

TIDSROM - Bomuldsfabriken Kunsthall 29.01.-13.03.2011

Text Mette-Line Pedersen, curator Harald Solberg

The exhibition *TIDSROM* (Time Spaces) shows five separate projects by Sidsel Hanum, Edith Lundebrække, Tina Jonsbu, Marianne Lund and Anne Aanerud. Although the artists have different objectives, all five work with ideas that challenge both our perceptions and our understanding of time. Characteristic of their work is not the impulsive, but, quite the contrary, a patient searching and an exploration of their material's inherent strengths. All the works on display required a considerable time investment and involved physical/mental challenges posed in various ways by the materials themselves. The artists boldly work at the limits of what their materials will allow, thereby giving new life to historical techniques.

Sidsel Hanum

For over 30 years, ceramicist Sidsel Hanum has developed and explored her own ceramic idiom. It is a formal language that consistently reflects the human relationship to nature. Using a painstaking process, she tests out various techniques and forms of expression. The way she works with her materials makes it impossible to plan everything in advance – the outcome remains uncertain right up until the kiln is opened. She uses intuition to decide how best to achieve a desired result. The artist favours titles that refer to specific events. Her style is organic, while also referring to minimalism.¹⁾ In recent years, Hanum has pushed porcelain to its limits, working from the basic idea of using the least possible amount of material needed for a certain form. She has abandoned the potter's wheel in favour of plaster moulds, but also employs the decorative technique known as "horning"²⁾ Her works give the impression of being "made by nature" thanks to their elaborateness and delicacy. In her own words:

*"I build things layer by layer – my works evolve from basic ideas and follow the patterns of nature in their development. The incredible variety of shells, corals, sea anemones and starfish one finds at low tide are an influence on my work. I also feel that the tide as such, as it rises and falls in the oceans, gives the world a certain unity. That's how I like to see life. We all live on the same planet."*³⁾

She describes her process as "drawing with porcelain". The artist's technique, which relies on porcelain slip, allows her to "draw" in three-dimensions. The material accumulates layer by layer to form simple circular shapes within the plaster mould. The artist forces the porcelain slip into threadlike channels inside the mould. Typical of this process is the way shapes develop according to a kind of organic principle of growth, in which the basic conditions are set by the artist, but the result cannot be determined in advance. Her works highlight issues such as the relationship between form and function. Sidsel Hanum is forever redefining her objects – each of which has its logical roots in the shape of its predecessor. The artist draws inspiration from childhood, nature, political events, and not least from the form itself. Her goal is to achieve a simplicity that encapsulates time, depth and continuity.

Edith Lundebrække

Op-art, with its various optical effects, is important to Edith Lundebrække. *Op art* is an abstract idiom that arose in the 1960s. The term "optical art" was first used in *Time magazine* in 1964, a year before the first *Op-art* exhibition was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. With its use of geometric elements and optical effects, *Op-art* seeks to create illusions of movement, without the artwork as such actually moving. Edith Lundebrække's background in crafts and textile design is evident in her artistic idiom. Her speciality is the use of repetition and pattern formation. Through the reiteration of simple geometric shapes, she explores how pattern arises according to a variety of systems.

In Edith Lundebrække's reliefs, constructed from wooden ribs mounted on painted wooden boards, the *op-art* illusion of movement is immediately apparent. The ribs and the background form different layers that interact with each other. The ribs create a three-dimensional effect in which the image changes depending on the viewer's vantage point. According to the artist, the visual effect can be explained in terms of a few clear rules. The width of the ribs and of the gaps between them (the background) is the same, whereas the design of the surface pattern and the colouration vary. By means of minor variations to this basic layout, the artist achieves major changes.

"In my work I seek to add to our perceptual and sensory experience. With the gallery space as my setting and the line as my starting point, I want to explore the dynamic aspect of a dialogue with the energy of the space," says Lundebrække.

Tina Jonsbu

The work of Tina Jonsbu is concerned with the documenting of slow processes in a system of self-imposed limitations accompanied by a bodily rhythm. Her drawings consist of crosses, dots, circles and dashes. In a 2009 exhibition at Kunstnerforbundet in Oslo she showed several series of drawings. One series consisted of 30 A4 sheets, each with a different three-dimensional rhythmical pattern. The works were accompanied by precise descriptions that suggest associations to *Fluxus art*,⁴⁾ which often included written instructions for democratic activities or actions in its presentations. For example:

"Starting with circles of 15cm diameter, I draw curves with angles inwards into the circle. Every third round, I subdivide the angles, thus doubling their number. Starting with circles of 5cm diameter, I draw according to the same system, but out from the circle. I stop when I am no longer able to split the angles without the lines merging." 5)

Jonsbu is fascinated by the deviations that occur when one adheres to a system requiring considerable repetition. Her works have a physical feel, since her drawings reflect the functioning of the body. They are suggestive of mechanical processes, but contain traces of chance and the human element.

"Jonsbu records, documents and collects; her works add up to an independent language with its own distinctive grammar." 6)

In an exhibition at *Galleri Kunst 1* in spring 2010, she showed a series of 300 drawings, 101 of which were contained in a small box. This is a series she has worked on continually since 2001, and the collection just keeps growing. Among the things she collects are old sheets of lined paper, some of which show traces of water damage. The incorporation of these random marks in her drawings gives rise to new forms.

For this exhibition she has contributed two drawings that were first shown at Kunstnerforbundet in 2009. The artist describes her work process as follows:

"Starting out from the paper's lower edge I draw lines with angles. The angles are subdivided and doubled in number every third line. When I can no longer split the angles, I reverse the process for the same number of lines."

She has worked with the same thematic material since graduating from Bergen National Academy of the Arts in 1997. In her MA project that year, she wrote: *"I want the present to be intense. I want to say something about existing in the now. Time is important."* The artist seeks to gain control of time. But an element of the uncontrollable intrudes when the process of drawing itself takes time. The drawing is challenged by the universe's own mathematical laws of nature. In other words, the metaphysical is an important consideration in Jonsbu's art.

Marianne Lund

Marianne Lund has a background as an architect and an artist. Her project *The Beauty of the Consequence – Lines and Corrections* forms the basis for her contribution to this exhibition. The project started out with drawings. The artist describes the project as *"geometry's encounter with the body"*. Questions such as *"how to draw the perfect circle?"* help to illuminate the underlying concept. In the drawings the artist uses a circular disk, which she moves around physically. The resulting impression is the achievement of the impossible, in other words, a perfect circle, in which new variations arise. The physical element is important for the artist. Technically speaking, she has moved from drawing to working in oils on aluminium plates.

The aspect of time is also crucial, and the artist is expanding her project to larger formats. We see a change in colour, shape and dimension. In a meticulous process, she paints lines, correcting mistakes or false starts, according to a "line follows line" principle. Dots (corrections) are marked as "mistakes", representing, in effect, the points at which the body reaches its limit and has to pause both physically and mentally. Or to put it another way, it is a matter of making a choice about whether to stop or continue. At the same time, "mistakes" means that "long" pigments maintain the line from beginning to end, whereas "short" pigments require the brush to be dipped in the paint during the process. When it comes to the process as such, it is in a sense the body that "obeys" the artist's predetermined choice. The artist decides everything in advance, both the format and the colour; what then happens during the execution is a result of the body's physical possibilities and limitations.

It is tempting to see similarities to both performance art 7) and minimalism in any description of her project. The result is something quite different from what one anticipated at the outset, having become the body's encounter with geometry or with the rules. In the project *REMEMBER ME* on display here, she uses her left hand as a way to research the body's possibilities and limitations. The project can also be viewed from the angle of the "hands on" tendency in art, whereby one reveals the inherent power and potential of techniques and materials by exploring them "by hand". Given this concern with space and the optical effects and possibilities of materials, in perceptual terms it is natural to compare Marianne Lund's works with *Op-art*. The paint pigments give rise to new and unusual optical effects; in the words of the artist: *"it's exciting to see how the various paint pigments change."*

Anne Aanerud

Anne Aanerud is a textile artist with a range of major public art commissions to her credit, both at home and abroad. She is known for her geometric and ornamental idiom using large formats.

The background to her contribution to this exhibition is a commission on which she is currently working to embellish

St. Olavs Hospital in Trondheim; prints of patterns/designs that will adorn the exterior glass panels and awnings. The building's façade is divided up by an aluminium grid. Any addition must engage in a dialogue with or stand in contrast to this feature. To emphasize the building's main volume as a form behind the aluminium grid, the artist intends to add an ornamentation consisting of a geometric black and white pattern, fundamentally similar to that on the glass panels and awnings.

Building with perforated façade elements arranged in a geometric pattern is a traditional technique in warmer countries, and interpretations of this tradition often play a part in modern architecture. In Trondheim, however, a highly ornamented façade will also carry references to the Nidaros Cathedral. Another obvious reference is traditional styles of knitting, such as Selbu patterns, or binding patterns in weaving. Aanerud's pattern will cover six floors of the four façades facing the street.

The exhibition presents a study of possible patterns – a digital print on the awning fabric on a scale of 1:1.

In her work, Anne Aanerud is preoccupied with the technical possibilities of materials, and with the space and the building as a single entity. Her style is minimalist, but with a futuristic touch.

Footnotes

1) Minimalist art and design are characterised by the reduction of formal and substantive elements to a fundamental minimum. Typical features include the use of geometric shapes, repetition, and industrially produced materials.

2) A traditional technique for decorating clay. A cow's horn from which the tip had been cut is filled with clay slip, allowing a steady stream to be released, which is used to "draw" decorations.

3) Artist statement.

4) *Fluxus* was an international art movement that first made an impact in 1962. Fluxus had no unifying profile; its basic idea was to bring together avant-garde artists from around Europe.

5) Kunst 3/2010.

6) Kunst 3/2010.

7) Used in the context of visual art, this term generally refers to a work that has both a spatial and a temporal dimension and involves an element of performance by the artist or some other person as part of the work and in accordance with the artist's idea.