

## **I Introduction**

With my art I'm interested in creating connections on a visual and conceptual level, and in expanding the temporal view. In my projects I often weave together several artistic media like installation, drawing, prints, sculpture and video. My work is to a large extent characterized by reflections around the endless amounts of semantic possibilities which originate in the process of decontextualization and recontextualization of disparate images. I wish to explore the connection between the historic and the contemporary, and to make artworks which express tensions between inner and outer forces.

I want my art to have a contemplative function, and to imbue it with polysemantic, complex interpretive possibilities. At the same time I'm concerned about the fact that my artworks must communicate with precision in their expression. I'm striving for this in all the decisions which makes up the process towards a finished work, and in all the elements which each artwork consists of.

## **II Research project: "Layers of Darkness and Light" (Working title)**

My research project is in part inspired by a very interesting philosophical and aesthetic reflection by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben. In his text "What is the Contemporary" \* he writes: "The contemporary is he who firmly holds his gaze on his own time as to perceive not its light, but rather its darkness. The contemporary is precisely the person who knows how to see the obscurity". And he continues "... to perceive this darkness is not a form of inertia or of passivity, but rather implies an activity and a singular ability. In our case, this ability amounts to a neutralization of the lights that come from the epoch in order to discover its obscurity, its special darkness, which is not, however, separable from those lights."

\* (From the book "What is an Apparatus? And other Essays", Giorgio Agamben, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2009.)

Ever since my exhibition project "Imagines faciunt saltus" from back in 2008, I have been working with the timeline as a means to expand perception of time and history – to expand temporal view. In order to create strong and interesting relations with questions I consider to be both pertinent to the present as well as being universal, one of my aims with this research project is not only to look at my own time (and of course of the political, sociological, ecological and spiritual side of it) in the attempt to make visible what Agamben calls "the obscurity", but also to move back and forth on the timeline.

I'm interested in a definition of the terms "obscurity" and "darkness" both as a metaphor for the phase of artistic research where there's a search for something that's invisible, undefined and indistinct, and also as a metaphorical and physical translation into an artwork. This means that I wish to explore the potential existing in the process which leads to the totality of an artwork which is made up of many parts / elements. These singular elements or "fragments" are initially indistinct, disconnected and un-coordinated, but as the process moves forwards towards the finished artwork in its entirety, each of the parts gains its expressive strength. I'm indeed interested in examining my ways of making art during this research project (see the paragraph "Work methods" further down in the text for some detailed questions regarding my ways of making art).

Equilibrium between different forces are essential both in the creation and in the reading of my artworks. In my art I'm searching for a whole that is plurivocal, and therefore I often chose components with an opposite or contrasting nature.

As a result of personal interest related to my artistic practice, I initiated a collaboration with CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) in Geneva, Switzerland, around three years ago. I was and am very interested in their scientific research on subatomic particles – the smallest "building-bricks" of the universe. It's my intention to let this research be one of the departure points for my project.

In my fellowship-project I want to pair my research in this field with another area of interest, which will make the project relate to both the previously mentioned text by Giorgio Agamben and what he writes about the darkness, the cosmos, the expansion of the universe, and the expression of this mystery, and which at the same time will permit me to deepen into one topic which has been of great interest for me since very early in my artistic research: The existence of antique cosmogony\*, indivisible from the aspect of sound in primitive societies. From an early age I have been inspired by the writings of the german ethnomusicologist Marius Schneider, whose research covers most of the antique societies in the world, and which confirms the fact that in most of the archaic cosmogonies, sound was perceived to be the basic matter. This raises awareness of the existence of an "intercultural philosophy" and a connection between sound and spirituality which we find in the "Rites of Creation" in most of the primitive societies around the world. I intend to look closer at his theories, and make kind of codifications which I can translate into my art.

One of the key-elements in this project will be transformation. This transformation could be similar to f. ex. the one which occurs when something goes from being in an amorphous state, to a state of "crystallised" form and structure. Order of this kind can be found all over in nature. Order can also be found in f. ex. music, but this is a different type of order which needs movement. Transformation is also a key element in the research on subatomic particles, where enormous amounts of resources and energy are invested in the attempts to "crystallise" human theories through the collision of particles in order to create the smallest "building bricks" of the universe – particles which does not exist on planet Earth under normal conditions. And once created, these particles only exist for the tiniest fraction of a second. Likewise, transformation is also an essential element when it comes to the "Rites of creation" found in many of the "archaic" or "primitive" human societies. But here it is often sound which is "the creator".

Something which goes from an amorphous state, to a state of "crystallised" form and structure, will be at the core of the project, both when it comes to dealing with theoretical, artistic and aesthetic problematics, and when making and exhibiting the final project.

\* Cosmogony is any model or theory concerning the origin, creation and evolution of either the cosmos or universe. (See "Acoustic Symbolism in Foreign Cultures" by Marius Schneider.)

### **III Artistic references**

Another aspect I want to study during the fellowship period regards a desire to define my production within the artistic practice which Nicolas Bourriaud has called "Postproduction". According to Bourriaud "Postproduction" is defined as an artistic way of

working by reusing, remixing and recontextualising cultural objects that already exist in order to construct new narrative structures. As Bourriaud writes: “To learn how to use forms, as the artists in question invite us to do, is above all to know how to make them one’s own, to inhabit them.” and “The activity of postproduction imply a similar configuration of knowledge, which is characterized by the invention of paths through culture.” \*

\* (From the book “Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World”, Nicolas Bourriaud, Lukas and Sternberg, New York, 2005.)

I'm both interested in defining my "position" within this field, and at the same time also to define what sets me apart from it. I intend to do this by reflecting on the terms "appropriation" and "articulation" as used by Bourriaud.

Another important reference to my work-method which I want to more deeply investigate during the fellowship period, is the work titled "Mnemosyne Atlas" begun by the German art historian and "cultural scientist" Aby Warburg in 1924, and left unfinished at the time of his death in 1929. I'm interested in more fully investigating the aspect which regards the collective mnemonic archive, the "baggage" of preexistent images which each person carries within himself / herself.

You may see both an unconscious and conscious influence and use of these theories in most of my projects. And you can also read about this in an interview I had with Elio Schenini, curator at The Museum of Art in Lugano, Switzerland. (See: [samoaremy.com/texts/Division Leads to Multiplication](http://samoaremy.com/texts/Division_Leads_to_Multiplication).)

#### **IV Work methods**

As already mentioned in the introduction, in my projects I often weave together several artistic media like installation, drawing, prints, sculpture and video. Experimentation and use of printmaking techniques will be central in my research.

I'm indeed interested in examining my ways of making art, and I want to do this by basing my examination on among other the following questions:

- \* Why does the precision of some choices and decisions I make during the process of making my artworks create a strength and tension which I find to be a very important aspect of my art?
- \* Where lies the limit between coincidence and purpose in my artworks / installations, where a composition-method, that for me is almost like making music, is used?
- \* In which way can I better re-elaborate or "analogically" manipulate appropriated images, to create an even stronger symbiosis with the contents of these images?

I will try to enter into the aspects mentioned above by focusing on the following topics:

- \* Musical and sound-related aspects translated into visual form.
- \* Perceptive shifting. (F. ex. transcription of sound into light or movement.)
- \* Outside / inside. (The expression of tension between inner and outer forces.)
- \* Surface and underlying layers.
- \* How to “unsettle” the motionlessness of an image.

During the research-period I will base a substantial part of the visual material utilized

for my project on images found during a constant process of collection of already existing visual material. I will continue my constant search for new and interesting images in libraries and archives. I systemize found images in a way similar to that of an archive, and this system, with its codification, is clearly personal. One of the sources from which I draw mostly are books of the most different kinds. During the research-period I will continue to extend my already existing archive, which now contains thousands of images. I will extrapolate images (or also objects) from their original context, reelaborate them and put them into a new one, by way of a process of decontextualisation and recontextualisation. The aim with the process of recontextualisation of the different "components" is to open up the narrative aspect which is intrinsic to every image or object. Moreover, I intend to create connections between the different "components" which will induce a sort of estrangement on the part of the viewer (as if the images /objects no longer belong to their prescribed codes: their story being reread and made actual all over again). By way of the juxtaposition of many elements my intention is to create a totality, one rich in both visual and conceptual references.

Drawing will also be an important part of my project, as it constitutes an essential part of my creative process. By way of it – and almost 'gropingly' – I begin to transcribe the ideas that lie at the bases of a project. As a project gradually advances I create and combine my own images – drawings or prints – with illustrations which I find and modify.

Dialogues and discussions with tutors, collaborators and colleagues will also be fundamental. And from a practical point of view I wish to structure my work during the research period in the following manner:

## **V Progress plan:**

**1:** Experimentation and in-depth studies of the different printmaking-techniques to transfer images to a printing plate, and also in-depth studies of different techniques to print images. Examples of this can be: transfer of already existing images to photo-gravure-plates, lithographic stones, silk-screen frames and plates for wood-cut. Once the transfers are done, I will re-elaborate the images on the "printing-plates" with different techniques. I will also experiment with different methods of printing on several types of media: from the most traditional and "classic", paper, to lesser used ones as f. ex. canvas, textiles and different objects (both large and small).

**2:** Experimentation with different possibilities of image-making by using various techniques which lie on the "border" between printmaking and photography. Examples can be photograms and a technique called "Nature self-printing" \* / "Naturselbstdruck". I will also experiment with techniques which involves analog (=chemical) development of images on photographic paper, and combine these images with digital prints by printing different images over them by the use of a digital printer.

(\* "Nature self-printing" is an imaging technique which prints directly from the original object such as a plant leaf. The first account of this technique, the "Dioscurides" manuscript at the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, dates from the thirteenth century.)

**3:** Experimentation with different techniques which permits me to intervene on the surface of

prints, and with techniques which permits me to manipulate images in an "analog" manner (= without the aid of a computer).

I have previously worked quite extensively with different kinds of interventions on the surface of digital prints, and through my PhD project I want both to research these further, and at the same time try to experiment with new ways of intervening on the surface of printed images. A most important factor here will be to find ways of intervening that will work in a "symbiotic" manner with the images, as to heighten their content.

Here are some examples of my previous use of these techniques:

- \* Using beeswax and pigment on the surface of digital prints. So far I've been using coloured, warm, liquid wax which I applied on top of the images by using a brush.
- \* Working on top of digital prints by placing "myriads" of tiny pieces of transparent adhesive tape on top of the images, which at the end got partially covered by several layers of tape. In a previous project I did this, then photographed the partially tape-covered images in daylight, and then finally printed the photographs of the tape-covered images. The reason of doing this was to make reflexions visible on the glossy surface of the adhesive tape.
- \* Working on the surface of digital prints by applying a large quantity of staples very close to one another, and arranged according to a predefined rhythm and spacing.
- \* Working on printed images by punching round holes through their surface, and in this manner also exposing underlying layers through the holes. Example: In my artwork "Ubi Constistam", the holes in the paper that 'constellate' the mineral depicted let us glimpse the underlying layers: burnt plywood and beeswax with red pigment.
- \* Working with distortion of images by use of a simple photocopying machine. I have carried out manipulations / interventions of images by moving a picture with my hand as the band of light of the photocopier moved. I looked for the right rhythm of hand-movement in order to distort the image to an exact extent, although every time the results would get slightly different, depending on the degree of experimentation. Given that the images were turned downwards towards the glass of the photocopier I didn't directly see the image. Because of this the oscillation of my hand-movements were depending on the time cadence and the gliding of the luminous band which scanned the image. By enlarging the photocopy through scanning it and then printing it once again, it becomes even more evident that there are no definite rasters and not even visible pixels in the blow-up, precisely because the photocopying machine creates a composition of irregular and organic signs. The possibility to use some of the "technology-specific" signs or "residues" occurring in this analogue manipulation process, will be an important issue to deepen into.

**4:** Experimentation with techniques and materials which permits me to create three-dimensional work. During this semester I foresee to work with sculptures or three-dimensional work, which bears in them the energetic strength and tension which will characterize the first three semesters. I imagine that I will want to make works that express a need to delineate an external perimeter and an internal space, some kind of three-dimensional maps.

**5:** Thorough experimentation and exploration into the endless possibilities existing when it comes to ways of weaving, composing and connecting different elements or "fragments"

which can make up an installation. I intend to use a method of observation and description of my work to create a sort of "map" of potential visual and conceptual inter-weavings between the different works I have made during the two first years of research, in order to better "connect" them with each other in an installation.

During the last phase of the project, I intend to focus on the following:

- \* **Dimension / scale:** At this point I will have to decide the dimensions of the images – those who need to be enlarged.
- \* **Evaluation of the eventual necessity of having to intervene further on some of the images / artworks.**
- \* **Evaluation of the quantity of elements needed in the installation and the eventual need to make further artworks:** According to what I wish to transmit, I will evaluate which of the artworks I have created during the first two years which can be used to give strength to the various aspects of expression in the totality of the installation.
- \* **Placement / position:** I will work to find the right placement / position of each image / artwork within the larger group of works. The placement of each work will have to contribute significantly towards creating tension and attraction between the different elements which together will form the installation.

## **VI Artistic results**

The artistic results of the research project will consist of several artworks, which will communicate with each other as an installation. As already mentioned, I often weave together several artistic media like installation, drawing, prints, sculpture and video in my projects, and it is my plan to work in a similar way also in this project. I would like the different elements of the installation to express transformation and the fluctuating borderline between chaos and order, between the unknown and the known.

I wish to exhibit the project in a suitable exhibition space here in Oslo.

As mentioned before, I'm interested in a definition of the terms "obscurity" and "darkness" as a metaphor for the phase of artistic research where there's a search for something that's invisible and undefined: Singular elements or "fragments" are initially indistinct, disconnected and un-coordinated, but as the process moves forwards towards the finished artwork in its entirety, each of the parts gains its expressive strength. Something which goes from an amorphous state to a state of "crystallised" form and structure will be at the core of the project, both when it comes to dealing with theoretical, artistic and aesthetic problematics, and when making and exhibiting the final project.