

Artist statement

2009

A contents-metamorphosis through modernism and post-modernism towards an open dialogue between the artist and spectator:

In fact the starting point of my artistic history of development commenced in the beginning of 1980ies some years while still studying at the The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. At the time the discussion on the academy were concentrated on the non-referential-artwork. There could not be any narrative following the representation revealing anything regarding the passion or joy of narrative of the artist.

The artwork was nothing else or more than what the spectator perceived and which the artist had represented: a colour, a form, a line, a structure. At that time I experienced this as a problem I tried to solve by letting the artwork be concentrate on how it develops within its own rules of foundation. It transpired in a direct contact with the history of art and with the language of sculpture, which is inseparable from its tradition-bounded craft-manlike discipline and art as a form of knowledge in its own right. A form of knowledge that encloses its own principles: a particular 'language-game'. The dimensions of the sculpture and the object were proportional to the human body directly. I understood sculpture as specific spatial artwork artists employed before the 20th Century while often the object was entirely abstract and could have attributes of assemblage. I was interested in dimension, which could be surveyed in both categories. The concentration of mine was directed towards the intimate dialogue between the spectator and the forms, images, materials and things of the artwork particularly. The inner relations of the artwork remained essential to me – even in works that entirely consisted of anonymous elements or where the artwork neglected to refer to a crux of matter – the intimate connection to the spectator was significant for the experience and perception of the artwork.

The scale ensured that the spectator dominated the object purely bodily. I regarded the problem of the plinth as very present. The sculpture/object was not aloud to engage within a privileged place in the world by being elevated on a pedestal. The every-day-like composition of found object or raw materials, which were joins of structure, reflected that the human world in general was ruled by underlying structures more or less autonomous of human volition.

It was an artistic/aesthetic standpoint with deep roots in modernism that among others could be experienced in works by artists like Sophia Taebuer-Art, Naum Gabo or Constantin Brancusi.

Gradually the minimalistic grid became the 'principle of art', which came to follow and determine my perceptions on art in many years. It was a fundamental conception that depicted the artwork as a structure among other structures.

Parallel to the work with the object/sculpture from mid 1980ies to the beginning of

1990ies I developed what I call *Metamorphosis-constructions*. (1) It is enlarged sculptures some almost 20 meters where forms transform in progresses, which in various ways visualize the enlargement of form or narrative elements.

But the progress of transformation made possible the use of narrative extracted from e.g. literature or art-history. The narratives were not exploit to create coherence between art and society/the spectator or to produce a perception of “the divine stories”. They were created exclusively as “matrix” to forms that transforms. In that way every artwork became an experiment for investigations of the relationship *between* the creation of form, space *and* seriality, the narrative and perception. It can be perceived as assertions of contradictions when working with forms that transforms and represents vague motions but at the same time obliged to solidify the progress of forms in images of instances. But this doubleness is very significant to artworks expressing post-modern ideas. Through doubleness expression becomes ambiguous and meta-layers commence that visualize the imperatives as part of the expression of the artwork.

The notion has to be invented from artwork to artwork and has no specific legitimacy but is part of the very expression, i.e. of the visual and material emergence of the construction. The ambiguity squanders the authority of the expression and signalizes that no definitive norm is present in the artwork.

My visual art production gives something back to the world by being a production of emblems or matrix of thought: form-reflections of time-spirit. The world emerges through the core-less artwork, the labyrinthine and infinite narrative and matter, the immanence of material and form in postmodernism. In that way postmodernism still has significance in my work creating artwork today.

Installations:

In 1995 I exhibited what I will entitle as my first real installation: *Meta-geometric constructions* (2) or *Virtual – ideal – real cobweb-constructions* (subtitled) *7 parts of a sculptural perception of the world*. (3)

To me installation is akin to a work of construction both distinctive and emotionally. The installation tries to create a joint expression on essential aspects of the link between man and the world. The installation differentiates from sculpture by involving far more aspects in the experience by surrounding the entire body of the spectator and suspending the difference between in and out among other things. With my installations I try to create a greater aesthetic opinion on the coherence between things, forms, space, materials and colours and our ideas of the world.

In *Meta-geometric constructions* the exhibition is being structured from the pillar that supports the ceiling in the centre of the gallery. Furthermore I added six columns (pillars) to create a specific figure of seven columns (pillars) inspired by the symbolism of number seven that is being repeated in various ways historically e.g. as the seven wonders of the world or the seven deadly sins. Together they created seven columns (pillars), seven fundamental principals of the spatial art: Transparency, covering-camouflage, impression-absence, structure-patterns, things-objects, substance-gravitation and stretching-

projection. All jointly exhibited with five big photographs. The photographs was staging of seemingly scale-less space where forms levitated in cobweb-like strings. I was taken up by creating illusions in photography where gravitation was suspended in contrary to the case of the columns in the gallery, which with visible hooks and screws were tied to be kept up. I used different kinds of cobweb-types from spiders as means for the underlying structure of the photographs and played with contradictions of in-out, small-big, floating-solid. Titles as: *A transparent construction – punctured* or *A transparent construction with dotted outline* demonstrates how I was engrossed of the artwork as an almost invisible membrane between internal and external, between the demarcated perfect form and the almost non-present. As demonstrated in the title of the exhibition I perceived the exhibition as an idea of what I called “a sculptural perception of the world.”

In 1998 I exhibited the installation *Shells of remembrance* at Indianapolis Museum of Art. (4) In this installation I incorporated a till then never been use before element in my artistic production: my personal history.

At *Shells of remembrance* three sculptural parts were held together by orange wickerwork that was separated but in theory had impressions of each other. As an experiment I took starting point in figures, which had character of label and correlation to my Greenlandic childhood. The figures hang from the ceiling down and became drifting especially because of the transparent quality of fibreglass. It was not the “mobile” character – the sliding – I was taken on rather it was the drifting attribute. On a long blackboard on the wall I had drawn cobwebs with charcoal and attached photocopies from a book on alchemy and mysticism.

I used two elements: skin of a polar bear and hair splendour with a knot on top of the head, which had references to the way Greenlandic women arranged their hair back in time. Centred I had a non-referential figure that both opened and closed it self towards the two other figures. Hair becomes form via its incomprehensive many parts of foundation. Part and total is at the same time the same and different. Skin the same. Patterns, arabesques, wickerwork draw together and separate parts at the same time. Signs referred to my personal memory of Greenland. Memories are also wickerwork of strings that in some places collects in bundles and other places vanish into thin air. Cobwebs are fragile strings drifting and at the same time strong tackles. Wood sticks were pricked in shells and words cut in wood. The words were sounds from drum-dances of the Eskimos stretched on a bar. Fibreglass is compounded of strings stretched into a transparent mass.

The two installations creates the aesthetic vestige I today embrace in my work. Artists like Jessica Stockholder and Thomas Hirschhorn has, in radical different ways, but still in the same attitude worked with installations. In similar ways they work by creating universes that congregate what I call constructions of mentality.

In recent years I have added to the development of installations as seen on the exhibitions *Golems Øer (The Islands of Golem)*, (5) *Clinch* at The National Gallery of Denmark or at *Paradisobservatoriet (The observatory of Paradise)* at Galerie Mikael Andersen in 2006.

(6). At both *Clinch* and in the *Paradisobservatoriet* I used Styrofoam-packaging to construct the very figures, and in the latter exhibition was the minor figures of casts of packaging in porcelain clay composed of found objects, fabrics and nets. Today I assemble several found objects in the installations directly earlier on I preferred using imprints of things and in that way I continue the genre of assemblage that origin in 1950ies with among others the works of Robert Rauschenberg. Works by the German artist John Bock or the Portuguese artist Carlos Bunga I find the same interest in un-monumental materials, which I myself have used in my works: corrugated cardboard, packing, cardboards, cardboard tube, brown tape that are being painted and connected into small objects or grander installations. Furthermore the German artist Isa Genzken has in her later as well as in her newest works and installations in many ways worked in an aesthetic field I can identify with however in a very different way.

In November 2008 I exhibited my latest work at Galerie Mikael Andersen in Berlin. (7) The title of the exhibition is *At hylde kvindens taleret skulpturelt (To salute the Woman's Freedom of Speech sculpturally)*. I have resumed the work with objects hanging from the ceiling down. I use wire as wickerwork in the sculpture. I have worked with wire and nylon-thread earlier on but only in a small amount of works among others in *7 søjler (7 Pillars)* from 1995 (8), where I used nylon-thread and wires to create shapes of element. The wire-woven sculptures are a whole new area of work to me. I work towards developing a form of installation, which in a more direct way implicate the spectator.

In the public artworks I have realized I have tried to apply and transfer some of the fundamental aesthetic and artistic ideas above-mentioned. The circumstances and terms for art in public places, streets and official buildings are so profound different in terms of the validities of materials, the demands from and considerations to surroundings, to political decision-takers and citizens, which requires new thinking in regard to the original starting point. I have tried to convey an asked for un-monumental sculpture to public space by creating *By-fraktal (City-fractal)* or *Torvenes Brøndsløjfe (The Well-bow of the Marked Places)* in polished stainless steel.

The reflecting surface has a tendency to obliterate the form. The fact that the surroundings reflect and all locomotion absorbs in the sculpture provides the surface with a transitoriness that takes part in demolishing its authority in spite of its size. (9).

The sculpture is a transformer, a machine, an observatory I employ to test my ideas and perception of the world in – and with – eventually as this perception changes gets new depths, new actors, new insights in and purposes.

The artistic (aesthetic) work is a work of comprehension, which constitutes in an artwork physically and in that way communicates expressions to others that enable them to enter the big construction of work the time-spirit constitute.

This text shows how I am at both the same – but aiming a brand new attitude – in my artistic production today.

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Enclosure 4 Elisabeth Toubro, Newest Works 2004-2008

Enclosure 4 Elisabeth Toubro. Newest Works 2004-2008

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Enclosure 5 Pladsen og monumentet set i farten (The place and monument seen in motion)

Enclosure 6 Elisabeth Toubro. Decorations 1990-2009

Enclosure 7 Sculptural transformation and social political change

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