A large flock of birds is seen flying across a sky filled with warm, orange and yellow light from a setting sun. The sun is a bright, glowing orb positioned just above the horizon line, which is marked by the dark silhouettes of trees and bushes. The overall scene is a dramatic and atmospheric landscape photograph.

UNDER A BLACK SUN

EXHIBITION IN THE ROUND TOWER

COPENHAGEN, 23. MARCH – 13. MAY 2012

A misty landscape at sunrise or sunset. The sky is a warm, hazy orange and yellow, with a bright sun visible in the upper left. The foreground is dominated by dark, silhouetted vegetation, including tall grasses and bushes. In the middle ground, a body of water reflects the warm light from the sky. The background features a line of trees and a distant, hazy horizon. The overall atmosphere is serene and atmospheric.

**UNDER A BLACK SUN**



U N D E R   A   B L A C K   S U N

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## BLACK SUN – UNDER THE ROOF OF THE ROUND TOWER

The black sun: enormous floating clouds of starlings form fleeting contrasts to the severe line of the Southwest Jutland horizon.

Between these two extremes, local artists and designers find their inspiration and show what they can do. The flat country etches clear outlines, the bracing weather tans the soul, and the sky's domination humbles and strengthens character. The exhibiting artists themselves point towards stiff headwinds and an abundance of light, concentrated individualism, and basic sensuousness as a common creative source behind their various artistic expressions.

And they are different, of course. The artists who have come together in "Under a Black Sun" represent a region which is often associated with qualities of nature. Speaking in pictorial terms, some of the works sprout cheerfully and

robustly from the rich soil's pungent green. Others arise persistently out of the eternal breath of the heaving waves, or are complex like the seaweed crackling dryly under our feet or slurping pliantly between our toes, or leaving lines on beach or bodies.

The art forces its way with the cool weight of heavy sea fog across the changing pictorial languages, meanders elegantly as a river, or thunders its demands with the force of a storm surge. And there are expressions which, with almost crystalline purity, lift towards the mighty Southwest Jutland skies and the sharp air.

Far from all the artists in this exhibition display the Southwest Jutland features; but in Lars Bollerslev's paintings we come face to face with a contemporary artist's interpretation of regional art. Else Pia Martinsen Erz unfolds the life of the marshes for the rest of us. The thronging birdlife



forms arabesques, and this energy is celebrated in sparkling colours.

Margit Enggaard Poulsen uses her own nature and that of the painting, losing herself in the moment and opening to the demands of material and subject.

Spontaneity and colours are also the hallmark of Niels Kongsbak. His creative process starts with sensing colours and light; all else bends to the demands of the experimenting unity.

In the work of Jørgen Printz Steinicke, the brush strokes assume the character of a narrative in the artist's search for something else and more. In even more concentrated form, Adam Gabriel attempts to encapsulate existential and psychological truths about man.

The essence of Jørn Houborg's art is painterly painting and an absurd humour – spiced with transformed flea market treasures from suburban backwoods.

In Hanne Knudsdatter's graphic art, the tender meets the

rough, and universal shapes grow out of the moving line. And Pernille Bejer allows surfaces and lines to dance and sing on contrasts and transitions in organic webs and abstract weaving across the paper.

Sculptor Lis Andersen makes abstract figures in stone, dignified and suggestive in the nuances of surface. Starting with space and materials, Ole Videbæk works with sculptures and installations which create new and old meaning. Lars Waldemar does not satisfy himself with his large abstract studies of the astounding structures of nature – he also expresses himself in pictorial terms.

The ceramic artists each sound a unique note in their common language. Sten Børsting has won international recognition for his creative and craftsman-like work with the sensuous aspects of glazes and prehistoric pottery. Typical of Bibi Hansen is her organic perception of shapes

and subjects which reveal both the emerging strength and the tenderness of the shoot.

In contrast to this is Kirsten Winther Johannsen's bowls and plates, the simple shapes of which are decorated individually with all-over patterns which are both complex and stringent.

And finally, those working across the traditional art forms: graphical artist Kate Skjerning's fascination with women's lives has resulted in large crocheted sculptures and installations with dandelion seed heads etc.

Textile artist Anette Bendixen combines art and craft when she needle-weaves a freehand "painting", and architect Cecilie Bendixen encircles transparent space in her installations, the continuous or changeable space and the porous space.

The Round Tower's large exhibition hall will be a landscape of differences.

Fortunately.



## LARS WALDEMAR

Nature is magical, and it can captivate you with strange conical growths and creatures. And Waldemar, who knows this, has a strong eye for microorganisms, water's mysteries, but he also respects the nature of intensity and play.

His artistic base is sculptures in limestone, large pure celebrations of the tiniest life forms' often bizarre appearance, far from any of the things with which we are familiar.

Limestone's matt surface creates no glossy tensions, but requires an unerring sculptural instinct paired with a strong sense of graphic effects. These sober white works enjoy the appearance of miniscule life forms.

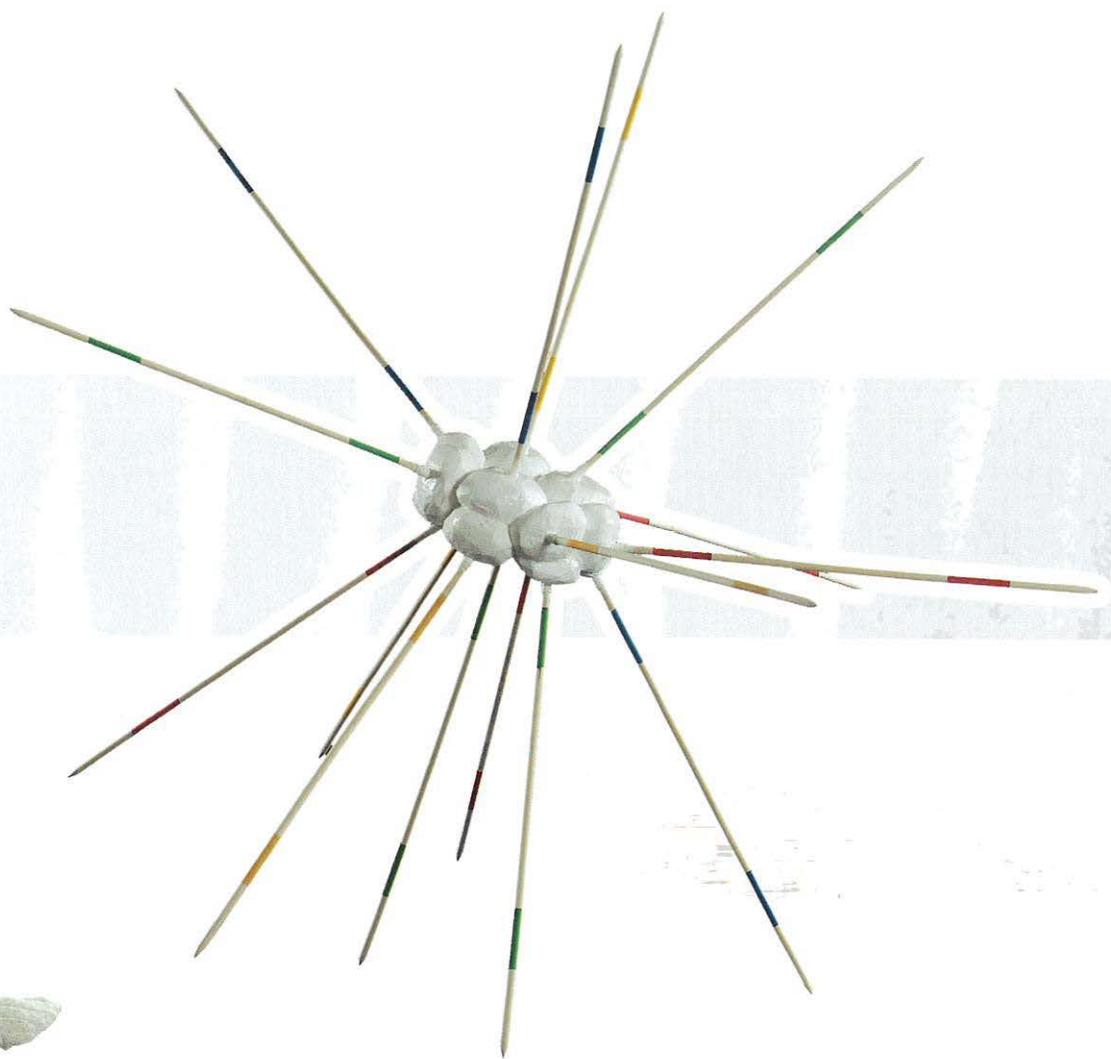
But other materials work with other tricks, and

Waldemar has followed a vigorous and playful nature into his own inventions. Starting with rubbish and materials found, windfalls of fruit and leaves have arisen, reflecting the concepts of nature, but freely interpreted.

In continuation of these studies of what form and material together can create, we find some strange creatures in *The Round Tower* with colourful limbs. Playful – or sinister? Mikado sticks reach out from a ballooning body, inserting themselves into the onlooker's private space.

Amorphic and organic graphics cavort on the walls, making us believe we are among living surprises again. But they are actually experiments with man-made elastics.







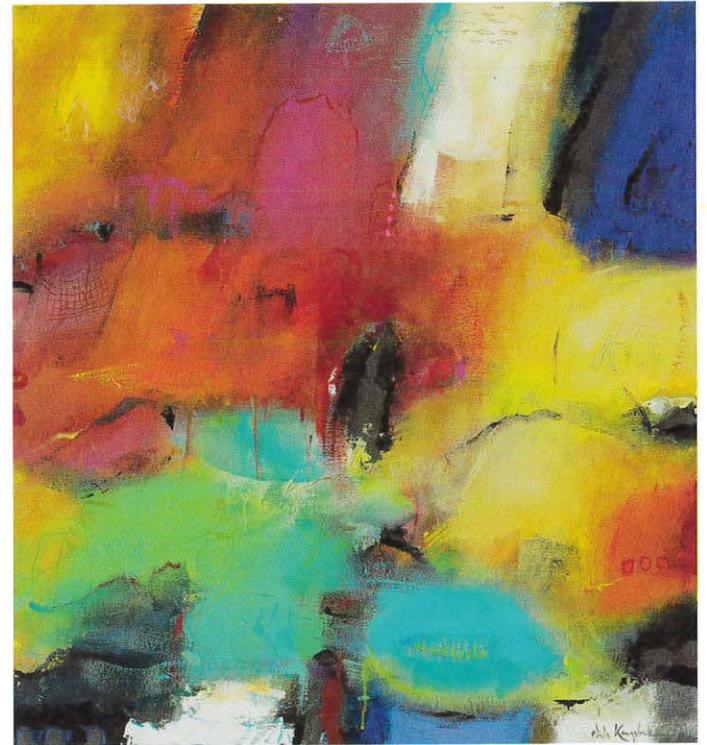
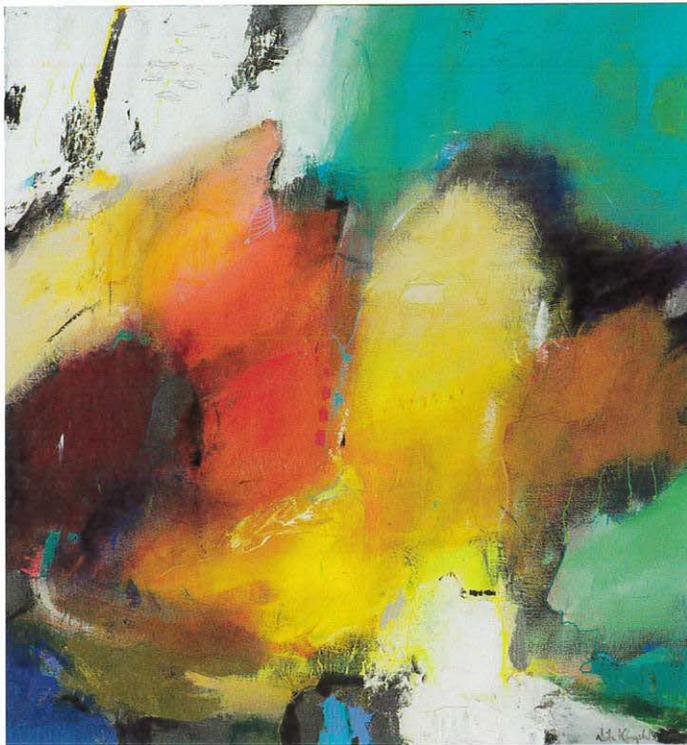
# KIRSTEN WINTHER JOHANNSEN

Words such as order, rhythm and unity represent these ceramic works very accurately. Winther Johannsen's range of plates, pots, vases and other designs is first and foremost about patterns. There are boundless riches which in regular repeats wind themselves rhythmically around the vessels' always simple forms. Their elegant lines range from modernistic to very ancient sources of inspiration.

The patterns arise from discovering different sides of nature; in music repeats; in the systematic qualities not only found in the nooks and crannies of nature, but also in all the world's cultures. Winther Johannsen finds inspiration in her extensive ethnological and cultural historical knowledge and curiosity. And she handles her patterns according to strategic and mathematical rules.

First a pencil is used to draft lines which disappear in the firing. Then the pattern is applied in blue or black. The result is simultaneously stringent, demanding and painterly. And onlookers hand is moving despite the fact that without the aid of words, the eye understands the riddle formed by the pattern along the pot's arched form. And hand and brain grow uncertain whether the pattern may, after all, be three-dimensional, like braiding or a reptile's pyramidal scales.

Organic elements settle down with controlled elements, creating a unified serenity where patterns resolve themselves in moving from the broad opening towards the narrow bottom, thus pointing to a complex rhythm.





## NIELS KONGSBAK

Colours capture. Brushes swish, and the imagination has been given free rein on abstract commons, which are ultimately colour moods rich in associations. Although Kongsbak allows himself to be inspired by things he has seen or experienced, he does not allow such inspirations to dictate to him.

The almost narcotic state of art comes through colouring. The colours kick him on to the next impulse. When creating pictures in this way, you must feel confident with chance events and recognise the possible in the impossible.

Experience has taught Kongsbak that the courage to dare to throw yourself at the unknown yields good results. Fruitful mistakes are physical evidence that intuition should be listened to.

Kongsbak believes it is OK for pictures to spread happiness. Via many different materials, he is on the track of the *joie de vivre* – quite classic expressions in acrylics on canvas and paper works where collages and old photos may sneak in as starting point and graphics.

But he has also worked with ceramics and glass. Glass paintings are particularly relevant in this context as they combine colour and light quite naturally, and it is meaningless to want to separate these two visual sensations from each other. Colour is light.

A glass painting gives light to colour or allows the colour to shine. In his glass paintings, Kongsbak is playing with the possibility of shaping the light of colour.



You may be struck by the frugality of graphics, but –! The aims of the prints are quite intimate, and they demand a direct dialogue between art and viewer – which, when rightly considered, is not modest at all.

Neither are the subjects; they are based on impressions from north-

western Scotland and the Wadden Sea around Løgumkloster.

There are recognisable elements such as landscapes, migrating birds and other living creatures in the far-flung landscapes. And from there, the subjects move into abstractions: works where lines, movement, and the

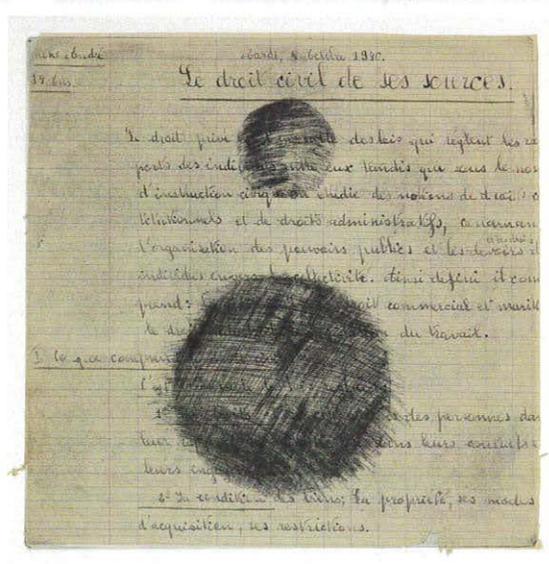
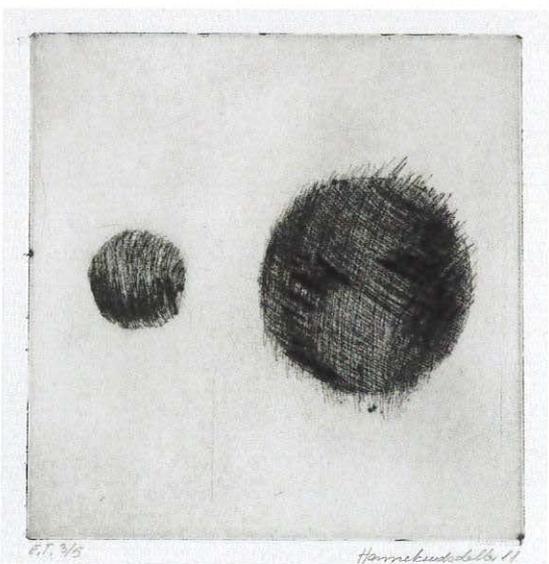
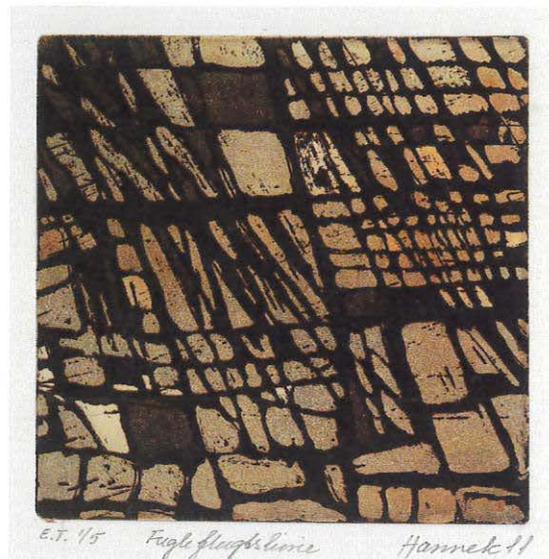
## HANNE KNUDSDATTER

hand's own sensibility push the experience of eyes and mind a little aside in favour of pictures totally in their own right. All the works display the humility arising out of the artistic urge to work with the material and the pictorial expression.

Hanne Knudsdatter started late, and is an autodidact graphic artist. She works in studios in Løgumkloster, Odense and Paris. Her own word for that element in graphics which

caught her imagination is its "woolly" quality: the vibrant line formed by scratching the print plate directly, that is, by omitting the preparatory work.

This line comes to life, adding a textural effect to the subject which runs like velvet along the picture surface, transforming it from being merely a recording line. The dry point is supplemented by other techniques which are also tested and studied in the studios.





## B I B I H A N S E N

Bibi Hansen pursues her ceramic professionalism with great enthusiasm, and there is curiosity and love behind her works. Her speciality is porcelain and stoneware, and the result is both unique pieces of art and series of articles for everyday use.

Throughout her career, nature has been her constant inspiration – sometimes directly visible in animals and plants as the undisguised starting point. Naturalistic butterflies frozen in the white porcelain flicker in front of our eyes.

Large organic bulbs reveal themselves behind colours borrowed from other elements in the close surroundings, the dunes. At other times the presence of nature is less visible, with small organic ornaments creeping elegantly up from the

edge of the vessel, or clearly painted brush strokes revealing the living hand's dynamism across the firm form.

And when the tonality of the colours of the Danish southwest coastal landscape directly outside Bibi Hansen's stable door echoes through her work, one senses their musicality.

The creativity of the Japanese culture with its intense presence in every moment inspires Bibi Hansen. Her ceramic forms' pure yet intense lines draw on her love of Japanese culture, as do many of her glazes. Solidity is paired with the slight and tender.

But first and last, ceramics is here a language spoken from a powerful and energetic source through the intuition of hands.





## P E R N I L L E B E J E R

Lines, flat surfaces, textuality on the material's own terms; universes of movement and rhythm open as worlds in their own right. Lines shift in staccato and broad pulse beats across the picture surface. Points twist and turn, meet and part, gently, violently. These pictures are raw without being cruel. As eyewitnesses we are granted a moment in a dance between the material's weight and the life of the drawing. The life of the picture is sensory, not a reflection of reality. Abstract black-white with a little colour.

As a qualified architect, Pernille Bejer, in her own words, simply never stopped drawing. Reflection and chance events are what her hand encapsulates. Her works have no

titles, for they must be able to stand on their own without the narrative which a title can intimate. What the onlooker gains from the individual picture is his own concern.

A chance event took her to a drawing course, and chance is the important ingredient which she has since allowed to work together with her thorough understanding of the graphic media. Her preoccupation with the media reveals a deep happiness in allowing the moment and her curiosity to decide the start of the process.

Bejer does not know the final result when starting a picture, but she is so familiar with the different phases of printing that she can bring out the texture of the picture.





## ADAM GABRIEL

From the written and the spoken word, we are familiar with the thought that a person's eyes are the windows to his soul. From films we know that eyes that see are highly expressive. Adam Gabriel's paintings remind us of the truth in these observations.

Who is the person looking back at us from his canvasses? The nameless persons whose gazes inexorably fix ours are telling us so much in their silent ways. The pictorial idiom, on the other hand, is anything but silent. It is expressionistic and it reflects the infinite degrees of human presence which a portrait can hold.

But these are not actual portraits. By rendering the human face with a universal rather than an individual expression, he is asking

us the question of what life is. In the middle of the cruelly colourful, glowing or sensuous brush strokes, within the alternately powerful and gentle lines, is something universal, something which is about us all.

The strengths and weaknesses of the faces reveal themselves to be existential. The multilayered and overlapping moods and feelings are allowed no direct or simple expression. Here is no evident laughter, sorrow or anger. It is the complexity and the many nuances which make us the onlookers stop to consider where we stand in our own lives.

Gabriel's art provokes us to introspection which, like a mirror, enables us to turn to the world and to other people.





## OLE VIDEBÆK

Here was the bricklayer who sought an answer to the great riddles of architecture. The answer would not be found in yet more education, but in the artistic work with sketches and ideas which soon became robust objects. His experiments with and discussions of space and architecture are still with him in the form of “wall” and “man”.

The first element delimits and protects, the second is the human element. It is a constant either as a human figure or a scale. If the work has the right size, the space and the walls create themselves as we move about inside or around it.

The sensory impression of the place is important for the creative process. To Videbæk, his experience of a location's potential and the materials already given is

important. They may be what is at hand, found, local – made by human hand, or nature's – or clay, a basic item in his artistic universe.

Clay has a rustic and vigorous expression. Videbæk does his own firing in primitive ovens which impose a high degree of unpredictability, leaving him only little control of the result. But in contrast to a conventional firing oven, he can rely on his red clay figures or reliefs turning out much more interesting than the boring red industrial plant pots.

With his installations, Videbæk can encapsulate the spirit of a place, often pinpointing something deeply beautiful or true about the place which the locals sensed but were unable to express in words.







## ELSE PIA MARTINSEN ERZ

A large flock of starlings appeared just behind the dyke at Skærbæk when, some years ago, the artist came cycling past in search of a return to a new life. The birds lured her northward, and every day for a month she returned to be within this feeling of freedom.

One bird species followed another; yet Martinsen Erz held on to the arabesques and patterns she detected in the many living, flapping and grubbing bodies. She borrowed from the light and the peace of the place for her pictures, which may be naturalistic but nevertheless reveal an eye for abstract picture qualities as a basic dimension.

The beauty of the birds and the pictures' almost calligraphic rhythm and clear colour

language are also inspired by insight into life. The marshes' rich bird life spurred the artist to reflect on human behaviour.

Parallels in cultural encounters, friendships, curiosity, joy of life, daily observations and dignified respect for life as it turns out for big and small is the backbone of her art. Her paintings and graphic works clearly reveal a close relationship to her southwest Jutland address.

Martinsen Erz is clearly inspired by the flat land and the surroundings in which she lives. Her pictures' sparkling and powerful palettes reflect a sensitive veneration for nature – and the desire to celebrate this vigorous natural scenery in her own pictorial language.





## ANETTE BENDIXEN

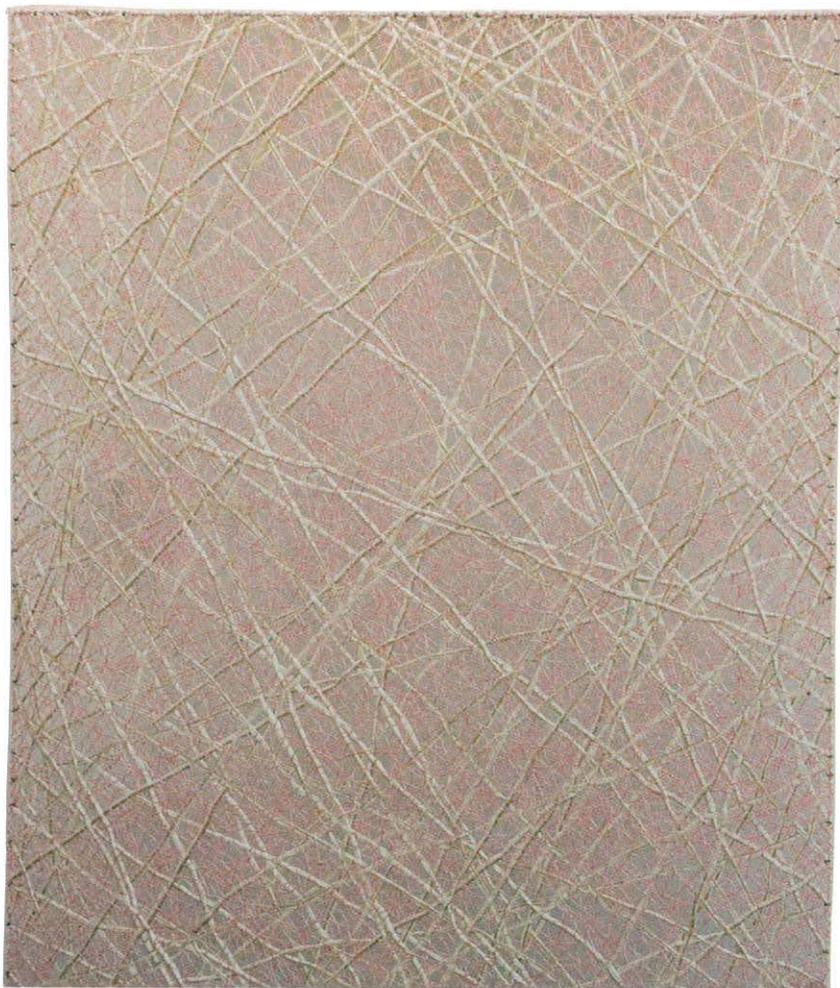
Versatile textile artist Anette Bendixen is a qualified weaver who has worked as such throughout her career. But it is in the fault line between the classical loom and its stringent vertical-horizontal structure that the art has arisen.

Bendixen dreamt of sewing in free air! And she saw a potential in combining the loom's large format with a technique which starts by weaving the thread in crisscrossing sections across the surface. The many threads are woven in and out of each other until the piece gains an almost embroidered effect: Bendixen embroiders woven pictures. They are large square airy surfaces, and they leave the netting of our mended stockings of old far behind. Her pic-

tures may reflect the classical gold frames of paintings, the Islamic world's light and patterns, or simply the joy of surrendering yourself to the power of colours.

Structure becomes an obvious theme. The thread meanders in and out in dense or open patches. The individual thread may be subtly emphasised by more of the same kind, by others crisscrossing it in all directions, or by the same or other colours.

Bendixen's technique thus opens for an expressive unity. Like brush strokes, each thread represents a movement and points to the artist's expressiveness. But the technique also contains a meditative element. The weaving cadence is met by spontaneity, strength, and a refined sense of colour.





## J Ø R N H O U B O R G

Of course absurd paintings can tell stories that we like to enjoy – although we may not understand all they tell, and may only smile in intuitive recognition. We need a good injection of humour occasionally, both in life and art, and yet don't we tend to mildly shake our heads at those who invite a bright yellow laughter or a sinister ironic snort?

Jørn Houborg's art offers a floating state of abstract painterly qualities and strange capricious levity. The broken baby shoes in pink porcelain and the overweight women raped by creatures from other planets – yes, they are thriving. And so are his paintings: textuality and layers of colour work with a rock-hard as well as subtly fading colour range.

This is pop art in postmodern medley; safe conduct to old cartoon heroes from before the time when they acquired pantyhose.

Jørn Houborg says in his battle cry for kitsch:

"Most people want to have good taste. It's called cultural capacity. Anybody can achieve that. All you have to do is run with the tide. Genuine bad taste is quite another matter. There are people who are born with bad taste. They are the few chosen ones. And there are those who have grown up in an environment of bad taste. They are also lucky. The rest of us who have been nurtured with good taste have a long and exhausting battle before us in order to attain a Genuine Bad Taste ..."



## M A R G I T E N G G A A R D P O U L S E N

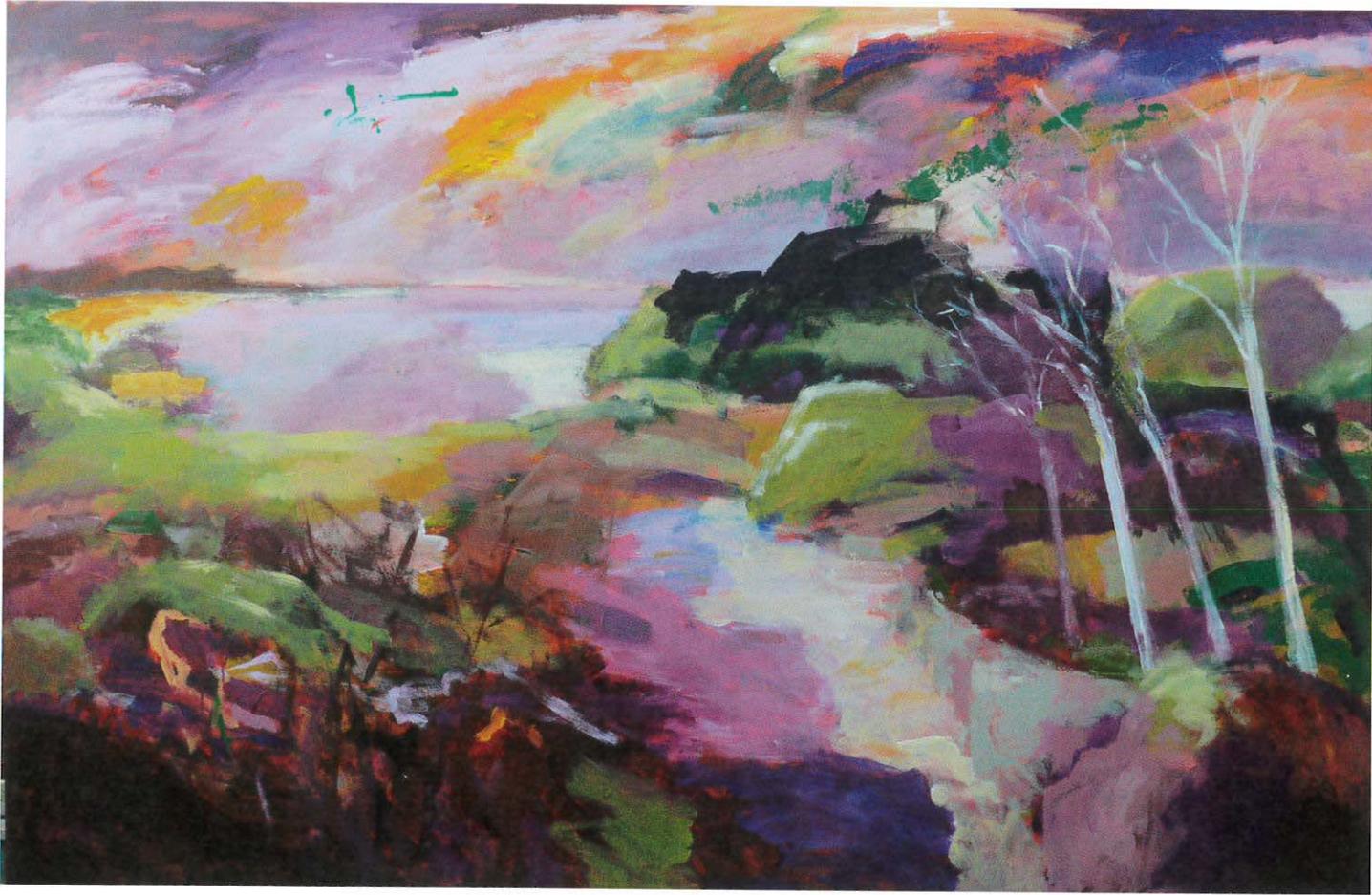
The lion roars. Or rather, the colours do. They whisper, snarl, quiver, rumble, gesture wildly and boast without restraint. Enggaard Poulsen is a true colourist; it is colour more than anything else which creates her landscapes.

With colour alone, she conjures up sounds and moods, the frail and tender become powerful, and nature's magic unity lends room to lions, torsos and other significant elements and presences. In Enggaard Poulsen's universe, the lion is the enjoyer of life, full of drive, urges and instincts – all of which carry her clean into mighty powers of expression. The dome represents inspiration. The dome shape, borrowed from the churches in the Italian city of Lucca, reflect the spirit, uniting with the picture's colouristic span. Enggaard Poulsen

knows her trade, but she does not limit herself to it. Instead she seeks to penetrate into something behind the landscape.

It is the painting process which gives birth to the picture, not her thoughts and feelings. The deep and glowing colours merely obey her starting point: experiences in the natural environment of the island of Fanø or Italy. Here is Fanø, background to and sounding board for landscapes of a rural or urban nature. Like the colours, the subjects emerge as something genuine, not only describing a moment experienced.

Enggaard Poulsen seeks what is earnest, that which is raw and biting back, and in this process, the emerging phenomena surprise even herself.





## KATE SKJERNING

Delicate, gossamer flower seeds belong with rough crocheted trees. Large drawings with an organic wealth of repetitions in graceful collusions between the composition's parts are also an element in Skjerning's register.

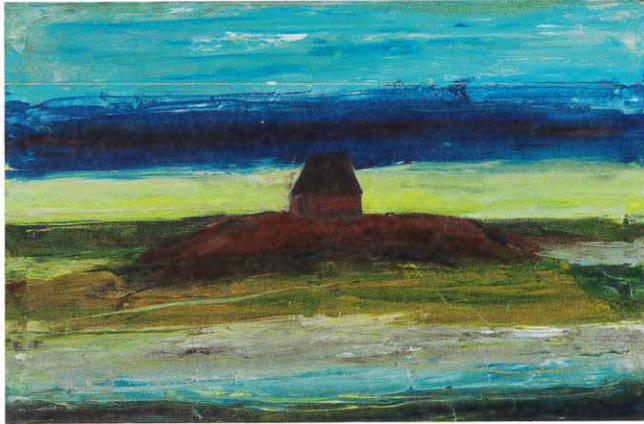
Starting with drawings, she works with installations of great mystical beauty. In her hands, a brutal bunker from World War Two becomes the perfect frame for – and part of – aesthetic, sensual and constructive works about masculinity and femininity.

Contrasts are confronted with each other, and Skjerning reveals in her works how these eternal encounters are not limited to firmly anchored gender roles. Quite the contrary – mutual dependency and poetic

interplay pulsate between the male and the female elements.

Skjerning's work displays a characteristic mix of intuition and reflection, on the basis of which she creates paintings, sculptures and installations with undefineable magic qualities. Skjerning's art encourages us to revise our interpretation of "Man" and "Woman", while its sensuality invites us to open our eyes in wordless recognition. The materials may be familiar, but they acquire an unusual and often very physical presence in her works.

There is extrovert power in her rustic and stubborn needlework as well as a delicate transitoriness in the materials such as dandelion seeds.



## LARS BOLLERSLEV

Serial exploration of a single subject can seem like a manic preoccupation, but as is the case with the Field Supervisor's House, it can also open for the existential aspects of life.

The nature of the Wadden Sea is stability and changeability in one and the same breath; it is the highest and most highly charged of sunny skies against a cloak of grey, impenetrable sky with no trace of inner tensions.

In Bollerslev's never-ending work of catching something essential and acute with his brush, one picture of the Field Supervisor's House emerges after the next – a constant stream of repeats which are never a copy, but an answer to seasons, weather, mind and the tender observations of day and night.

The house has become a Heimat icon for the Tønder marshes. Bollerslev is a local son and artist. The Field Supervisor's House near Ballum is in the neighbourhood and is caught on the road from Hjerpsted, on a bicycle, across the edge of the dyke, as a distant creature of dusk in the flat marshes. It has been said of Bollerslev's paintings that they are borne by, or even born of, the rich dark clay which forms the subsoil in this region.

The paintings start with small seven-minute sketches made on site, later to emerge in the studio, dug up with the spatula and in layers of impasto and glaze pulled out of the range and across the canvas. Here are dark skies with a streak of light on the horizon. It is breezy out there, and the night, the winter and the rain give a huddling shake. That's how it is here in the marshes.



## STEN BØRSTING

The masculine and the feminine elements create tensions wherever they meet. And ceramic works are no exception, works which under Børsting's hands and in his own words acquire a simultaneously highly refined and "terribly rough" expression. His stoneware objects take their starting point in articles for everyday use – but are shaped at least to the same degree by his artistic concerns.

The contrast between vases, bowls and pots – large in terms of their fundamental lines, accurately worked and often revealing a thorough knowledge of storage methods of past history – and the small BoxBoxes are characteristic elements.

The BoxBoxes which Børsting has invented gather up the threads. Here you sense the

powerful work with the material and see the fine surfaces full of glittering nuances. The name BoxBox refers to the physical dimension of the work with the clay. The element of inherent chance in the raku firing and the interplay between the fiery hot stoneware and the combustible materials such as straw and wood shavings which are packed around the object creates the crackled and sparkling glazes.

The rough part comes with the surface texture. Every elegant shape gains more tension, indeed a fruitful unrest from buds, bristles and other unruly patterns stretching out from the stoneware itself.

The patterns invite you to touch, back of heads curling up. Unclosed, vulnerable in their porosity.

## CECILIE BENDIXEN

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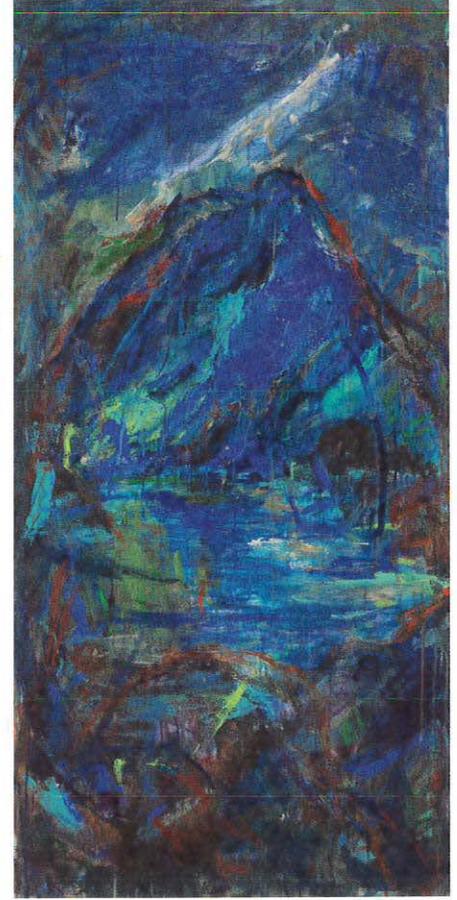
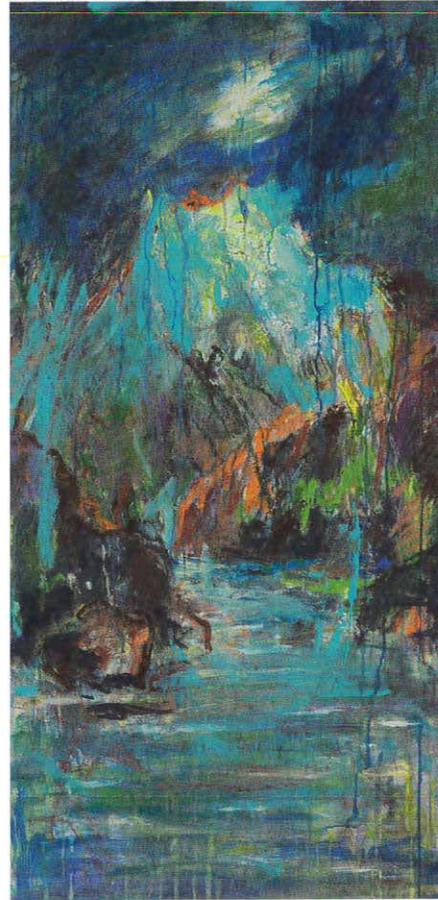
If form and function are to merge in a greater whole, the aesthetics are essential. This, the beautiful and the sensuous, can elude reason, but they are nevertheless an integral part of the whole. Architecture and design are a borderland: much must be calculated, but it is also necessary to consider the object's physical and aesthetic qualities. Bendixen's installations point to our physical experience of our surroundings.

Bendixen is a qualified architect, and she makes tents so as momentarily to encapsulate space. She uses textiles of a light quality which are cut, sewn, braided, folded etc. Add to this her professional knowledge of space – and that of textiles, for she has en-

tered a new crossfield, sound absorption. Her installations use "the hard and transparent polyester, the heavy and homogeneous wool, and the flabby and frayed cotton". First she derives a series of guidelines from her investigations. She then designs three different spaces: the transparent space, the continuous or changeable, and the porous.

Her goal is to find qualities and basic principles for greater use of these textiles because their sound-absorbing qualities are translated into aesthetic form. Human surroundings, like human life, must be meaningful! Art's apparently meaningless experiments create the cohesion between things which create meaning.







## JØRGEN PRINTZ STEINICKE

One way in which to be in tune with yourself and the world is to hold on to one's fixed points while also recognising new impulses. The two together may then settle as the sediment from which paintings grow. Steinicke's art encompassed patterns and creatures in colour. People encountered angels or animals. African masks mingled naturally with figures from Central America, and impressions from Italy.

Always Italy, again and again with church domes and compositions by old masters interpreted in new and expressive ways.

And to Steinicke's own surprise, nature is now also claiming its right. For two years in a row he has cycled from Holsted to Rome because he

had to experience the landscapes in slow motion – not through a car window. With the aid of a camera he fixated the many impressions gained from the back of the bicycle. And now some years later, the sediment has matured, and Steinicke has become a landscape painter. The inner landscapes reflect the external mountains and hillsides, the lush growth and miserly stretches.

The experiences of green meadows and yellow grain fields melt together in a unified physical and mental sensory vision. It used to be the purely human world in which Steinicke's figures revolved. Now they are gone leaving the peace of nature behind. The paintings strive to live here and now, as you do when on a bicycle journey.



# LIS ANDERSEN

In their work some artists succeed almost all reasonable limits in uniting the tensions which circumscribe and define human life. This is how Lis Andersen's sculptures appear, precise in their intimations and accurate in form, calm and silent as a matter of course, and yet filled to bursting with all possible pictures.

The artist expresses an eternal quality, symmetrical and carefully worked as they are. Monumental in composition whatever their actual size. The numbers of materials and effects are often toned down. Single features join each other, rough and smooth surfaces, horizontal principles which mark vertical weights, nature's materials such as granite and diabase against

organic branches and man-made glass and rubber.

A quietly self-assured womanliness emanates from Andersen's works – or do we experience it like this because we know that a woman is behind the works?

Her sculptures may be of human size, or small as a clenched fist, and often with a trace of minimalist stringency. It may reveal an inspiration from especially ancient Egypt, but also other cultures remote in time and place.

The feminine expresses itself discretely as a complex open kindness, a strength, and steadfastness tied to the elegance of saturated and glossy surfaces.



UNDER A BLACK SUN  
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