en ellers passiv og betydningsløs verden. Og situationen lader efterhånden til at være den, at vi i lige så høj grad er vidner til materialerne, som de er vidner til os.

Holisme er derfor blevet en meget markant konkurrent til det atomistiske verdensbilledet, der adskiller tingene og placerer dem i et strengt hierarki, alt efter hvor selvstændige og unikke de opleves ud fra et menneskeligt synspunkt. De senere års fokus på klimaforandringer har fået os til at interessere os for, hvordan tingene hænger sammen, fremfor hvordan de adskiller sig fra hinanden. Det gælder for det første verden, der ikke består af adskilte genstande, for det andet mennesket, der ikke er adskilt fra verden. Og for det tredje gælder det kroppen og

bevidstheden, der efterhånden ses som en integreret helhed. Det kommer f.eks. til udtryk, når vi får at vide, at fiskeolie og chokolade højner humøret, at travær af d-vitamin sænker det, og at yoga kan stimulere det endokrine nervesystem og afhjælpe stress. Grænser eksisterer ikke, hvis man zoomer tæt nok ind. Alt har forbindelse til altting: Zone-terapi kan påvirke din fordøjelse, og på jobcentrets netværkskursus får man at vide, at der kun er syv håndtryk til Obama. Netværk, holisme, tværfaglighed og krydsbestøvning er tidens buzzwords. Hvis jeg oplever mig selv som adskilt fra de taster, jeg rammer nu, skyldes det at mit sanseapparat ikke er fintfølende nok til at erkende, hvad viden-skaben har fortalt mig: at computeren og jeg består af samme materiale bare i forskellige, midlertidige konstellationer.

Over og under målet

Holistisk tænkning lader imidlertid til at være strandet i den slags sporadiske fornemmelser for sammenhæng. En større mentalitetsændring, der anerkender alttings fundamentale hierarkiske jævnbyrdighed, lader stadig vente på sig. Og i det omfang, vi tænker holistisk, er det sjældent ensbetydende med en gennemgående erkendelse af vores egen indfældethed. For vi er jo stadig dem, der harunik indsigt i disse sammenhænge. Vi er stadig de vidende, og som sådan er vi alligevel ikke helt jævnbyrdige med resten af den holistiske helhed. Selvbevidst-hed forbliver det, der udmærker os. Den menneskelige selvvurdering klæber til os, hvor meget vi end vil det eller ej – den lader til at være en integreret del af vores måde at tænke på.

Den holistiske tankegang, som den kommer til syne i de senmoderne, vestlige samfund, lider ifølge filosoffen Graham Harman af den misforståelse, at mennesket fortsat tror, at det kan regne verden ud. Og det gør det enten ved at skyde over eller under målet. At skyde over målet er at se altting i samme astronomiske perspektiv, som jeg tidligere har opridset. Det er at påstå, at altting hænger sammen, fordi altting har samme udgangspunkt. At skyde under målet er, som jeg også har demonstreret, at splitte verden op i sine mindste bestanddele, atomer, og finde sammenhængen her.

Hvad der er fælles for begge holismen er, at de stiller sig tilfreds med en overfladisk "forståelse", der ignorerer et kolossal mellemlag imellem panoramaet og close-uppet. Og her er verden hverken gennemskuelig eller ordentlig. Hvis vi tager

holismen på ordet og synker ned i hierarkisk jævnbyrdighed med alt andet, får vi ikke større klarhed, men større uklarhed. Vi bliver opmærksomme på, at ikke-intenderet feedback er reglen snarere end undtagelsen. Det er hér mikrofonerne skratter. Det er hér radioen hvæser. Det er hér, der findes utallige sansninger af verden, som ikke er menneskelige, og som vi aldrig vil kunne få adgang til. Det er hér at mennesket, spændt ud imellem mikroskopiske og astronomiske rørelser, kæmper med sine selvopfundne tegnsystemer, sine tal og bogstaver, for at skabe mening i et kæmpemæssigt felt af *white noise*. Det er hér vi er, fanget imellem reducerende holismen, der skyder over og under målet for at opretholde illusionen om, at den forfængelige menneskelige fornuft vil kunne gennemskue kaosset på enten mikro- eller makroniveau. Det kan den ikke.

Den ukendelighed og fremmedhed, som således følger med, så snart man tænker den holistiske tanke til ende, kan kunsten rumme. Videnskaben, derimod, kan få svært ved det, bundet som den er til at virke inden for logiske og retoriske rammer, der vanskeligt kan rumme det paradoksale og modsatrettede, og som er funderet på præmissen at mennesket står i et særligt forhold til omverdenen, hvor det er i stand til at "forstå" den. Billedkunsten er ikke underlagt den slags rammer. Den kan kommunikere på frekvenser, der ikke er logiske. Den kan bære paradoksalitet, ægte jævnbyrdighed mellem menneske og materialitet og er på ingen måde forpligtet til at skabe forståelse.

Vidne og vidnesbyrd

Hvis man altså skal tale om materialet som vidne i en kunstnerisk forstand, tænker jeg ikke vidne så konkret og kriminal-teknisk som i betydningen "tilskuer til en forbrydelse". Det er ikke for at benægte, at den slags værker findes – det gør de bestemt, og den slags kunst kan være både kraftfuld og ved-kommende. Umiddelbart kan man tænke på den dansk-bosniske kunstner Ismar Cirkinagic, der har udstillet herbarier med pressede blomster, som var plukket på massegrave i Bosnien. Eller rumænske Daniel Knorr, der har udstillet de uformelige papmaché-lignende klumper, som blev tilbage efter Stasis vand-makulering af overvågningsmateriale i 1989. Men her ville jeg indføre en skelnen mellem vidne og vidnesbyrd, hvor vidnes-byrdet betegner dokumentationen af en specifik hændelse. Udsagnene i Knorr og Cirkinagics værker kan betegnes som

vidnesbyrd om specifikke sociale overgreb, monumentale i deres passive massivitet. Men jeg tænker, at det – som tidligere nævnt – kan være produktivt for en større fornemmelse af jævnbyrdighed og indfældethed at udvide forståelsen af både vidne og materiale, således at vi i stedet for at se materialerne som de passive vidner for menneskelig handling, i højere grad ser verden som en totalitet af materialiteter, der indvirker på hinanden og derigennem er hinandens vidner.

Med et bredere perspektiv er det ikke blot værker, der specifikt arbejder med genstandenes materielle egenart, som det giver mening at betragte ud fra et materialitetsperspektiv. Vi er i dag vant til at kunne betragte værker ud fra f.eks. feministiske og psykoanalytiske perspektiver, selvom de ikke aktivt lægger op til det. På samme måde må det kunne lade sig gøre at betragte kunsten ud fra materielle aspekter, selvom det ikke, fra den menneskelige kunstners side, var hovedintentionen. Dén intentionalitet er, som det efterhånden bør være tydeligt, i mine øjne kun en del af værket.

Materialernes kunsthistorie

På den måde ville det f.eks. være oplagt at tænke i materialernes kunsthistorie. En periode er ofte i lige så høj grad kendetegnet af et materiale og en særlig teknisk håndtering af det, som af en bestemt motivkreds eller en særlig verdensforståelse.

Tænk bare på antikkens marmor, middelalderens træskærerarbejder eller renæssancens fresker – eksempler på stærke kunsthistoriske identifikationer af en tidsalder med et materiale. Derefter kommer endnu en gang marmor, men denne gang klassicistisk ubemalet, ren og hid som selve den immaterielle, oplyste tanke, som den gav krop. Siden, med den industrielle tidsalder, meget apropos, kommer olie, olie og efter olie: romantisk idealiserende, naturalistisk-realiserende, med impressionistisk hastighed eller symbolistisk fortætning. Derfra avant-gardistisk opløsning og dekadence. Strøgene skriger surreelt og ekspressivt, og genstandene clasher i institutionel utilpassethed – *objets trouvés out of place*. Konkretismens geometriske univers dekonstruerer former og farver til arketyptisk ikonicitet. Senere viger betydningen af materialernes egenart i konceptkunstens forestilling om udskiftelighed i den bagvedliggende idé tjeneste, imens de dernæst dominerer det minimalistiske udtryk, hvor selvsamme idéfostrende bevidsthed trænges i baggrunden.

Kunsten er viklet ind i verden og i en kontinuerlig dialog med den, hvor den både definerer den og refleksivt bliver defineret af den. Fattig kunst, skabt af tarvelige materialer, bliver et korrektiv til selve idéen om, at værket ikke kun repræsenterer noget værdifuldt, men også skal gøre det gennem særligt værdifulde materialer, og kan dermed samtidig ses som et korrektiv til selve det hierarki i materialiteten, der identificerer det sjældne med det ædle. Popkunstens insisterende gentagelse af det uendeligt reproducerbarnes unikhed. Teknikkens mekaniske virkelighedsgengivelse, øjet fordoblet i kameralinsens meta-refleksivitet. Performancekunstens endelige underkendelse af skellet mellem kunst og kunstner – dens fastsættelse af menneskematerialets aldrig uindviklede forhold til verden. Og selvfølgelig land art’ens omarangeringer af naturlige fænomener og italesættelse af omverdenen som et altid allerede eksisterende værk – at signere himlen og kalde den sin, ligesom man altid har været dens. At vende en sokkel på hovedet og udstille verden. Hierarkisk jævnbyrdige fænomener, der håndterer, peger på og bevidner hinanden.

Signing the Sky and Calling it Your Own

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You know that kind of feedback sound some electrical appliances make. Like for example, those first few seconds when a public speaker stands before the microphone, and it makes jarring high-pitched sounds until it is adjusted. Or a radio that crackles when you walk in front of the signal, or a snow filled TV screen. It is unpleasant and maybe even a bit eerie. Because, why do appliances still make noises when they are not in use? Why do they have to crackle, screech or flicker like electronic phantoms who had decided that their way of haunting should look and sound exactly like this? It is no coincidence that the entrance to the other dimension in the film *Poltergeist* shows so-called 'white noise'.

To a lesser extent, we perhaps know the situation where a DVD has stopped playing and you haven't switched off the player, causing the title music to loop. It is horrible! Maybe not for everyone, but at least for me. And I rush off to stop the commotion. It is as if all the things I have always considered as passive or dead suddenly display a kind of independence and work back on me, even though it is meant to be me that operates them. Objects show a dark side and irrationality, and are beyond recognition when they, as objects we have invented for specific purposes, suddenly turn out to have other forms of expression that seemingly have no purpose, and that we certainly never intended.

It is scary when things appear to have a life and a will of their own. This is because we are comfortable with the thought that it is only us that have consciousness, or at least calculative consciousness. It is us that operate things and not them that operate us. We are accustomed to thinking of materials as something that we can leave our imprint on, things we can put our stamp on, and they therefore bear witness to our presence.

Stardust in the meat computer

Basically, everything consists of the same amount of material generated by the birth of the universe and reconfigured through the ages. Nothing has disappeared and nothing has been added. Our bodies are stardust that has been a part of countless constellations over billions of years, which have taken on and given form in solidifying and dissolving processes taking place on both such an inconceivably large and small scale that it is impossible to determine what is what.

The notion that man should represent something unique and separate in relation to the world is, from a so-called deep time perspective, absurd. This is a perspective where you leave the human horizon and take the earth's scale into consideration – the world as an astronomical phenomenon. It is a perspective that humbles human temporality and our overestimated concept of being unique and autonomous. With such a scale relationship, man becomes nothing more than carbon coagulated around minerals, a form of life pertaining to so many other organisms, and just like minerals are included in processes with the world's other materials. It is not a case of consciousness on the one hand and the materials on the other, but an intertwining of human and non-human intentions, movements and shapes.

Art can in many ways be seen as a practice that is particularly aware of this collaborative relationship between human intention and the materials' intrinsic properties and movements. In some periods however, the notion of this interaction led to the misconception that man and especially the artist was master of the material, and that the relationship was characterised by monologue rather than dialogue. The material reality was seen as a flexible mass that served to realise the artistic vision as precisely as possible. However, such a conception of the world as endlessly passive and plastic, ignores the fact that no consciousness is free-flowing ether that can foster thought constructions out of nothing, no matter how much we wish it were. Consciousness is strictly speaking nothing more than a chemical and electronic exchange inside a meat computer whose immense thought potential has led us to believe that it is immaterial. But in the end, it is basically all about the meeting of atoms. There is no separation, which makes a monologue possible. There is nowhere you can talk in private. Everywhere you go you are always entangled in a choir of voices, temporalities, opponents, scales and systems that intertwine.

Fish oil and yoga

In many ways, we are used to thinking of materials as witnesses to world events and so they might be seen on several levels. They act as documentation of human actions – cultural artefacts from which history can be written. Still, what I would really like is an extension of the concept of a witness, so that it does not appear as static as it tends to do. A witness is typically the passive observer of an event, which is a problematic position to imagine in a world where nothing is static and everything is hierarchically equal – a world where it is increasingly difficult to maintain hierarchies that distinguish between (primary) doers and (secondary) witnesses.

It seems more fertile to think of the concept of a witness in a broader sense that transgresses the division between doers and witnesses, which keeps the material reality in a passive state where it, like a blank page, accepts the imprint we intend to make. This belief overlooks the fact that the materials, in addition to being the (by no means blank, but) already heavily drawn-over page, are also the stamp pad that delivers ink to the footprints and the feet themselves. The materials are the world. Without them, no us and no actions.

Action is just matter that change places, and that takes and loses shape. The universe playing solitaire. And, just because we are able to think a contour around our own atoms and see them as the basis for a unique design, it does not mean that we are the only ones doing something, or that the rest of the world is just sitting vacantly fixated 'witnessing' it. The weather conditions over the last decade alone can testify that man is not the only active doer, in an otherwise passive and meaningless world. And, the situation seems to be gradually becoming one where we are just as much witnesses to the materials as they are to us.

Holism has therefore become a very significant competitor to the individualistic view of the world, which separates things and places them in a strict hierarchy according to how autonomous and unique they are, perceived from a human point of view. The focus on climate change during recent years has led us to take an interest in how things fit together, rather than how they differ from each other. Firstly, this applies to the world which does not consist of separate entities and secondly, to the human who is not separated from the world. And thirdly, applies to the body and our consciousness that can be seen as an integrated whole. An example of this could be when we hear that fish oil and chocolate improve our mood, that vitamin D deficiency reduces it, and that yoga can stimulate the endocrine nervous system and relieve stress. Borders do not exist if you zoom in close enough. Everything is connected to everything: reflexology can affect your digestion and at the job centre's networking meeting you are told that there are only seven handshakes between you and Obama. Network, holism, interdisciplinarity and cross-pollination are the buzzwords of today. If I feel removed from the computer keys I am typing on right now, it is because my sensory apparatus is not sensitive enough to recognise what science has told me: that the computer and I are made of the same materials – just in different, temporary constellations.

Above and below the target

Holistic thinking seems however to be stranded in that kind of sporadic awareness of context. A major change in mindset that recognises the fundamental hierarchical equality of all things is still not evident. And to the extent that we think holistically, it rarely amounts to a continuous realisation of how deeply rooted we are in it. Because, we are still the ones who have unique insight into these connections. We are still the knowledgeable ones, and as such we are not entirely equal to the rest of the holistic whole. Self-awareness remains the distinguishing factor. The human habit of self-overestimation stays stuck to us, whether we want it or not – it appears to be an integral part of our way of thinking.

The holistic mindset that emerges in the late modern Western societies suffer, according to philosopher Graham Harman, from the misconception that people still think that they can figure out the world. And, they do so by either shooting above or below the target. Shooting above the target is to see everything in the same astronomical perspective as I described earlier. That is to say that everything is connected because everything has the same starting point. Shooting under the target is, as I have also demonstrated, to split the world up into its smallest components – atoms, and find the correlation here.

Common to both forms of holism, is that they are content with a superficial 'understanding' that ignores the enormous middle layer between the panorama and the close-up. And here, the world is neither transparent nor orderly. If we take holism at its word and sink down into hierarchical equality with everything else, we still won't find greater clarity, but instead greater obscurity. We become aware that non-intentional feedback is the rule rather than the exception. It is here the microphone crackles. It is here the radio hisses. It is here there are countless perceptions of the world that are not of the human kind, and that we will never be able to access. It is here that man, stretched out between microscopic and astronomical sentiments, struggles with his self-invented sign systems, numbers and letters to find meaning in a giant field of white noise. It is here we are trapped between the reducing holisms that shoot above or below the target in order to maintain the illusion that vain human reason will be able to figure out the chaos on either a micro or macro level. It cannot.

The unfamiliarity and strangeness, which follows as soon as one starts to thoroughly engage with the holistic mindset, can be accommodated by art. In contrast, it can be more troublesome for science, as it is bound to work within a logical and rhetorical framework where it is difficult to encompass the paradoxical and the conflicting, and is founded on the premise that man has a special relationship with his surroundings, where he is able to 'understand' them. The visual arts are not subject to this kind of framework and can communicate at frequencies that are not logical. They can bear paradoxicality, genuine equality between the human and nonhuman, and are under no obligation to be comprehensible.

Witness and evidence

If we are going to talk about the material as witness in an artistic sense – it is not the concrete and forensic kind of witness acting as a 'spectator to a crime' I am referring to. This is not to deny that such works exist – they certainly do, and that kind of art can be both powerful and relevant. One might think of the Danish-Bosnian artist Ismar Cirkinagic who has exhibited herbariums with pressed flowers, picked from mass graves in Bosnia. Or, Romanian Daniel Knorr who has exhibited formless paper mache-like lumps left behind after the Stasi destruction of surveillance material in 1989. I would like to introduce a distinction between witness and evidence, where evidence represents the documentation of a specific event. The statements in Knorr and Cirkinagic's work can be described as evidence of specific social abuse, monumental in their passive solidity. But I think that, as mentioned earlier, it would be productive in the greater sense of equality and interlacement to expand the definition of both witness and material so that instead of seeing the materials as the passive witnesses of human actions, we will increasingly see the world as a totality of materialities that affect each other, and in that way are each other's witnesses.

In a broader perspective, it is not just the works that specifically deal with the material nature of objects that should be considered from a materialist perspective. Today, we are used to being able to consider works from, for example, feminist or psychoanalytic perspectives even if they do not actively encourage this. In the same way, it must be possible to consider art from material aspects, even if it isn't the human artist's main intention. As it should be evident by now, this kind of intentionality is only part of the work in my eyes.

The art history of materials

In this context, it would for example seem natural to think about the art history of materials. A period is often characterised by a material and the specific technical handling of it, to the same extent as certain motifs or a special understanding of the world. Just think of ancient marble, medieval woodcarvings or Renaissance frescoes – examples of powerful art historical identifications of an age with a material. Then marble appears again, this time classicistic and unpainted – just as pure and white as the intangible, enlightened thought that it embodied. And then, with the industrial age came (very apropos) oil, oil and even more oil: romantic idealism, naturalistic realism, with impressionistic haste or symbolic density. And from there to avant-garde dissolution and decadence. Brushstrokes scream surrealistically and expressively, and objects clash in institutional maladjustment – objets trouvés out of place. Concretism's geometric universe deconstructs shapes and colours into archetypical iconicity. And then later on, the importance of the materials' distinctive character wanes in conceptual art's notion of the interchangeability in the service of the underlying idea, while they then dominate the minimalistic expression where the very same ideas and the consciousness that sprout them are now forced into the background.

Art is entangled in the world and is in a continuous dialogue with it, where it both defines it and reflectively is defined by it. Art created out of common materials stands to correct the idea that an artwork does not only represent something of value, but should also do so by using particularly valuable materials, and can therefore be seen as an adjustment of the very hierarchical materiality that identifies the rare with the precious.

Pop art's insistent repetition of infinitely reproducible uniqueness. Technology's mechanical representation of reality, the eye doubled in the meta-reflexivity of the camera. Performance art's ultimate disregard for the boundary between art and artist, and its declarations about the human material's never uncomplicated and always entangled relationship to the world. And of course land art's rearranging of natural phenomena and the articulation of the surrounding world as an already existing artwork – signing the sky and calling it your own, just like we have always belonged to it. Turning a plinth upside down and exhibiting the world. Hierarchically equal phenomena that take action, point at and witness each other.

Vidnet – fra gudsbeviser til vidnefortællinger

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Titlen til Det Fynske Kunstakademis afgangsdudstilling 2015, *Material Witness*, rummer en dobbelt betydning, idet begrebet på den ene side henviser til kunstneren som hovedvidne og på den anden side til selve det kunstneriske materiale, kunstværket, som vidne til verdens begivenheder. Juridisk er *material witness* derimod et entydigt begreb fra amerikansk ret, der henviser til en person, der sandsynligvis har så væsentlige oplysninger om en kendsgerning i en sag, at han/hun vil kunne påvirke sagens udfald. Derfor skal retten benytte alle muligheder for at få vidnet til at møde op og vidne, herunder at udsætte sagen eller sågar begære anholdelse af vidnet for at sikre vidneudsagn. *Material witness* blev indført i 1789 med The First Judiciary Act for at sikre, at de mest centrale vidner med materiel information om en forbrydelse kunne udtale sig i sagen (Studnicki and Apol 2012: 485). En række artikler, domme og lovændringer har omhandlet dilemmaet mellem på den ene side sikringen af en straffesags oplysning med al relevant viden for at kunne rekonstruere et kriminelt hændelsesforløb og på den anden side vidnets forfatningsmæssige beskyttelse mod staten i form af uberettiget anholdelse og tilbageholdelse på ubestemt tid. Særligt siden 11. september 2001 har en række artikler omhandlet, hvordan det amerikanske politi benytter sig af bestemmelsen til *aggressive detention*, dvs. til retligt at kunne legitimere anholdelse og indespærring på ubestemt tid af personer med viden om eller forbindelser til terrormistænkte. Også i Danmark har vidner pligt til at møde op i retten og kan tages i forvaring for at sikre vidneudsagnet både i civile- og i straffesager, jfr. Retsplejelovens kapitel 18.

For at kunne forstå ideen om vidnet som bærer af kendsgerninger, der er væsentlige for en sag, vil det følgende først diskutere den retshistoriske udvikling af beviser og vidner, hvorefter selve vidnebegrebet vil blive underlagt diskussion. Til sidst vil disse overvejelser blive brugt til at diskutere kunstneren og kunsten som materielt vidne.

Vidnets historie

I middelalderen havde man endnu ikke den moderne form for vidner. I Europa, herunder i Danmark hvor landskabslovene var gældende, var der krav om formel bevisførelse, hvorved menes, at der i lovene var fastsat, hvilken form for bevis, der skulle føres og at der ikke var adgang til modbevis. Som udgangspunkt var det fastsat i lovene, at det var sagsøgte, der skulle føre bevis for sin uskyld, frem for at sagsøger skulle styrke sine anklager ved bevis. Beviserne baserede sig på Guds domme eller ordalier, hvor indblandingen fra Gud var bestemmende for, hvorvidt sagsøgte ville blive dømt skyldig. De mest markante former for gudsbevis var forskellige former for jernbyrd eller vandprøver. Jernbyrd fandtes i forskellige former, som f.eks. skudsjern, hvor anklagede skulle bære et stykke glødende jern ni skridt, inden vedkommende måtte kaste det fra sig, og skrå, der bestod i, at anklagede skulle gå hen over tolv glødende plovjern. Vandprøverne bestod i at samle en genstand op fra kogende vand eller i ikke at drukne, når man blev kastet ud i vand med noget tungt om kroppen. Hvis den sigtede havde brændt sig, blev skoldet eller druknede, var beviset for uskyld ikke ført. Disse former for bevis foregik under gejstlig medvirken. Det var et gudsbevis, dvs. man troede, at Gud ville vise, om sigtede var uskyldig, ved at forhindre normale følger af f.eks. berøring med glødende jern eller kogende vand (Bartlett 1986).

Ydermere var gudsdomme involveret i forbindelse med f.eks. partsed med mededsmænd, der var det mest almindelige bevismiddel i Danmark i middelalderen. Typisk krævedes, "at tolv mænd ved deres ed bestyrker tilliden til en ed aflagt af en sagsøgt part" (Tamm 2009: 119). Sagsøgte udtog mededsmændene, og det krævedes, at alle mededsmænd var enige i at støtte sagsøgtes ed, for at beviset kunne opretholdes.

I begyndelsen af 1200-tallet var kirken dog begyndt at tvivle på den mulige guddommelige indblanding i retssager og begyndte hermed at afvise det rationelle i gudsbeviset. Med den inkvisitoriske proces forsøgtes indført, at man skulle finde frem til sandheden i en given sag ved at vurdere beviser og ikke blot – som i det tidligere akkusatoriske princip – sikre, at de på forhånd opstatede beviskrav var opfyldt. Kirken ønskede, at processen skulle afspejle, at man søgte sandheden og hermed om der overhovedet havde fundet en forbrydelse sted. Sagsøger skulle hermed også i stigende omfang bevise,

at sagsøgte var skyldig. På Det Fjerde Laterankoncil i december 1215 forbød kirkens ledende mænd gejstlige at deltage ved guddomsprøver. Dette førte til ændringer i procesretten i de fleste verdslige fyrstedømmer, hvor kirken forsøgte at erstatte de negative bevismidler med positive beviser (Andersen 2006). Det negative bevis, der implicit betød at sagsøgte var skyldig, indtil det modsatte var bevist, var ikke i overensstemmelse med en etisk retspleje, som kirken ønskede at indføre i den verdslige sfære. Dette kommer f.eks. til udtryk i et pavebrev fra 1218 til ærkebiskop Anders Sunesen, hvor pave Honorius eksplickerer, at kirken vil have udryddet det negative bevis, som ligefrem karakteriseres som ”denne pest” til fordel for et positivt bevis byggende på de kanoniske – dvs. de romersk-katolsk kirkelige – bevisregler om vidner og dokumenter. Anvendelsen af vidner var en bevægelse mod et materielt bevis, dvs. et indholdsmæssigt bevis, som kirken nu foretrak. Denne måde at se vidnet på krævede dog ikke, at vidnet ved selvsyn havde observeret det faktum, de udtalte sig om, det var nok, hvis de også kunne give den almindelige opfattelse på stedet.

Fokus ændredes dog langsomt med de materielle beviser, der skulle underbygge parternes påstande, men det var først i 1500-tallet, at det materielle vidne blev almindeligt som en væsentlig kilde til information om et gerningsforløb. Med Danske Lov fra 1683 blev det et krav, at vidner var troværdige, hvilket blev forsøgt sikret ved at der var to, der kunne præsentere overensstemmende udsagn (Andersen 2010: 337).

Fra rationelle vidner til vidnefortællinger

Processen fra at have gudsbeviser til gradvist at indføre materielle vidner kan betragtes som en rationaliseringsproces med kirken som drivkraft tilbage i middelalderen. Som redegjort ovenfor var gudsbeviset et ydre bevis, hvor sandheden om et givet begivenhedsforløb blev bestemt ud fra forhold, der principielt ikke kunne påvirkes af individer, da de var gudsbestemte (selvom der fandtes forskellige strategier til at kunne bestå både jernbyrd og vandprøverne). Det var med Max Weber (Weber 1978) en irrationel form for bevis, der var afhængig af magi eller sågar mirakler, for at beviset overhovedet kunne føres, hvilket også blev et af argumenterne mod gudsbeviset. Med tiden ændredes beviset til at blive en materiel bevisform, hvor beviset omhandlede de faktisk-materielle omstændigheder ved et givet hændelsesforløb, der søgtes afdækket objektivt.

Beviset blev således omformet til en indre rationel forståelse af et hændelsesforløb, en person havde været vidne til. Vidneforestillingen blev således, at et hovedvidne kan beskrive de væsentlige detaljer i et hændelsesforløb i en sådan grad, at beskrivelsen kan få afgørende betydning for en sags udfald.

For rettens efterprøvelse af vidneudsagnet bliver det væsentligste spørgsmål, om vidnet taler sandt eller falsk og om vidnets forklaring evt. understøttes af andre indicier til at få frikendt eller dømt sigtede inden for en rationel forståelse af den genskabte og genfortalte virkelighed. Naturligvis er domstole og retten generelt opmærksomme på, at fordi et vidne udtaler sig om en begivenhed, hvor alle indicier peger i en anden retning, behøver vidnet ikke at tale usandt, men blot huske forkert eller have opfattet en given situation anderledes (Jochimsen 2012). Bag denne opfattelse af vidneforklaringen er en rationel forståelse af, at vi objektivt kan observere virkeligheden og ligeledes objektivt gengive den via sproget. En sådan forståelse kan naturligvis være vanskelig at opretholde, når den postmoderne videnskab igennem flere årtier har påvist, at viden er noget, der performativt konstrueres, og hvor sproget ikke blot objektivt repræsenterer virkeligheden, men skaber og omformer den på bestemte måder. Som den franske filosof Jacques Derrida påpeger, får ord deres betydning relationelt, hvorfor et ord eller et begreb altid vil implicere andre ord og begreber. Derfor er ordenes og begrebernes meninger åbne og får mening via forskellen til andre termer (Derrida 1982). I den postmoderne forståelse opløses subjektet herved, da vi altid skabes og genskabes i de forskellige relationer, vi indgår i (Derrida 1991; Lacan 1989). For forståelsen af vidnet betyder dette, at hvis præmissen om at subjektet ikke eksisterer og den objektive beskrivelse heller ikke findes, kan der altid stilles spørgsmålstege ved vidneudsagnet og præmissen om tilskrivelse af sandhed eller ikke sandhed i udsagnet – og ligeledes til de kausaliteter, der ligger indlejret.

Vidnets observation af en konkret hændelse, der materielt kan påvirke sagen, bygger på en viden, der er fremkommet ved selvsyn eller ved at have hørt eller læst noget. Det er med andre ord forestillinger, der fremkommer via sanseindtryk og som oversættes til forbindelser af ord og begreber med iboende mening. Disse forbindes af subjektet inden for dettes habituelle forståelsesramme af kausale begivenhedsforløb, som vidnet reproducerer. I dette ligger der, at vidnet via sine sproglige forståelser og forståelseskategorier, om hvordan prækonstruerede

objekter kan handle i forskellige situationer, kan efterrationalisere og skabe en kausal følge af begivenhederne, der giver subjektiv mening for vidnet.

I genfortællingen af et begivenhedsforløb foretages efterfølgende empiristisk efterprøvelse ved at rekonstruere et sandfærdigt hændelsesforløb. I dette ligger der en tidsdimension, hvor vidnet noget tid efter sanseindtrykket skal genfortælle det oplevede og ganske ofte endda skal genfortælle det en række gange over et længere tidsforløb. Vidnet indlejrer et begivenhedsforløb i bevidstheden, som huskes også i fremtiden, og vidnet kan risikere at skulle genfortælle begivenhedsforløbet over tid flere gange til politi, anklager og domstolene. Vidnefortællingen repræsenterer således en fastfrysning – en materialisering – af et begivenhedsforløb i et subjekt, der skal bære og videreformidle hændelsen på et objektivt niveau. Det er velkendt, at sådanne forklaringer kan ændre sig over tid, da subjektet påvirkes af de mange spørgsmål, det modtager og af de mange genfortællinger og indre rekonstruktioner, der foretages. Ydermere kan et vidne have observeret et begivenhedsforløb i en tilstand af affekt eller chok, så et forløb ses gennem en sådan optik, hvorefter affekt- eller choktilstanden aftager og den rationelle afprøvning påbegyndes. Det er også velkendt, hvordan traumatiserende oplevelser kan være vanskelige at genkalde og hvordan spørgeteknikken fra terapeuter, pædagoger, politi, anklagemyndighed og andre kan have betydning for de fortællinger, der indlejres i vidnerne. Det er således ikke en objektiv beskrivelse af et sagsforløb, der finder sted, men en fortælling om en oplevet begivenhed.

Kunstneren og kunsten som materielle vidner

Kunsten som vidne står over for nogle parallelle udfordringer som det retlige vidne, nemlig at kunstneren ikke kan bidrage med andet end fortællinger om samtiden – om gerningsøjeblikket. Uanset hvilken agenda kunstneren har eller hvilket materielt udtryk, kunstneren benytter i forsøget på mimetisk, metaforisk eller kritisk at repræsentere og give alternative blik på virkeligheden, vil kunstneren altid være præget af egen baggrund, habitus og handlingsdispositioner. Kunstnerens mulighedsbetingelser for den kunstneriske udførsel vil være afhængig af eksisterende materialer og behandlingsteknikker og ikke mindst placering og styrke i forhold til de omgivende magtstrukturer. Kunsthistorien viser således, hvordan kunstnerens

udsigelsesposition må anskues i forhold til magtfeltet, hvor kunstnerens relation til andre kunstnere, til indflydelsesrige personer (som eksempelvis mæcener, fyrster, konger, statsledere osv.) og til vigtige institutioner (for eksempel kirken, staten, kongehuset) har haft afgørende betydning for den kunst, der er blevet produceret og den måde, hvorpå kunsten har kunnet agere vidne til sin samtid (Bourdieu 1996). Det samme gør sig gældende for samtidskunsten.

Kunstværket kan ses som den materielle fastfrysning af kunstnerens blik ud fra hans/hendes specifikke position i samtidens kunstneriske felt. Værket transformeres fra kunstnerens specifikke udsyn – bestemt af dennes baggrund, habitus, dispositioner, position i det kunstneriske felt og materialevalg – til en materialitet, et objekt, der kan fortolkes af beskueren afhængigt og uafhængigt af dets subjektive skaber. Fortolkningen af værket er ligeledes afhængig af beskuerens egen position og forståelseshorisont, ligesom fremtidige læsninger vil være betinget af de kontekster, værket præsenteres i. Kunstværket som materielt vidne er dermed en fortælling om verdens begivenheder, der er dybt afhængig af magtkonstellationer og kunstens rolle i sin tid såvel som beskuerens egen historie og evne til at afkode kunstens fortælling.

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The Witness

– From Ordeals to Testimonies

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The title of Funen Art Academy's graduation show 2015, Material Witness, has a double meaning. On the one hand, the term refers to the artist as the key witness and on the other hand to the artistic material, the artwork, as witness to world events. In law, a material witness is a precise term stemming from the American legal system and refers to a person who could have such essential information about a fact in a case that s/he could affect the actual outcome. Therefore the court is required to do everything in its power to ensure that the witness shows up and testifies, including staying the proceedings or requesting that the witness is arrested in order to secure a testimony. The term 'material witness' was introduced in 1789 with The First Judiciary Act in order to assure that vital witnesses with material information about a crime could present their statements in court (Studnicki and Apol 2012: 485). A number of articles, court rulings and legislative amendments have dealt with the dilemma between, on the one hand, securing information in a criminal case with all the relevant knowledge in order to reconstruct criminal events and, on the other hand, the constitutional protection of the witness against the state, in the form of unjustified arrest and detention for an indefinite period of time. Especially since 9/11 2001, a series of articles have discussed how the American police uses the material witness statute to legally legitimise the arrest and indefinite incarceration of people with knowledge of, or connections to terror suspects – as a form of 'aggressive detention'. In Denmark, witnesses are also obliged to meet up in court and can be taken into custody to safeguard a witness statement, both in civil and criminal matters (The Administration of Justice Act, Chapter 18).

In order to understand the idea of a witness as the bearer of facts that are vital to a case, I will firstly discuss the legal and historic development of evidence and witnesses and then the actual concept of the term 'witness'. Finally, these considerations will be used to discuss the artist and art as material witnesses.

The history of the witness

The modern concept of a witness did not exist in the Middle Ages. In Europe, including Denmark, the law required a formal presentation of evidence that established which kind of evidence was pertinent to a case. Furthermore, there was no access to counter-evidence. Basically, it was a requirement of the law that the accused had to prove his/her innocence, instead of the prosecutor strengthening accusations with the presentation of proof. Proof was based on God's judgement or on trials by ordeal where God's so-called visitation was decisive for whether the defendant would be found guilty. The most pronounced forms of visitation comprised trials by ordeal involving water or fire. There were various versions of the ordeal of fire, for example – one where the accused had to carry a piece of red-hot iron nine paces before s/he was allowed to discard it, and another version where the accused had to walk across twelve red-hot ploughshares. Ordeals of water consisted of having to retrieve an object from boiling water, or not drown when thrown into water with something heavy attached to the body. If the accused was burnt, scalded or drowned, their innocence was not proven. This form of proof gathering was carried out with ecclesiastical assistance. The term visitation refers to the belief that God would reveal innocence by preventing the normal consequences of, for example, contact with red-hot iron or boiling water (Bartlett 1986).

Trials by oath were also involved in a legal procedure, which required a joint oath sworn by oath-helpers and was the most common means of proof used in Denmark during the Middle Ages. It typically required "that twelve men by their oath reinforced confidence in an oath made by a defendant party" (Tamm 2009: 119). The defendant selected the oath-helpers and this procedure required that they all agreed to support the defendant's oath for the evidence to be upheld.

In the early 1200s, the church had however begun to doubt the use of visitation in legal proceedings and thus began to reject the rationality of these practices. The inquisitorial system attempted to establish the truth in a given case by evaluating the evidence and not merely – like with the former accusatorial principle – ensure that the necessary proof requirements were met beforehand. The church wanted the process to reflect that the truth was being sought and to ascertain if a crime had even been committed. The plaintiff would also have to a much larger degree prove that the accused was guilty. At The Fourth Council of the Lateran in December

1215, church leaders banned clergymen from taking part in trials by ordeal. This led to changes in procedural law in the majority of the secular principalities, where the church tried to replace the negative evidence with the positive (Andersen, 2006). The negative evidence, which implicitly meant that the accused was guilty until proven otherwise, was not in accordance with the ethical administration of justice, which the church wished to introduce in the secular sphere. For example, this was expressed in a papal letter from 1218 to Archbishop Anders Sunesen, in which Pope Honorius explicitly states that the church intended to eradicate the negative evidence, described as "that plague" in favour of positive evidence supporting the canonical – i.e. The Roman Catholic church – rules of evidence regarding witnesses and documents. The use of witnesses was a step towards tangible proof, a substantive proof that the church now preferred. This way of regarding the witness did not however demand that the witness had actually observed the events that s/he testified about, and in fact it was quite acceptable to just emulate the general perception of the event on the spot.

Focus on material evidence that would substantiate the claims of the parties changed slowly, and it was not until the 1500s that material evidence became commonplace as a key source of information about a crime. In 1683, it became a requirement of Danish Law that witnesses were reliable, and it was attempted to guarantee this by presenting two witnesses with consistent statements (Andersen 2010: 337).

From rational witnesses to witness testimonies

The process from using ordeals to the gradual introduction of material witnesses could be considered as a process of rationalisation with the medieval church as the driving force. As explained above, visitation was an external form of evidence, where the truth surrounding a particular sequence of events was determined by conditions, which in principle could not be influenced by the individuals since they were left to God's judgement (even though there were different strategies to pass both ordeals of fire and water). According to Max Weber (Weber 1978) it was an irrational form of proof that relied on magic or even miracles in order to be able to use it in the first place, which also became one of the arguments against it. Over time, the concept of evidence changed into a form of material evidence that dealt with the actual material circumstances surrounding a given course of events that sought to be objectively

uncovered. Evidence was thus transformed into an inner rational understanding of a course of events that a person had witnessed. Witness presentation took on a form where a key witness could describe the significant details of a course of events to such an extent that the description could be crucial to the outcome of the case. The tricky question for the court when reviewing the testimony is whether the witness is in fact telling the truth or not, and whether the explanation is supported by other circumstantial evidence which can lead to an acquittal or a conviction within a rational understanding of the recreated and retold reality. Naturally the law and the courts are aware that just because a witness offers comments on an event with all other evidence going against them, it does not automatically mean that the witness is not telling the truth, but perhaps just remembers or perceives a given situation differently (Jochimsen 2012). A rational understanding of how we can objectively observe reality and then objectively reproduce it through language lies behind this witness statement approach. Such a realisation may be difficult to maintain when post-modern science for several decades has shown that knowledge is something that is performatively constructed, and where language does not merely represent reality objectively, but creates and reshapes it in certain ways. As Derrida points out, words get their meaning relationally, which is why a word or a concept will always implicate other words and concepts. Therefore, the meaning of a word or a concept is open, and what a word/concept means is defined by how it differs from other terms (Derrida 1982). In this post-modern understanding, the subject is dissolved as we are always created and recreated in the different relations we partake in (Derrida 1991; Lacan 1989). In terms of the witness, this means that if the premise that the subject does not exist and the objective description does not exist either, the testimony can always be questioned. So can the premise to attribute truth or lack of truth in the statement – and the causalities that are embedded within the statement.

The witness's observation of a specific incident that may materially influence the case is based on knowledge obtained from personal experience or by having heard or read something. In other words, notions generated via sensory input, which are translated into compounds of words and concepts with inherent meaning. These are connected by the subject within its habitual realm of understanding of the causality chain of events, which the witness reproduces. This means that the witness, through his/her

linguistic preconceptions and categories of understanding of how pre-constructed objects may act in different situations, might post-rationalise and create a causal sequence of the events that provides subjective meaning to the witness.

In the retelling of a sequence of events, a subsequent empiricist examination is undertaken by reconstructing their true course. This entails a dimension where the witness, some time after experiencing the sensory impression, must recount what s/he experienced and often retell it again a number of times over a longer period of time. The witness embeds a sequence of events in his or her consciousness, which will be recalled in the future. The witness may also have to retell, repeatedly and over time, the chain of events to the police, the prosecutor and the courts. In this way, the witness's story represents a kind of frozen materialisation of a series of events in a subject that must bear and disseminate the incident on an objective level. It is common knowledge that such explanations can change over time, as the subject is influenced by continuous questioning, and the countless retellings and reconstructions carried out. Furthermore, a witness could have observed a sequence of events while in a state of affect or shock, so a scenario is experienced in a certain way, after which the affect or shock state abates and rationality kicks in again. It is a well-known fact that traumatic experiences may be difficult to recall, and how the questioning techniques used by therapists, support workers, police and prosecutors and others may affect the stories embedded in the witnesses. Hence, it is not an objective description of the case history that takes place but a narrative of a perceived event.

Art and artist as material witnesses

Art as witness faces some of the same challenges as the judicial witness, in the way that the artist cannot contribute with anything other than narratives from his/her time – about the moment of the crime. No matter which artistic agenda or material expression the artist uses in his attempt to mimetically, metaphorically or critically represent and give an alternative view of reality, the artist will always be marked by his/her own background, habitus and behavioural patterns. The artist's range of possible solutions for artistic production will depend on existing materials and processing techniques, and not in the least, placement and strength in relation to the surrounding power structures. Art history shows how the position from where the artist makes his/her statement must be

considered in relation to the field of power – where the artist's relation to other artists, to influential people (such as patrons, princes, kings, state leaders etc) and to important institutions (for example: the church, the state, royal family) have proven crucial to the art produced and the way in which art has been able to act as a witness of its time (Bourdieu 1996). The same is true of contemporary art.

The artwork can be seen as the frozen materialisation of the artist's view from his or her specific position within the contemporary artistic field. The work is transformed from the artist's specific outlook – determined by his or her background, habitus, behavioural patterns, position in the artistic field and choice of materials – into the materiality of an object that can be interpreted by the viewer – dependent and independent of its subjective creator. The interpretation of the work is also dependent on the viewer's own position and scope of view, just as future perceptions will be conditioned by the contexts in which the work is presented. The artwork as material witness is a narrative about world events that are heavily dependent on power constellations and the role of art in its time, as well as the viewer's own narrative and ability to decode the history of art.

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Currently Fictional (Gustav Bisgaard,
Sarah Ridao & Oscar Yran), Sif Hedegård,
Johanne Helga Heiberg Johansen,
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