

SEVEN FROM AFAR

Seven From Afar

Sharjah Art Museum, UAE, 2004

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SEVEN FROM AFAR

With tremendous support from His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, the Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, the Directorate of Art (Department of Culture & Information) and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts are taking the initiative of developing a solid base for an innovative dialogue through this cultural program.

The interest shown by both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of foreign Affairs in Denmark encouraged Dr.Else Marie Bukdahl, Rector of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and the artist Dorte Dahlin in proceeding with this rewarding project with Sharjah as they had been showing keen interest in formulating a cultural exchange programme in order to create close ties between the innovators of both these friendly nations.

They both consider Sharjah as a very important cultural venue which continues to attract international and Arab cultural events and believes in its vital role in promoting the human knowledge and in shaping its cultural future.

This time Sharjah is going to host the exhibition *Seven from Afar* with the participation of 7 alumni of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. A scientific workshop will be held in association with this exhibition where detailed discussion will take place about Art and Science. The title for the workshop is "The relation between sculpture and place..Art in public areas"

The Department of Culture and Information is grateful to everyone who took part in realizing this scheme which helps strengthen the links between the Arab and western cultures and at the same time creates a good opportunity to exchange their creative ideas. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and to all those involved in this exhibition. Our special thanks to Dr.Else Marie Bukdahl, rector of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Dorte Dahlin, Rasmus Eckardt and Lars Greenwood for the good work exerted towards the welfare of both our communities.

Directorate of Art
Department of Culture & Information.

Visit of visual artists from Denmark to the Sharjah Art Museum

Else Marie Bukdahl, President of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and Dorte Dahlin, Visual Artist

Both the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Danish Ministry of Culture have wished to extend and intensify the cooperation with the Arab world that Denmark has had since the 18th century. For this reason they decided that the *Danish Secretariat for International Cultural Relations*, which administers their joint cultural projects, should draw up a cultural exchange project between Denmark and Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. That the choice fell on Sharjah was due to the fact that the Emirate has long been known for its fruitful and successful endeavours to create a dialogue between the Arab world and Europe.

Both the Biennial as well as other arrangements have been inspirational meeting-points for artists, poets and other representatives of Western and Arab culture. The artist Dorte Dahlin and President of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts Else Marie Bukdahl were invited to draw up this cultural exchange programme, which was designed in close collaboration with the *Department of Culture and Information of Sharjah*. Dorte Dahlin and Else Marie Bukdahl have both headed and participated in a number of projects in Sharjah. In 2000 Dorte Dahlin, together with colleagues in Sharjah's *Department of Culture and Information*, arranged the exhibition *Overlaps* with the participation of Danish artists and architects. Poetry readings, lectures and workshops were attached to the exhibition. In connection with these projects and during the Sharjah Biennial in 2001 plans were laid for future projects, and friendships were formed between the Danes and their colleagues in Sharjah. His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, the members of the *Department of Culture and Information* and Mr. Hisham Al Madhloum, the curator of the Museum of Fine Arts in Sharjah have always received their Danish guests with great generosity and created the best possible conditions for their collaboration with their colleagues in Sharjah.

The first project in the cultural exchange programme was a very successful exhibition, which was shown at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts under the title *Five From Afar*. The exhibition featured five prominent Sharjan artists: Karima Al Shomely ambiguous installations offered universally relevant interpretations of Arab culture, while Tarek Al-Ghoussein's intense photographs rendered the Palestinian people's search for an identity and a home country in visual terms; Abdul Rahim Salem contributed "4 works, a tent like canopy of canvas stretched across ceiling, wall and floor", establishing a surprising unity of painting and installation art; Khalil Abdul Wahid presented video art exploring the relation between the virtual and the real world and setting up an effective contrast to Mohammad Ahmed Ibrahim's sculptures, which somehow seemed to suggest that they had been created by nature itself.

The exhibition was received with enthusiasm. In the daily newspaper *Politiken* Kristine Kern wrote that it presented "excellent works" that revealed new aspects of "Arab culture", while at the same time containing universal perspectives. The exhibition catalogue with a text by Talal Mualla reinforces

the impression of the range and quality of the exhibited works.

The next project in the cultural exchange programme is also an art exhibition. It will open at the Museum of Fine Arts in Sharjah in April under the title *Seven From Afar*. Five of the exhibiting artists - Lars Grenaa, Rasmus Eckardt, Anne Marie Ploug, Bertil Skov Jørgensen and Smike Kászner - are primarily graphic artists, who trained at the School of Graphic Arts more or less concurrently under Professor Vibeke Mencke Nielsen. The Academy's first female professor, Vibeke Mencke Nielsen created a school in which the exploration of the possibilities of the graphic arts and new departures from traditional practices flourished. Whether working in serigraphy, lithography, photogravure or digital imaging processes, all five artists explore new ways of exploiting the many expressional possibilities of the graphic arts. Another shared feature is that all of them are seeking, each in his or her own way, to create visual interpretations of the social and cultural life of our time, to render it immediate and relevant, to subject it to critical examination or to reveal new perspectives.

Another artist participating in the exhibition is Erik Steffensen, presently Professor at the School of Graphic Arts at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. Besides renewing the course of instruction at the School, he has made significant and innovative contributions to the graphic arts, painting and photography. The seventh contributor is his assistant Professor Finn Naur, who exhibited at the Biennial in Sharjah in 2003. He has in particular broken new ground in photogravure and installation art.

A seminar devoted to two themes will be attached to the exhibition *Seven From Afar*. One of the themes is the relation between art and science, while the second concerns works in public space and projects for such works in both Denmark and Sharjah.

Both the participating artists and the other Danish representatives are very much looking forward to visiting Sharjah and taking part in what has proved to be such a fruitful cooperation. We wish to express our gratitude to His Highness Sheik Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, the members of the *Department of Culture and Information* in Sharjah and Hisham Al Madhloum and his staff for their generous support for this exhibition and the accompanying seminar. We must also thank the Danish Ministry of Culture and the Danish foundations that have supported the project. Finally, special thanks are due to the artists Rasmus Eckardt and Lars Grenaa, who have curated the exhibition. At the same time we are also looking forward to the realisation of the projects under the cultural exchange programme that are already under preparation. These are two site-specific projects in Sharjah, headed by artists Dorte Dahlin and Mogens Møller. Later projects will be *Superflex's* video projects and translations of modern Arab poetry into Danish and of modern Danish poetry into Arabic.

These projects will help to further profile the links between Arab and Danish culture.

A Brief History of the School of Graphic Arts

Vibeke Mencke Nielsen, Painter, graphic artist, Professor at the School of Graphic Arts, 1989-1998

The School of Graphic Arts, established around 1920, is one of the youngest of the Schools of Visual Arts at the 250-year-old Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. Despite its relatively young age and short line of professors and teachers, the School has left its mark on the development of Danish art.

Prints as a form of expression have existed for hundreds of years. They could be used for conveying information, in book form, as posters, for duplication and for reproducing the works of other artists.

For years - parallel to their work with painting and sculpture - Danish artists had expressed themselves through the graphic arts. The small paper formats could do something different, different even from drawings. Etching had its own silver-gray colour and dry point its own special black. It was common to exchange graphic sheets with other artists, and collections arose. For example, one of Europe's oldest collections is to be found in Copenhagen: the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Statens Museum for Kunst, which is open to students and researchers.

The Danish artist J. F. Willumsen (1863-1958) spent long periods in Spain and France, where, among other things, he saw the Spanish artist F. Goya's (1746-1828) etchings and met the French Impressionists, Paul Gauguin's new woodcuts and the early Symbolists. With new experiences and a large French photogravure press Willumsen returned to Denmark, where he surprised the public with his exhibitions of new graphic works.

Almost at the same time (1905) Norway's great artist Edvard Munch exhibited his pioneering graphic sheets in Copenhagen, giving rise to an explosive growth of interest in the dissemination of this medium among Danish artists. 1909 saw the foundation of "The Society of Graphic Artists" to mark that it was now possible to speak of a free and autonomous form of art.

At the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts there had long been an interest in working with etchings, but the technical facilities were lacking. Around 1920 a professor of painting, Axel Jørgensen, took the first steps towards establishing a department for the graphic arts. Experiments were carried out in the professor's kitchen, among other things, with etchings and fusing powdered resin onto metal plates for aquatint etchings. The department attracted a large number of students, and soon a head of department was appointed, the artist Holger J. Jensen (1900-1966), who was to become the first professor of graphic arts in 1963.

Long before this, however, the flowering of the graphic arts had exercised a profound influence that can still be felt today in a graphic tradition deeply indebted to the founder of the School Axel Jørgensen's view on life - a consciousness of the surrounding world that also appeared in Edvard Munch's prints.

When a school, and with it a tradition, grows to strength and maturity, it will often be followed by a kind of counter-school, an ex-school, and this is just what happened at the beginning of the 1960s. This school was formed by young artists from outside the Academy. They were concerned with an experimental art inspired partly by the new American Pop Art and partly by an expressionism that turned against the traditional narrative element in the graphic arts.

The young artist Poul Gernes, who later became a professor at the Academy, described the new simplification that took place as follows: "First the solemn and the allegorical went, then the recognizable motif, and soon all that remained was the construction of the motif. Then that went too, leaving only form, surface and colour. When that was also thrown overboard, the only thing left was the structure." After which Poul Gernes hit a copper plate 100 times with a hammer and took an impression. Now the air had been cleared, and things were quiet for a time.

The Ex School dissolved itself. The School of Graphic Arts continued to attract young artists, who experimented with structure and texture while at the same time retaining a firm grasp on the tradition.

The 1970s was a period in which prints appeared in large editions. Both at the Academy, where new groups of artists were formed, and in the School of Graphic Arts this was connected with the wish to make art more widely accessible to the general public.

It was a time of manifestos. Graphic art retained its narrative, at times agitational expression while continuing its experiments with structure and texture. A lavish artistic exuberance made its appearance in book illustrations, posters, portfolios and books devoted solely to prints. Classical techniques were also used to produce new and beautiful postage stamps. Classical serigraphy is still being practiced today in the production of bank notes and stamps.

Artists traveled abroad, and art exhibitions came to Denmark. The volume of pictures was overwhelming, and to become visible in the flickering universe of pictures graphic formats grew in size - out of their frames, out into urban space. The workshops of the School of Graphic Arts could not live up to the new demands posed by these trends.

The new graphic art used already existing pictures, to which artists added their own visual commentaries. For a time experiments with structure and texture lost their topicality. The machine-made surface of serigraphy was needed for the new forms of expression, and artists moved into the professional workshops where the required machines were to be found.

Artists have always been open to new techniques. The presses on which sea charts were printed could be used to print etchings. Lithographic stones used

by industry to produce labels could be used to produce autonomous works of art. And, of course, artists saw the opportunities offered by photography, serigraphy and, why not, photocopiers. When new techniques appear, so do new forms of expression. Artists seek new paths, and art renews itself. At the beginning of the 1990s it became possible to extend the Academy's School of Graphic Arts. New and better workshops with the latest graphic equipment were provided. And the young artists returned to the School.

Serigraphy is not limited by the nature and size of the object. In principle one can print on anything, transfer new or already existing pictures to any surface. Prints were made on canvas, on glass, on meter-long lengths of paper, on transparent plastic, on tables and plates and furs. Printing methods became part of installation art. It was no longer so much a question of the graphic arts, but simply of art and how to intensify one's artistic idiom.

The small, sensitive structural experiments and prints using classical techniques have survived both as mono-prints and in books. There is a lively interest in many different kinds of artistic expression, and many young artists are again working two-dimensionally. Discussions among art students and the generosity with which they share ideas in alliance with the new surroundings at the School of Graphic Arts created a fruitful climate for the emergence of talent and a new graphic consciousness.

Rasmus Eckardt, Lars Grenaa, Anne Marie Ploug, Bertil Skov Jørgensen and Smike Käsner were part of this environment together with Erik Steffensen and Finn Naur Petersen. Their common interest in working with printed pictures manifested itself in very different types of artistic expression. Their discussions have continued among them, have continued to sharpen their perception - both of their own work and of the works of others - and to prevent repetition of already achieved results. And now they are exhibiting together at the Museum of Fine Arts in Sharjah.

In the mid-1990s 8 Danish graphic artists, a lithographer and a copper-plate printer sailed to the Faeroe Islands. The Tórshavn Museum of Faeroese Art had established a graphic workshop, which was now to be put to the test.

Workshops, printmakers and collegial gatherings are always a valuable opportunity to exchange new ideas and methods. The lithographer had returned home from a month's stay at a lithographical workshop in New Delhi with a video greeting for me. I saw an elderly artist, clad in yellow, inking a stone using the method employed in all the lithographic workshops of the world. - Then the picture changed to a smiling young artist, who said: "Hi, this Dilip Tamüly speaking to you." Six years previously Dilip had been a guest student at the School of Graphic Arts in Copenhagen.

Now he was working in New Delhi and I received his greeting in Tórshavn. A couple of days after my return to the Academy a fax ticked in from Katmandu in Nepal: "Would you like to visit our graphic workshop?"

These things are not as surprising as they many seem. The word goes round and the interest is immediate when new possibilities appear and new ideas emerge as art. In recognition of the necessity of meeting the works of other artists, art and artists will always - as has always been the case - be crossing borders.

Sharjah - København - Sharjah

And the dialogue will continue and continue...

List of participants

Rasmus Eckardt

Lars Grenaae

Bertil Skov Jørgensen

Smike Käsner

Finn Naur Petersen

Anne Marie Ploug

Erik Steffensen

Rasmus Eckardt

Born 1970 in Skagen, DK

mail@rasmuseckardt.dk / www.rasmuseckardt.dk

Rasmus Eckardt's metier is the graphic arts, and his work is characterised by a keen interest in experimentation. Eckardt frequently combines more than one method in the same picture and uses graphic techniques on both paper and canvas. His motifs often have a photographic origin, as in, for instance, his *Once* from 1999-2000, where the motif is a photograph digitally conveyed to canvas. The surface of the picture has then been worked on so that the motif is "punctured" by white spots as if something had gone wrong during the development process, or liquid had been spilled over the picture. The meaning of this device can be interpreted at different levels.

It can be seen as drawing attention to the surface of the canvas in contrast to the illusionist effect presented by the photograph. On this level the spots serve to underscore the fictionality of the photograph. But the white spots may also be seen in relation to the title of the series, *Once*, as a kind of erosion, an artificial trace of the passing of time, which emphasises the picture of memory as unclear, a series of glimpses, transient.

Another series, *Space(s)* from 2002, also involves photographic material. Here Eckardt works with snapshot-like, fragmentary pictures that are often details or seem to have been taken surreptitiously because of the abrupt way in which they have been cut. As in the series *Once*, everyday motifs are used. And although it is clear that these are travel photographs - even from exotic places - Eckardt has sought to present quite ordinary objects, for instance a bathroom, a road surface or the leafless, snow-covered branches of trees in a park.

The individual pictures in *Space(s)* are scenic and function in relation to and by virtue of each other, in other words as a series. And reading them together, we are reminded of a film sequence, in which the meaning of one frame continues into our reading of the next.

Eckardt uses similar filmic effects in his new series of banners *Sequence*, exhibited in *Seven From Afar*. Here, too, the motifs are photographic and fragmentary, but this time, in contrast to the fruitful jumble of *Space(s)*, they are "arranged" in sequences, each of which forms a little pictorial story in the larger narrative told by the whole series. The individual sequences alternate between pictures of action or movement and "pauses" in the form of panoramic tableaux.

In addition to the reference to filmic narration, the actual form of the pictures in *Sequence* evokes associations with modern multimedia idioms such as the layered picture windows of the computer screen while at the same time also referring to a centuries-old ornamental tradition in Islamic art. A visual meeting between different cultures.

Kristine Kern, January 2004

Sources: Texts by Claus Handberg Christensen in the catalogues for *Once*, 2000 and *Space(s)*, 2002.

Education

- 1990 Admitted to the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts
- 92-97 School of Graphic Arts under Prof. Vibeke Mencke Nielsen

Selected exhibitions

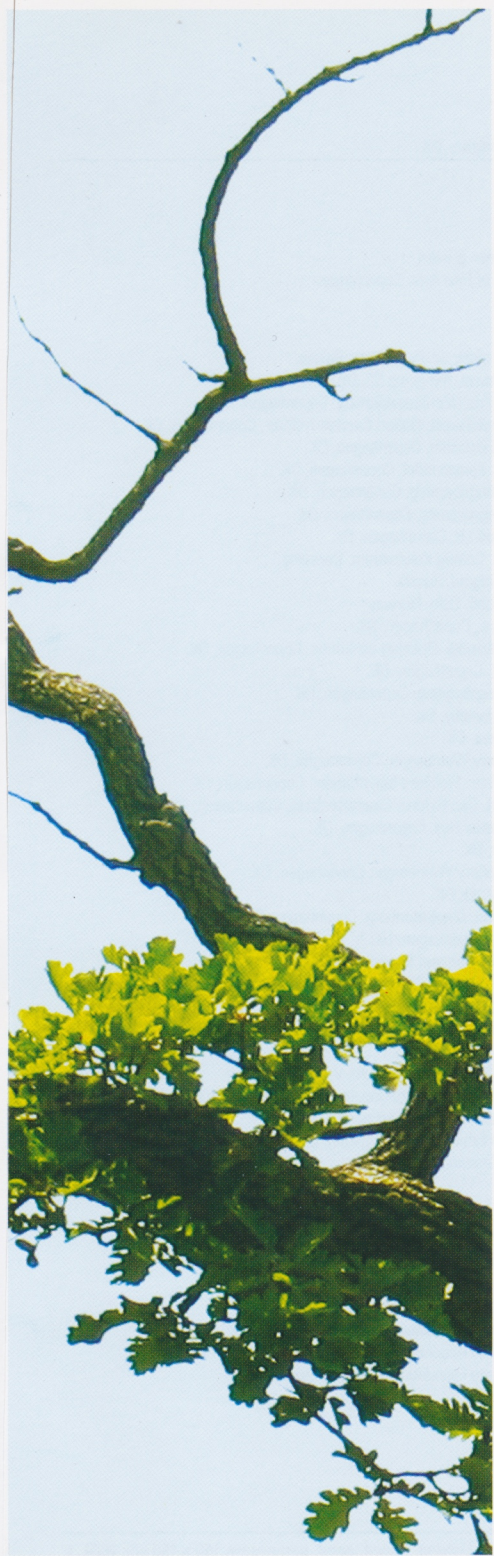
- 2003 "Best of", Galleri Carsten Frøkjær, Copenhagen, DK.
- "Grøn/Green", Lyngby Kunstforening, Lyngby, DK.
- 2002 "Malerei aus Dänemark", Kunstverein Coburg, Germany.
- "D'oro", Amagerbankens hovedsæde, Copenhagen, DK.
- "SPACE(S)", Galleri Carsten Frøkjær, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2001 Opening Exhibition, Galleri Carsten Frøkjær, Copenhagen, DK.
- "Spring 01", Danske Grafikere, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2000 "Content Providers", Galleri Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
- "Fall Collection 2000", Galleri Carsten Frøkjær, Hellerup
- 1999 "White Room Parade", Galleri Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
- TRYK 14, 4 sommerudstillinger, Danske Grafikere, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1998 Nykredit, Copenhagen, DK.
- "sådär lite party", Danske Grafikere, Copenhagen, DK.
- GERMINATION "X", Belgium and Greece.
- 1997 "Room Sevenothreeo", Qianmen Hotel, Beijing, China.
- "EXIT97", Kunstforeningen, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1996 Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- Skovgaard Museum, Viborg.
- Charlottenborg Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- Sapporo International Print Bienniae, Sapporo, Japan.
- 1995 Rampen, Copenhagen, DK.
- Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- "Insight with Outview", Palæflojen, Roskilde DK.
- Skovgaard Museum, Viborg DK.
- 1994 "SANDsightly", The Old Post Office, Skagen, DK.
- "Where are we now?", Unge Kunstneres Samfund, Oslo, Norway.
- Landart project + SIMA Power Station, Eidfjord, Norway.
- 1993 "January 93", Ovengaden, Copenhagen, DK.
- "May 93", Ringsted Galleri, Ringsted, DK.
- Charlottenborg Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.

Various

- 2003- Chairman of the art association "Zebra".
- 2003 Sale to the New Carlsberg Foundation.
- 2002 Decoration commission for Lett & Co, Lawfirm, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2002 Sale to the New Carlsberg Foundation.
- 2001 Sale for permanent hanging, Nykredit.
- 00-02 Member of the board of the Association of Danish Printmaking Artists.
- 2000- Member of the Association of Danish Printmaking Artists.
- 97-98 Selection committee for the Spring Exhibition, Charlottenborg.
- 1997 Sale for permanent hanging, Nykredit.

Publications

- 2002 "RUM" [SPACE(S)], ISBN 87-988134-1-2.
- 2000 "Engang" [Once], ISBN 87-988134-0-4.
- 2000 "Content Providers".
- 1999 "White Room Parade"
- 1998 "sådär lite party".
- 1993 "93".



Lars Grenaae

Born 1965 in Copenhagen, DK

lars.grenaae@mail.dk

Lars Grenaae works both as a painter and as a graphic artist, but both types of picture derive from some of the same considerations, irrespective of his choice of medium. Grenaae's pictures relate to a pop tradition - both in regard to their everyday motifs and the way in which they are reproduced. But in contrast to the American pop tradition of the 1960s, which defined itself in opposition to the past, Grenaae has accounts to settle with the history of painting, and many of his paintings clearly contain considerations regarding form.

One example of this is a comprehensive series of untitled serigraphs from 2001. Here we see how variously coloured fields are introduced into the space of the picture, either to draw attention to the spatial, or, conversely, to emphasise the surface as a fall and the space as an illusion. Formal visual investigations of this kind create an immediate link with the Formalist tradition of artists like Malevitz and Mondrian and are continued in, for instance, Constructivism and Pattern Painting. Before we have managed to think that far, however, Grenaae has already gone a step further and mixed the formal with figurative motifs taken from the Grimm brothers' stories and kitsch comics series with tearstained women and cowboy heroes. In general, it is characteristic of Grenaae's work process that he composes his pictures in the same way as today's DJs sample music or IT artists download pictures from the Internet.

In Grenaae this leads to a collage of different visual systems and signs that produce a pictorial statement somewhat more ambiguous than that of traditional Pop Art. Here technique plays a not unimportant role, as Grenaae's idiom is partly the result of an irresistible urge to experiment with various materials and techniques - and, not least, to combine them. Some of his new works, among others those he presents in *Seven From Afar*, are a good example of this. Here he combines serigraphy and the woodcut in two prints, while the last picture, *Jack London*, besides being serigraphy is pencil and acryl as well. It is also interesting that text makes its entrance as an independent pictorial element. This introduces yet another level of meaning, as the text deliberately adopts a precarious balance between being verbal meaning and visual sign, thereby destabilising the pictorial statement.

Kristine Kern, January 2004

Education

- 89-93 Apprenticed as silk-screen printer.
- 91-98 Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen.

Selected exhibitions

- 2003 Reflections in a Nordic Light, St. Petersburg, Russia.
Young Danish Art, Pakhuset, Nykøbing Sj., DK.
ZEBRA 25 YEARS, Den Frie Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK.
Greetings From The Black Forest, Galleri Carsten Frøkjær, Copenhagen, DK.
Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2002 2-4-6, Carsten Frøkjærs Kunsthandel, Copenhagen, DK.
ZEBRA, Den Frie Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK.
ALIBI, Den Frie Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK.
Onomatopoeikon, Galleri LB, Copenhagen, DK.
Malerei Aus Dänemark, Coburg Kunstverein, Germany.
VII Print Biennial, Kaliningrad, Russia.
Unge Kunstneres Samfund, Oslo, Norway
Galleri Heede & Mostrup, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2001 Carsten Frøkjærs Kunsthandel, Opening exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
The Heritage, Galleri PI, Copenhagen, DK.
Zebra, Den Frie Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK.
Parallelvej, Lyngbyhus, Lyngby, DK.
- 2000 Mønstring, Rhizom, Århus, DK.
Content Providers, Gallery Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
Autumn Collection, Carsten Frøkjærs Kunsthandel, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1999 Invited guest, Exhibition, Den Gyldne, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK.
Print 14, Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
Print 14, Rhizom, Århus, DK.
White Room Parade, Gallery Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1998 Holbæk Triennial (1st prize), DK.
Invited guest, Den Gyldne, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK.
Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
Exit 98, Kunstforeningen, Gammel Strand, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1997 Danish representative, Ljubljana Biennial, Slovenia.
- 1996 Glas Kunst Glas, Central train station, Abenraa, DK.
Ambiguo, Centro Lavarò Arte, Milan, Italy.
New Art, Copenhagen, DK.
Lithography 1795-1995, Skovgaard Museum, Viborg, DK.
Sudwestdeutsche Landesbank. Internationale Grafikudstilling, Germany.
- 1995 Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
Charlottenborg Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
Proofs, Round Tower, Copenhagen, DK.

Various

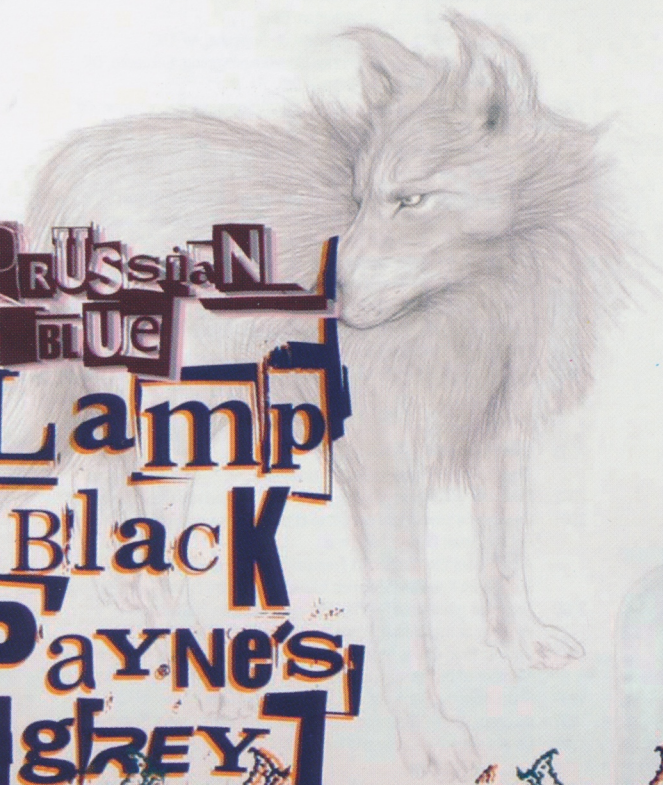
- Selection committee, Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition 1996-99.
- Committee, Charlottenborg Fund 1998-2000.
- Committee, Danish Graphic Artists 1998-2002.
- Member of the Artists' Association, Zebra.
- Lecturer, the Royal Danish Academy, Basic Course since 1998.
- Lecturer, the Royal Danish Academy, School of Graphic Arts, since 2002.
- 2-year grant, Danish State Foundation for young artists.

Jack...



LONDON Calling

RUSSIAN
BLUE
Lamp
Black
PAYNE'S
GREY
CRIMSON
PINK



Bertil Skov Jørgensen

Born 1968 in Kolding, DK.

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Bertil Skov Jørgensen works both as a painter and as a graphic artist, but no matter which medium he chooses, his work is always carefully, indeed, meticulously executed. This care for detail is essential to his idiom. Skov Jørgensen often works through a juxtaposition of disparate elements, either in the same picture, as when a house becomes three-dimensional and rises out of the picture space, or when figurative and apparently abstract motifs meet on the same sheet, as when, in *Gate/04*, a zeppelin sails over the surface of the picture and crosses the ground-plan of an aerodrome on its way. Or it may also be a matter of the juxtaposition of two or more pictures that combine to constitute a work.

One example of this is a series of untitled pairs of pictures from 2002, in which Skov Jørgensen has allowed three-dimensional interior elements like stucco and skirting boards on one picture to meet with an illusionist architectural painting on the other. Neither is, however, immediately recognizable. Without their context, the viewer needs a little time to identify the stucco as stucco, and the architectural paintings represent only sections of rooms or details of buildings, so that it is not possible straightway to see what they are supposed to "be". Taken together, the motifs set off an interaction and establish a dialogue on spatiality in both a physical and a formal sense.

It is in the meeting between the two motifs that meaning arises. In another work, *Electrical Articles* from 2001, Bertil Skov Jørgensen operates with a number of pictures within the same work, or, rather, pictures and objects, as both photogravure and neon lighting are involved. The work is made up of seven square MDF plates. Skov Jørgensen has mounted a number of neon tubes on four of them, while on the other three he has minutely depicted a terminal strip, a fuse and a flatfish.

Skov Jørgensen also works through the principle of opposition in his new prints for *Seven From Afar*. This time it is a matter of two "identical" graphic series, each printed in its own colour and hung so that they face each other as mirror images. The work may, among other things, be seen as an investigation of the meaning that the motif assumes depending on whether it is printed in black or red.

Themes connected with architecture are characteristic of a number of Skov Jørgensen's works. In addition to the examples mentioned above one might also single out the series *Sleepless* from 2003, which, among other things, represents a single-family house and the plan of a suburb placed opposite a cloudy sky. In this series Skov Jørgensen has also set aside ample space for emptiness. And emptiness, or open space, is an important recurring feature of his paintings. It is as if he is deliberately keeping a space free for something that might conceivably happen.

Kristine Kern, January 2004

Education

- 94-99 Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Graphic Arts under Professor Vibeke Mencke Nielsen and Professor Erik Steffensen.
- 92-94 Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Basic Course under Professor Øivind Nygaard.
- 90-92 University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Theology.

Selected Exhibitions

- 2003 Come Back, Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
Zebra 50 YEARS, Skovgaard Museum, Viborg, DK.
Spring03, Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2002 Zebra 50 YEARS, Den Frie's Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK
7th International Biennial of Graphic Arts, Kaliningrad, Russia.
Parallelvej, Lyngbyhus, Lyngby, DK.
Spring02, Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2001 Graphic Art, Næstved Museum, Næstved, DK.
Etchings 9901, Studio 1-2, Herning, DK.
Zebra, Den Frie's Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK.
Ground Zero, the showrooms of Jyllands-Posten, Copenhagen, DK.
Christmas Exhibition, Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2000 Roll Call, Galleri Rhizom, Århus, DK.
Amorpheus, Mærkbar, Copenhagen, DK.
Content Providers, Galleri Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
Debutants, Silkeborg Kommunes Udstillingsbygning, Silkeborg, DK.
Trends 2000, Æglageret, Holbæk, DK.
- 1999 Charlottenborg Autumn Exhibition, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK.
Print 14, Galleri Rhizom, Århus, DK.
Print 14, Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
Nykredit Kunstforening, Copenhagen, DK.
Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK.
Position Defined, The Royal Danish Academy Showroom, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1998 Exit 98, Kunstforeningen Gammel Strand, Copenhagen, DK.
One Of Us, Bikubens Udstillingssted, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1996 School Of Graphic Arts, Skovgaard Museum, Viborg, DK.
- 1995 50-Year Memorial Exhibition, Hiroshima, Japan.
Lithography 1795-1995, Skovgaard Museum, Viborg, DK.
- 1994 The Graphic Workshop, Hjørring, DK.
- 1992 Artists' Autumn Exhibition, Den Frie's Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK.

Various

- 2003 Grant from the Ole Haslund Foundation.
Grant from the Henry Heerup Foundation.
- 2002 Execution of a mural painting at Lett & Co., lawfirm, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2001 Design of a stamp for Post DK to commemorate the 50th anniversary
- of the Royal Danish Air Force.
Award from the Danish Art Foundation for contribution to ZEBRA.
Grant from Købmand Heinrich Müller and hustru Emma Müller's Foundation.
- 2000 Two-year grant from the Danish Art Foundation 2001-2003.
Working at the Danish Academy in Rome 9/2000-2/2001,
- grants from Queen Ingrid's Roman Foundation and the BG Foundation.
Member of the hanging committee of the Charlottenborg Exhibition 2000.
- 1999 Grant from the Ragnvald and Ida Blix' Foundation
- 1998 Co-arranger of "Metallum", a publication by the School by Graphic Arts.
- 1997 Co-arranger of "Cairns and Landmarks", a publication by the School of Graphic Arts.



Born 1966 in Copenhagen, DK

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Smike Kászner's favourite tool is the computer. He works with a mixture of print and painting, and this often involves a large number of processes. Kászner originally started by painting on the computer, but now he paints first and then scans his painting into the computer, after which he processes it digitally. At other times the picture is painted digitally using programmes like *Painter*. An illustrative example of this type of work is *Another fruitless attempt – piss off postmodernism/sensing transmodernism* from 2002. Here it is clear how Kászner has painted on top of a processed picture of a painting, and that there are many generations in the process. By removing the painting from the material, distancing himself from the painting process or, rather, by digitalising it, Kászner places a filter between artist and work and thereby dismantles the idea of the painting as a direct imprint of the artist as subject.

As a result of the work process the completed picture makes a fragmentary appearance - often like a collage, as in the series *Lebensglück* from 1996. Here we see various animals with other kinds of food than those the animals are normally known to eat, for instance a koala bear with a fish and a snake with an orange. The animal portraits, which are digital, photographic collages, are inserted - as pictures in the picture - in remarkable frame works; for example, the snake appears in a science fiction-like molecular universe, while the koala bear is framed by a piece of lace in the shape of a heart. In general, it is a characteristic feature of Smike Kászner's artistic production to combine what at first sight seem to be irreconcilable entities or to pair paradoxical oppositions, in which the elements of the picture comment on one another to make an often ironical or provocative statement - as in *Memories are made of this* from 1999, in which the huge mushroom cloud of an atom bomb is decorated as a Christmas tree with glass balls and paper chains.

At other times, however, the statement is more sensitive, almost poetic. His new series *Topology of 21st century* from 2003 the motifs of which were photographed in the Pacific, is a good example of this. Here in a number of the pictures we see a green island appear out of the sea, surrounded by pink spotted clouds. In some of Kászner's pictures for *Seven From Afar* he has taken his thematic point of departure from the area of Arab culture. One example is *Angry Yellow*, in which the area's various conflicts of interest are highlighted through an alternative approach to national symbolism.

Kristine Kern, January 2004

Education

Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts:

99- 01: Master in art theory and communication.

93-99: School of Painting.

91-92: Danish School of Advertising.

Selected exhibitions

- 2003 Gallery Frøkær, Copenhagen, DK.
Moscow International Film Festival, Moscow, Russia.
Retina International Film & Video Festival, Hungary.
Undangan Rabu Video Club, Jakarta, Indonesia.
Galleri Gambliä, Umeå, Sweden.
- 2002 Spark Video International, Spark Contemporary Art Space, Syracuse, USA
Video Art & Multimedia Festival, La Baule, France.
"Videomathon", [KSA:K] Centrul pentru Arta Comtemporana, Chisinau, Moldova.
PRO kunstnersammenslutning, Copenhagen, DK.
International Festival d'Art Vidéo & Media, Clermond-Ferrand, France.
- 2001 Dokumentar- und kunstfilm festival, Kassel, Germany.
DCA Gallery (Gallery Weinberger), New York.
"Commutation", inSITEout, Lothringer 13, Munich, Germany.
"Extensions", Elisabeth Foundation of Art Studios, New York, USA
- 2000 "Content Providers", Gallery Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1999 "White Room Parade", Gallery Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1998 Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
Charlottenborg Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1997 "Højtryk og Dybtryk i Norden", censored exhibition, Museum of Photo Art,
- DK, Norway, Sweden and USA.
22nd International Biennial of Graphic Art, Museum of Modern Art, Slovenia.
Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1996 Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1995 Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
Artists' Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1993 Artists' Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1991 Artists' Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.



Finn Naur Petersen

Born 1954 in Copenhagen, DK

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Installation is Finn Naur Petersen's primary medium, but he also works with graphic art. And although these are two very different idioms, they involve some of the same considerations. Much of Naur Petersen's art is characterised by a particularly sensitive focus on the potential meanings contained in his material allied with an ability to exploit this potential in a poetic dialogue with the surroundings and the viewer. His works invite us to experience them - they are modern, visual fairy-tales.

In his graphic art Finn Naur Petersen often uses a number of different techniques and, at times, a number of different visual systems in the same work. But there are exceptions. The series *Kissing the Island* from 1996-97 is, for example, comparatively simple in its execution, consisting of a series of graphic sheets, all photogravures. In fact, they are in the nature of documentary photography, since the pictures refer to an action - a kiss. On trips to islands in Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Greece the artist has kissed aesthetically neglected things like a rusty lighthouse, an antiquated aeroplane, a dilapidated house and an old truck. Gold leaf has been placed on the spot that was kissed. As art historian Ann Lumbye Sørensen points out, the series can be seen as an ironic commentary on the idea that all that the artist touches turns to "gold", but at the same time it may also be seen as drawing attention to beauty in everyday life, in what is overlooked and decrepit.

In another series, *Document / Artist Tools* from 2001, Finn Naur Petersen uses a number of different techniques on the same sheet. The prints are thus a combination of etching and photogravure, and their motif is a meeting between the histories of science and art. One of the sheets, for instance, shows an antique bust placed within a perspective grid, while another represents an equestrian statue that has virtually been erased during the subsequent processing of the plate with an etching needle. *Document / Artist Tools* can be seen as a precursor of the prints Finn Naur Petersen has produced for *Seven From Afar*, as there are several methodical similarities in the combination of figurative motifs and their subsequent visual, abstract processing. But there are also striking differences. *Artist's Degrees - Mecca Or Manhattan* is first and foremost more painterly, almost decorative in its execution. The underlying figurative and yet ornamental motifs represent old Arabic weapons and characters. The subsequent lithographic and photogravure processing is colourfully expressive and in this way point back to their originator, the artist whose visual fingerprints they reflect - though they deliberately lack the critical distance to be found in *Kissing the Island*. *Artist's Degrees - Mecca Or Manhattan* is, by way of contrast, a meeting between two types of picture or, rather, two systems of representation - one Western, the other Middle Eastern. Thus, as so often in Finn Naur Petersen's works, it is in the space between oppositions that the exchange of meaning arises.

Kristine Kern, January 2004

Sources: Texts in *Nærvær / Finn Naur Petersen / Katalog*, Copenhagen 2000

Since 1993 senior lecturer at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, DK.

Selected exhibitions and projects

- 2004 From Object to Objectivity, Den Frie Udstillingsbygning, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2003 Sharjah International Biennial 6, Sharjah, UAE.
Transit, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK.
Galleri III, Oslo, Norway.
- 2002 Photofest, Houston, Texas, USA.
Stendernes Museet, Oslo, Norway.
- 2000 "Comfort Me", Installation, Gallery Søren Houman, Copenhagen, DK.
Love. Installation, Gallery Under Dybbøls Bridge, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1999 Mecca. Installation, Albertslund City Hall, Copenhagen, DK.
Gabriel's Chamber. Decoration, School of Pharmacy, Copenhagen
6 Passages. Decoration, Police Headquarters, Viborg, DK.
Icon. Decoration, Police Headquarters, Ringsted, DK.
- 1998 Sunset in Korea. Installation, Den Frie, Copenhagen, DK.
3 værker (3 Works). Installation, objects and graphics,
- Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK.
45-98. Objects. Talking. Hiroshima Art Document, Hiroshima, Japan.
- 1997 Growth/Seasons. A Film, a Camera, a Place. 4 Exposures, 4 Seasons, Copenhagen, DK.
Front. Installation, Brandts Klædefabrik, Odense, DK.
Anemones for China. Danish anemone-seeds in Chinese earthenware pots,
- Hepingmen, Wai, Beijing, China.
Recent Graphics. Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
Nordic Photo-Engraving. Museum of Photo Art, Odense, DK.
- 1996 Kissing the Island. Project from Senja, Norway,
- via Iceland and the islands of Anholt, DK and Scopelos, Greece.
Terra Nullus. Installation. Station 96, Gothenburg Municipal Library, Sweden.
- 1995 Icon. Decoration, National Library, Århus, DK.
Kim. 40 Recent Woodcuts. Gallery Rampen, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1994 Objects and Sculptures. Galleri Art Focus, Copenhagen, DK.
Garden of Eden I. Sculpture, Marienlyst Manor, Elsinore, DK.
Garden of Eden II. Sculpture, Frederiksberg Park, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1993 Chiaroscuro. Installation, Borealis VI, National Gallery, Reykjavik, Iceland.
Chiaroscuro. Installation, Maison du Danemark, Paris, France.
- 1992 The Roof of the World. Sculpture, Slovenska Narodna Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia.
Wall of icons. Installation, Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren, Germany.
Burning up the Bridgets. Fire and charcoal drawing on wall. Gallery de Vonk,
- Amsterdam, Holland.
- 1991 Children at the Beach. Icon. Installation, Den Frie, Copenhagen, DK.
Ambulatory. Installation, Church of Our Lady, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1990 Winterreise (Winter Voyage). Objects on wall, Galleri Läderfabrikken, Malmö, Sweden.
Tempi Passati. Installation, Ringsted Galleriet, Ringsted, DK.
Houses. Lithographic book based on text by the architect Wilhelm Wohlert.
The Garden in Leifsgade. Lithographic book with sketches for installations and sculpture
Just like stone, wood is light for me. Installation, Gl. Holtegaard, Copenhagen, DK.
The World's Roof. Sculpture. Gallery Ek'ygnose, Bordeaux, France.
Mirror. Billboard, installation, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, DK.
Town gate for Sæby. Sculpture group, placed at the entry to the town of Sæby,
DK.
- 1989 Atalanta and the Fruit of the Middle Ages.
Lithographic book based on text by the alchemist Sir George Ripley.
Fragment: Snow and Ashes. Book, in collaboration with the author Jens Christian Grondal.
Kimono. Installation, Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1988 The Stars, The Planet, The Sea and The Sailor. Sculpture and installation.
Nordic Art Center, Helsinki, and Södra Karelens Museum, Lappenranta, Finland.
Small Sculptures. 4 sculptures in sand and ink, chocolate and gold.
Århus Art Building. Århus, DK.
- 1987 K18. Installation, Documenta, Kassel, Germany.
The Antarctic. Installation and drawings, Galleri Brandt, Copenhagen, DK.



Anne Marie Ploug

Born 1954 in Copenhagen, DK

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Anne Marie Ploug works in a universe in which art and everyday life meet. Her pictures draw their inspiration from many different sources: the idioms of the mass media are combined with those of art history, the aesthetics of East and West enter into a fruitful symbiosis. From 1995 to 2001 Ploug's primary inspiration derived from Japanese culture and lifestyles. It all started with her fascination with the cartoon series *Manga* and various spin-off products, but later her interest in Japan extended to comprise such different forms of visual expression as Hokusai's woodcuts and Playstation 2 computer games. In Ploug's artistic production, which includes both painting and prints, this has manifested itself in a number of dynamic pictures in which written characters, cartoon figures and other visual emblems are mixed in the same fragmentary way as the visual information in a computer window. One example is the series *Love Act* from 1999, in which large-eyed, lightly clad girls of the kind to be found in *Manga* appear on the same canvas as written characters and love scenes borrowed from 14th century Japanese woodcuts.

In Anne Marie Ploug's later pictures the point of departure is still Japanese, but *Manga* has been abandoned in favour of more ramified sources of inspiration that also involve other forms of cultural expression. These pictures are simpler and thus quieter in impact. Here you will often see a section of a motif, for example a girl's legs or a hand holding an umbrella, in what is otherwise an almost monochrome picture space. Here the little things of everyday life have replaced the visual extravagance of the mass media. And the possibly naive but emancipated heroine of *Manga* has been replaced by the pure innocence of childhood in paintings like *Flyaway*, *Waiting for the Sun* and *MTX—Girls*, all from 2002 - a forever lost innocence that was perhaps never quite so innocent. In all three pictures - as in Japanese porn magazines - one sees apparently inoffensive pictures of the bare legs of very young girls. There is a deliberate ambivalence at work in the depiction of the motif, inviting the viewer to read the picture in two different ways.

In the series of pictures that Ploug shows in *Seven From Afar* the idiom is once again stylised and the motif a fragmentary section, but the content is quite different. The theme is weeds, and the pictures constitute a kind of tribute to wrong and unwanted existences that survive despite massive efforts to combat them. We see dandelions, thistles, cow parsnips and other ill-regarded plants that are often exposed to attempts to exterminate them. The prints, linoleum and serigraphy, are simple, ornamental and almost meditative in expression. The content of the series can be seen as a symbolic problematisation of prejudices and preconceived opinions.

Kristine Kern, January 2004

Sources: Texts in the catalogue for *Quirky Girls*, 2002

Education

88-95 Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

Selected Exhibitions

- 2003 A Long Nose for Art History, No. 2, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK. (catalogue)
- 2002 Alibi - everybody lives in the igloos of the city, Den frie udstillingsbygning, - Copenhagen, DK. (catalogue)
- Quirky Girls, DCA Gallery, New York, USA. + Horsens Museum of Art, DK. (catalogue)
- 2001 Peep Show, Get real ART, New York, USA.
Extensions, EFA Studio Center, New York, USA.
Memories, Politikens Galleri, Copenhagen, DK.
- 2000 Salon 2000 DK, Pavillion, Kongenshave, Copenhagen, DK. (catalogue)
- Content Providers, Galleri Weinberger, Copenhagen, DK.
POP-OP, Kastrupgård + Holstebro Museum of Art, DK. (catalogue)
- Art-Copenhagen, Forum, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1999 Print 14, Danske Grafikeres Hus, Copenhagen, DK.
Call at Me, Galleri Phoenix, Copenhagen, DK. (catalogue)
- Hello - Happy Friend, Galleri Lund & Lund, Klampenborg, DK.
- 1998 Convoy II, Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK.
Paintspace IV, Galleri Phoenix, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1998 Instant Satisfaction, Galleri Phoenix, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1997 Sizefiction, Galerie Egelund, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1996 Cowgirl Society, North Galleri, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1996 Germination 9, Biennale for young artists, Prag-Nice-Luxemborg. (catalogue)
- Convoy, Turbinehallen, Copenhagen, DK.
Hi, how goes it? 2, Galleri Eat Me, Copenhagen, DK.
Without Borders, Nordgrafia, Gotland Museum of Art, Sweden
- 1995 Globe, Copenhagen Kulturcity 96, Christiansborg, Copenhagen, DK.
Storm, Europacentret, Copenhagen, DK.
Arms Gallery, Saga II, Copenhagen, DK.
15 young graphic artists - 45 graphic experiments, Skovgaard Museum of Art, Viborg, DK.
Wild At Heart, Gallerie Jousse Seguin, Paris. (poster-catalogue)
- 1994 Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
Charlottenborg Autumn Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK. (catalogue)
- 1993 Charlottenborg Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen, DK.
Group Show II, Krasnapolsky, Copenhagen, DK.
Hype, Overgaden, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1993 Playtime Baby, Galleri Nådada, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1992 Jens Hansen's Farm, Charlottenborg-Rådskælderens, Copenhagen, DK.
- 1991 Street Signs, Biz-Art, Glyptoteket, Copenhagen, DK. (catalogue)
- Showroom, Wurst, Copenhagen, DK.

Works in Selected Museums

Horsens Museum of Art, DK.
Skovgaard Museum of Art, Viborg, DK.

Selected Bibliography

Helte/Heroes, Copenhagen 2004. Text by Mai Misfelt.
Kunst til tiden [Art on Time], Gads forlag 2003. Text by Ole Lindboe.
Quirky Girls, DCA Gallery, New York 2002. Text by E. M. Bukdahl and Rune Gade.
Call at Me, Copenhagen 2000. Text by Birgitte Kirkehoff Olsen.



Erik Steffensen

Born 1961 in Copenhagen, DK

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An iceberg in red slowly fading away on the horizon. On the way to nothingness. In picture after picture the motif gradually disappears. That's what we are shown in the eight photogravures exhibited by Erik Steffensen in *Seven From Afar*. His series *Floating Icebergs* may be seen as a formal investigation of what happens to the motif in the graphic printing process, but in terms of content it can also be seen as an exploration of the relation between sign and meaning. What happens to the meaning when the sign gradually dissolves in a serial retreat?

This is not the first time that Erik Steffensen has used red for such purposes. In 1995 he exhibited a comprehensive series of serigraphs, *Mt. Fuji Overture*, which was based on the Japanese artist Hokusai's *100 Views of Mt. Fuji*. Here, however, the artist's concern was not with filmic temporality as in *Floating Icebergs*, but rather with a number of parallel nows in the many equivalent but yet different depictions of the same motif. Furthermore, the technique used was different, and icebergs are not exactly mountains. While Mt. Fuji must be considered to be relatively stable, a Greenlandic iceberg both moves and changes form.

Nor - unlike *Mt. Fuji Overture* and a number of other works by Steffensen - is *Floating Icebergs* concerned with penetrating into the work of an individual artist. What it explores is, rather, a separate category of motif and, perhaps, a certain sensibility. It is clear that Steffensen has accounts to settle with the landscape - as genre - and with art history as such. With its reference to C. D. Friedrich's *Iceberg* this work points to the Romantic depiction of landscape with all its Weltschmerz and melancholy. Somewhat in the same way as his photographic series *Arizona* from 2000-2001, with its deserted mountain-scapes under deep blue skies, refers to the American road movie and the idea of the lonesome cowboy.

In addition to *Floating Icebergs* Steffensen is exhibiting two other graphic series of five prints each: beach pictures - from Germany in the series *California*, and from California in the series *Venice Pier*. And in both series, as in *Floating Icebergs*, Steffensen works with the theme of disappearance. In the intensely yellow *California* it is the bathers who gradually disappear further and further out in the sea, while in the golden *Venice Pier* it is the motif itself that disappears. Geographically Steffensen travels far and wide, but the questions he asks of the world are always the same. He presents his artistic experience reflected in the mirror of the world. Or perhaps it is the other way round.

Kristine Kern, January 2004

Erik Steffensen studied philosophy and art history at the University of Copenhagen from 1983 to 1992. At the same time, from 1986 to 1992, Steffensen attended the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, where he has taught since 1992. He lives in Copenhagen, DK.

Selected Exhibitions

- 2002 Galleri Susanne Ottesen, Copenhagen, DK.
2001 North Jutland Museum of Fine Arts, DK.
2000 Sisimiut Greenland, Albertslund Town Hall, Copenhagen, DK.
Art Forum, Berlin, Germany.
Rauma Art Museum, Finland.
Seven up goes west, Braenderigaarden, Viborg, DK.
Beyond Borders, Coninx Museum, Zürich, Switzerland.
Susanne Ottesen, Copenhagen, DK.
1999 Photographs, DCA Gallery, New York.
Landschaften im Nichts (Island), semina rerum - Irène Preiswerk, Zürich, Switzerland.
The disturbing silence, Vejle Art Museum, DK.
The Arken Collection, Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, DK.
Wolken - Wasser - Stein, semina rerum - Irène Preiswerk, Zürich, Switzerland.
1998 Tryk - Prints 1982-1997, Kastrupgård Collection, Copenhagen, DK.
Hammerschøi Notes - Im Labyrinth der Einsamkeit, semina rerum - Irène Preiswerk, Zürich, Switzerland.
another fine mess, Galleri Susanne Ottesen, Copenhagen, DK.
Seven Up Meets Snow White, Munkeruphus, North Zealand.
1997 Satellites of Love, Zeitraum Malerei, Copenhagen, DK.
La lune à 1 mètre, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway.
Im Dunkeln zum Licht, semina rerum - Irène Preiswerk, Zürich, Switzerland.
In the Labyrinth of Modernism, Esbjerg Art Museum, DK.
Fotofeis, The Danish Cultural Institute, Edinburgh, Scotland.
1996 Never Give a Sucker an Even Break, Galleri Susanne Ottesen, Copenhagen, DK.
Turner Sketches - Short Cuts, semina rerum - Irène Preiswerk, Zürich, Switzerland.
Colour Photogravure from Niels Borch Jensen's workshop, Photographic Centre, Cph, DK.
1995 Mt. Fuji Overture, Galleri Specta, Copenhagen, DK.
Rodin Improvisations, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, DK.
Building for Billions, North Jutland Art Museum, Aalborg.
Remembering Mirrors, Foto Medium Art Galerie, Wrocław.
Sommerausstellung, semina rerum - Irène Preiswerk, Zürich, Switzerland.
Art Against Aids, Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, DK.
1994 Stranger than Paradise, International Center of Photography, New York, USA
- and Fotomuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland.
The Birte Inge Christensen and John Hunov Collection, Randers Museum of Art, DK.
Spleen, Maison du Danemark, Paris.

Publications (Selection)

- 2001 Steffensen, Erik: 100 works. [Exhibition catalogue: 6.10.2001-6.1.2002].
- North Jutland Art Museum, 2001.
2000 Caves & Exits, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.
Sisimiut - Grønland [Sisimiut - Greenland], Borgen.
Poul Gernes Monografi [Paul Gernes, A Monograph], Borgen.
1999 Landschaften im Nichts, semina rerum.
1998 Tryk - Prints, Kastrupgaard Collection.
Hammerschøi Notes, semina rerum.
Wolfs plørede blik [Wolf's Stoned Eye], Den lille kunstrevy.
Mexicanske motiver [Mexican Motifs], Den lille kunstrevy.
1997 La lune à 1 mètre, Fotogalleriet
Hammerschøi, Space Poetry.
1996 Turner Sketches - Short Cuts, semina rerum.
1995 Sex, løgn og fotografi [Sex, Lies and Photography], Politisk Revy (with Mette Sandbye).
Rodin improvisationer [Rodin Improvisations], Borgen.
1994 Asger Jorn, Animator of Oil Painting, Edition Bløndal/Donald Judd, Space Poetry.
1993 Strindbergs Metode [Strindberg's Method], Borgen.

A commitment to the blue to stand up for a sustainable

It is not just the business strategies that represent the world. It is the commitment to the blue to stand up for a sustainable. The blue is the commitment to a better world, one that is not just a better world, but a better world as a whole.

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It is important to be able to stand up for a songbird

Erik Steffensen, Professor at the School of Graphic Arts

The development of art is determined more by poetry and our fundamental humanity than by anything else. At times, however, the artist may feel quite alone with this point of view. For new machines appear all the time. We expect the best and the worst of them, depending on whose hands and eyes, whose brains operate the machines. A cell phone is a fairly innocuous thing, while a camera phone profits considerably more from its surroundings. In the modern world pictures have greater truth value than words. And this might lead some people to believe that poetry will not survive. That the magic of words will lose its impact. That our cultural development will come to a halt. Mentally. Artistically. Spiritually. We are in a dilemma that has nothing to do with faith. Facts, rather. The artist finds himself in an electronically advanced era. It is difficult to say anything that has not already been repeated a million times elsewhere. Unless we turn to poetry and seek nourishment there.

Danish artists, that is people who were born and have grown up within the cultural framework created by Danish schools and parents, will probably have a poetic approach to the world. As children we understood our landscape through the prism of songs like those of B.S. Ingemann:

*The flowers now awaken, refreshed by morning dew,
the happy birds are to each other calling;
now children 'round the world lift their eyelids anew,
the snail with its shell is slowly crawling.¹*

The verse tells us what it is to be Danish. To love the simple and unpretentious. To love life and the wonders of the world. That when we open our eyes, there is light. B.S. Ingemann (1789-1862) was no prophet even though his poetic vision was luminous. He just instinctively knew that if one did not have an eye for the smallest leaf, one would never be able to appreciate the larger things in life. The best-known Danish morning hymn begins:

*The sun is rising in the east,
it gilds the heavens wide,
spreads light on mounts where darkness ceased,
on shore and countryside.²*

Life is precious, and its gold belongs to all of us. It is spread throughout the landscape to be enjoyed by everyone. Not prophetic, but exceedingly democratic - and national, too. Of course Ingemann did not only scatter pearls on his way through life. He produced a large number of historical novels, which with their hopeless nationalist enthusiasm are totally unreadable today for others than literary specialists or politicians and priests of a medieval cast of mind. A friend of Ingemann's, N.F.S. Grundtvig, criticised his historical project: "Why on earth do you want to wear a shirt of chain mail?" No. "Just be a riddle to yourself, like a flower at the bottom of the sea!"

This is how the two artists exchanged their experience of the world. It is important to be able to stand up for a songbird. This is the attitude that we survive on as a nation, whether we are employed in the world's leading windmill concern or as a migrant artist under warmer skies.

"To travel is to live" wrote another of the Danish poets of the Golden Age, Hans Christian Andersen. He ventured further out into the world than Ingemann, who made the Grand Tour to France and Italy, but subsequently rarely left his nest in the Danish provincial town of Sorø. Today the Danish artist's itinerary has been considerably expanded. Travel is a necessary part of the artist's mental work place. But this is not just travel for the sake of experience. The point is that the artist delivers something on his journeys. He stops not just for the night, but to exhibit his work. Here there is a parallel to Hans Christian Andersen, who not only eagerly absorbed new impressions, but also made use of his creative talent along the way. Of course, Hans Christian Andersen is mainly famous for his writing, but he was also one of the first Danes who attempted to speak English. And he did not do this merely to satisfy his own ego, but to understand and penetrate more deeply into the customs of other cultures. Every Danish child is familiar with Andersen and his tales, but few will know how he spoke. "Guten Morgen, *mon père!* har De godt *sleeping?*" he might ask in a mixture of German, French, Danish and English. He wanted to experience the world and was not afraid to address and immerse himself in the life of other countries. So it is today. The upbringing we receive in preparation for the cosmopolitan lives we lead today comes to us from the thinking of the Golden Age. We are proud of our poets, our artists. But we do not blindly follow in the footsteps of the past. Our horizons must be extended in every conceivable way. We avail ourselves of all kinds of machines in order to continue to be human beings with a perspective on life. Only in this way can the new art develop. Only in this way can we see for ourselves.

¹ Translation: P.C. Poulsen. "Grant me, God, the Gift of Singing"
www.danishchurch.vancouver.bc.ca/GGG/

² Translation J.C. Aaberg. "Grant me, God, the Gift of Singing"
www.danishchurch.vancouver.bc.ca/GGG/