



Fig. 3. Hein Heinsen, *Sculpture 85*, 1985.  
Bronze, 190 x 60 x 60 cm. Randers Museum of  
Art, Randers.

Fig. 4. Hein Heinsen, *The Hermitage and the  
Mountain Climber*, 1993. Mixed media,  
11 x 5 x 2 m. Sophienholm, Lyngby.

الشكل (٣) هاين هاينسن ، فن النحت ٨٥ ، ١٩٨٥ م  
برونز ١٩٠ × ٦٠ × ٦٠ سم متحف  
الفن راندرت  
الشكل (٤) هاين هاينسن ، متسلق الجبل - والصومعة  
١٩٩٣ ١١ × ٥ × ٢ م لينغباي ي









Fig. 5. Mogens Møller, *The Golden Urn in the Garden of Paradise*, 1991. Gold plated copper, h. 8 m, the female storyteller, h. 1,5 m. Gudenåen, Randers.

Fig. 6. Mogens Møller, *Wiedewelt 1731*, 1999. Bronze and copper, h. 9,5 m. The Royal Library, Copenhagen.

الشكل (٥) موجينز مولر ، ، الجرة الذهبية في حديقة الجنة ، ١٩٩١ ، نحاس مطلي بالذهب

الشكل (٦) موجينز مولر ، ويديولت ١٧٣١ ، ١٩٩٩ البرونز والنحاس ارتفاع ٩م المكتبة ، كوبنهاجن







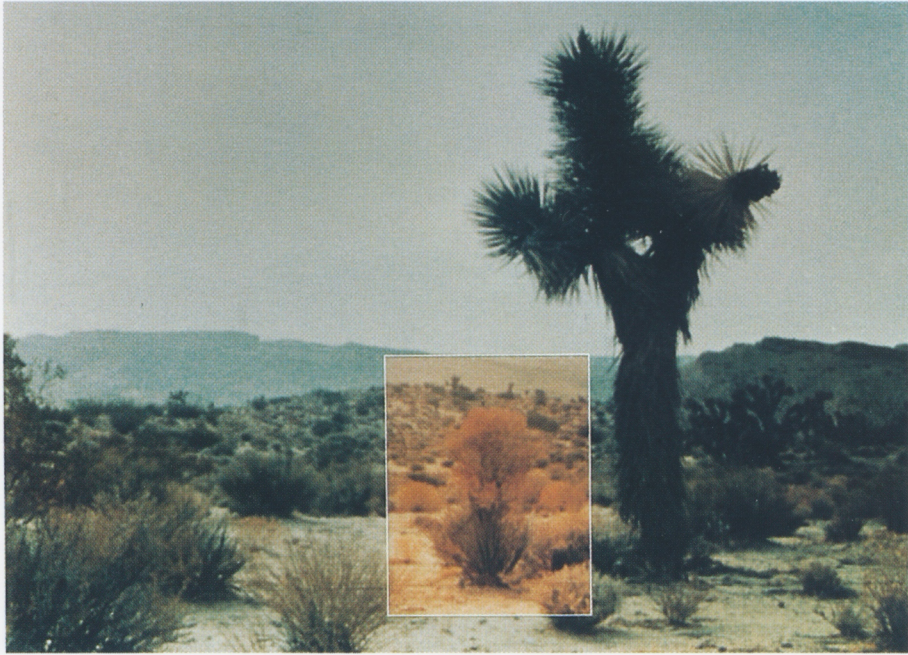


Fig. 7. Stig Brøgger, *Bushes, Nevada*, 1969.  
Color prints, 60 x 84 cm.

الشكل (٧) ستيج بروجر ، الأغصان، نيفادا ، ١٩٦٩

مطبوعات ملونه ، ٦٠ × ٨٤ سم





Fig 8. Stig Brøgger, *This is a library - it is not a painting*, 1992. Oil on different supports, front 1,9 x 11,41 m, back 1,3 x 11,41 m. Hinnerup Library, Hinnerup.

الشكل (٨) ستيج بروجر ، هذه مكتبة - وليست لوحة ،  
 ١٩٩٢ألوان الزيتية في أماكن مختلفة ، الواجهة ١٩ ×  
 ١١م ، الخلفية ٣ × ١١م مكتبة هينسراب ، في  
 مدينة هينسراب





Fig. 9. Dorte Dahlin and Mogens Møller,  
*Monument and Stairs*, 1997. Mixed media.

الشكل (٩) نورت داهلين وموجينز مولر ،  
النصب التذكارية والدرجات ، ١٩٩٧ هيرتسولز





Fig. 10. Dorte Dahlin, *The Green Square*, 1993.  
Mixed media. Hirtshals.

الشكل (١٠) دورت داهلين ، الساحة الخضراء ، ١٩٩٣ ،  
هيرتشلز



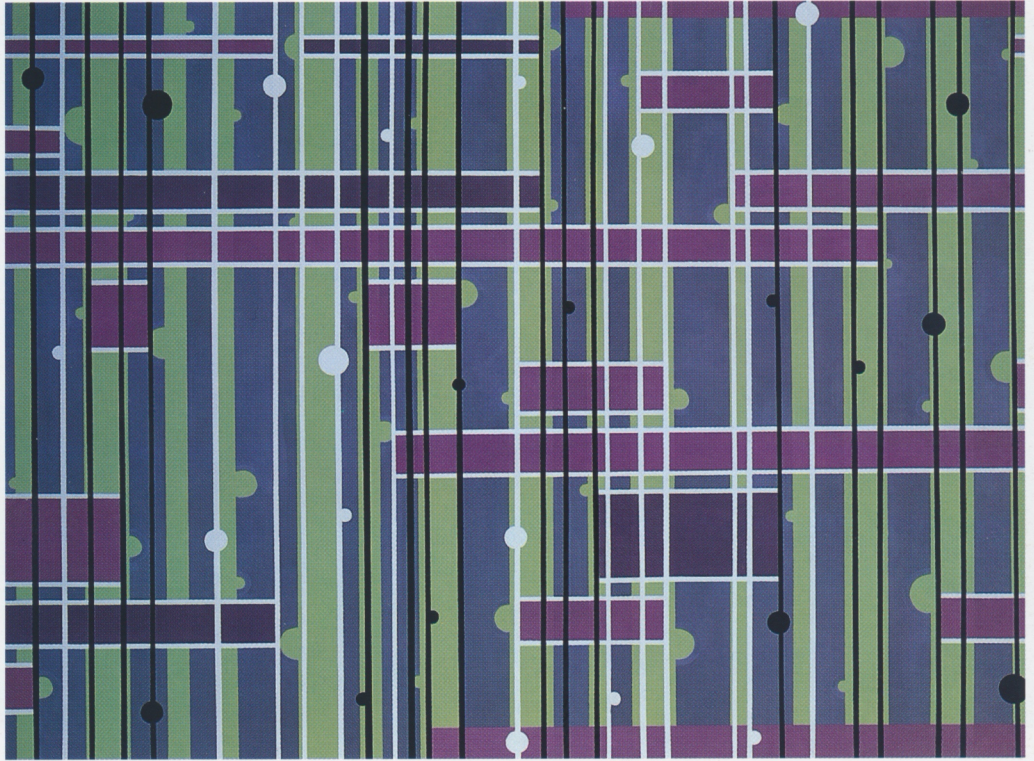


Fig. 11. Anette Abrahamsson, *Composition – Pinky never goes home*, 1992. Tempera on canvas, 180 x 240 cm.

الشكل (١١) أنيت أبراهامسون التنضيد- اللون القرنفلي  
لايذهب للبيت مطلقاً ١٩٩٢ مزج الألوان بالغراء على  
القماش ١٨٠ × ٢٤٠ سم



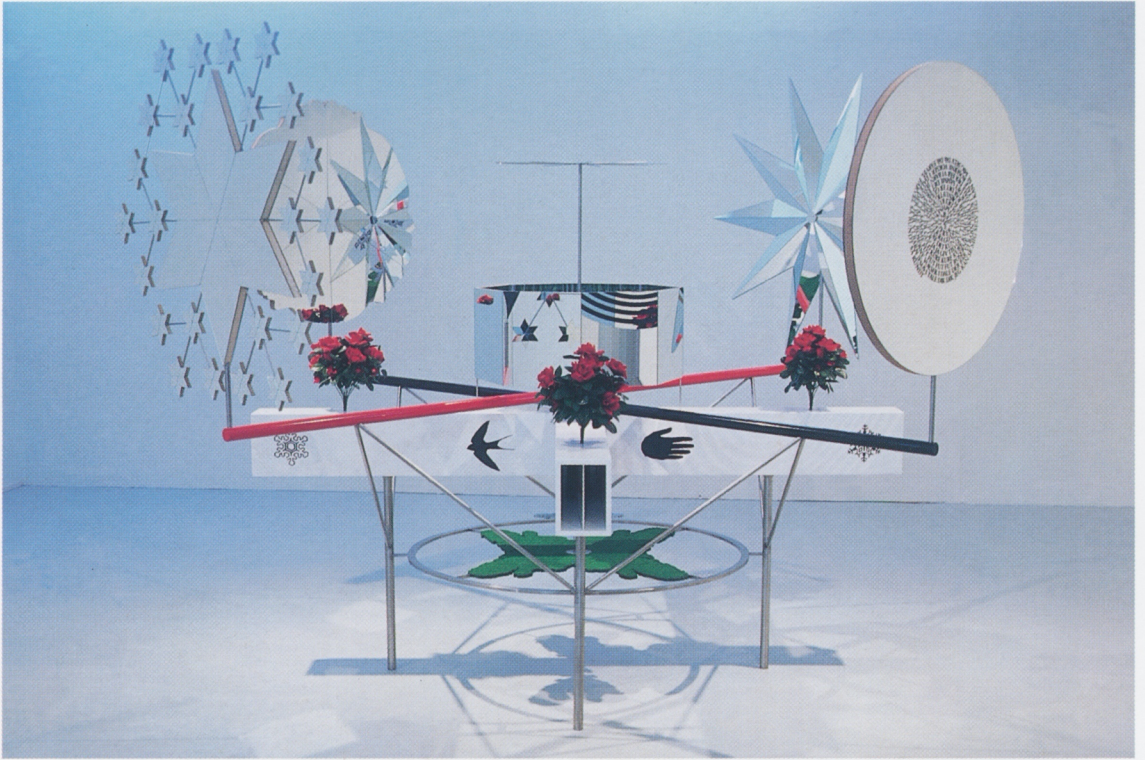


Fig. 12. Henrik B. Andersen, *Gerda and Kaj*, 1997. Mirrors, wood, steel and plastic, h. 215 cm, d. 312 cm.

الشكل (١٢) هنريك بي أندروسون ، جيردا وكاج ١٩٩٧  
 مرايا ، وخشب ، وفولاذ وبلاستيك ارتفاع ٢١٥سم والبعد  
 ٣١٢ سم





Fig. 13. Per Bak Jensen, *Overhead Railway Project*, 1990. 2 color prints, 185 x 260 cm. Nørrebro Station, Copenhagen.

الشكل (١٣) بير باك جينسين ، مشروع سكة الحديد  
العلوية. ١٩٩٠ مطبوعتان ملونتان ١٨٥ × ٢٦٠ سم محطة  
تورييرو ، كوينهاجن









Fig. 14. Annemette Larsen, *Untitled*, 1990.  
Pencil on paper, 148 x 210 mm.

الشكل (١٤) إيمنت لارسن بدون عنوان ، ١٩٩٠ ، قلم  
رصاص على ورقة ٢١٠ × ١٤٨ سم





Fig. 15. Tine Borg, *Missing Link*, 1992. Painted wood, black and white photo, 300 x 167 x 53 cm.

الشكل (١٥) تين بوج ، الحلقة المفقودة ١٩٩٢ خشب مطلي ، صورة أسود وأبيض ٣٠٠ × ١٦٧ × ٥٣ سم



Inspired by Chinese artists, in 1985 she departed from the traditional Western European conception of space in a very distinct manner, creating a new, often enigmatic space constructed out of a multiplicity of directions of the gaze. Chinese painting, which had a good deal of importance in the breakthrough in her artistic development, is described by her in the following way: "It was a traditional Chinese landscape painting with mountains and streams, done in Indian ink on a light, shaded scale that made the painting almost invisible. After having looked at the picture and let my eyes sink down into the almost unlit universe, I found an opening in it that became a kind of key to another conception of time, space, and body – and that put me on the track of spatial formations that may be described as "lost distance" and "rubber geometry" – in an attempt to attain breadth of view. For at the bottom of the picture, where one could follow – as though from a birds-eye view – a little path winding in and out between projecting rocks and thus wind one's way upwards in the picture, the recognizable landscape disintegrated in the middle of the picture into a kind of "cloud"; technically, this was achieved by a delicate change in the soft and light brush strokes to small "chops" with the tip of the brush. Thus the cloud could also be regarded as an enlarged area of bacteria. And this membrane, this field of oscillation or this enlarged vanishing point – which might also bring to mind a flickering television screen caught between two channels – functioned like a time machine in which the journey through the landscape was accomplished without one's body. Like a thought, the body – transparent and weightless – had crossed a great distance in one slow moment. Above the cloud the little path reappeared, only seen from below, but of the same breadth, as though nothing had happened."<sup>26</sup>

The art historian Mikkel Bogh defines "rubber geometry" as follows: "rubber geometry is characterized by – as the name implies – its soft form, but also by not limiting its domain to lines and forms. "Rubber geometry" encompasses the space as well as the choice of color, the light and

shade as well as the figure and the scale. It simply makes it possible, as part of one and the same geometry, to elaborate the painting's vague spaces, soft figures, shifts in color, transitions between loose and tight forms, the coincidence between foreground and background, and all the other conditions that split and spread the gaze. And the fact that this geometry is soft means in truth that it is not fixed on one single level – like in constructivism – nor on one single space – like in the linear perspective – but precisely becomes a geometry for the more or less chaotic gaps and intermediate dimensions."<sup>27</sup>

This complex geometry, which also visualizes a concept as elusive as memory, is developed through a kind of double gaze whereby one, as Dorte Dahlin remarks, "zooms one's eyes into the picture" and "looks closely with one eye and with the other achieves a distant general view."

Hence, Dorte Dahlin creates a new reality in her pictures that always juxtaposes in unexpected ways conceptions of space and ideas normally separated in time and space, thus establishing openings into a wonderful world previously outside our field of vision. In a series of light paintings from the 90s, there are reminiscences of Chinese and Muslim gardens, romantic mountain ridges, vast desert-like stretches or the blue firmament in the many disparate, fluid, and folded spaces behind the lace-like veil or gossamer haze of the fog. But upon shifting one's gaze, these allusions suddenly lose their recognizability through a drop or a dab of paint, becoming dim mirages in a lost understanding of distance. In the later paintings, where the vast and yet intense "blue desert space," which is painted in different techniques that give "the travelling eyes" different possibilities for immersion, the spaces are broken by white ovals. These ovals are gathered in chain formations that sometimes resemble microorganisms or distant constellations, sometimes appear as single elements – beads or holes – that twist space and time on invisible axes. This is certainly a visualization of the ambiguity and the unforeseeable developments characterizing our world and an allusion to the fact that history does not proceed in a pre-determined and certain way.

27. Mikkel Bogh, *Dorte Dahlin* (Copenhagen), p.17.



In Dorte Dahlin's works in public spaces, this multiplicity of disparate spaces and times appears in a new shape, giving overlooked aspects of our world a new value, such as in the works placed in the windblown fishing town of Hirtshals, in northern Jutland: *Den Grønne Plads* (The Green Square) (1993) and the big staircase, *Monument og Trappe* (Monument and Stairs) (1997), which she created in cooperation with Mogens Møller.

In *Den Grønne Plads* (fig. 10), the square itself is covered with a light grid reminiscent of a geometric sand bottom and a seaside beach. The "garden medallion" with its three stripes of fragrant thyme and other colorful plants from the surrounding dunes is like a lush island that has emerged from the sea and positioned itself somewhat obliquely on the grid. The stripes in the big oval point towards a little niche in the sheltering wall where one finds a weather station that registers the velocity of the wind. This weather station regulates the water supply of the two four-meter long basins pointing directly east-west and gazing like two small eyes towards the sea and up towards the heavens, just as so many of the town inhabitants do. The water follows the shifting movements of the sea, sounding like swells rolling in under the square, while atomized clouds of water spray out of the basins like white wings in the high wind. The Lyme grass in the "Heart of the Square," with its finely intertwined steel latticework, bends in the strong westerly wind or in sand storms and may be viewed as a symbol of the harsh life of the population up here on the northern west coast, where both the sand and the violent, capricious sea have again and again threatened its conditions of existence. But the "Heart of the Square" also contains a key to understanding "the lost distance." As small as it is in respect to the square, it renders visible the condition of the square as a point of presence for

the gaze that, on the one hand, is sent out to a barely visible vessel on the curved horizon line of the sea and, on the other, to the dot on the radar screen that sends electronic messages from "invisible satellite eyes." Thus, the "lost distance" is sensed and apprehended both through the overall gaze and the journey through time and space.

*Den Grønne Plads* has not one but many centers and hence several poetic spaces joined together, each creating a unique link to the town, the sea, and the sand dunes. The visitors who walk around the square meet a visualization of the present-day endless, interwoven spaces, but it is shaped in profound harmony with the place it frames. Likewise, the poetic Arabic gardens are not just a symbol of heavenly paradise, but they also contain relations to their natural surroundings. For the many murmuring brooks or the dead-calm basins, the profusion of flowers, and the stylized flower motifs on the brilliant mosaics refer to the brief fertility brought about by the heavy spring showers that cause the deserts and oases "to explode into colors."<sup>28</sup> A typical example of an Arabic garden is Dar Si Said in Mar-rakech, Morocco (fig. 2).<sup>29</sup> In addition to this, both the Islamic garden and Dorte Dahlin's square offer an integrated experience of sounds, scents, and visual impressions. But the medley of rich colors and the scents of the exotic flowers, the bright mosaics, and the rhythmic sound of the murmuring brooks in the Islamic gardens are in Dorte Dahlin's square replaced not just by the sound of the often violent sea swells and of the murmur of the basins, but also by the strong scent of the small red and white flowers from the dunes. Finally, in Dorte Dahlin's square, the inscriptions often interwoven in Arabic ornament are replaced by a poem by the prominent Danish poet Søren Ulrik Thomsen. This poem is inserted in the sheltering wall and contains an interpretation of the special atmosphere of the square, while at the same time directing the gaze in another direction:

"The trawlers – blacked-out, hushed

30. Translated by Dan A. Marmorstein.

28. Steen Estvad Petersen, op. cit., p. 5.

29. As Steen Estvad Petersen points out, it is "a garden in the shape of a cross with raised transepts (symbolizing the rivers of Paradise) and in the middle the fountain of life, which at the same time serves as a water reservoir from which the water is channeled to the four nursery beds. The ceiling of the pavilion is painted with cosmological themes that are mirrored in the water," (op. cit., p. 13, fig. p. 12).



lolling upon the sea.

With closed eyes and throbbing gills  
the shoal of herrings pauses askew in the depths.  
The fields are burning, tended by men  
leaning gently up against the tall pitchforks.  
Yesterday was yesterday  
each one comes to halt in his own space.”<sup>30</sup>  
(*New Poems*, 1987)

*Den Grønne Plads* – as Dorte Dahlin puts it herself – is “constructed as a horizontally outstretched and open work in which the different single parts are only conceived as coherent in a soft network of sensing, memory, and knowledge.” *Monument og Trappe*, on the other hand, is a compact and tightly knit monument (fig. 9). In its outer form it resembles a big wave crashing down on *Den Grønne Plads* around a narrow, sharply profiled bastion, where it either seems to be divided into two parts or where two dashes of the waves meet. Precisely because the stairway is shaped like one big wave, the sea and the square are linked through an impressive technique whose register is inspired by, indeed actually visualizes, the violent rhythm of the sea. The different sequences of the stairway create a series of spaces and different viewpoints, and these points visualize the relationship between the smallest entities and the greatest scales in nature, while at the same time directing attention toward cosmic space. This perspective is illustrated through the sculpturally shaped sequence of abstract forms in different sizes that “move” down towards the point at the harbor square where the two stair sequences meet. Between the two stair sequences a monumental ramp has been constructed on whose extreme edge is placed a group of mosaics and sculptures that has received the name *Scott*. The brilliantly colored cluster of mosaics is made of glass and resembles a tartan plaid with its red, green, yellow, and blue shades. The sculpture, which is modelled by Mogens Møller, is a snow-man cast in bronze and silverplated. The complicated network of structures covering its radiant surfaces alludes to that which we often overlook, the smallest

entities in nature – snow flakes, ice crystals, and drops of water. But in other spaces in this monumental installation the grand perspectives in the world and the firmament itself above us are visualized or exposed. The viewer thus does not only confront an illustration of the patterns inside the chaotic, rolling waves, but also allusions to the stars and the infinite distances in space.

Anette Abrahamsson was another young painter who in the beginning of the 80s registered and interpreted in a remarkable way the loss of meaning brought about by the rapid flow of images in the media.

But the paintings she created in the middle of the 80s were noticeably influenced by new orientations. At the time, she began to seriously experiment with the special illuminating power and rich subtleness of oil painting in order to create a counterpart to the electronic images of the media world and the mirages of the world of television.

In the series entitled *Intet sprog* (No Language) from 1987, the figurations disappear from the surface of the picture and are replaced by abstract forms faintly visible behind a veil of transparent colors. The spaces of the pictures are open, containing allusions to the infinite and the boundless. The pictures on which she works in the succeeding years, and in which she applies the delicate tempera technique, are also non-figurative. They are sometimes characterized by more precisely profiled geometric patterns, sometimes by more blurred contours (fig. 11). But in both cases the pattern effects – like in Islamic ornament – are structured in such a way that they seem to be able to continue forever, thus creating an illusion of cosmic space, which is without fixed limits and cannot be grasped through a picture.

In 1996 a new phase emerged in Anette Abrahamsson’s artistic development. The figure and the object became an integrated part of her pictorial universe in a new framework. In 1999 she characterized this shift in style in the following way: “My starting-point was to refer to some-thing very concrete, which in the context might point towards an abstract state of mind.”<sup>31</sup>

31. An unpublished *Artist statement* dated May 9, 1999.



She called this new phase of development *Post-Pop-Formalism*, and the fundamental view in this concept also influences the pictures she exhibits (figs. 16 and 17). These paintings contain on the one hand references to Pop Art's flat icons of everyday objects and media images, but on the other hand new and sensual qualities have been added to them through the tempera technique. For precisely this technique has given the pictures a velvety character and a special luminous fullness that does not just create intensity and presence, but establishes a spatial dialogue with the spaces and lines out of which the figures are constructed. On the surface of the picture, figures and objects are placed within their respective spaces. They are completely alone and stare into space with almost empty eyes. And even though there are several figures in the same picture, no meaningful relationship exists between them. As a result, the line and the contour acquire special meaning. An intense arabesque-like link is created between them. The eyes, consisting of curved and arched lines, are intertwined in this composition like small patterns or holes that point back toward the geometric patterns with which she occupied herself previously and toward her basic abstract pic-torial practice as such. Figures from our time are brought into a complex, arabesque-like space. It is above all the expressive and highly significant network of arabesques and the large areas of color that create complexity and intensity in the pictures. This pattern of lines alludes to Islamic ornament, which is either entirely abstract or made up of highly stylized flower motifs. Along with the areas of color, the complex patterns – the arabesques – carry an independent expressive force.

The Danish philosopher Per Aage Brandt has described the general lines of Anette Abrahamsson's art in connection with an analysis of "the essence of the picture":

32. Per Aage Brandt, "Inhabitable Structures – New Considerations Concerning the Essence of the Picture." Article in the exhibition catalogue for *Anette Abrahamsson*, Norrköpings Konstmuseum, December 3, 1995–January 21,

"The images give, are given to us, again and again. Nothing massively interferes in between their recurrences. We just don't know when we will find them again, within which presently possible network. Therefore, art is never ensnared in a time, hostage of a time. Because *no dated time* or era could constitute the "ground," or ultimate meaning, of any image. The structure – which is the very possibility of the image – prevents this, I would say. On the contrary, we do only inhabit one time, just as we inhabit one place, insofar as we see its now as an entirely specific infolding of the past within that future, where the past lies in wait for us. Reappearance's specific awaiting-us constitutes the "specific" of the present. What can we expect? Or to put it another way, which images await us? If we knew *that*, then we would know where we were. But if we don't know that, we can at least investigate our own expectations, as we move so far into the images as we can, or as far as they allow us. That is precisely what the artist is doing, consequently her extreme sense of present-tense. The artist is a "reality maker", in this respect. Not by "making up", but by rediscovering, day by day, the future's past-folds. There is, or there is given, no more direct access to the contemporary, the "specificity" of the present, than this *ent(er)*-ance through the structures that we *presently* find inhabitable.<sup>32</sup>

#### *New sculptural concepts with associations to Islamic Art*

As early as 1983, shortly after the young painters had created new orientations in painting, a number of distinctive young sculptors entered the

33. See Mikkel Bøgh's foreword to the catalogue *Juxtaposition*, an exhibition organized by Mikael Andersen, April 29–June 6, 1996, pp. 5-6.

34. The quotation is from Else Marie Bukdahl's book *The Baroque. A Recurrent Inspiration* (The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, 1998), p. 55. Translated into English by Stacey M. Cozart.

35. Mikkel Bøgh, "Lethed og tyngde – den nye skulptur" (Lightness and Heaviness – New Sculpture) in *Ny Dansk Kunsthistorie* (New Danish Art History), vol. 10, *Kunsten i mediernes tid* (Art in the Age of the Media) 1996, p. 143.



art scene. Among them Henrik B. Andersen, Søren Jensen, Øivind Nygård, Morten Stræde, and Elisabeth Toubro are especially worthy of note. They were all interested in creating unique new sculptural concepts that could serve as a bulwark

against increasing entropy and the free exchange of signs in information society. Their sculptures contained new formal operations that actualized in an independent way a dialogue with, for instance, the Baroque and Classicism, intensifying the meaning of place and space. In addition to this, they gave priority to the outer over the inner, the object over the subject, complexity over simplicity, open space over closed space. As Mikkel Bogh expresses it, a number of these sculptors' works almost have the "character of a series of frozen explosions that have left profound folds in history."<sup>33</sup> In Morten Stræde's words, especially "the surface of the sculpture constitutes the battlefield, the matter that the subject gnaws away at, and in which are inscribed the most diverse strategies and conversations with art and literature from the past."<sup>34</sup> But each of these sculptors has his or her own individual sculptural concepts and objectives.

In the 80s, one of these sculptors, Henrik B. Andersen, was particularly preoccupied with what he called the sculpture's "being," that is, the condition that a work of sculpture must be present in the space in the same way as people and things in the world we know. His sculptures from this decade contain many original answers to how one, as Mikkel Bogh puts it, could evade the fact that "sculpture, which of course must necessarily be figurative and narrative, avoids allusions to an overfilled and far too meaningful cultural space."<sup>35</sup> Henrik B. Andersen has succeeded in creating a series of original sculptures that are inordinately present in their space, capture new perspectives in our familiar world, and make allusions to the universe. In the 90s, his conception of sculpture was constantly being

expanded and changed, achieving an incredible scope. He created large and highly complicated works that contained an overwhelming accumulation of historical references and spatial and figurative dimensions that – like in a Bach sonata – are always being varied and set in new contexts. But in this multiplicity of materials, forms, and spaces a unifying interior movement always arises, making it possible for the viewer to grasp the work's new interpretation of our constantly changing, complex, and fragmented world.

Like enigmatic sphinxes, his most recent sculptures take possession of their space in a slow but steady way.

This complicated and tight sequence of repetitions and the often unexpected variations also form a bulwark against the figure of speed and velocity in our culture.

The use of repetition as a primary figure for accumulating meaning and creating renewal or exposing unexpected connections is one of the most characteristic features in Henrik B. Andersen's latest works. His sculptural interpretation of repetition also contains indirect references to Islamic art. For precisely this figure is the most prominent fundamental harmony in Islamic ornament, where the different elements are varied over and over again and continuously set in new contexts so that extremely complex pattern

effects are created. Important sides of the Islamic tradition are thus maintained, while at the same time renewal is generated and new meanings arise. But the subtle and detailed pattern effects are not actually a part of a visible whole. For, as Ernst J. Grube writes: "By accounting for part of a pattern that in its entirety only exists in eternity, the Muslim artist links the momentaneous, the apparently limited – with eternity itself."<sup>36</sup> But in Henrik B. Andersen's large works the repeated

38. Hans Christian Andersen, *The Snow Queen*, in *The Complete Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales*, ed. Lily Owens (New York, 1984), p. 73.

39. Hans Christian Andersen, op. cit., p. 75.

40. See the catalogue from the exhibition *Lftor. Kunst, Arkitektur og det offentlige rum* (Art, Architecture, and Public Space), Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, 1997, p. 243.

41. Cited from an unpublished text from 1998.

36. Ernst J. Grube, *Islamisk Kunst* (1966), op. cit., p. 11.

37. Cited from an unpublished text from 1998.



varying structures are changed much more frequently than is the case in Islamic art, thus coming to resemble – as he himself notes – those of the Baroque: “The Baroque repetition goes beyond its initial conditions by folding over itself and thus changing and developing new forms that cannot be followed back to the first forms.”<sup>37</sup>

This is revealed as clearly as possible in his complicated work *Gerda og Kaj* (Gerda and Kaj) (1998) (fig. 12). For in the different sequences of form, the repeated structure branches off in varying ways in all directions so that in the end it becomes a densely woven pattern. Gerda and Kaj are the principal characters in Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale *The Snow Queen*, which is translated into virtually all the languages of the world. The Snow Queen’s ice palace is described by Hans Christian Andersen thus: “In the midst of its empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake, broken on its surface into a thousand forms; each piece resembled another, from being in itself perfect as a work of art, and in the centre of this lake sat the Snow Queen, when she was at home. She called the lake “The Mirror of Reason,” and said that it was the best, and indeed the only one in the world.” And it was in fact Kaj who played “the icy game of reason”: “Kaj’s fingers were very artistic; it was the icy game of reason at which he played, and in his eyes the figures were very remarkable, and of the highest importance.”<sup>38</sup> After having searched for Kaj for a long time, Gerda finds him with the Snow Queen, and the two return together to their own world. While observing that “[t]he roses on the roof were in full bloom, and peeped in at the window,”<sup>39</sup> they suddenly realize that they are both grown up, and love blossoms between them.

The fairy tale about reason – and its iciness – and the life-giving power of love has been visualized by Henrik B. Andersen in such a way that the fundamental theme itself is played through in an interlacing pattern of different variations that are crossed and reflected in the

different mirrors and thus joined in infinitely many ways. Henrik B. Andersen also calls his compositional technique *osmosis* – the passage of liquids through porous walls and membranes<sup>40</sup> – the passage that Hans Christian Andersen relates in his fairy tale and that is both varied and reinterpreted in this contemporary work of sculpture.

The overall theme in this and related works is characterized by Henrik B. Andersen as follows: “I see my works as open and closed. With their metaphors they weave their way into their time, but with their masks and crystalline structures they close themselves inwards toward themselves in the acknowledgement that only closed but infinite spaces can form new languages.”<sup>41</sup>

Henrik B. Andersen also views the desert as a place without signs and thus where the inspiration to create images is greatest. He expresses this idea in the following way: “I forget a grain of sand in the palm of my hand. I turn around and a space whose geometry still hasn’t found its shape pulls at me, making my thought heavy. I have forgotten and I look in; I get a picture, my eye becomes double, I look out while looking in, finally I only look in; not until then can I create, not until then have I forgotten. I look out into the empty space that is no longer empty because my inner gaze imaginarily fills up the space.”<sup>42</sup>

Henrik B. Andersen’s sculptural activities are on the whole influenced by his keen awareness of the ability of sculpture to communicate in a particularly intense and present way interpretations of the aspects of the world that are impossible to grasp linguistically.

### *Breakthroughs in photography*

Photography also took a central position in the Danish art scene of the 80s and was influenced by

42. Henrik B. Andersen, “Til Walter De Maria. *The Lightning Field*, New Mexico,” in the draft of a poetics of sculpture, “Noter til det der står stille” (Notes on That Which Stands Still), in *Kritik*, no. 137, 1999, p.58.

43. Poul Erik Tøjner, “Metafysisk realisme – om Per Bak Jensens fotografi” (Metaphysical Realism – on Per Bak Jensen’s Photography), which is an article in the catalogue for the exhibition *New York. 1890-1990*, Sophienholm, 1990-1991, p. 28.

44. Per Bak Jensen, *Stedernes væsen / The Being of Places*, in English with Anita Bay Mogensen (Copenhagen, 1993), p. 3.



many new figurative aspects and existential undertones. The photographer Krass Clement was thus not only interested in depicting the reality surrounding him, but also used it – just like the poet – as a symbol of fundamental existential viewpoints.

Per Bak Jensen, who is also one of the prominent Danish photographers of the 80s' generation, has used photography as an artistic means of expression in a particularly intense and still way. With a wealth of subtleties of expression, he has captured what he himself calls the "essence" of the empty places – the forest floor, empty squares, deserted streets, freeways void of cars, or monuments shrouded in the morning fog. Through his singular photographic interpretation he makes the mysterious and silent places "talk." The Danish art critic Poul Erik Tøjner is correct in stating the following: "here in the absence of the enterprising daily pulse, but right in between its traces, Per Bak Jensen positions his eye and makes the places available for meaning. There is a sensual surcharge of references in the photographs of the cultural facade of the city – park, statue, cornices, ornament – and at the same time a vacuum of meaning, so that the viewer is drawn into the picture."<sup>43</sup>

In a book entitled *The Being of Places* (1993), Per Bak Jensen has compiled a series of the best of his photographs. This work gives a subtle impression of the scope and originality of his photography. He has always been interested in capturing the spirit of places or, as he puts it: "I have always been interested in places. I believe that each place carries a secret, a riddle, and if one stays at the place long enough one can sense the riddle of the place. I try, in my pictures, to capture the riddle of places. My pictures do not pose questions or give answers, they form the entrance of the secret of places. Consciously or unconsciously I have always applied a method with which I wanted to create a picture showing both the being of the place and the mind answer-

ing the message of the place."<sup>44</sup>

In Denmark there is no desert. On the whole there are very few deserted landscapes. But in the winter, when the cities and landscapes are enveloped in snow and fog, the landscape appears in such a way that it – as Per Bak expresses it – may be called "a white desert." In the photographs he displayed at this exhibition, he in fact took pictures of the snow landscapes so that they contained associations to the Arabic desert (figs. 32 and 33). The white snow-covered nature scenes merge with the fog to form an indeterminate evocative unity. All contours disappear and an enigmatic, seemingly endless landscape stands out for the viewer. In Per Bak Jensen's pictures, the Arabic desert's yellow modulations of color that leave their imprint on the landscape as far as the eye can see, and the sand storms that dim the view from time to time are replaced by snow-covered white surfaces and the elusive veil of the fog in which they are shrouded.

Per Bak Jensen has also made works for public spaces. These include *Projekt Højbanen* (Overhead Railway Project) (1990) (fig. 13), which consists of two gigantic color photographs of completely empty stretches of freeway bordered by the great deep-blue firmament. The pictures visualize a state of calm and create space for contemplation in the middle of the stressful life in the city, where the quick rhythm obscures time-honored humane values. This is how Baudrillard has experienced the empty freeways, which is why he calls them "the modern deserts."

The art historian Ingrid Fischer Jonge rightfully remarks that "the invitation to contemplative concentration is implicitly present in Per Bak Jensen's photography. Empirical reality supplies the theme for it, but a new universe emerges behind that which one believes one recognizes."<sup>45</sup>

### *Renewal in the Art of Drawing*

46. Jørgen Herman Monrad, "Zehn Zeichnungen von Annemette Larsen." Afterword to Søren Ulrik Thomsen's above-mentioned collection of poems, *Hjemfalden/Anheimgefallen* (Kleinheinrich, 1993), pp. 152-

45. Ingrid Fischer Jonge, "Det fotografiske billede" (The Photographic Picture) in *Ny Dansk Kunsthistorie*, vol. 10 (Copenhagen, 1996), p. 200.



In the 70s, the art of drawing lived in obscurity. But in the 80s, when painting and sculpture again assumed a dominant position, this art form was also brought to light and came to stand as an independent artistic form of expression. Annette Larsen is one of the artists who rendered it visible in a particularly poetic way.

Until 1987 she experimented with different forms of expression and techniques. For the most part she manoeuvred in a field between sculpture and installation art. But in the exhibition *Tinnonnen*, which was held in Malmö, Sweden, in 1987, she arrived at the form of expression that she has cultivated with great intensity ever since. This genre is a time-consuming one that only uses a single yet complicated technique: pencil drawing.

The genre of pencil drawing is especially useful for illustrating books. Annette Larsen has among other things made a number of incredibly delicate drawings as illustrations for Søren Ulrik Thomsen's collection of poems *Hjemfalden* (Reversion) (1993). With a steady hand she has captured the slight differences and broad perspectives so characteristic of Søren Ulrik Thomsen's poems. Jørgen Herman Monrad has rightfully made the following observations about these drawings:

"For almost a year she has carefully scratched, hachured, added lines, ornament, or surfaces and again erased them until layers upon layers of fine silvery lead saturated the paper. Time itself is drawn and ground into the paper. The lead has gained depth, but its pale reflection is hiding something. What is it that is hidden? Is it the landscape where the smallest things are: chromosomes, grain germ, the small seed corns (...)? Is it the landscape where the biggest things are: the endless sequence of numbers, the submerged continents and the meteor paths? (...) No one knows yet, for that which the pale reflection of the lead hides is the circle of beginning."<sup>46</sup>

A number of her recent drawings interpret a world where the metaphysical world and our reality are interwoven in many surprising ways. In several of them there are clearly recognizable associations to Islamic art and culture (fig. 14). The pictorial space is often ambiguous. Enigmatic cloud

formations float in front of the scenes with figures, suggesting a metaphysical or a divine dimension. In several of the drawings the viewer encounters desert tents marked by considerable materiality and yet without heaviness. Inside the tent one can just make out the presence of a gesturing figure. Small desert flowers are spread out across the surface. The lace-like pattern of dots appears as points in the endless space surrounding it. The motif becomes blurred, turning into phantasms with blurred contours, but always marked by great intensity. It appears as though a thin veil was placed between the artist and the motif. The physical world fades out of sight, turning into dim formations that precisely due to their indistinctness and distance make space for new perspectives. In the space constructed there are always unpredictable forces present. Often the infinitely branched areas and pattern effects of the landscape are mapped out. Across this pattern run nervous vertical tracks suggesting movement. In other cases the pattern takes the form of a mosaic. On the whole, Annette Larsen uses the pencil like a magic wand, inscribing unexpected associations and meanings in her drawings. In a contemporary language she has captured the atmosphere and the poetry characterizing so many of the small paintings illustrating Islamic books.

47. Kasper Nefer Olsen, "Artikulation og kontinuum. Kunsten i det uendelige delta" (Articulation and Continuum. Art in the Endless Delta), in the exhibition catalogue for *Proms*, Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik (Odense, 1992), p. 26.

48. See Carsten Juhl's article, "Omkring installationens æstetik (og filosofi). Med særligt henblik på de første seks udstillinger i Galleri Max Mundus" (On the Aesthetics (and Philosophy) of the Installation. With a Special Focus on the First Six Exhibitions in Gallery Max Mundus), in *Formelle Rum, Æstetikstudier III*, edited by Morten Kyndrup and Niels Lehmann (Århus, 1996), pp. 187-218. This gallery was founded in 1994, but is now closed.

49. Michael Hübl, "Set udefra" (Seen from the Outside), an article in the exhibition catalogue for *Skulptur i Eventyrhaven og Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik* (Sculpture in the Fairytale Garden and Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik) (Odense, 1993), p. 7. The exhibition of sculptures in Eventyrhaven in Odense is reputed to be one of the best outdoor presentations of sculpture. This garden was created in honor of Denmark's world famous writer of fairy-tales, Hans Christian Andersen. The Odense stream winds its way through the garden, at the center of which is an impressive pergola circle designed by the famous Danish landscape architect C. Th. Sørensen.



### *Innovations in the art of the 90s*

In the European art of the 90s, a number of new artistic forms of expression emerged, while *Conceptual Art* and various kinds of installation art again achieved a prominent position, but they were included in a rather different context and enhanced by new artistic registers. This was not least due to the fact that the new media – computer and video – often became integrated elements of the artistic processes. In Denmark a number of groups of vital young artists took the new challenges up for revision, creating a variety of artistic activities that contained new interpretations of our everyday reality and of the concept of sculpture. The watering down of values that has occurred in information society influenced the young artists' outlooks. In the exhibition *Proms* (1992), several representatives of these groups participated, among others Henrik Plenge Jacobsen and Tine Borg. In the exhibition catalogue the Danish philosopher Kasper Nefer Olsen correctly observed that as different as these artists are, they share an interest not just in "creating valid art in a uniform cultural space," but also in "articulating an original relationship between artist, work, and viewer."<sup>47</sup>

Tine Borg is co-founder of the gallery *Max Mundus*, where she and several of her colleagues – among them Anja Franke, Lars Mikkelsen, and I. N. Kjaer – have presented new kinds of installation art. Through their works they have created a place of refuge that visualizes a multi-faceted network of relations to the worlds of art and science, to nature, to the institutions, and to media society. Unexpected linking between new areas has been part of their artistic activities, in particular between politics, bureaucracy, pollution, chemistry, physics, and urbanism.<sup>48</sup>

Tine Borg often takes objects or forms already present in our world as the starting point in her works, elaborating them in such a way that both their appearance and meaning are changed and invested with a new power of fascination. Or, as the German art critic Michael Hübl puts it: "In her exactly balanced art, she transforms impressions and experiences from her own reality in a closed yet still plausible system."<sup>49</sup> The enlarged string of beads that she has placed in three of her sculptural installations creates particularly distinct patterns of

new meanings, and it also uncovers different poetic reminiscences (fig. 15). She explains how these strings of beads that have been put into surprising contexts contain a network of associations to both the European and the Islamic world:

"I have been interested in the phenomenon of the string of beads about as long as I have sculpted. At first I saw the string of beads as an ornament for the body. I "transposed" the string of beads to sculpture and was interested in getting the sculptural aspect of the individual beads and of the structure to say something new about the body. Later, during a trip to the Islamic world, I saw a rosary with 99 beads. I saw men go to pray in the mosques with their rosaries, which were used to keep account of a prescribed number of prayers or sacred names, and I saw how the men stood on the street corners after prayer, rolling some of the beads around between their fingers. I realized here that the string of beads is not just a piece of jewellery for the body, it is also an instrument for prayer that says quite a bit about repetitions, about renewal, about endlessness and cosmos – just like the desert. To me the string of beads represents by way of Islam a sculptural world that spans a scale from the single little concrete bead to the body as ornament to the endless cosmos and back again. The string of beads is like a film in which every single, absolute bead is a picture in an endless story."<sup>50</sup>

Thus, since the end of the 60s numerous Danish visual artists have attempted to find what an anonymous Arabic poet has called the "world of reenchantment." It is a world constantly undergoing change, where one does not long for an always lost "enchantment" but rather recreates it in a contemporary shape, on contemporary terms, interpreting it in the pictorial or sculptural idiom of the times or through other artistic media. But a "world of reenchantment" is also a world where a fruitful and extensive interplay exists between tradition and innovation, such that the innovations might organically blossom out of the many growth layers of national culture – both in Europe and in the Arabic world.

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50. Quoted from an unpublished text from 1999.