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**AVGANGSUTSTILLINGEN 2009**

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KUVATAIDEAKATEMIA  
BILDKONSTAKADEMIN  
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## History

One hundred years ago Statens kunstakademi (The National Academy of Fine Art) was founded by Royal resolution. The painter Christian Krohg was the Academy's first professor and director, a position he held from 1909 until 1925. Because of his long association with the Academy he is often considered as its Founding Father. We at the Master program would like to honour him. Firstly, on the cover we have a portrait of Christian Krohg by last year's graduate artist Johannes Høie. Secondly, we celebrate this anniversary with a graduation show at Stenersenmuseet which this year takes the form of a self-organised exhibition by the MA class. Thirdly, we have invited the graduate students from the Funen Art Academy in Odense, Denmark, and the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki, Finland, to exhibit with us at the anniversary exhibition "One Hundred Years" at Kunstnerforbundet in Oslo.

Kunstakademiet in Oslo has changed a great deal during its 100 years existence, both with regards to media and formats used, and to the discussions and socio-political implications caused by a globalised culture and society. But one thing that may not be so different is the focus which the Academy has on free art, on being a space in society that suggests and promotes aesthetics, critique, freedom and lawlessness.

This year's graduates, whom I have followed over the last two years, represent a wide scope of approaches in terms of artistic subjects, media, and content. They have left me with an impression of a highly engaged class when it comes to debate, social life, solidarity, and first and foremost artistic activity of a high level inside as well as outside the Academy.

I wish to thank this class for a great exchange of ideas and an exiting collaboration, as well as everybody involved with the MA programme, from MA assistant Janne Talstad, the other professors and colleagues at Kunstakademiet, to all those who have supplied the external assistance and knowledge that we have been granted. Also thank you to Stenersenmuseet and Kunstnerforbundet for hosting our exhibitions. A final thank you goes to Christian Krohg; Kunstakademiet was a great idea, here's to another hundred years ...

- Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, April, 2009





## Art and Society

- A conversation between artist

Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, professor at Kunstakademiet in Oslo and art historian Sanne Kofod Olsen, rector of Funen Art Academy.

**Henrik Plenge Jakobsen:** As you know, this conversation will be printed in the catalogues for the degree exhibitions of two Scandinavian art academies – Funen Art Academy in Odense, Denmark, and Kunstakademiet in Oslo, Norway. Rather than speaking of graduating, however, you suggested that we might speak of art and society, which is, in a manner of speaking, an issue whose real impact is only felt after you have graduated from an art academy. Even though an academy is, of course, part of society, it nevertheless constitutes a protective environment of sorts. So, if we begin at the sheltered workshop first, we at the Kunstakademiet in Oslo recently had a visit from the German artist and unofficial godfather of recent Norwegian art, Stephan Dillemoth. Together with the students, he arranged a happening entitled *Lumpenball* (a German expression for a kind of beggar's banquet) – a carnival of sorts where all participants were dressed as vagabonds, vagrants, and whores.

The Lumpenball began as a kind of

tramp's procession which set out from the Academy, made its way through the city and ended up at a dilapidated bar, Gamle Banken, which is located in the harbour in Oslo and decorated for the occasion with stale food and things found in the city dumpsters. All participants contributed a performative feature – reciting their own poems, playing the harmonica, or performing a special tramp's dance where the audience would splatter a tramp with black ink to the tones of Rolling Stones' *Sympathy for the Devil*. As the night progressed everyone got drunk and rather agitated, and it all ended up with the Academy's lecturer on drawing, Anna Gudmundsdottir, who was dressed as a beggar and had been begging money all night, standing in front of the Oslo stock exchange, throwing coins at the buildings while the guards stood gaping in slack-jawed disbelief. Such an attack on the stock exchange, conducted at a time of great difficulty for the institution, and such a Lumpenball, which can be regarded as a kind of bohemian investigation and celebration of the financial downturn – do you think this mode of artistic action would be a possibility? After all, you have referred somewhat acerbically to Dillemoth and his compatriots as the *Gegen-gegen* gang (“the Against-against gang”).

**Sanne Kofod Olsen:** My intention wasn't really to be acerbic; I simply use the

designation for a group of artists who are against everything – including others who are against the same things. Perhaps this is simply a typical mechanism, found in most artists; after all, they will believe in their own project first and then tolerate those of others second – and to varying degrees only. This is understandable enough given the fact that artists often have to shore up themselves without any help. They have a kind of instinct for survival that can certainly impress me, but which also serves to emphasize the difficulties that beset an artist's life. The choice to become an artist is one of the most radical choices you can make. It is a “leap into the void”, to paraphrase Yves Klein, who created a collage/faux performance with that very title (*Le Saut dans le Vide*, 1960). Many artists are, in a way, dissidents. Or what do you think?

I should add that I greatly appreciate Dillemath the dissident and his work, which I would describe as classic avant-garde counterculture. I firmly believe that counterculture is necessary, for there is nothing which cannot be said or gainsaid within that realm. In many ways art is one of the only areas in contemporary society where things can be said without pulling punches. Many artists have already taken the step in full, making real compromises on what other consider normal living standards in order to be

able to retain their artistic freedom. That almost sounds romantic, and I never really thought I would ever get to a point where I can sometimes see myself as a romantic modernist. Yet I find that as things get progressively more controlled (as is the case with e.g. the Bologna Agreement, the European standardisation model for education, including education within the arts), I find it increasingly important that the arts retain and offer alternatives. Art is a place of sanctuary, a no-man's land which is an inherent part of the nature of the discipline/art, as it were. One of Dillemath's important contributions to art and contemporary culture is the website [www.societyofcontrol.com](http://www.societyofcontrol.com), which addresses control aspects of today's society. The concept of the society of control can be traced back to e.g. Gilles Deleuze, who in 1992 wrote an article by the same name. Deleuze believed that the society of control had replaced the society of discipline, describing the change in the following terms:

”We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become “*dividuals*,” and masses, samples, data, markets, or “*banks*.” [...] The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. (Gilles Deleuze, *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, October 59, Winter

1992, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA)

Do you believe that art can have a liberating potential in our contemporary society?

**HPJ:** Yes. I believe that one of the primary functions of art is to be liberating, to represent a space for broad-mindedness. That is why art should be designated “free art”, a field for lawlessness. I believe we should insist on this. Particularly when we live in a society governed by control and capital. On the other hand, I am slightly wary of the dissident role. It gets a little bit too cloistered, convent-y, a little too *dropout*. I take the position that art should operate simultaneously within as well as outside of society, finance, and politics – be present and not-present at the same time, as it were. To me, this schizophrenic position is the most meaningful point of departure in a society of control. Art should enter into a state of interplay and exchange with society and yet remain autonomous at one and the same time.

**SKO:** Yes, I agree – up to a point. But I still think it is important to retain the dissident role as an option.

**HPJ:** One of my dear old friends, Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, has said that the only place he sees a Utopian space or scope is within the arts. He probably didn’t have a

Lumpenball in mind at that point, but do you think it’s true that aesthetics and the arts represent Utopia?

**SKO:** Ah, yes, good old TWA! I probably wouldn’t go to quite those modernist extremes, seeing aesthetics and art as representatives of Utopia. Rather, I believe that the opportunities for Utopias very much reside in the independence and freedom of thought. However, good technocrats would also see Utopia in totally managed and controlled systems. That would be their dream world! To me, Adorno is something of a fundamentalist of aesthetics; busily saying that Utopia could no longer exist because “the new” could not keep happening. In many ways he has planted the seeds of the tired old cliché that has been going around since the 1980s (perhaps since the 1960s), claiming that art is dead. Haven’t we seen that if you stick too hard to one particular view of what art is in the material sense, then art is particularly at risk of dying? I suppose that it is a contradiction in terms to speak of the death of art in relation to an avant-garde discourse because in that particular discourse art has an inherent impulse towards breaking away from its own conformity. Or what?

**HPJ:** To me, the question of whether art is experiencing a crisis and/or dying is a generation issue more than anything

else – a question of one generation not understanding the next. I see art – the visual arts, literature, and music – as an amazingly huge, ongoing, and quite tenacious project; a project which Adorno fought for, both in his work on aesthetics and in the formal structure of his writings. I see his position as more precise than e.g. that of the poststructuralists as regards their analysis of the world in which we live. Adorno's crystalline trains of thought and his rejection of systems are especially attractive to an artist such as myself.

Whereas Deleuze presents a kind of system with his thoughts on the plateau, the rhizome, etc. – a kind of universal model – Adorno only sees things clearly for fleeting moments or at specific points, and that is far more in keeping with my own position.

**SKO:** I have to say that I quite like the expanded space of poststructuralism. Even though I am no Deleuze scholar, I like his basic concepts such as "the thousand plateaus" and the rhizome. The fragmented, the many-faceted, the nomadic, and the entire concept of the subjectivity of a becoming (for example, he uses the concept "becoming woman", which depicts a movement; it points ahead and so is a state of becoming). I also think the concept of a becoming subject or nomadic subject is important from a gender perspective. It provides space for new perspectives and ways of viewing the world. This expanded

space has been very important for those aspects of feminism that are informed by poststructuralism.

**HPJ:** To me, art is fiction and should remain fiction. At the same time art should also relate to the society or reality of which it is part. But this, too, can be problematic; I do not think that art should be instrumentalised or engage directly in relation to any given case or issue. What is your view on that?

**SKO:** Art is always a more or less self-aware construct and, as such, a fiction. But fictions are also part of reality and can affect reality and society. It can comment and intervene, and of course it can also be specifically didactic, i.e. comment directly on political issues, thereby becoming political. I think this is just fine, because political art can make points in a different way compared to the phrasings used in newspapers. Of course, art can also choose not to intervene, to stay exclusively within a self-referential aesthetic field. If art chooses to comment on the credit crunch, such as a Lumpenball, it is welcome to do so. I don't really believe it has a real impact on the financial situation, that it will make a difference, and Anna Gudmundsdottir's action symbolises this perfectly: Small coins being hurled against a huge, impenetrable building. Even so, the action may put some things into perspective

and point to other issues. I only see a real problem when art is instrumentalised.

Today we see many examples of the instrumentalisation of art. It might happen when art takes part in charitable projects such as the *Cow Parade* – you know, those decorated cows that visited Copenhagen last year, where artists decorated a model cow; the proceeds from the sales of the cows went to charity. It says a lot about this project that I saw a TV show where one of these cows was in the office of Stein Bagger (the fraudster and conman who was formerly CEO of the now-bankrupt IT Factory). This is poor art, indifferent art, entirely subjected to a specific purpose.

Art is also at risk of becoming instrumentalised when it very specifically takes part in social projects. Of course, this happens at the very instant a market arises for a specific type of art and the artist chooses to meet this demand. That can be quite all right in some cases. But I think we need to take care that art is not always tied to an objective, to a purpose, becoming a means to an end. There is a lot of talk about this these days; institutions such as Danish industrial organisations are not too keen on independent schools of art. They increasingly focus on product-oriented work and on collaborations between the realms of art and business. This is also very much reflected in educational policy today.

Schools for design and architecture receive the most attention politically.

The most beautiful thing about art is its lack of purpose. Uncertainty and unpredictability is always part of art. There are no specific answers, no rules. Do you agree, and how do you think we can maintain and argue in favour of this status in our contemporary society? To me, this is one of our (the art scene's) biggest and hardest tasks – to find arguments in favour of maintaining the freedom of art. Why is art important to society? Or is it important?



**HPJ:** We can certainly say that aesthetics are important to society, meaning that there are individuals or groups who act without a predestined function or objective. Whether that involves the art institution as we know it right now is, perhaps, less important. But we need to have reserves that allow for different ways of thinking and acting. Aesthetics are a defence against control

and oppression. To me, the great problem with Karl Marx, who was actually a kind of aesthetic soul, was that he never formulated an actual aesthetics; if he had done so, we might not have seen the totalitarian regimes and abuse of communism that arose.

When we look at the role played by art in late-capitalist society, I see a great threat in the appropriation of artistic processes within work and business life that has coincided with the digital revolution. For example, the corporate world and shareholders focus greatly on innovation, development, and potentials rather than on actual production, and this attitude has rebounded back onto the arts like a boomerang, with art increasingly becoming a field for innovation and research. Art is very much appropriating the 'innovative' mode of organisation of corporate life, and it becomes difficult to tell the difference between the IT consultant and the artist. That is where art gets a real problem. To me, this is a kind of erosion of the free artistic field – an erosion that will eventually create a bleak, barren plain of middle class values and slave mentality.

This development is, perhaps, particularly easy to spot within art education, where the art academy of continental Europe is under attack on virtually all fronts because it does not represent a model for research and measurability in the conventional

sense. It seems as if the '68 generation has hooked up with the neo-liberalists to dream a dream of an innovative information society, and that is a highly toxic cocktail. In addition to this, we have also witnessed the rather sad development that the role or figure of the artists has become very professional. The last drunken artist was Kippenberger; now, the standard role has become a rather domesticated, adaptable type who tries to navigate the choppy waters of career, art fairs, exhibitions, galleries, and the whole nine yards. There's bloody well nothing very bohemian about it the way things are right now. But perhaps we are headed somewhere else.

And speaking of somewhere else: How do you see the role of the art academy in society, perhaps of your own academy as well as in general? It is a somewhat absurd education; it is certainly not very career-minded. Only a few become artists or, to be precise, artists who can make a living off their art. How can this be justified? I myself, for example, cannot make a living off my art and I am teaching others how to be unable to support themselves financially. That is something of a paradox ...

**SKO:** Yes, perhaps we are headed somewhere else. Even though the dominant trend right now is to see society as a well-oiled machine (the present-day Utopia of the technocracy), it is nevertheless quite

organic. When something happens within one area, there will often be a response within another. As regards the art academy, it is a humanistic and artistic conglomerate, and I very much see this field as the butt of contemporary attacks. Why do we educate all these free artists? I also ask myself that question from time to time, knowing full well that far from all of them will be able to live off their art if we look simply at income from works sold. However, I actually see the conception of artists living off the fruits of their studio as something of a myth. If, like you, you become professor at an art academy, that profession is very much linked to your artistic practice. Had you been a failure as an artist, you would not have been offered the job. I am not quite sure where and when that myth arose. Think of Kandinsky and Klee, for example; two great artists within art history. They both worked at the Bauhaus school, and that seemed to be how they made their living. And they are not the only examples.

Throughout history, some artists have chosen to live in great poverty (and presumably that is still the case), while others have lived off family fortunes or patrons. The present-day concept of the “self-sufficient artist” is based on those few, extremely successful artists who in many cases are also very good businessmen and women and devote a lot of time to that side of things. I think it is

important to clearly state (in art education, too) that living as an artist involves much else besides ‘living off one’s art’, for only a very few can do that throughout their lives.

The way I see it, the academy should retain its identity as an artistic and intellectual haven, a place where stimulating settings for exchange can be established. An education within the arts is very much an education which is about one’s own discoveries, personal as well as artistic, for these private/artistic discoveries and awarenesses form the foundations of artistic production. Many question whether it is possible to create artists through education. I believe it is, but it is primarily done by creating a stimulating environment for (artistic) self-development in a state of collective interplay.

Art is a funny thing, conditioned by psychology and social factors; things that cannot be pinned down in a textbook. There is no final answer where good art is concerned, and that is probably what so many find annoying. It cannot be checked or controlled. And that is why I think that the art academy fulfils an important role within society; ideally, it should be able to reflect upon its own role as a place which in many ways represents something which is beyond control in relation to the ‘products’ made: In many ways, the presence of art in society reflects a classic

separation into three stages familiar from psychoanalysis: the imaginary (images/ recognition), the symbolic (language), and the real (the unconscious). This model describes the development of human consciousness from infant to fully grown, but it also describes the human psyche. The imaginary and the symbolic are the defined entities within human development, whereas the real is the undefined – the place where our urges and imagination belong. It is also what Freud described as the unconscious, which is precisely characterised by being outside the scope of total control. If we take it that art is part of the unconscious of society, what then would happen to society if the unconscious part becomes increasingly suppressed? I believe that too much suppression will lead to schizophrenia. And that brings us back to Deleuze, Guattari, and the consequences of the society of control.

It is food for thought that today, it is necessary to argue why art is important to society. It is no longer taken as given. In recent years, economists have argued that art should be able to exist on the terms stipulated by the market economy, i.e. as a commodity. Today, parts of society regard this argument as the simple truth and believe that art has always functioned according to these premises. In a manner of speaking, the economists perform a kind of critique of modern civilisation which

I think has taken the humanistic part of society completely off guard. That is why we (the humanists, artists, etc.) now find ourselves pressed into a corner which we must find suitable arguments to navigate out of, whereas 'new management' theories and technocracies have long since gathered up arms for the great culture struggle. It is like David and Goliath. However, David vanquished Goliath with his little slingshot. In Florence, David's victory over Goliath symbolises the emergence of a vibrant culture in the late Gothic era and the Renaissance. Do you think that we, like David, have a slingshot packed away?

**HPJ:** I think we have plenty of shots left. I am a romantic and insist that it is possible to attack the experience economy with knowledge, aesthetics, and reflection.









## The Village

Paris, 1972. Things had been going badly at the studio. The optimism that had made transforming the closed-down hospital into a cutting-edge complex of contemporary art workspaces such a collective joy was fast evaporating. The government grant was spent. Nobody was coming to the private views, although the bus routes were clearly marked on all the invitations, and a sense of futility hung in the air like bad aromatherapy. When the local junkies broke into Jean-Paul's studio they took the broken tape machine, a mug without a handle and two rolls of masking tape but left the paintings. The public's faith in the bourgeois attributes of line, form and harmonious colour combination remained stubborn. The roof leaked.

There was a big meeting later that year. It was the second Friday in July, with the traffic outside gridlocked halfway to Belgium and the heat enough to make Marie-Joelle's wax casts of her naked body look like forensic shots of an acid-bath accident. Anything was better than this.

'Anything is better than this,' said Anton, when it was his turn to speak.

'I've got an idea,' said Dominique, when it was hers.

Her plan was as brilliant as it was simple, and the artists adopted it immediately. It was true to the spirit of radicalism that had informed their project from the outset and yet it promised considerable lifestyle benefits. It would be collective, but allow for individual freedom. Above all, it would represent the coming of the dream of the avant-garde - art and life merged seamlessly together.

They sold the hospital to a property developer and bought the tiny abandoned fishing hamlet of Inutile-sur-Mer. They made the long journey south in a convoy of borrowed vans, dormobiles, hand-painted 2CVs. Each of the artists had conceived a project that would contribute to the whole. Marie-Joelle installed an oven in her cottage and, using only flour, water, yeast and salt, constructed exact replicas of loaves of bread. Henri, as a tribute to Joseph Beuys, opened a shop that sold dead hares, and also rabbits, pheasant and a range of cured meat. Anton, inspired by Tinguely, set up a small workshop in which he worked on a variety of strange machinery, but principally the old Peugeotts of the local farmers. Jean-Paul painted ironic watercolours of the surrounding countryside, which he sold to tourists.

The winters were mild and passed quickly, the summers were hot and lasted forever and the tensions of metropolitan life

melted into the heat haze like so many bad dreams. The days, the weeks, the months, the years went by; the project took root and flourished. The artists became skilled in their new media, but the pile of press releases, hand-set and printed on home-made paper by Dominique and Jacques in the excitement of the community's formation lay yellowing and dust-covered, unsent. The world's ignorance of the artists' groundbreaking activities remained profound. In the local bar (motto - 'the act of drinking beer with friends is the highest form of art') the debated strayed ever further from the need to dematerialise the object and refine the aims of social sculpture, towards love affairs, problems with the harvest, roof maintenance, the poor run of form of the local football team. Marriages were celebrated with non-religious rites, personal vows or pagan rituals. Soon the first children were born.

There were hard times too, of course, but the struggle had a meaning and what resources the villagers had were shared without bitterness. The artists' ingenuity had not been dulled by their rural idyll, far from it. When things got difficult, Anton would sabotage harvesters or grain elevators on the surrounding farms and then turn up the next morning, toolbox in hand, asking whether by any chance they needed a mechanic. Angelique and Claude grew three acres of Morocco's

finest on their smallholding. There was a wine festival for the tourists with the artists dressed authentically as peasants. They sold their 2CVs and rode bicycles instead. They claimed welfare at false addresses. They got by - in fact they thrived.

One day a stranger came to the village, out of season for a tourist but dressed like a city dweller. The children laughed at him as he passed in his bright clothes, his impractical footwear. He wandered around for a whole afternoon, bought wine and cheese from the artists' little shops and picnicked down by the disused harbour. He took photographs and wrote in a spiral-bound notebook. Two weeks later he was back, looking for a room to rent.

He was, he explained, a painter. He'd been working in Paris but had just received a grant and decided to spend a few months developing some ideas in isolation. Things hadn't been going too well. He felt his work lacked relevance. He needed to examine his practice, perhaps rebuild it entirely. A room was found that easily double as a studio if the mattress was propped against the wall and the rent, by Parisian standards, was very reasonable. He moved in at once.

Although the years of rural life had changed the artists out of all recognition - nobody would have guessed that the

village had not always been exactly as it now appeared - the passing of time had not tempered their ideals. The stranger's arrival, financially welcome as it was, stirred up old commitments, resentments, rebellious natures. They set to work on the young painter.

(first published in *StopStop* #1, Glasgow 1997)

-Will Bradley

One by one they visited his studio, never letting slip that they were anything but honest, country folk. Subtly, over time, criticising his successes, encouraging his mistakes, applauding his failures, they destroyed the young man's work. Taking advantage of his obvious crisis of confidence, they turned him into a shambling parody of an artist and when, months later, he left again for Paris they laughed into their beer until the sun came up.

The rest, of course, is history. A few years ago I saw his first one-person show in New York. Near the door there was a table with a book of newspaper clippings and a pile of catalogues, and as I paused there before leaving I was cornered by the gallerist. Standing over the visitors book, she pressed a pen into my hand. So I scrawled my name as illegibly as I could, and then in the column marked 'comments' I wrote what I always write when I don't know what to say: 'Uncompromising'.



## **I Hate Myself with my Tongue in my Cheek**

*"When I was a little kid I wish the first word I said was the word 'quote' so that right before I died I could say 'unquote'"*

Stephen Wright

*Digital voice recording, made by Dr Robert Knappstad on April 3<sup>rd</sup> –2009, transcribed.*

Ok (click) testing (click)...ing (click) How the f\*\*\* does this thin... (click)...ork (click) Ok I think I've got it fig...(click)...t now

The buttons on this thing are too small. I liked it better when they were analogue. Aaah the eighties. Just kidding. Didn't really like the eighties that much. In fact: the eighties is maybe the sorriest ...(click) Strike that. (click)

But I've always preferred the more tangible interface of analogue equipment to the innocuous touchpad on newer digital stuff, everything has become so tentative, I'm not comfortable with the merging of man and his machine that's implied by this senso-interactive desire inscribing itself on all technological surfaces... (click) strike that too. (click) (mmmf) So my first question would be – a question to myself obviously – why invite me to write an essay for your

final year show? (mmmf)

I mean, I find clinical psychology to be not the obvious choice in terms of what you would want to use as a theoretical framework to investigate art. First of all, the answer is already given; yes, the artist-subject is – historically speaking – prone to adopt dysfunctional behavioral patterns. Secondly; reducing art to a behavioral indicator short circuits the divide between artist and artwork and hence reduces it to a site for pathological projection, a highly dubious undertaking when not coupled with an intent to treat the ailment. As you can understand I'm sort of at odds with my professional etiquette here...(mmmf) Besides, I admit that my knowledge of contemporary art is very limited. I collect Weidemann paintings. So why did I agree to write this essay? (click) I have no good answer for that... But now I'm getting defensive here. (mmmf)

So, as you have probably gathered by now, I'm not entirely sure how to approach the issue at hand. I'm not really sure what *is* the issue at hand to be honest. I guess that's what I'm supposed to find out. We'll have to free associate a little here. Bear with me.

Starting with where I am. Where am I? I'm here, in my apartment, splayed supinely out across my living room carpet. What's that? A dried piece of salami? What's

this? A yellowed toenail? I really need to vacuum this carpet. Housework is boring. I wish I had a girlfriend. I wish I hadn't divorced my wife. Or rather; that she hadn't divorced me. I wish I had taken better care of my prostate, because then I wouldn't have had to lie here exercising my perineum right now (mmmf). On the other hand I'm happy that I'm healing up well after the prostate-reduction surgery. I have a lot of things to be hap...(click) Strike that, that whole free association part. Wrong track. (laughing)

(mmmf)

Now I will talk to you about David Letterman. I want this essay to somehow deal with the language of art and its repressive properties. Where does Letterman fit into that? As an analogy, obviously. The language of art not as in how art translates into meaning – i.e. the relationship between signifier and signified, but with a more sociolectic approach; as in what sort of an identity does contemporary artistic practice tend to it was a golden yellow light over the football field. . .*Long pause, heavy breathing.* (click) Sorry, where was I? The Identity that contemporary artistic practice produces, yes. And what is the relationship between the formal and conceptual tropes of this practice and the identity and self-perception of the artist. (mmmf) (click)

What I think is interesting about Letterman is his tongue. That mouth always seems so dry. His tongue is moving incessantly about in there like it's always distributing a scarce reserve of saliva. It's so you can almost hear the dry smacking noise of his tongue being sucked by a desperately dehydrated mouth whenever he is about to speak, as if he is savoring the dryness of his wit. Coffee and the others were pacing up ahead of me as we broke into the woods, bending off the branches that was spurting from the tree stems into a barring mesh of wiry wood, making their thin twelve year old bodies bend sideways and backwards in a ballet-like sequence of movements as they pushed through, while trying to avoid their bare skin getting lashed, and disappeared into the shadows (click) What am I talking about? The coffee mug that he's always got clasped in his bony grip. The diuretic properties of coffee obviously have something to do with it, his dry mouth. (mmmf) His humor is clearly tongue-in-cheek, but in the case of Letterman that term also literally denotes a physical characteristic: his restless tongue constantly in motion, often presses visibly against his cheek, and is as such, *in-cheek*. (mmmf) I read somewhere that Letterman is pathologically obsessed about his weight, bordering on anorexia. Being starved can't help with the moist problem in his mouth... I wonder what his breath



smells like? ...Strike that last sentence. His breath is irrelevant.

Browsing for Letterman related articles on the net (mmmf) that I could use to expand on my exposition. I found one in the New York Times where there was this anecdote about a time when he'd had Teri Garr on the show and during a commercial break she had shouted to him over the loud music 'How are you?' He had slipped a note across the desk to her that read: 'I hate myself.' Caught off guard by this sudden display of self-debasement, Teri had tried to assure David that he was a great guy, but to no avail since David's only response was to underline, twice, what the note already said and pass it back to her. He walked slightly bent forward, guided by two pointed sticks wielded by two of the boys. The sharp ends made him jolt every time they poked his fat behind. I remember... (click) Sorry, trailing off there, again. I don't know what's wrong with me today. Yes, back to Letterman and the note. Title suggestion: 'I Hate Myself with my Tongue in my Cheek' (click)

Speaking of tongue in cheek, how about that Duchamp? I was informed by the internet that he has made a piece called 'With my Tongue in my Cheek'. (mmmf) I wanted to talk about him too. I went on Youtube and watched interviews with him. I made a note of some of the things he said

that I found indicative of what he embodied as an artist. *Sound of paper being unfolded*: Quote one: 'I wanted to go back to a dry drawing, to a dry conception of art.' Quote two: 'I want his fat behind to be free (click) Sorry, again: I want to be free and I want to be free from the skin on his arms that had been clawed with red stripes by the thin twig we had used as rope to tie his hands on his back (click) What did I say? to be free from myself.' Quote three: 'There are three forms of it – he's speaking about taste here – bad, good and indifferent, I'm on the indifferent taste boat'. Here we have the quality of dryness, coupled with the despise of self and the lacking of allegiance to a certain group defined by its tastes or preferences. I thought that he looked anorectic too but that's just speculation. (mmmf) Professional chess player. Didn't like female body hair. Who does? Strike that. (click)

My point is that Letterman and Duchamp have characteristics in common: They share a dispassionate outlook, they favor dryness and verbal puns as opposed to compassion and sincerity. They cultivate the expression on his red, freckled face as I hurried past him: a sort of fearful introspective gaze. (click) Sorry, I don't know what I was talking about there. I mean: They cultivate tastelessness or indifference toward taste, and they both feel encumbered by the self. Now, Duchamp's despise of self is

directed at the institution of self and not the private experience of self. To him the wanting to get away from the self, or *his* self, comes from the point of view of a politically radical position. (click) Duchamp cites the book 'The Ego and Its Own' by Max Stirner as a major influence on his artistic practice. Max Stirner is considered one of the founding nihilist thinkers and an advocate of what is called individual anarchism. One of Stirner's central concepts is the idea of the ego as 'a creative nothing'. This resonates well with Duchamp's desire to be freed from himself.

Quote from 'The Ego and Its Own': 'I alone am corporeal. And now I take the world as what it is to me, as mine, as my property; I refer all to myself.'

Though an affiliate of various art movements and groups of his time, Duchamp never – after leaving behind impressionism and later abandoning painting all together summing it up in what he derisively referred to as 'retinal art' – subscribed to any collective ideology. There wasn't room for any pathetic motions toward group identity in his philosophy. It's all about the ego, his ego. We tickled him till he peed himself. He was now tied to the thick trunk of an old pine tree. His skin was blank with perspiration. A rash had broken out all over his sagging fat-boy chest. The hyperventilation muf...

(click) I feel a bit dizzy. Strike that.

Anyway, the limitless possibilities for ego expansion that follows from taking the 'I alone am corporeal...' statement to heart. Duchamp's turn to chess might actually be a side effect of him being unable to acknowledge 'the other' except as opposition within a framework where the rules are fixed. Also the easy transition from art to chess, there's something ominous about that. Needs elaboration. (click)

The self Duchamp wants to be freed from is the self that asserts *itself* by subscribing to carefully chosen preferences. The bourgeois self. The hyperventilation muffled by the sock taped in his mouth, teary eyes looking to me for compassion. The self that subscribes to authority.

To be free means, to Duchamp, to perceive life as constant game, where nothing real is ever at stake, no allegiance is anything but temporary guise. (click)

David Letterman *hates* himself. To him that's not a principal attitude. On the contrary, hating oneself is a mortal sin in his culture. At least doing so openly. Which is a paradox since obsessing on one-self invariably leads to hating one-self, and if there ever was a culture that propagated self-obsession it would be the culture in

which Letterman is deeply immersed – American showbiz. We left him there, in his pissed out pants, propped apathetically up against the tree... Letterman is known for being a perfectionist, which entails being overly self-conscious and self-scrutinizing. This constant self-scrutiny, which allegedly had him mercilessly picking his own performances apart after the taping of each show, is what reveals to him the shallowness and vanity at the core of his nature and in turn fuels his contempt for himself and by extension everyone else.

There is a clearly detectable air of contempt about him. It shows in the smirky and patronizing way he often treats his guests. His self-loathing is transferred onto his interviewees by the way of a contemptuous distrust of their motives. He can't stand pretensions of sincerity. It's the same way with Duchamp and his embrace of the machine as metaphor. Shrugging off the romantic pursuits of his contemporaries and their – aesthetic – desire to make the subconscious speak. And then we forgot him. No one knows how long he was out there, in the woods, all by himself, taped to a tree, half naked, freezing as the sun settled and the chill of the night set in and the mosquitoes found his fat, defenseless body. (click) Trailed off there, again. I don't know what I was saying there. Sorry about that. Duchamp, yes, he too felt contempt for the fallacies intrinsic to all

human belief-systems be it the hierarchy of taste or the transcendence of painting.

Now Letterman is not an intellectual like Duchamp. He doesn't advance abstract arguments. On the contrary he always gives the best and most unreserved praise to whatever product his guest is on the show to endorse. It comes with the job description. It's not the product he dislikes or that he wants to nail for its inconsistencies, it's the people behind the product that are at the sharp end of his wit. He sees human nature for the shallow and cynical apparatus it is. Take these quotes:

*Sound of paper being unfolded.* Quote one: "New York... when civilization falls apart, remember, we were way ahead of you." Quote two: "The weather here is gorgeous. It's mild and feels like it's in the eighties. The hot dog vendors got confused because of the weather and thought maybe he was dead. Because when I suddenly remembered – after I had gone to bed that night – and climbed out the window and ran into the woods in my pajamas, back to the tree where we had tied him up, he was gone, it was spring, so they accidentally changed the hot dog water in their carts." Quote three: "Congratulations are in order for Woody Allen - he and Soon Yi have a brand new baby daughter. It's all part of Woody's plan to grow his own wives." Quote four: "I'm just trying to make a



*of Robert vomiting on himself, because when I received his recorder in the mail a few days later – for transcription like we had agreed upon – it was inside a brown padded envelope and when I opened it a stench so intense it gave me tears in my eyes burst forth. The recorder was sticky and smelled sourly like the contents of someone's stomach.*

-Stian Gabrielsen





Juan Andres Milanes Benito  
1975, Isla De La Juventud, Cuba

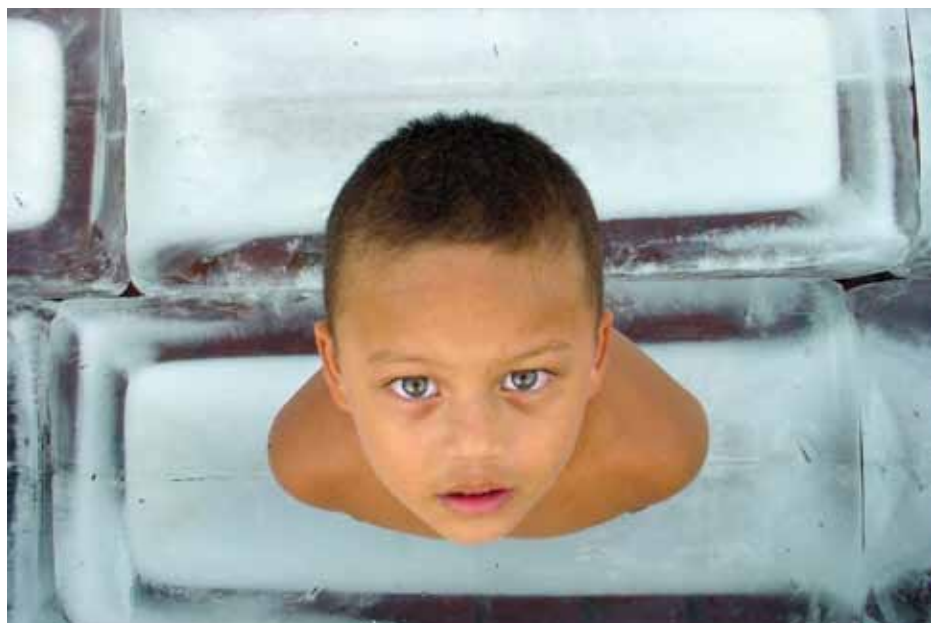


THE ROUTE  
glue, 1600 shoes, polystyrene (160 x 600 x 150 cm)  
2008





THROUGH MY EYES  
cardboard, various objects  
Trondheim  
2008



**ABSTRACTION IN NOVEMBER**

metal, ice  
multiple cities in Panama  
1999-2003



**ABSTRACTION IN NOVEMBER**

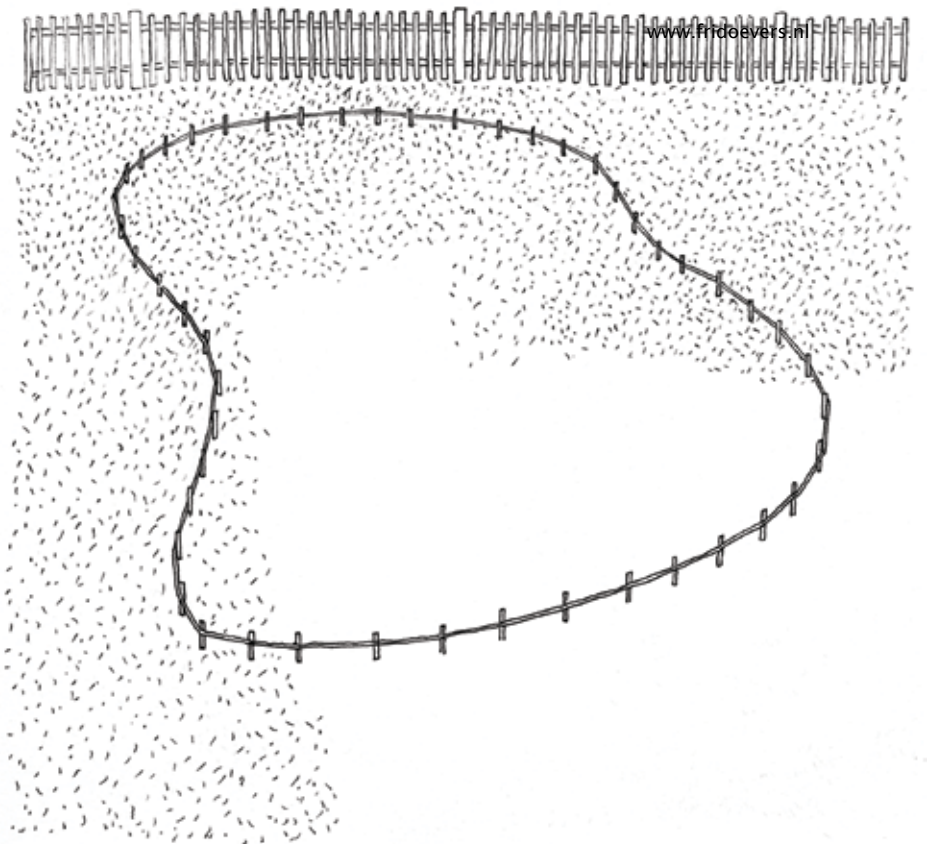
metal, ice  
multiple cities in Panama  
1999-2003

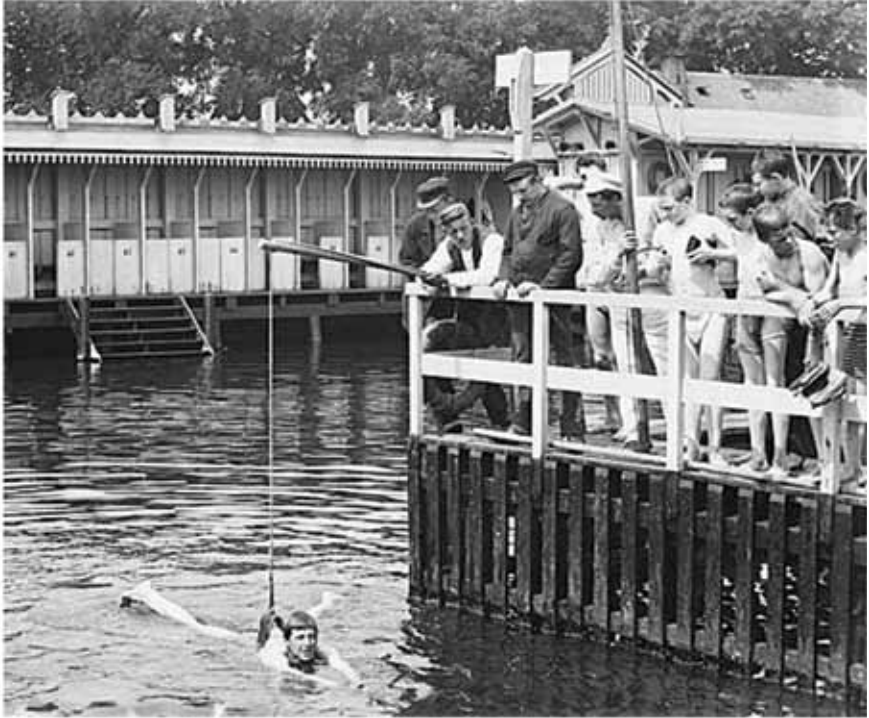


IN A STRAIGHT LINE FROM MY FACE TO MY BACK  
performance, video (8 min)  
2008



IN A STRAIGHT LINE FROM MY FACE TO MY BACK  
performance, video (8 min)  
2008

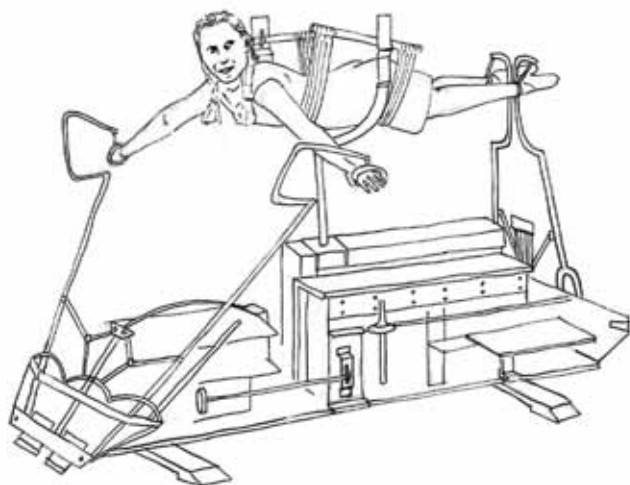




Jacob Olie, photograph of the Westerdoksdijk swimming pool, 1893

‘He has a frog in a bowl of water, tied with a pack-thread by the loins, which pack-thread Sir Nicolas holds in his teeth, lying upon his belly on a table; and as the frog strikes, he strikes, and his swimming master stands by to tell him when he does well or ill.’ When asked if he had ever tried out the stroke in the water, Sir Nicolas replies: ‘No Sir, but I swim most exquisitely on land. I contend myself with the Speculative art of swimming, I care not for the Practick. I seldom bring anything to use, ‘tis not my way.’

(Charles Sprawson, 1992, *Haunts of the Black Masseur: The Swimmer as Hero*, London: Jonathan Cape, p. 24)

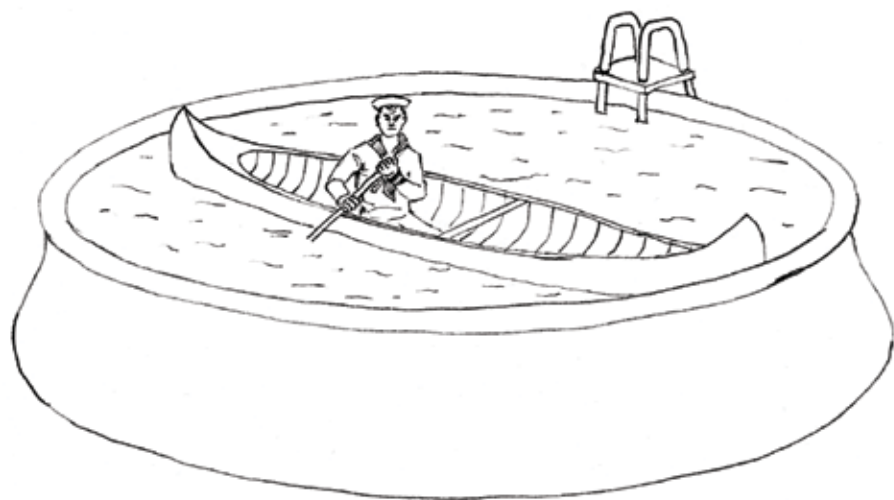






Slim Aarons, photograph of the Pendleton estate, 1960





Jonathan Mcready Brewer  
1979, Clearwater, FL





UNTITLED  
oil on canvas (100x67 cm)  
2009

left  
UNTITLED  
oil on canvas (210x120 cm)  
2009





studio april 09

left  
UNTITLED  
oil on canvas (38x38 cm)  
2009

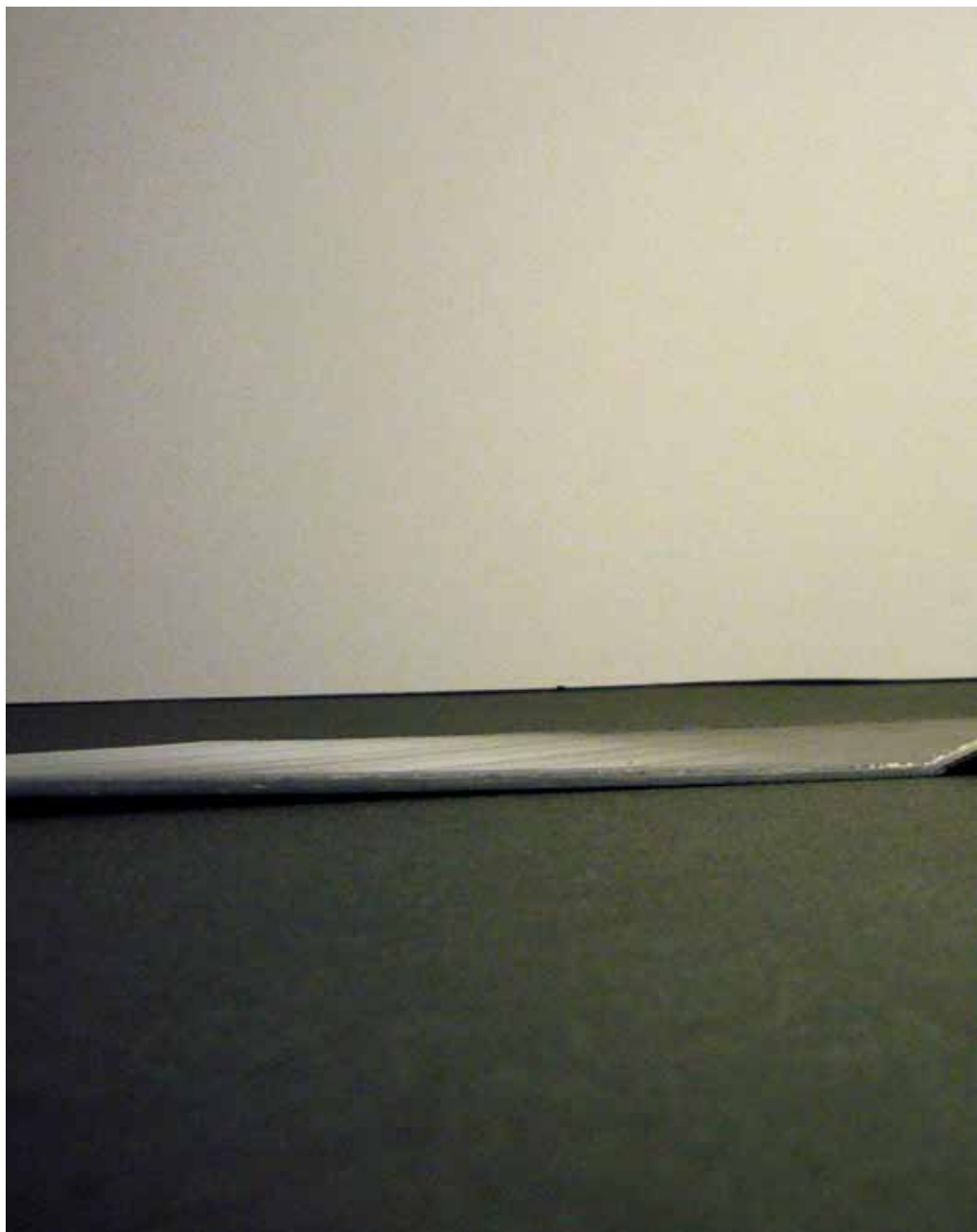






UNTITLED  
oil on canvas (40x26 cm)  
2009

left:  
UNTITLED  
oil on canvas  
2009

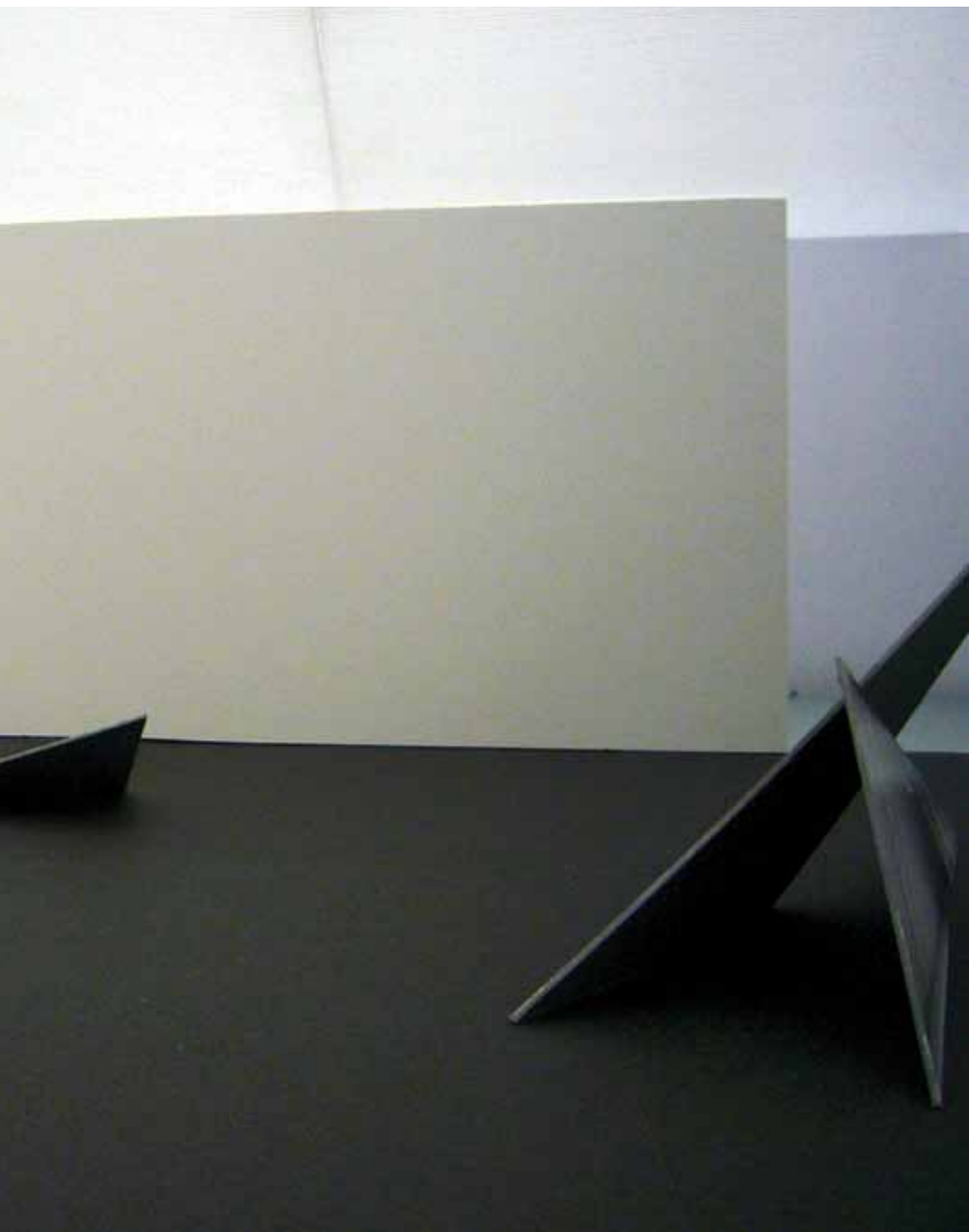


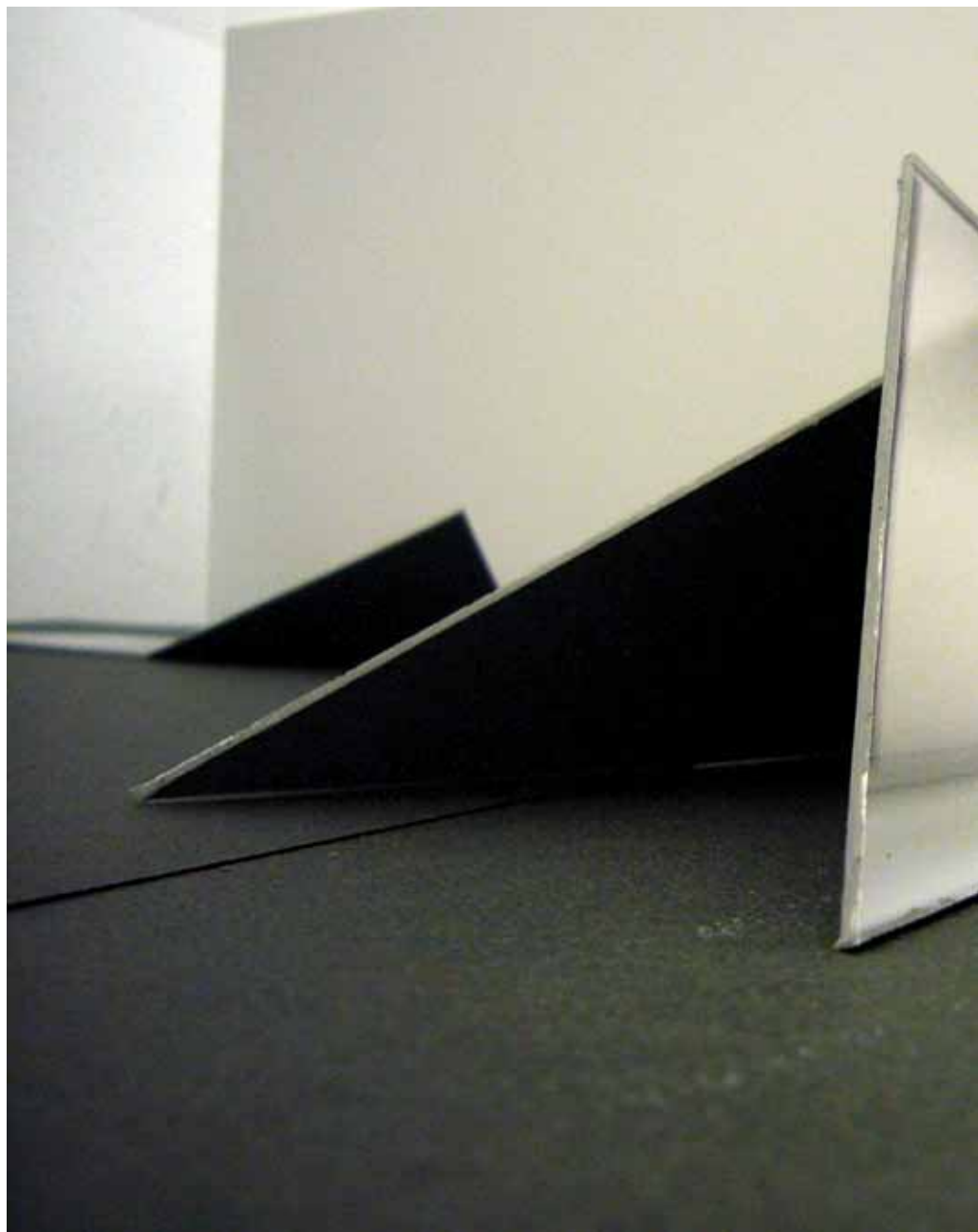
LEANING, LYING, STANDING, HANGING (MODEL)  
print mounted on cardboard (70 x 70 x 30 cm)  
2009



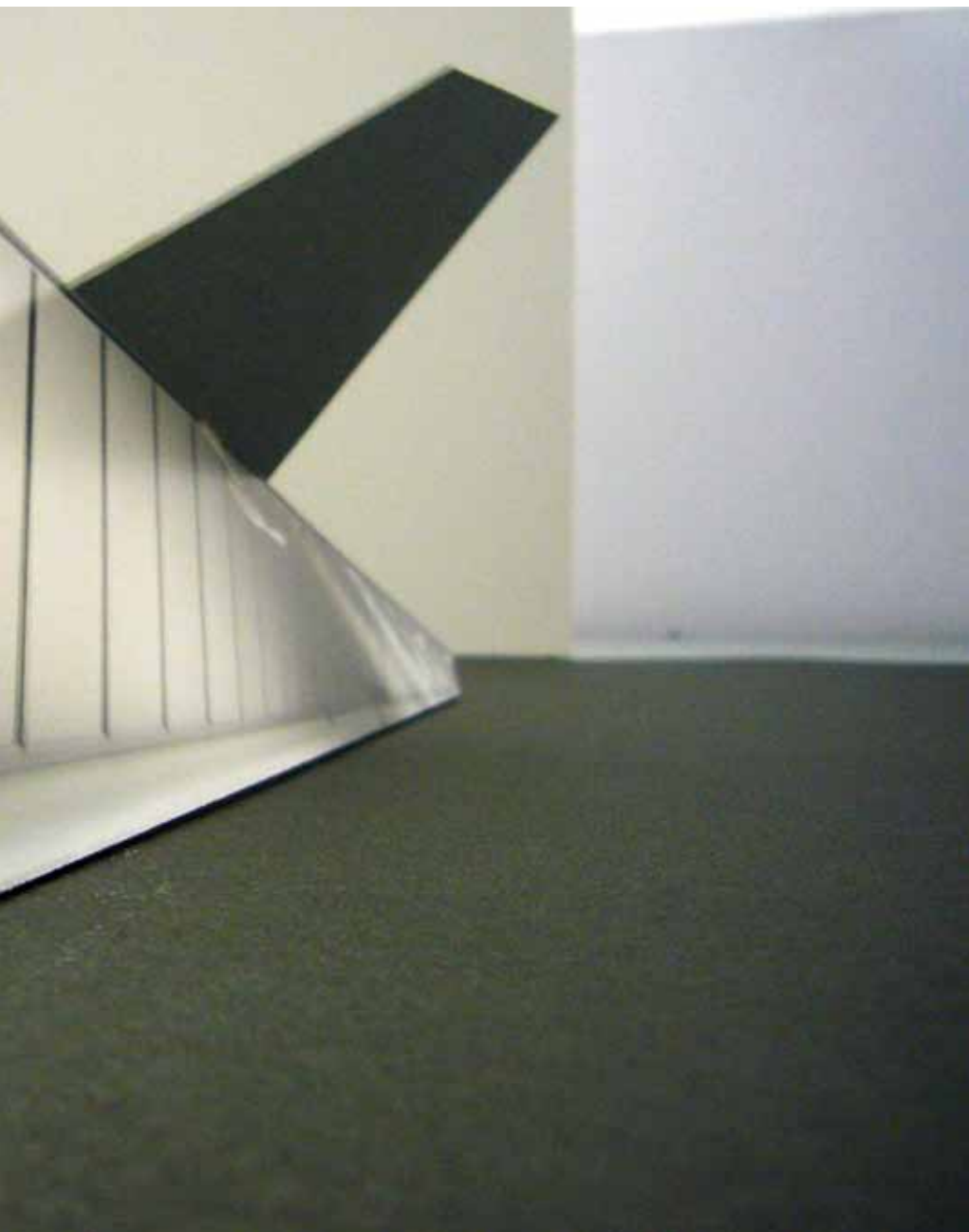


LEANING, LYING, STANDING, HANGING (MODEL)  
print mounted on cardboard (70 x 70 x 30 cm)  
2009





LEANING, LYING, STANDING, HANGING (MODEL)  
print mounted on cardboard (70 x 70 x 30 cm)  
2009



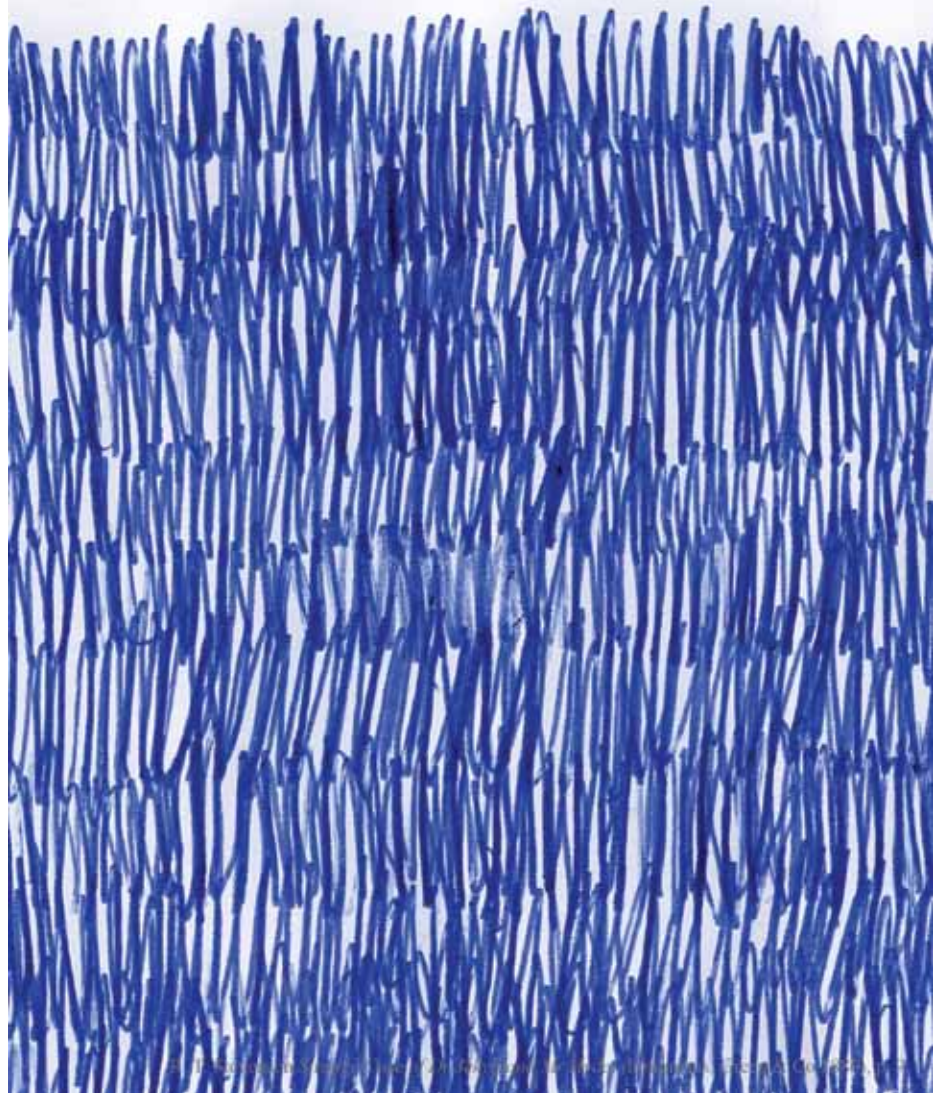


GIRL AT THE SHOPS WHO'S FACE IS GETTING SQUASHED BY A  
SET OF HEADPHONES AND A SCARF

Pencil on paper (24 x 18 cm)  
2008



That was the amount of information that the lawyer carried back with him to the great, dark bed on which he tossed to and fro until the small hours of the morning began to grow large. It was a night of little ease to his toiling mind, toiling in mere darkness and besieged by questions.





LOSING FACE  
pencil on paper (24 x 18 cm)  
2008



FIGURE  
pencil on paper (7 x 4.7 cm)  
2009

don't go changing trying to please me  
you never let me down before

I don't imagine you're too familiar  
and I don't see you anymore

I would not leave you in times of trouble  
we never could have come this far

I took the good times I'll take the bad times  
I'll take you just the way you are

don't go trying some new fashion  
don't change the colour of your hair  
you always have my unspoken passion  
although I might not seem to care

I don't want clever conversation  
I don't want to work that hard  
I just want some someone to talk to  
I want you just the way you are



LIKE PEELING A POTATO  
Still images from Single Channel DVD (07.14 min)  
2008

## Flat

Linguistic ramble ravel. Carnival and cables. Perfume over fortune, quiet strolling stables. Spinewood no good – come to terms with it. Quit? Sample old machinery. Laughable matters HAHA. Lingo friend fell on face cause a discussion bout the human race. Life for rental. Behemoth taxes on a line – lime -. fine – one dime – her lad. Sweat pearls on window. Window over sweat pearl. One floor, two floor, three. Many floors. Plateau? Bulding done. 2128. Artist dead. No worry. Vison transmittion position. Sun shine on my fangs underneath the silent current. Currency let me bee come over here and i'll read you some poetry. Gitarcase. Long travel. Stay like this zen cheese, christ fridge filled with meat. Catapult. Oh my god. God is dead. Headache. Kiss on lips, saliva drips. Hip. Tit. Nah. Rest. Limbs ok on a silent day i would say hey ok. Stroll a while. Cofee (?) cruissant (?) oh yes please thank you. Smile. Violent day in Iraque. The land is moving. Eyes analyzing. Situation stumbles out of control – many victims. Yawn. Don` t worry. Smiley face everything will be allright. We dance a while. Dance, dance, dance. Depression. De press ion. Ion. Mathmatics (?) forget it! Question mark on side of paper. Notebook. Pen. Technology can save your mental health. We go to the northern lands where the landscape

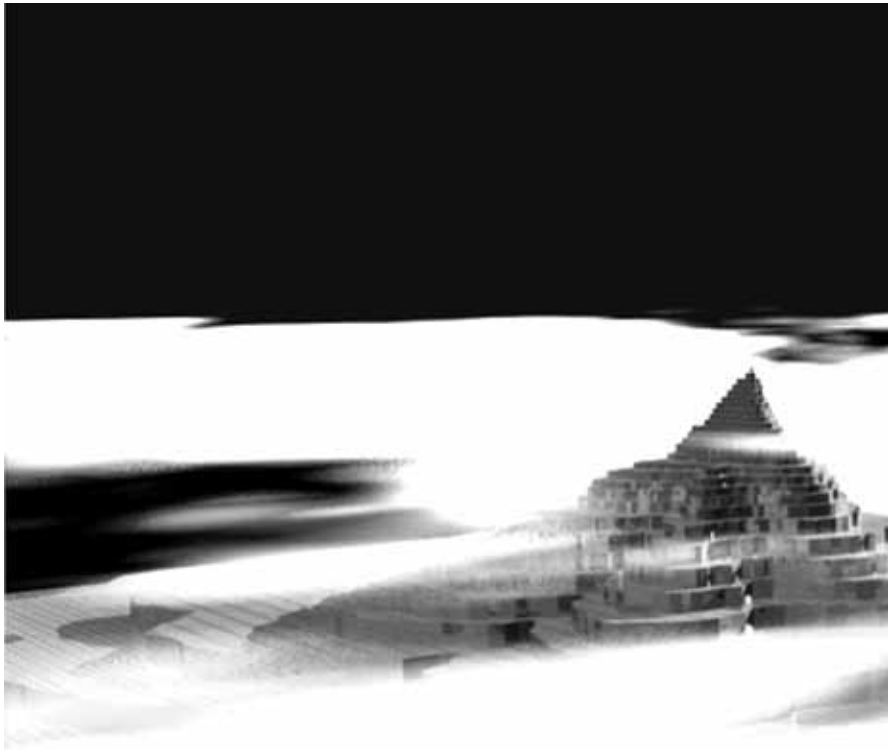
is furious and the trees are wild. Where the man drinks ale and laughs about older days. But there is always a machinery. Pinewood one, two three. History of angst hard to face for flatland race. Bingo! Got it talk of death and u are in. Chill. Take a chill pill. Please. No smoke dope? That`s a joke. Come on smoke. No? I stay like this cause my manners are my measurement tool. I can walk like this, talk like this, make art like this, and still try to understand you. We all can do. It just takes some practice. Just. Beyond comprihension. Playing stupid. Choose a stonerhead to kill your project dead. Enough unsaid. Tataratata in the background. What the fuck are YOU doing? I will brake your lights. If you jump of the floor on to the pavement you die earlier. Wrinkles occurs in face. Limp cake. Color: Pipered. Tasty cookie. Relax thirty years. Art will make itself. Right attitude BOY? Go on. You can be my own private experiment. Funding, funding funding! Stuck in a corner. No progress. Can it be the land? Iressisstable forest of fire. Progress occurs. Return to the flat with your mind in your palm.

Big artist big brain damage.

- Kristian Skylstad



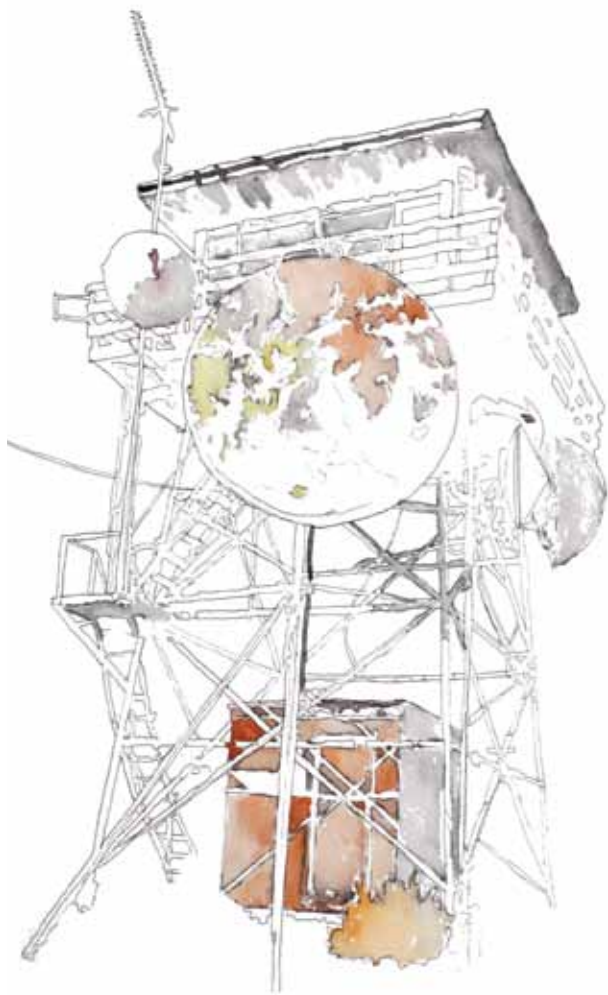
-YOU BROKE THE LOOKING GLASS, NOW BREAK THE STONE.  
model for installation  
wood, plexiglas, waterpump, light, water, rosemarin, copper (Ø 4,7m, H 2,4m)  
2009



**HIGH IN THE SKY ON SOLID GROUND**  
proposal for a mountain placed in the middle  
of the Netherlands on top of Utrecht, housing  
ten million people (diameter base level 20km,  
height 3km)







OBSERVATION TOWER  
Ink and watercolors on paper (31 x 41 cm)  
2008



WOODEN DIAMOND  
birch (Ø 35cm, H 24cm, about 30000 carat)  
2009

The core of my work is text and drawing, however, my ideas frequently cross over into other forms of expression such as performance, sculpture, and music in one manner or another. These are not necessarily within my field of specialization and perhaps for this reason present a constant process of experimentation and excitement in my work. It is crucial, almost inevitable, for me to crossover multiple mediums or deconstruct multiple creative planes in an attempt to approach all perspectives and better understand the subject matter. Each consecutive project builds upon the last thus possessing a long history and often making it problematic to give an accurate overview of my ideas within the limitations of a couple of hundred words and a handful of images. I embark upon this task by stating first that my work and ideas evolve around the concepts of The Human Being as a Commodity and The Power System.

#### Human Manual

The artist's book project, Human Manual, presents a scenario where humans fit one format of beauty. They are like cars off a car manufacturing assembly line, reduced to complacent mechanical objects whose relationships are maintained by means of an instruction manual. It is with this project that I began to express my fascination of the human being as a commodity. A commodity is only a commodity so long as there is a marketplace. In the market place of buying, selling, supply and demand of commodities emerges the inevitability of the Power System.

#### Comic Book

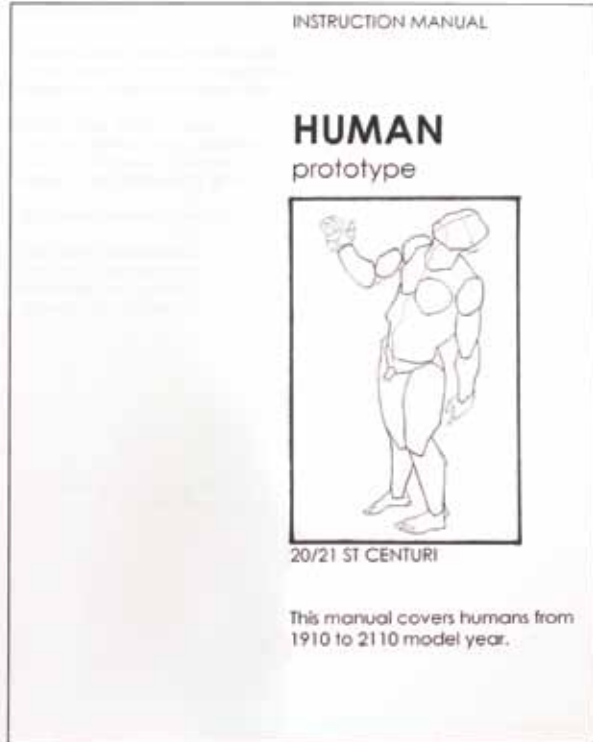
A series of 3 related works, Power System, Homemade Super Heroes, and Heaven's Gate, Comic Book is a project that furthers

the concepts introduced in the Human Manual. It is a collection of texts, and ink and pencil drawings that employ fantasy, mysticism and popular culture to explore the parallels that can be drawn between spirituality and commerce in contemporary psyche. While Human Manual satirically discusses the physical component of the human being as a commodity, this series hypothesizes spirituality as a commodity that can be manufactured, bought and sold just like any other typical commodity in the marketplace.

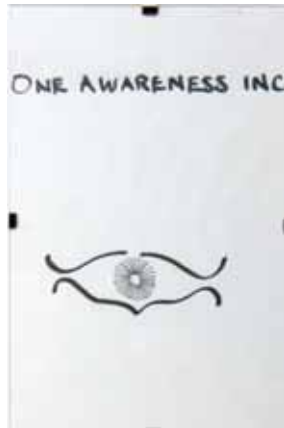
#### Socio-cognitive Modeling: Predator Prey Plastic

This project is a culmination of the projects already discussed because it explores the commoditization of all the components of the human being – physical, spiritual and intellectual. It employs Sigmund Freud's structural model of mind – Id Ego Superego – in its deliberations. Freud's model uses both the conscious and unconscious functions of the mind to attempt to understand the psyche's natural development, and its management of libidinal and aggressive impulses. Considering that Internet portals and cyber space limit human interaction to such a remote and subliminal level that there are few consequences in actively indulging in our libidinal or even aggressive tendencies, it is not long before the marketplace of commoditized humans begins to look like the battleground of predator and prey; a more brutal variety of the power system. This project does not aim to undermine the quality of life that Internet portals, cyber space and other technological advancements have brought to our existence. It simply contemplates the constant state of evolution and delicate balances of contemporary psyche.

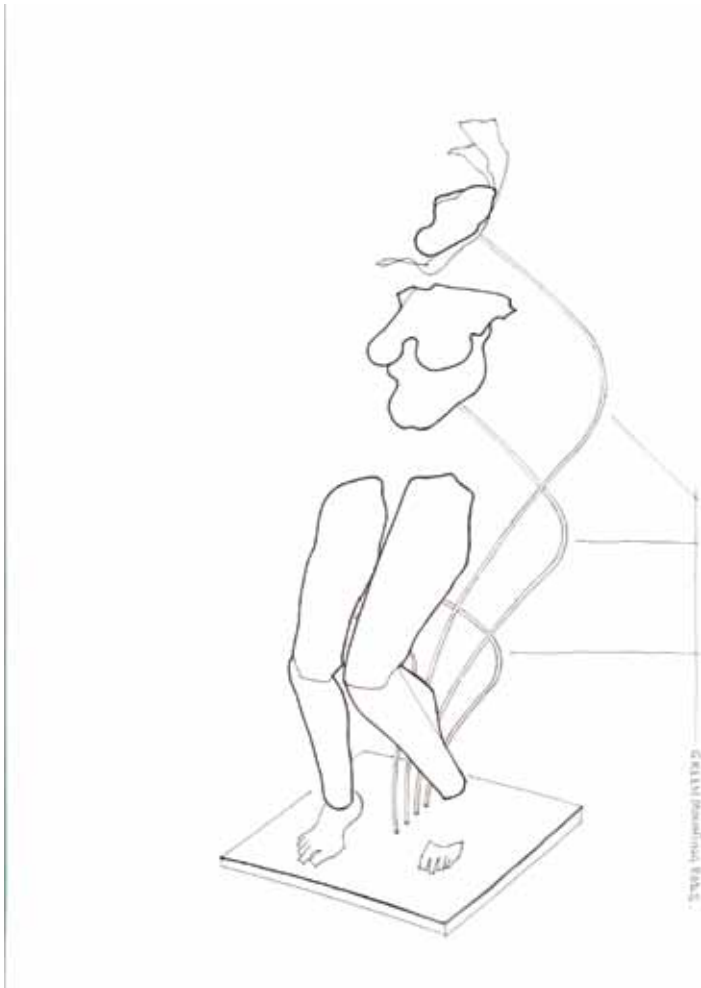
- Milumbe Haimbe



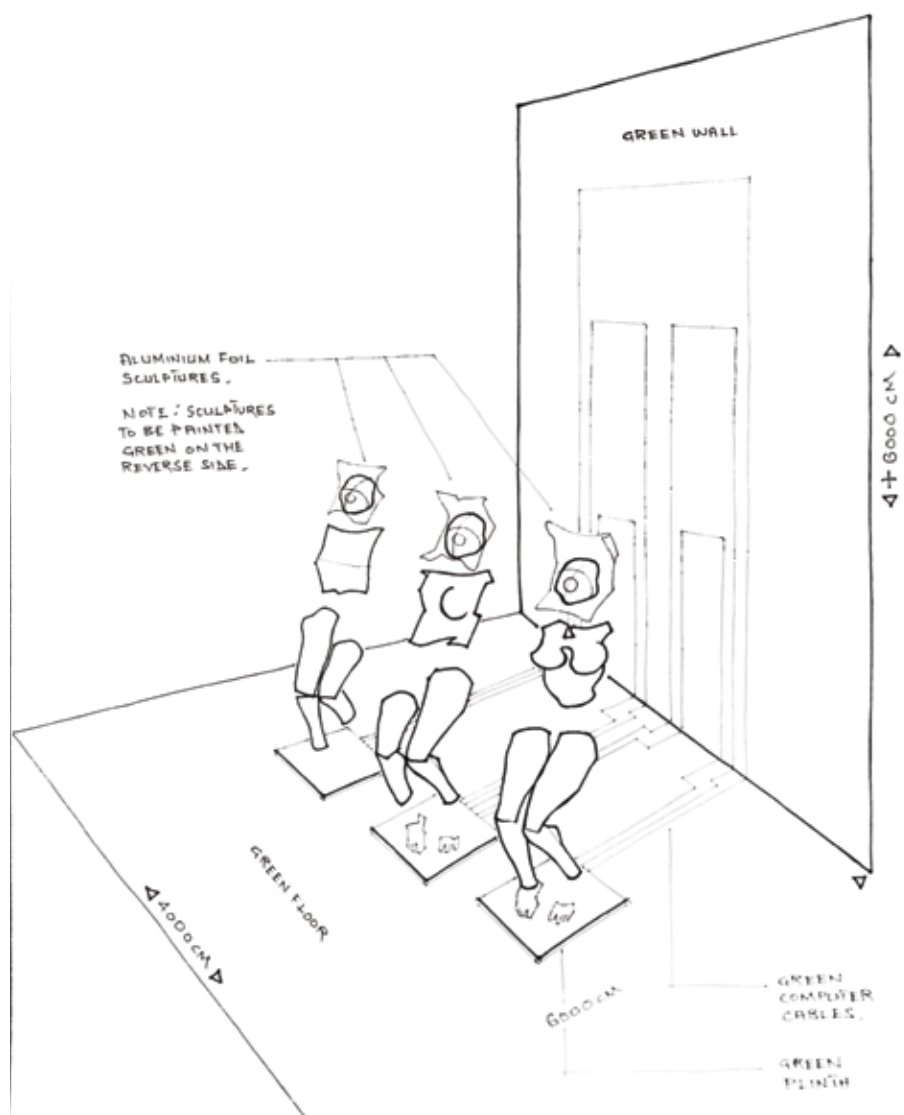
HUMAN MANUAL  
Artist's Book Project (25 x 21cm)  
2007



COMIC BOOK - POWER SYSTEM  
Ink on tracing paper (each 14,8x21 cm)  
2008



SOCIO-COGNITIVE MODELING (mounting detail sketch)  
Ink on paper  
2009







SOCIO-COGNITIVE MODELING (work in progress)  
Aluminium foil sculpture  
2009

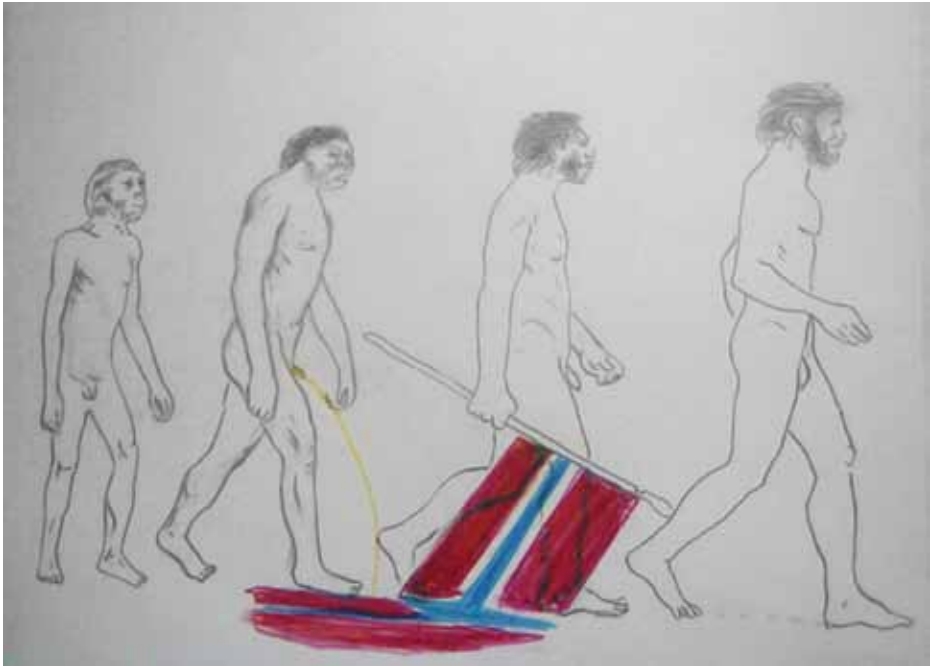
left:  
SOCIO-COGNITIVE MODELING (INSTALLATION SKETCH)  
Ink on paper (29,7x42 cm)  
2009



**SUPERAPE**  
pencil on paper (42x59 cm)  
2008



**SUPERAPES**  
pencil on paper (42x59 cm)  
2008



NATIONALISM  
pencil on paper (42x59 cm)  
2008



SPACE WITCH  
pencil on paper (42x59 cm)  
2008



NAIROBI TRIO COLOUR  
pencil on paper (42x59 cm)  
2008



NAIROBI TRIO B/W  
pencil on paper (42x59 cm)  
2008





out now!

Steinar Haga Kristensen

# RETROSPECTIVE

*on the un-subjectified persona*



Torpedo Press  
2009

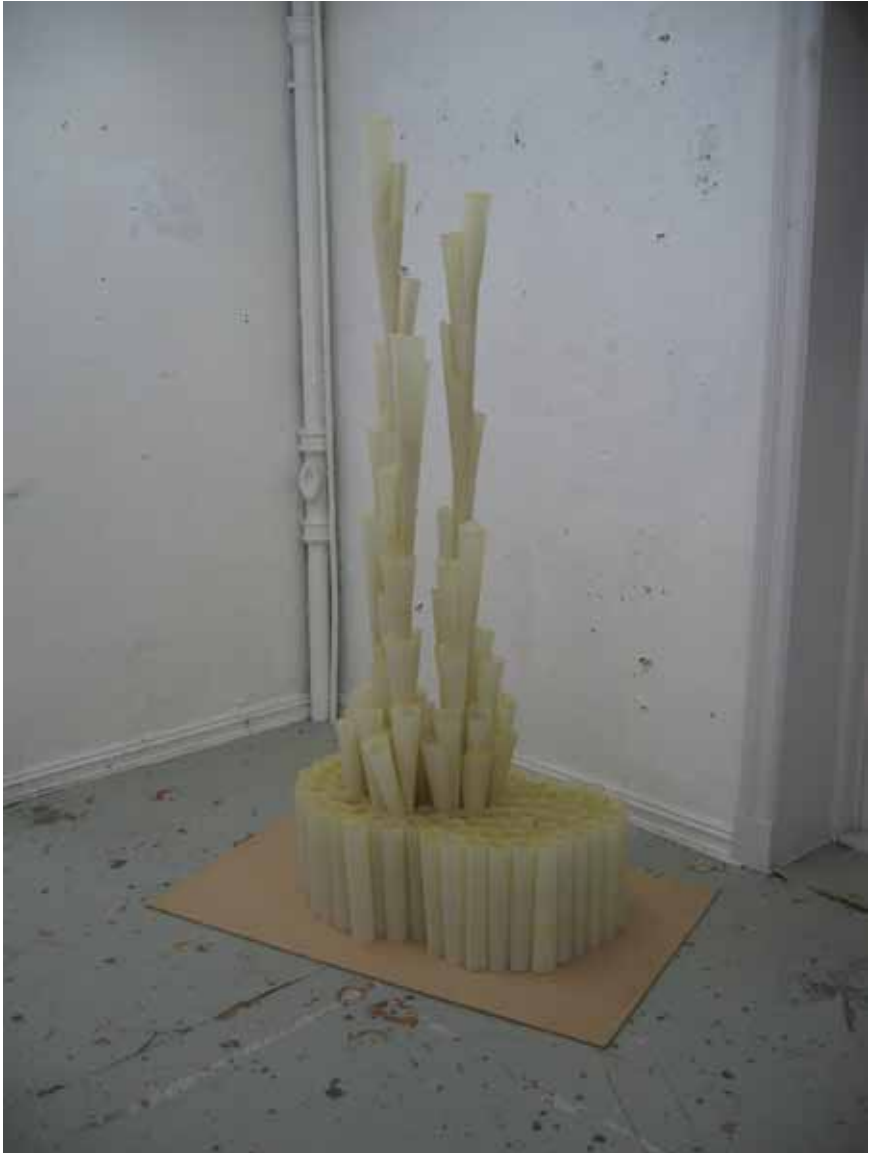








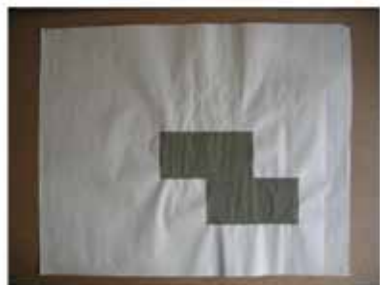
Sylvain Marchand  
1980, New Caledonia, France





360-DEGREES-AND-MORE  
portland cement 180 kilogrammes (400 x 0.4 cm)  
2006

left:  
CHIENDENT (couch grass)  
Paper and wax (185 x 110 cm)  
2009

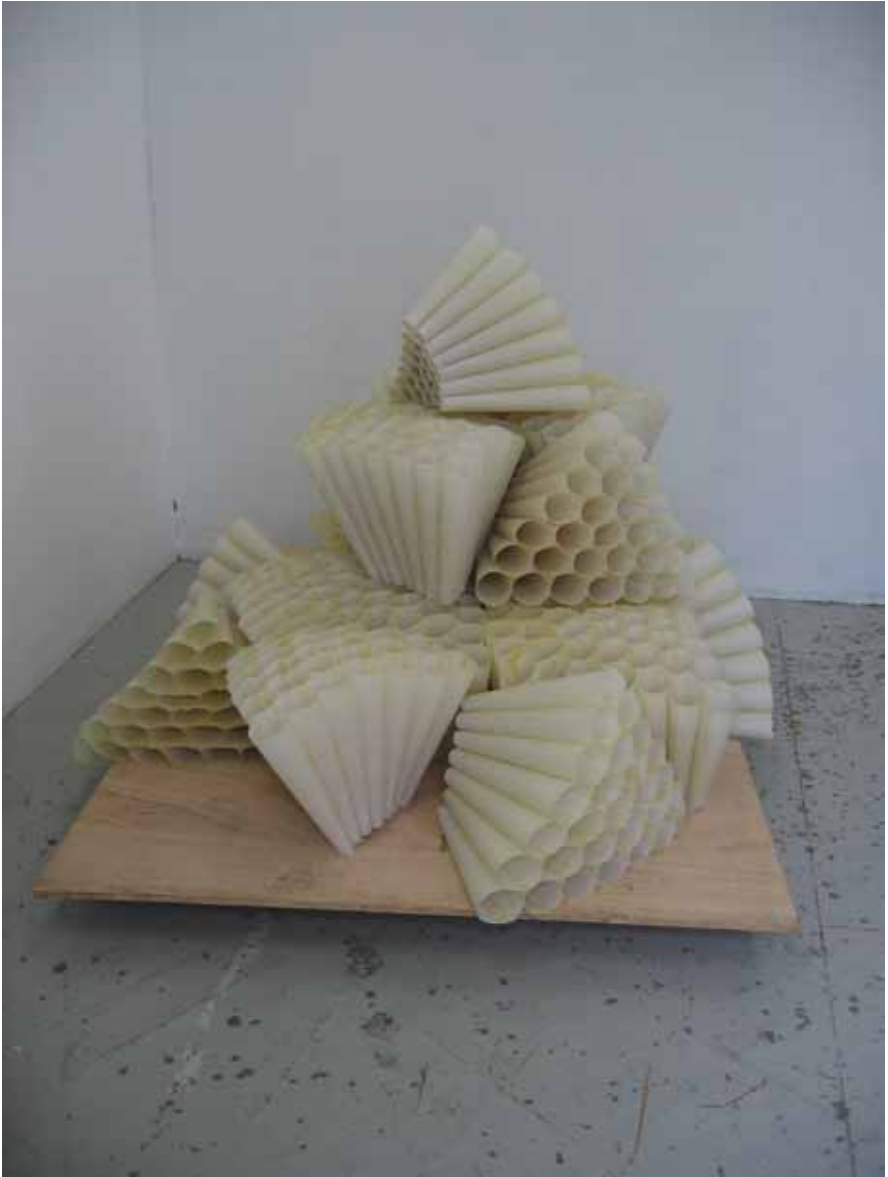






**TIME-GLASS**  
marble powder, vitrine (40 x 22,5 cm)  
2008

left:  
**BRAIN DAMAGE**  
cement on paper (50 x 72 cm each)  
2009





**INANITY**

portland cement and sand 90 kg, stick, bucket, 11  
liters of water, one rubber duck (170 x 55 cm)  
2007

left:

**WILD-BUNCH**

paper and wax (dimensions variable)  
each module is 40x 40 x 29.7  
2009



THE GREAT REPRESSION I  
Photography  
2009



THE GREAT REPRESSION II  
photographic print & black marker  
2008



BLACK IS THE COLOR  
tabloid image & watercolor  
2008



UNTITLED  
torn wholesale catalog  
2009



UNTITLED  
black marker  
2008







BEARDREAM/DREAMBEAR  
still images from video work  
2009



DON'T LET THE BEDBUGS BITE  
digital images (dimensions variable)  
2008



I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU  
digital images (dimensions variable)  
2008



HOLLYWOOD KISS  
digital images (dimensions variable)  
2008



RELATIONS  
digital images (dimensions variable)  
2008



SECRETS  
digital images (dimensions variable)  
2008

En hvit mann besøkte et aboriginer-reservat i sør-Australia. Han vil utforske aboriginernes tradisjoner omkring overnaturlige evner og trolldom. En kveld, sittende rundt bålet, spør han en av de innfødte om de vet hva som skjer på en romferge som akkurat da fløy over det australske kontinent - og som de kunne se med det blotte øyet fra der de satt. Etter å ha myst litt mot nattehimmelen lukket den gamle indianeren øynene og ble taus i fem minutter. Så våknet han til live igjen og sa at ”joda, mannskapet på romfergen har det fint og er ved godt mot, men den ene av dem er forkjølet”. Den tilreisende spurte hvordan den gamle mannen kunne vite dette. Med et smil svarte aborigineren at ”jeg måtte vel dra opp dit og se, hvordan ellers?”

Noen uker senere når den hvite mannen var kommet tilbake til sivilisasjonen, tok han kontakt med romfarts-senteret og fant ut hvem som faktisk var om bord romfergen han og hans australske venner så den kvelden. Han kom fort i kontakt med astronautene men de var litt motvillige til å snakke om denne turen. Men etter en innledende runde med tillitsoppbyggende dialog fikk mannen få høre en høyst merkelig historie. En kveld fløy fergen over det veldige Australske kontinentet, ble han fortalt. Mannskapet holdt på med sine rutinemessige oppgaver. På et tidspunkt tittet kapteinen Valerij Tereshkov ut i luken og så en klynge med lysende prikker rett foran skipet. De kom tilsynelatende ingensteds fra. De fortsatte å sveve rundt skipet i en stund og beveget seg til sist i retning Jorden i veldig rask hastighet. Ingen av mannskapet på romfergen kunne forklare fenomenet, selv om alle fikk sett skikkelig på de lysende prikkene. Det eneste alle var enige om var at de lignet på ildfluer og syntes å ha en hensikt med sine bevegelser. Styringsmekanikeren, som lå nede med et lett anfall av influensa, fikk riktignok ikke sett de merkelige prikkene.

Å gjøre rede for Sigmund Skard sitt kunstnerskap er som å gjøre rede for de lysende prikkene. Det er elegant enkelt og minimalistisk. På kort tid har han skapt et ”bodyofwork” som imponerer med sitt omfang. Han gjennomfører sine prosjekter og performancer på en måte som kanskje minner om det reine norske fjellvannets fall langs vestlandske fjordvegger. Stilsikkert og insisterende finner hans argumenter vei gjennom skogen av livets fenomener og ned i vår felles historie og erindring. Vannet er like klart som det er iskaldt - og Skard sine aksjoner bryter uavlatelig med våre innøvde erfaringsmekanismer. Transport og forflytting, er et uttalt interesseområde for Skard. Hvordan han velger å transportere sin kropp over en hekk, er et typisk eksempel på en løsning på en problemstilling for kunstneren. Å se oppover mens man forflytter seg er et greit utgangspunkt, men det byr på problemer når man skal forflytte seg over en smal hekk – på langs.

En trapp går noen trinn over og noen trinn under bakkenivået. Bortsett fra at det er Land Art og at denne skulpturen ikke tåler tidens tann, siden den er laget av det materialet den står på; myra, så blir jeg tiltrukket av det faktum at den er ikke konstruert til å bli brukt av vanlige dødelige som står på bakkenivået. Det er unaturlig å bestige en trapp fra siden, man vil gjerne konfrontere det forfra. Denne trappen kan man bruke til å gå ned på hvis man kommer fra himmelen eller til å gå opp hvis man våkner fra de døde. Konstruksjonen er ekskluderende for oss, absurd som den er stående midt i en myr.

”Så lenge jeg har hender, føtter; en kropp, så nærer jeg intensjoner som er uavhengige av mine valg, og som påvirker mine omgivelser på en måte jeg ikke bestemmer over selv.”  
(fritt oversatt fra engelsk utgave av



”Phenomenology of Perception” Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1964.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty spør i boken *Kroppens Fenomenologi* om hva et verktøy funksjon består i. Er det en forlengelse av kroppen? Eller bare en død ting som kroppen dytter på og får ting til å skje? Hvis alt vi bruker blir en forlengelse av kroppen, spør jeg meg selv, hvor går grensene får kroppen vår da? Stopper det ved verktøyet eller ved resultatet av arbeidet som utføres med verktøyet?

Gjennom sin stilsikre kroppsbeherskelse perfektjonerer Skards sin argumentasjon med den persepsjonelle verktøyskassen. Det å mestre noe, det være seg verktøy, et fag, mellommenneskelige forhold, eller rett og slett seg selv, innebærer å kunne beherske noe lett og uanstrengt. Man utvikler en automatikk på samme måte som man automatisk går eller puster. Bevisstheten er ikke inkludert i beslutningstagningen, slik man ikke konstant tenker: nå skal jeg puste inn, og nå puste ut. Ansvar for opprettholdelsen av disse funksjonene og fenomenene er kroppens. Våre ideer, våre eiendeler og vårt avkom blir dermed en forlengelse og en kropp utstreckt i tid og rom over landegrenser og over tidsgrenser. Stolen som snekkeren har solgt til meg blir en forlengelse av hans kropp inn i min leilighet og min bevissthet. Men denne ekspanderte tilstand handler også om makt, og jeg klarer å betvinge stolkroppen under min autoritet. Stolen er der til min bruk og jeg har betalt for den.

Sigmund Skard sitt kunstnerskap handler på et nivå om kroppen som en flerdimensjonal enhet, som strekker seg utover våre vante forestillinger om tid og rom. Våre vanlige kropper vokser som andre vanlige kropper, vi anlegger skjegg, stifter familie, kjøper hus og arbeider. Dermed strekker kroppen seg utover seg selv og manifesterer sin tilstedeværelse i tid og rom. Skard utforsker denne forestillingen

og utfordrer den ved å gjøre en hel rekke med tilsynelatende meningsløse ting. Men veldig ofte gir handlingene likevel perfekt mening når vi tenker på at Skard prøver å fylle ut de tomrommene som oppstår i denne flerdimensjonale verden. Tomrommene oppstår fordi vi som oftest kjemper om de samme tingene og konkurrerer på samme arena. Så lenge vi er opptatt med å oppta de beste plassene, få de beste avtalene, de beste omtalene, flest venner på fjesboka, mest klikk på hjemmesiden, størst avkastning, minst rente, best resultat, størst integritet og enda større flatskjerm i stuen, driver Skard med på å erobre det nøytrale grenselandet og erklærer det som sitt eget og gror kroppen sin inn i det område hvor ingen enda har ferdes. På den måten kan han gjøre krav på alle tomrommene og slik blir han sogar tomhetens mester. Men til og med tomrommet er ikke det tomrommet man øyeblikkelig tror det er. For fins det egentlig tomrom? Det er i hvert fall verdt å spørre om. Her er Skard sin evne til å minne oss på de mest elementære ting nok en gang til stede.

Skard påpeker at vi er minst opptatt av ting vi egentlig er mest opptatt av. Høres det rart ut? Hold pusten. Hvor lenge klarer du deg uten luft og hvor ofte tenker du faktisk på det? Sigmund kan minne deg på nettopp det i hans performance *Luftrtransport*. I et dunkelt belyst rom, blir tilskuerne vitne til at kunstneren forflytter luftmengder ved å fylle lungene i et hjørne av rommet og slippe det ut i et annet. Fra under taket og ned på gulvet. Fra under en stol og i ansiktet på en av tilskueren. I et cartiansk tilbakefall leser jeg det som en deling mellom hode og kropp, og hodet må bli minnet på deres felles minste multiplum for overlevelse. Hvis dette hadde vært den kalde krigen så hadde Sigmund vært en gjensidig ikke-ødeleggelses avtale. I et paranoid øyeblikk tolker jeg denne performansen som en ondsinnet profeti om at i nær framtid vil kanskje ikke luften være fri for alle.

- Ivan Galuzin



UTAN TITTEL (arbeid i prosess)  
Videoperformance  
2008/2009



LUFFTRANSPORT 2

performance

Bowing to Lebow, Kaiskur 9. Tromsø, 2008

PiP-Show, Kunstakademiet i Oslo, 2007

photo (top): Vik,Lai Chun Wing





**JORDING**

Jord, grus, stein og gras (2 x 1,40 x 2m)

Cowboys don't cry, Suldal

2008

left:

**COLALINE**

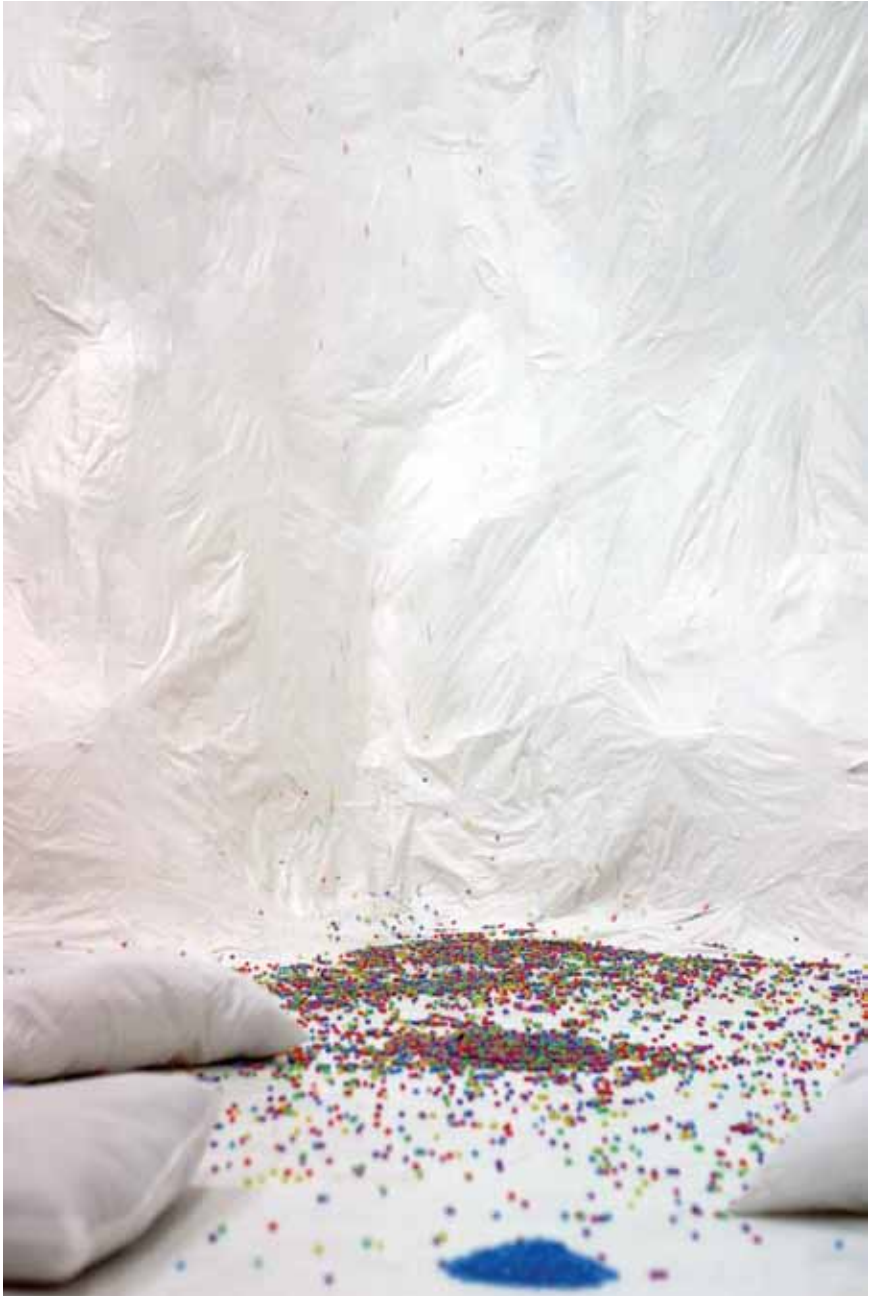
Colabokser (Søyla med Colabokser, ca 10 meter lang)

Vegskjering langsmed E36 nær Førde i Hordaland, Norge.

Boksane passar akkurat inn i restane av borehola som står att etter utskytinga av vegen.

photo: Vik, Lai Chun Wing, Hans Magne Skard

2008





**GREAT PEARL MOUNTAIN**

approx. 30 000 plastic beads, pillows, hired workforce,  
papier-mâché, chicken wire (dimensions variable)  
Galleri 21:24  
2009

**GREAT PEARL MOUNTAIN**

approx. 30 000 plastic beads, pillows, hired workforce,  
papier-mâché, chicken wire (dimensions variable)  
Galleri 21:24  
2009

No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I was in train EC46

9:00, 3 men stole this bag.

And They pull out my money

in bag. They didn't steal

my passport and credit card.

They ~~had~~ stole 150000 yen

So. could you make a

theft report?





**DYSFUNCTIONALIZED COINS**

found coins (dimensions variable)

2009

**DISCARDED "THEFT REPORT"**

note found in trash at a Vienna youth hostel (21 x 15 cm)

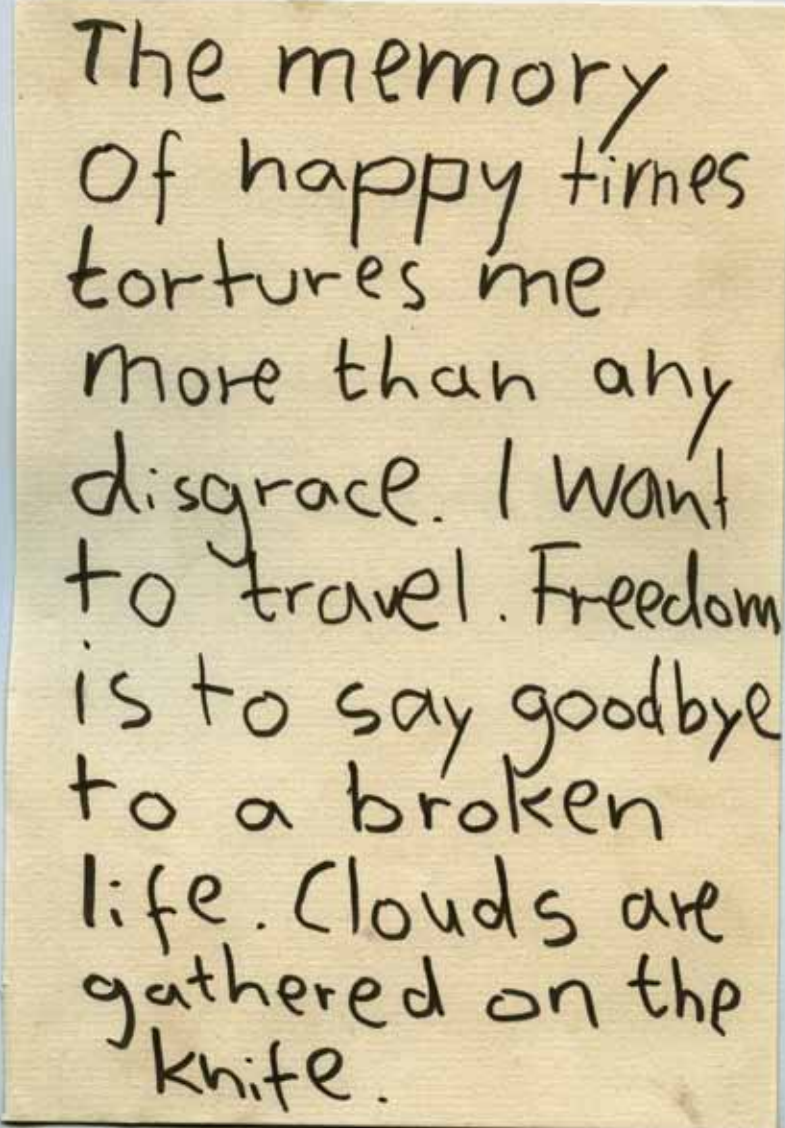
2009



UNTITLED  
digital photograph  
2000-2008



UNTITLED  
digital photograph  
2000-2008

A photograph of a rectangular piece of light-colored, textured paper with handwritten text in black ink. The paper is set against a light blue background. The handwriting is in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The text is arranged in approximately 12 lines, filling most of the paper's surface.

The memory  
of happy times  
tortures me  
more than any  
disgrace. I want  
to travel. Freedom  
is to say goodbye  
to a broken  
life. Clouds are  
gathered on the  
knife.

GOODBYE LETTER  
1996



LAVA LOVE, SORRY, SORRY  
2001

## ingenting

“To say what you feel is to dig your own grave”  
- Sinéad Marie Bernadette O’Connor

“Nei, det er jo ikke noe pedofili.”  
- Bjarne Melgaard

Kristian Skylstad er det merkeligste individet jeg har møtt så langt. Selv om jeg har kjent han halve livet fremstår han fortsatt som en slags gåte.

Han skifter personlighet oftere enn han skifter sokker. Altså oftere enn to ganger i uka. Rebel without a cause eller rebel with a cause. Det kommer an på humøret. Hissig testosteronbombe eller hysterisk kvinnfolk. Eller ingen av delene. Problembarn eller vidunderbarn. Kanskje begge deler. Langt nede eller høyt oppe. Fungerer ikke ellers.

Det begynner å bli mange år siden nå, men jeg kommer nok aldri til å glemme den kvelden. Sammenbruddet. Kvelden han falt sammen som et korthus. Han kunne ikke engang stå oppreist. Det forpinte ansiktet hans uttrykte mer smerte enn jeg trodde var mulig i en slik situasjon. Han knakk sammen i krampegråt, helt utrostellig.

“Hva skal jeg gjøre? Jeg er ingenting uten henne!”

Jeg forstår den dag i dag fortsatt ikke hvordan han kunne påstå noe sånt, men jeg er ikke i tvil om at han mente det. Selv om han fremsto som en liten jente, virkelige menn gråter tross alt ikke, var det befriende å se en voksen person som ikke gjorde noe forsøk på å tøyte sitt eget følelsesliv. Det er lett å si at bunnen var nådd, men på mange måter tror jeg det er slags høydepunkt.

“What’s in the box?”

“Your head. It’s empty.”

Hvem sier at bunnen ikke kan være et høydepunkt?

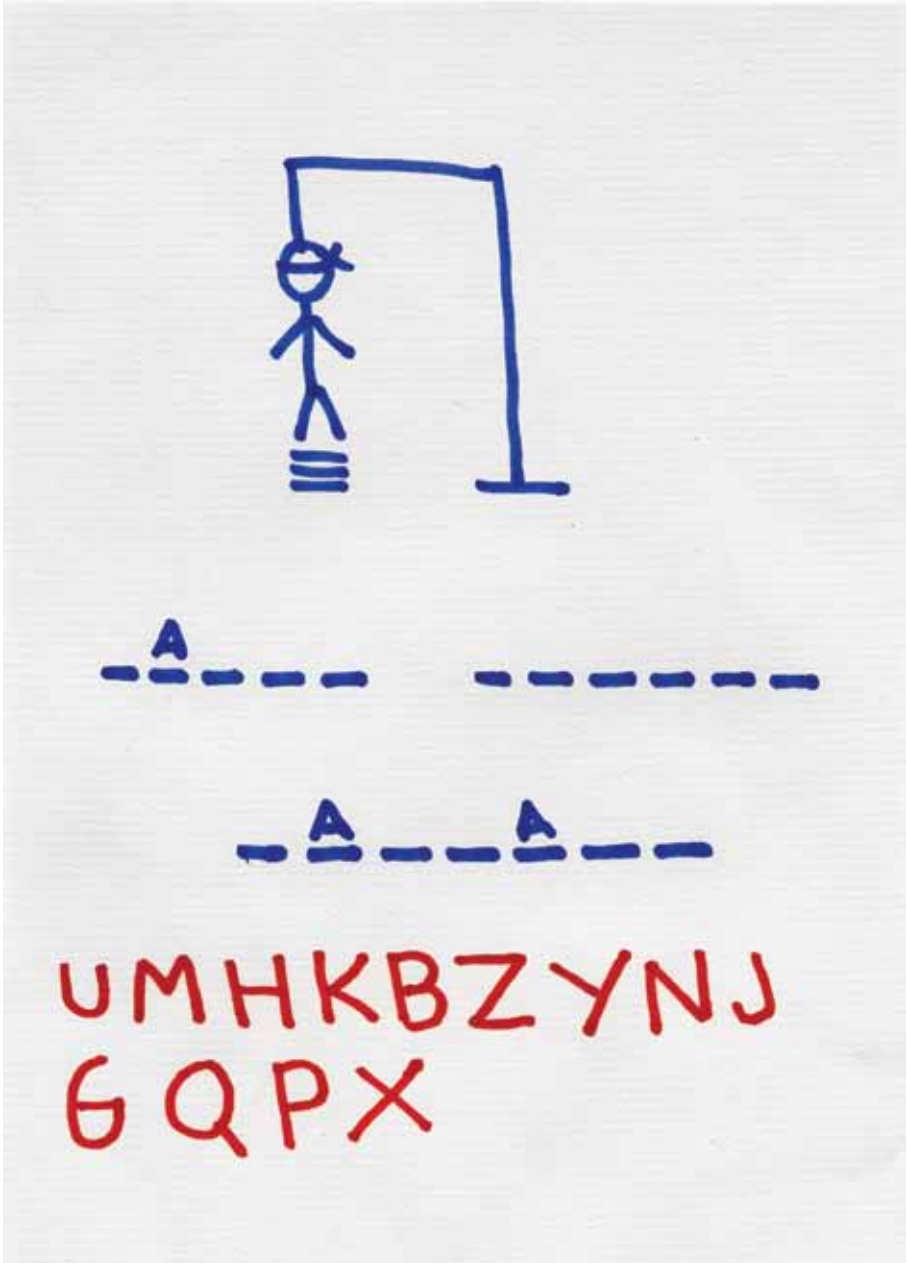
Den kvelden inngikk Kristian en pakt med djevelen. Halvt delirisk solgte han sjelen sin

for å bli den største fisken i den lille dammen som utgjør det norske kunstmiljøet. Den neste dagen angret han seg, og prøvde desperat å få avtalen annullert. Så vidt jeg vet har de fortsatt ikke kommet frem til en endelig løsning.

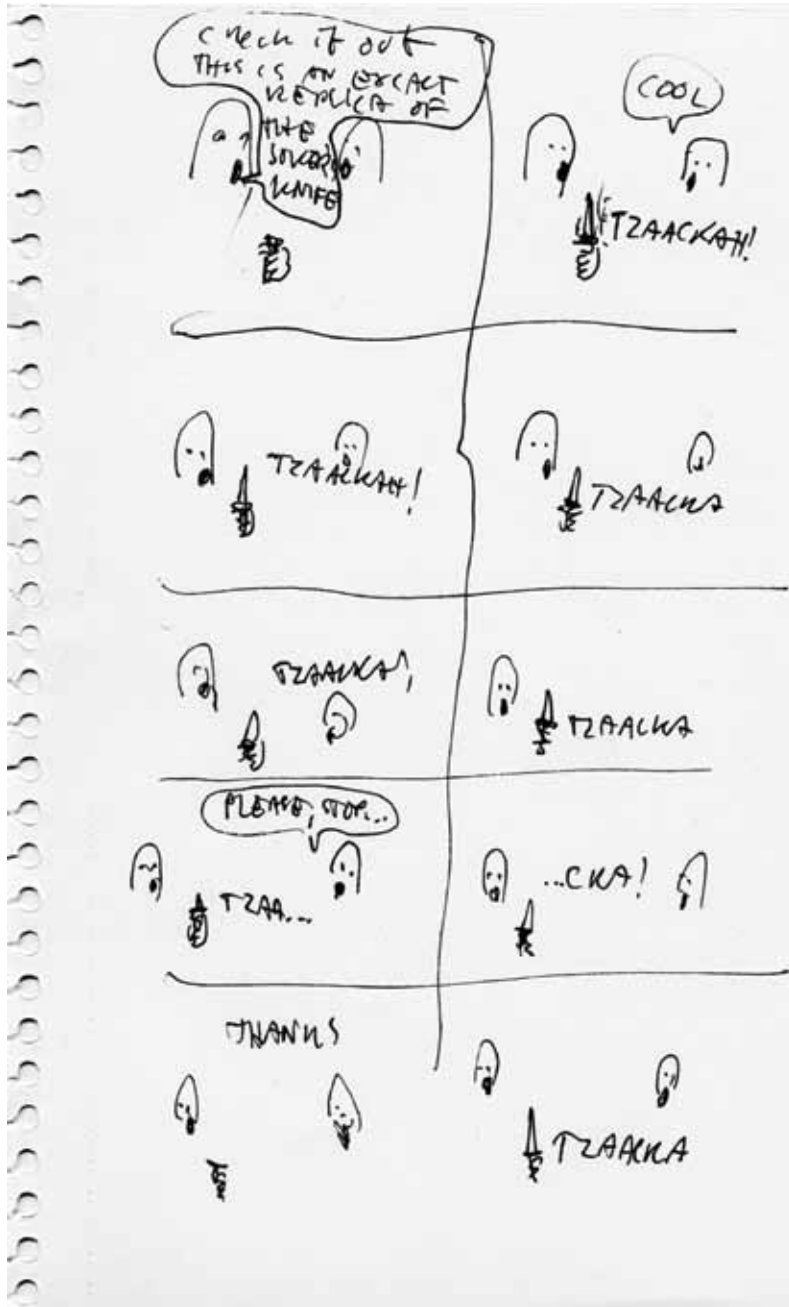
Det har vært en del spekulasjoner rundt min venns mentale helse den siste tiden, og enkelte stilt diagnosen bipolar lidelse. Etter å ha lest meg litt opp på området er det vanskelig å avfeie en slik diagnose helt og holdent. Trangen til å båslegge og sette navn på ting er allikevel ikke noe som står veldig sterkt hos meg, og Kris Krems hypomaniske tendenser er vanligvis ikke noe mer enn forfriskende avbrekk fra hverdagslivets kvelende monotoni. Siden Kristian er i stand til å takle de sosiale komplikasjonene som av og til oppstår i kjølvannet av “uheldige” enkeltepisoder er jeg ikke særlig bekymret for hans ve og vel i den sammenheng, men er tvert imot overbevist om at dette er en av hans styrker som kunstner og person. Når vi spilte fotball sammen utmerket Kristian seg først og fremst ved å løpe rundt og “kjekse” ned motspillere så fort de fikk tak i ballen. Dette skjedde selvsagt også på treninger, og det hadde lite å si om personen med ballen var venn eller fiende. Alle ble sparket ned i tur og orden. Selv om det begynner å bli en stund siden Kristian spilte fotball liker jeg å tro at han benytter seg av den samme taktikken på andre arenaer også. Han deler ut ballespark i øst og vest, og mang en kunstkritiker har måttet forholde seg til evigunge Skyltads polemikk.

Nei, det er ikke alltid så lett å forholde seg til Kristian. Han går ikke stille i dørene. Han sier ikke alltid de “rette” tingene, og han følger stort sett bare sin egen timeplan. Aldri likegyldig, samme faen hva temaet er. Sånn er det bare. Kristian kan være vanskelig å akseptere, men han er nærmest umulig å ignorere. Nettopp derfor er jeg overbevist om at Kristian Skylstad kommer til å gjøre seg bemerket i internasjonalt sammenheng i årene som kommer.

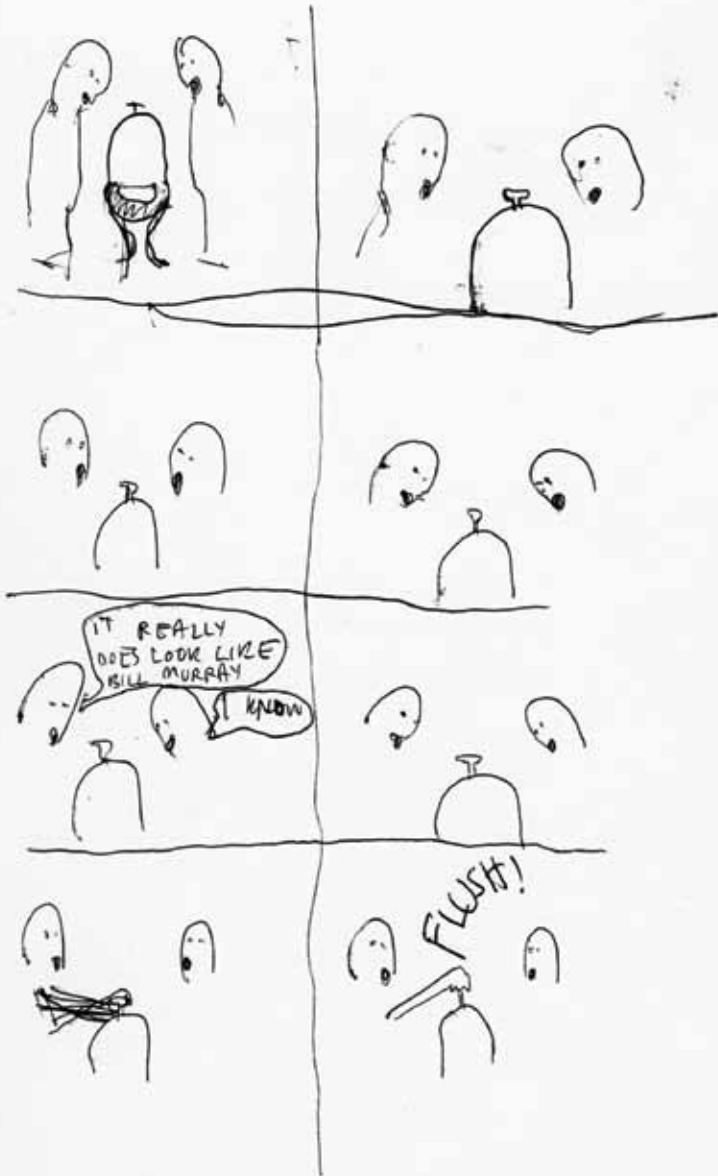
- Michalis Gennarakis, barndomsvenn



HANGMAN (THE PALE KING)  
2008







IT'S OK, RAY #5  
2009



STARE INTO THE LION'S EYES AND IF YOU TASTE  
THE CANDY YOU'LL GET TO THE SURPRISE  
2009





AFTER HOMER MURRAY (JACKSON INJURED)  
2009



STATE  
COUN

JENNI  
Plainti

Vs.

WILL  
Defen

TO:

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA/  
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON

JENNIFER BUTLER MURRAY  
Plaintiff,

Vs.

WILLIAM MURRAY,  
Defendant.

TO: THE

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hereof, exclusive of the

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON )  
17 Ph 3: 24 )

7. Plaintiff is informed and believes that *matrimonii*, of and from the Defendant on the grounds of drugs, and one year separation.

8. The Plaintiff is informed and believes that custody of the parties' minor children, Caleb James William Murray (born October 6, 1995), Cooper Jones M Darius Murray (born May 30, 2001), pendente lite as reasonable visitation, pendente lite and permanently, sc manner, obeys all restraining orders, and does not involve

9. During the time the parties lived together s herself in a manner becoming a good, true, devoted and her husband and four children. The Plaintiff has always minor children.

14. The Plaintiff is further infor restraining and enjoining Defendant from ent Thompson Avenue, or interfering with her vel

15. The Plaintiff is concerned th and that Defendant will denigrate t n Order restraining and enjoiri this litigation, from discussin from alienating the children' zing the Plaintiff to the children, in t children, pendente lite and permanently.

16. Defendant is a wealthy as "Ghostbusters," "Stripes," "Caddyshack," an and is dependent upon the Defendant to supp

17. The parties entered into an Exhibit A. The Plaintiff asks this court to determine if it is valid under South Carolina alimony, attorney's fees, life insurance to i estate, and other relief. If it is valid, Plaintiff

18. Defendant contends the Pre-agreement by failing to honor Article Nine ( Plaintiff in the style to which she was accusa

19. Upon information and belief exclusive use and possession of the home Thompson Avenue, Sullivan's Island, South home and in her possession, pendente lite a caretaker of the minor children. Plaintiff an home. Plaintiff alleges that, due to the Defe his emotional instability, his refusal to seek be restrained and enjoined from returning to

20. Plaintiff is informed and beli to continue to provide the same health, m counseling, for Plaintiff and the minor child: and all premiums regarding same as well



HOW ARE YOU.  
2009

For noen måneder siden var jeg litt emosjonelt rufsete. En kompis som er psykolog mente at jeg muligens var klinisk deprimert, noe jeg følte kunne medisineres med single-malt whisky, samtidig som jeg begynte å lure på om det var særlig smart at jeg bodde i 8. etasje. Jeg hadde nettopp publisert et par ganske selvtuleverende tekster som jeg hadde et litt ambivalent forhold til. Via uplanlagte omveier hadde jeg liksom ramlet inn i rollen som den klassisk lidende skribenten som drikker og skriver seg ut av det emosjonelle gjørmehullet ved å skrive sin egen lidelseshistorie. Yawn. For det var jo aldri meningen, men kanskje er det slik at alle som skriver én gang må innom slike spørsmål for, om ikke ikke annet, å få skrevet det ut av seg. Det er en viktig forskjell på å få noe skrevet ut av seg, og det å skrive seg ut av noe.

Jeg syns det er interessant når kunst pirker borti et privat materiale som føles galt. Inga S. Søreides skulpturer er basert på avstøpninger av hennes eget ansikt og kropp, men dette vil jo det publikum som ikke kjenner henne personlig ikke vite. Men jeg syns arbeidene er mest interessante dersom man vet det, for det gir en ekstra edge som det er vanskelig å oppnå uten å trekke veksler på denne kunnskapen. For det som skjer med en gang vi vet at motivene er basert på Inga selv, er at det åpner seg opp et landskap av usikkerhet rundt hva vi egentlig er vitne til. Er det en personlig historie som ligger bak? Det er påfallende hvordan den tabloide dekingen av kunst fremdeles er like opptatt av spørsmål av typen ”hvor mye av din egen historie ligger til grunn for arbeidet?” Og det er tilsvarende interessant hvordan kunstnere like sikkert svarer med at arbeidene nok kan ta *utgangspunkt* i noe egenopplevd, men at de uansett er ment å leses som uttrykk for mer generelle og allmenne erfaringer.

På én måte er dét litt dumt, for det kunne egentlig være interessant dersom noen en gang rett og slett presenterte sin egen historien uten ambisjoner om at den skulle ha noen mer vidtrekkende gyldighet. Tanken om at kunsten ikke skal være spesifikk og individuell, men universell og allmenn, begynner kanskje å bli litt tynnslitt. Et arbeid Inga S. Søreide skal vise på en annen utstilling i vår består av materialene ”alkohol, tårer og Cipralex.” Vi tenker selvfølgelig umiddelbart at dette legger opp til tolkninger i retning av angst og depresjon. Nå hun i tillegg i denne utstillingen kommer til å benytte skulpturer av eg et ansikt og egne hender som motiv, blir det umulig å lese uten også å henfalle til spekulasjoner om den som har laget arbeidet. Det skapes her en spenning i den forstand at betrakteren automatisk lurer på hvordan dette er knyttet til kunstnerens eget liv, den type spørsmål som det lenge var helt uakseptabelt å stille innen kunstkritikk, men som i mainstream-dekkingen av kunst aldri forsvant, og som nå kanskje er litt mer legitimt igjen, godt hjulpet av at ”forfatteren” i kjølvannet av sin egen ”død” har brukt de siste femten årene på å skrive veldig mye om seg selv igjen. Dette gjør at sånne som meg kan se arbeider som Inga S. Søreides og begynne å tenke på de tingene jeg har skrevet om nå. Utvilsomt er det mange som ikke er opptatt av slike kunstteoretiske spørsmål. Gjennomsnittsbetrakteren ønsker sikkert heller å bruke arbeidene til å tenke over de følelsene og erfaringene som ligger i arbeidene, uansett hvem sine følelser og erfaringer det måtte være. Men det ønsker ikke jeg å tenke på. For hvis jeg gjorde det ville denne teksten kun ha handlet om meg selv og mine egne følelser og erfaringer.

- Erlend Hammer, Oslo, 19. april 2009.





**AHASVERUS**

wax, hair, textile, metal, painting, bench and organic material  
(220 x 240 x 220 cm)

Haugar Vest fold Kunstmuseum

2008



1982/2009  
(detail)  
installation (210 cm x 160 cm x 80 cm)  
2009



EMPATHY, RED WINE, TEARS AND CIPRALEX  
paper, red wine, tears and cipralex (50 x 60 cm)  
2009



ANXIOUS  
wax (15 x 13 x 8 cm)  
2009



UNTITLED

wax, hair, clothes, textile, metal (55 x 50 x 120cm)

"Believing is seeing" gallery 21.25, Oslo

2008

Magnus Vatvedt  
1981, Bærum





left:  
UNTITLED  
acrylics on linen (40 x 30cm)  
2009



UNTITLED (ILLUMINATION # 8)

chlorine bleach on industrial coloured paper

(64 x 46cm)

2009





UNTITLED (ILLUMINATION # 14)  
chlorine bleach on industrial coloured paper  
(64 x 46cm)  
2009



UNTITLED (ILLUMINATION # 18)  
chlorine bleach on industrial coloured paper  
(64 x 46cm)  
2009



UNTITLED  
acrylics, chlorine bleach on linen  
(50 x 40cm)  
2009



KULLFLØYEL  
performance  
Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Bethanien, Berlin  
2008



HELLO GLOSSALOLIA (HEI TUNGETALE)  
performance  
Utkanten UKS / Sørlandsutstillingen  
2008

# REMEMBERING THE FUTURE



REMEMBERING THE FUTURE  
collage  
(15x21cm)  
2009



HELLO GLOSSALOLIA  
performance  
Utikanten UKS  
2009



**UNDER HIMMELROTA**

performance  
Komposisjon for 13 dykkere og en stemme  
Bru, Stavanger Kulturbymuseum 2008





ZOMBIE ATLANTIC  
performance  
Rekord, Oslo  
2008

o mortal;

## A FOREWORD

Shipping  
scouting

Warming-up  
whisper of

flower to the full!

write in

cook weekly  
sing and learn

The roll of drum

From a trapeze: the voice of the next step form the sound of grand living

You feat; the crashing  
symphony of Off-sounding philosophy  
Flemishing down a coil of line  
Transform battleships to comets

old World Wonder- Fo'c'sle of a destroy

Here close-sropped, clean-shaven chins; royals and t'gallants clew up  
they made their building

Went to the, fled to the  
continuing histories

and splashes around

Here he is taught  
here he lives  
here he, too, absorbs tradition

Treat the  
place the  
acquire a holystone

occure equipped  
parade with them  
a curving shadow

an echomakers voice passing the word  
sent as a this-is-not-true

It's not that the White  
But towards the



UTEN TITTEL  
oil and papier-mâché on canvas (70 x 55 cm)  
2008

left:  
FORWORD  
tekst  
2009



ECHO OF AN END (detail)  
oil on two plates (each 18 x 24 cm)  
2008

right:  
ECHO OF AN END (installation view)  
wood, cloth, brass, steel, plastic, paint (dimensions variable)  
2009







**UTEN TITTEL**  
oil and acryl on canvas (90x70 cm)  
2008

left:  
**FUTURE BENCH** (after Giacomo Balla)  
painted wood (70x65x42 cm)  
2009

## Mere merchandise

*“For the commodity, there is no mirror that copies it so that it may be at once itself and its “own” reflection. One commodity cannot be mirrored in another, as man is mirrored in his fellow man. For when we are dealing with commodities the self-same, mirrored, is not “its” own likeness, contains nothing of its properties, its qualities, its “skin and hair.” The likeness here is only a measure expressing the fabricated character of the commodity, its transformation by man’s (social, symbolic) “labour”. The mirror that envelops and paralyzes the commodity secularises, speculates (on) man’s “labour.” Commodities, woman, are a mirror of value of and for man.”* Luce Irigaray, p. 176, *This Sex which is not one*, 1977.

My interest in women as performers led me to a strip bar in Oslo, where I started a “collaboration” with a dancer. In this bar they have their own currency, dollar looking money-bills the customers adorn the dancers with during the performance. The mirror room in the photographs is where customers can spend paid time with their favourite dancer. In my photographs the pole dancer is both the performing subject and beheld object. When women are reduced to commodities, Irigaray says they engage in a social system that can be interpreted as the practical realisation of the *meta-physical*. In this system, man reduces himself (and the mystery of life ) to the

productivity of his labour. As I looked around in the strip bar, I noticed that the money circulating among us, served as a sign for the fool, who got caught by a spectacle similar to that of a circus. The money mirrored a desperate power that was simply imagined.

Surrounded by mirrors, the pole dancer is part of a production similar to the early Body Art movement Amelia Jones describes as “*dramatically inter-subjective, opening up the masculinist and racist ideology of individualism in modern formalist work.*” With its radical narcissism and nude performances, body art challenged the dominance of the Cartesian subject: a transcendent self and male genius behind the surface of the art object. (*Body Art, Performing the Subject*, 1998 ) My work is an attempt to negotiate the conventional border between formalism and body based feminised art; where the body served as the ‘phobic object’ of artistic modernism.

Isadora Duncan was a pioneer of modern dance and saw the personalised movements of the body as a way to spiritual freedom. Announcing: “*the dances of no two persons should be alike*” and describing art which is not spiritual as mere merchandise. Is there a free woman behind the dance of the stripper? Beyond doubt there is a business woman and performance is her way to economical freedom.

- Kristine Øksendal 2009





EVA, I  
gelatin silver print (21 x 24 cm)  
2008



BEGGING FOR IT, II  
gelatin silver print (19 x 21 cm)  
2008



JE VAIS À L'AMOUR, III  
gelatin silver print (21 x 28 cm)  
2008



THE BALLROOM WALK, III  
gelatin silver print (23 x 23 cm)  
2008



VENUS XTRAVAGANZA, III  
gelatin silver print (21 x 24 cm)  
2008



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