PERISKOP

NR. 32 2024

FÆRØSK KUNSTHISTORIE I DAG

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Peer review: Artiklen af Vár Eydnudóttir har været gennem double blind peer review.
Oversættelse: Temanummerets essays og artikler er oversat til færøsk af Beinir Bergsson.
De er tilgængelige på hjemmesiden periskop-tidsskrift.dk
Korrektur: Tekstbureauet Cirkumfleks (dansk og engelsk)
Grafisk tilrettelæggelse: Forlagskonsulent Kasper Monty, www.monty.dk
Tryk: Specialtrykkeriet Arco

Omslag: Rannva Kunoy, *RAROC (1),* 2021, pigmenter, akryl på hør. © Rannva Kunoy.

Periskop nr. 32 udgives med støtte fra:

NY CARLSBERG FONDET
NEW CARLSBERG FOUNDATION

Landsdommer V. Gieses Legat

STATENS KUNSTFOND

ISSN 0908-6919

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INTRODUCTION
Faroese Art History Today

The Faroe Islands occupy a precarious place in Danish art history. Many Faroese artists have received their education at Danish institutions and established careers in Denmark. When World War II isolated the country from Denmark, Faroese art students established the Faroese Art Society (Listafelag Føroya) in Copenhagen in 1941, setting the stage for the establishment of permanent art institutions in postwar Tórshavn. Just as Faroese artists have come to continental Europe, so, too, have artists traveled to and created images of and from the Atlantic archipelago over the centuries. Despite this rich, entangled history of transnational exchange, Faroese art history must often combat outsider assumptions that frame the islands' geographical distance from Denmark as an indication of cultural marginality. With this special issue of *Periskop*, we wish to question the possibilities and limitations of the Faroe Islands as a site of critical art historical inquiry. We are, however, keenly aware that by dedicating a special issue of *Periskop* to Faroese art, we are complicit in a tradition of producing knowledge about Faroese art out of Copenhagen and out of Denmark. In what follows, we situate the special issue within – and against – existing scholarship on Faroese art history.

Faroese Art: A Brief Historiography

What language do scholars use to describe Faroese art? In writings on Faroese art, certain tropes are reiterated time and again: Faroese nature is inextricable from Faroese art, and the Faroes are particularly "far away". In the survey book *Century: One Hundred Years of Faroese Art*, the Danish art historian Mikael Wivel (2011, 375) invokes a stereotypical center-periphery narrative by presuming that the Faroe Islands are a periphery:

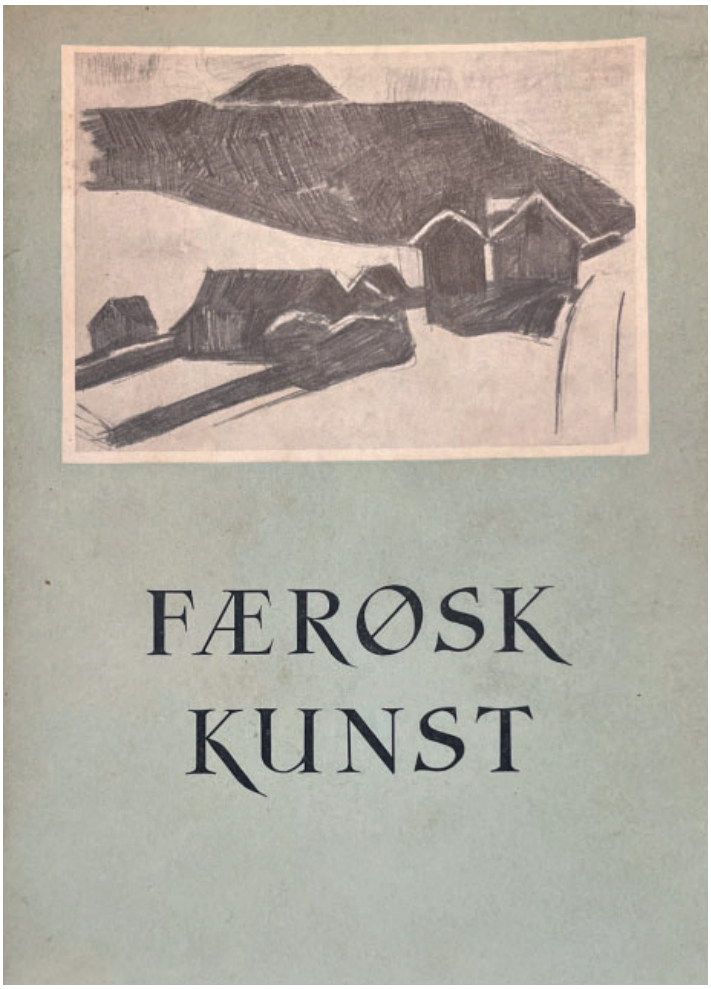
> Although the Faroe Islands lie out in the North Atlantic and far from the great metropolises of the world, throughout the twentieth century they have maintained their connection with the artistic life of the Continent. Currents from the south have therefore left their mark. But clearly local traditions and a landscape of a rugged, absolute character have influenced Faroese art far more than all that comes from the outside, and have helped give it a characteristic lift in the direction of the expressive and the existential.

Although Wivel acknowledges the influence of "the Continent", the one hundred years of Faroese art in Wivel's book is assessed only by means of its similarity to or divergence from a putative center. At the same time, the visual production of the Faroe Islands cannot seem to escape the impact of local geography, and the "periphery" only generates significance through markers of cultural difference, what outsiders gloss as "exotic".

The tropes are, however, not only reiterated by Danish art historians. Faroese writer and politician Karsten Hoydal (1976, n.p.) went so far as to speculate that "the Faroes have been so impoverished in the visual arts" due to the supposedly harsh climate and rugged nature of the country.[1] In other words, artists in the Faroes have not only struggled with nature as motif but also against nature as a force. His words come from the introduction to the 1976 exhibition of Faroese art in Copenhagen, arranged by the Faroese art association, Listafelag Føroya, and Dansk-Færøsk Kulturfond (the Danish-Faroese Cultural Foundation). Throughout Hoydal's introductory article, it becomes clear that the exhibition – and catalog – is considered a stepping stone to support the future of Faroese art *in* the Faroes (and with public funds). This scope was also present in the first survey exhibition of Faroese art in Copenhagen in 1955 **[1]**, also arranged by Listafelag Føroya. In lieu of a national school, the arts association chose to show works that depicted the Faroes (Heinesen 1955, 17). Scholars such as Danish art historian Nils Ohrt (2021, 8-9) have ascribed the idea that Faroese artists represent place to the fact that the first Faroese artists to receive an academic training in the arts began their production at a time of strong national sentiments, a moment to which the 1955 exhibition also belongs.

The influence of Listafelag Føroya on shaping the canon of Faroese art should not be underestimated, and when reading through these exhibition catalogs it becomes evident how their truths became precedence for writings on Faroese art today. The association was founded on March 23, 1941 by Faroese artists isolated in Nazi-occupied Denmark while the Faroe Islands were under British rule. That same year, the association organized its first exhibition of Faroese art in Janus

Kamban's studio on Nørrebrogade. The exhibiting artists were Gudmundur Hentze, Ingolf Jacobsen, Bodil Jensen, Sámal Joensen Mikines, Bergithe Johannessen, Janus Kamban, Elinborg Lützen, and Ruth Smith (Listafelag Føroya, n.d.). From the outset, the aim of the association was to establish a national collection to be permanently exhibited in Tórshavn – an aim finally realized in 1989 when their collection was merged with the Løgtingið art collection (Føroya Almenna Listasavn) to form Listasavn Føroya. Walking through the rooms of the museum today, it is evident how the canon of Faroese art was likewise manifested physically through the acquisition of works.



[1] *Færøsk Kunst* exhibition catalog, 1955.

Mobilizations of tropes on Faroese art can, in other words, vary drastically. However, no matter the intentions behind these clichés, they remain something that is written with and against in Faroese art history: "We struggle ourselves to get rid of the clichés, but it is not easy when others prefer to keep us in a romanticized, nature-defined perspective," as Faroese art critic and curator Kinna Poulsen (2011) pointedly wrote in a response to Wivel's *Century*.[2] And, whereas canonized Faroese artists such as Sámal Joensen Mikines, Ruth Smith, and Ingálvur av Reyni might have depicted the local (read as national) landscape and culture, the urge to see the Faroese landscape in the production of *all* Faroese artists is more problematic, to say the least.

However, as this short historiography also demonstrates, Danish dominance[3] in the writing and exhibiting of Faroese art history has not always been the case, and Faroese scholars obviously have also influenced the writing of Faroese art history. Bárður Jákupsson, the Faroese artist who served as the first director of Listasavn Føroya from its 1989 founding until 2003, penned the standard text

Myndlist í Føroyum in 2000 with editions in Faroese and English. And Kinna Poulsen herself has, in recent years, been an important force in writing Faroese art history from Tórshavn with publications such as *LISTAMÁL – Tekstir úr tíggjunum um list og mentan* (2017) and the websites Listinblog (active 2010-14, with Inger Smærup Sørensen) and Listaportal. No less important is the production of Faroese art history out of Listasavn Føroya, as the bibliography of this introduction also testifies to.

Conquering the Faroes

Inger Smærup Sørensen (2012) has pointed out how (Danish) tourists play a crucial part in nature's prevalence in Faroese art; it is simply a motif that sells. "And Danes love Faroese art, they almost can't get enough of it, and the more Faroese, the better. But what's the reason? Don't they have decent artists in Denmark?" Sørensen (2012) asks provocatively.[4] The same point is unfolded by Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen (2019, 217), who writes that: "[...] when foreigners come to the Faroes, they want an authentic experience: puffins, the Vestmanna cliffs, Mykines, fish, turf roofs, sheep, and so on. The same applies to art and it preserves the *færø-kunst*."[5] *Færø-kunst*, or "Faroe-art", is a term that is tightly linked to the exhibition of Faroese art in Denmark, and – although it is still used today – dates back to the promotion of a Faroese national school in the 1920s, where Faroese artists began their education in Denmark. Olsen (2019, 211) writes:

> This art includes figurative paintings of landscapes and nature, it can also be pictures of grind killings and Faroese dances. In recent times, it has also come to include semi-figurative landscape paintings. The landscapes are mostly depicting pure nature – none are about people, cars and ships.[6]

In other words, one reason for the frustrating endurance of this narrative of Faroese art as peripheral and bound to nature is that Faroese art is often introduced in survey shows or publications that risk reducing it to something consistent across time, constantly rediscovered and always approached at an introductory level.[7] Here, nature remains the primary mode of introduction and analysis. Despite the strong tendency to often consider Faroese art through the lens of the introductory survey, Faroese author and artist William Heinesen (1900-91), pointed out already in 1955 (17) the very impossibility of considering Faroese art as a collective whole: "One cannot speak of a national or local school of art, every bird sings its own song [...]."[8] Although one might argue that this special issue is, in fact, a kind of survey in itself, we have tried to counter the introductory level

[2] Frederik Theodor Kloss: *Fuglefangsten under Store Dimon på Færøerne* (Bird catching at Stóra Dímun in the Faroe Islands), 1854. Jægerspris Slot, Kong Frederik den Syvendes Stiftelse.

engagements with Faroese art by inviting in-depth analysis of works, practices, and exhibitions. This aim is in alliance with recent artist monographs that are slowly building a different kind of narrative (see e.g. Ohrt 2019; Marnersdóttir 2010; Poulsen 2009; Warming 2007).

However, the eagerness to capture and collect Faroese nature is not new. Artists have long traveled to the Faroe Islands, and the presence of foreign or outsider artists has had a decisive impact on how Faroese first accessed the materials and methods of making visual arts. Danish art historian Henrik Bramsen

[3] Sámal Joensen-Mikines: *Grindedrab (Grindadráp)*, 1942. Watercolor, pen, brown ink, 247 x 318 mm. SMK – The National Gallery of Denmark.

(1955, 31-32) even talks about a *painterly conquest* ("malerisk erobring") of the Faroes by Danish artists, surging with Niels Bjerre's depictions of Faroese nature in the 1920s. The Faroe Islands as an art historical motif does, however, date earlier in the historical record. For example, the German-born artist Frederik Theodor Kloss followed Crown Prince Frederik (VII)'s 1844 travel to the Faroe Islands and produced five paintings depicting what would become stereotypical motifs of the country, such as a pilot whale killing and seabird catching **[2].** Faroese scholar and poet Kim Simonsen (2012) argues that the material for a surging Faroese nationalism in the 19th century drew upon travel writings from and about the Faroes. Since Simonsen's study focuses on literature, there has yet to be a similar in-depth study on the influences on the formation of a national visual art. One could, for example, point to the meeting between the American explorer, artist, and journalist Elizabeth Taylor, who lived with Danish artist Flora Heilmann during her stay in the Faroe Islands in 1900-05, and who is said to have inspired the Faroese artist Niels Kruse to become a landscape painter (Warming 2008, 13). As Bart Pushaw argues in his contribution to this special issue, even the earliest extant Faroese art in the nineteenth century was intimately intertwined with the wider world.

Despite this interest in the Faroe Islands (and Faroese art) from Danish art historians and artists as described in this introduction, it can be difficult to find in-depth engagement with art from the Faroe Islands or by Faroese artists in Denmark itself. At the National Gallery of Denmark (SMK), only 22 works by seven Faroese artists[9] are to be found, although the museum's Danish name, Statens Museum for Kunst (The State's Museum of Art) could suggest a responsibility for representing art from all of the Danish Realm (*Rigsfællesskabet*). Besides a self-portrait and a nude by Ruth Smith and abstractions by Ingálvur av Reyni, the remaining works at SMK all depict Faroese nature and motifs – such as villages, landscapes, and the seasonal killing of pilot whales (grind) **[3]** – thus neglecting a more nuanced representation of motifs and media. However, things might be changing at the SMK. In a recently drafted acquisition strategy, art from the Realm is specifically mentioned as something new: "The representation of the art of the Commonwealth – both historically and in the present – also appears as an ongoing part of the narrative of the nation state's history and cultural identity, which is clearly a neglected area that requires special attention."[10] Since then, the museum has acquired works by Hans Jákup Glerfoss, Ruth Smith, Zacharias Heinesen, and Ingálvur av Reyni, and in the year of publishing this special issue, works by Smith and Mikines were hung on the walls in the permanent collection.

Obviously, then, Faroese artists *do* exhibit in Denmark – and have done so historically. Bergithe Johannessen was the first Faroese artist to be educated at the art academy in Copenhagen with her enrollment in 1925. More recent examples of contemporary Faroese artists exhibiting in Denmark are Randi Samsonsen's textile project *Things Matter* at Trapholt (2023) and Hansina Iversen's exhibition *SÚGA* (2024) at the project space Bonne Esperance, run by Jóhan Martin Christiansen. Faroese artists have also had an impact on public spaces in Denmark, including Tróndur Patursson's *Cosmic Room* (1997), Hans Pauli Olsen's Christian IV monument (2019) and Hansina Iversen, Gudrun Hasle, and Jessie Klee-

[4] Jessie Kleemann, Gudrun Hasle, and Hansina Iversen: *Imaq, Havið, Havet,* 2024. Colored concrete, Faroese basalt stone, and Greenlandic marble. Nordatlantens Brygge, Copenhagen. © Jessie Kleemann, Gudrun Hasle, and Hansina Iversen. Photo: Torben Eskerod/ Nordatlantens Brygge.

mann's joint public work *Imaq, Havið, Havet (2024)*, commissioned for HM Queen Margrethe's 50th anniversary as regent **[4]**. The importance of cultural houses such as Nordatlantens Brygge in Copenhagen and Nordatlantisk Hus in Odense should also not be underestimated. The exhibition *Conversations on Fog* (Nordatlantens Brygge, 2020-21) was a crucial example of a survey show that tried to break away from restricted approaches to a definition of "Faroese".[11]

We mention these works and exhibitions here not to give an exhaustive list, but to point out the importance of (engaging with) artists from the Faroes in Denmark. Still, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the response from Danish academics and curators to our call to contribute to this special issue was extremely limited. This is a reminder of the marginal space that Faroese art holds within Danish academia, a critical lacuna with serious consequences given the fact that there are no advanced programs to study art history in the Faroe Islands. From our perspective, it seems that Faroese art history falls through the cracks, not only for institutional reasons in Denmark, but even in the Faroe Islands.

Towards Transnational Art Histories

Artist Carola Grahn (2017) has noted that there is a "delicate difference between 'thinking at the edge of the world' and 'thinking about the edge of the world'". Her point of reference is the international art world's sudden interest in Sámi art and aesthetics, and although the same kind of attention is difficult to discern for Faroese art, the distinction between "at" and "about" still finds relevance. With this special issue of *Periskop,* we have tried to avoid a reductive approach to Faroese art by being in dialogue and collaborating with Faroese professionals, artists, and curators.

Furthermore, this special issue of Periskop is in dialogue with previous endeavors to situate Faroese art and art history within a transnational rather than national context. Such projects include *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition in Five Acts* (2006), which included exhibitions, workshops, and cultural event in Reykjavík (Iceland), Nuuk (Kalaallit Nunaat), Rovaniemi (Finnish Sápmi), Copenhagen, Helsinki (Finland), Oslo (Norway), and Stockholm (Sweden) – and Tórshavn. The Tórshavn "act" included an exhibition and film program at Listasavn Føroya and a spoken word/performance/music event at Norðurlandahúsið (the Nordic House). *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism* included the Faroes in the transnational entanglements of the (former) Danish empire that are often overlooked (see also Körber and Volquardsen 2014; Thisted and Gremaud 2020). As anthropologist Firouz Gaini (2006, 6) wrote about the events in Tórshavn: "Usually, we are the periphery that is

[5] Laila Mote: poster for the seminar *Confronting Coloniality,* 2023. © Laila Mote.

invisible in the larger urbanised societies. This time the so-called periphery has been the context, the central arena, of an ambitious project of high priority."

The urge to refuse the status of periphery and its demeaning cultural baggage and instead frame the Faroe Islands as one of many centers of cultural production was also the starting point for the seminar *Confronting Coloniality: Trans-Cultural Connections in the Faroe Islands and Beyond* **[5]** organized by editors of and contributors to this special issue.[12] The seminar took place at Norðurlandahúsið in March 2023 and invited speakers and participants to join a dialogue regarding the possibilities and limitations of the Faroe Islands as a starting point for questions around colonialism, coloniality, and the arts. In many ways, the seminar has shaped this special issue of *Periskop*.

Projects such as *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism* and *Confronting Coloniality* do, however, raise the delicate question of how to situate the Faroes within the

(post)colonial. As Vár Eydnudóttir points out in her contribution to this issue, the country is often forgotten or overseen in discussions of Nordic colonialism because it neither has had the unambiguous status of colony or colonizer. As becomes evident from her article on the Colonial Exhibition in Copenhagen in 1905, the Faroes are not "outside" colonialism and coloniality. Although this special issue is not about colonialism or coloniality, the regard of imperial matters prompts us to consider transnational connections in the past, present and future. It is not a solution to the problem of an earlier nationalized discourse on Faroese art to consider Faroese art history (only) within a postcolonial framework. In fact, we might rephrase Carola Grahn's (2017, 42) words and say: Not only should Faroese artists speak about Faroese matters, they ought to be addressing everything! Any future conception of a Faroese art history must be attentive to and representative of its full creative complexity. In other words, we must evaluate the artworks on their own terms.

Contributions

As this introduction alludes to, colonial history is an important lens through which to consider Faroese art and visual culture. Drawing on photographs and other archival material related to the 1905 colonial exhibition in Tivoli, Copenhagen, ***Vár Eydnudóttir***'s article "Holding Hands at the Heart of Empire" analyzes complex proximities between exhibition "participants" from different parts of the Danish empire as indications of the Faroe Islands' entanglement in coloniality. ***Nivi Christensen*** writes about the installation of Jóhan Martin Christiansen's *DISH* (2017) at Nuuk Art Museum, which highlights the complex legacy of Faroese fishermen on Inuit lands at Kangerluarsoruseq, also named Færingehavn. In "Blue Puffins: *The Avian Aesthetics of Díðríkur á Skarvanesi",* ***Bart Pushaw*** reads the motifs and materials in Díðríkur's paintings through the context of the nineteenth-century trade in Faroese birds as scientific commodities and the Danish trade monopoly on the Faroe Islands.

This special issue presents critical readings of already canonized artists in Faroese art history. ***Maxine Savage***'s essay "Landscapes Envisaged: Ruth Smith's (Self)Portraiture" intervenes in the existing literature on Smith, proposing that her unique merging of portrait and landscape genres be read not as evidence of unfinishedness, but instead of artistic intentionality. ***Isabelle Gapp***'s essay "Aquatic Art Histories of the North Atlantic: Frida Zachariassen and the Faroe Islands Fisheries" locates Zachariassen's paintings from the 1950s of Faroese fisherwomen within transnational histories of industrialization, unionization, and gendered labor that have shaped "women-sea-fish

relationships". ***Jóhan Martin Christiansen*** presents a selection of sculptures by Janus Kamban, delicately foregrounding previously overlooked aspects of Kamban's life and practice and discovering an intergenerational queer allyship across Faroese art history. In her essay, "Krop og hjem: Forhandling af slægtskab i Astrid Andreasens *Babyboom*", ***Lotte Nishanthi Winther*** reads the artist's work *Babyboom* (1997) in the light of critical perspectives on transnational adoption. Winther asks how the fact that the Faroe Islands since the 1970s has had one of the highest numbers of transnational adoptees per capita affects our understanding of this work.

In his essay "Tita Vinther: Weaving the Monochrome", ***David W. Norman*** engages a multitude of perspectives on Vinther's wool and horsehair weavings, ranging from these works' destabilization of the art-craft binary to their connection to feminist reworkings of minimalist seriality and the racialized underpinnings of the monochrome. ***Anna Maria Dam Ziska***'s essay "Elinborg Lützen: Subsea dreamscapes" reevaluates Lützen's linocuts, arguing that these surrealistic prints forged a third path in Faroese art that is neither recognizable landscape nor full abstraction. Abstraction is also central to the work of ***Hansina Iversen*** and ***Julie Sass***. Here, they present a curated selection of each other's works, and as the introduction by ***Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen*** notes, Iversen and Sass share a commitment to building artistic and curatorial connections, both between and beyond their practices.

In the essay "Uden for rammerne", ***Kinna Poulsen*** analyzes Randi Samsonsen's sculpture series *When Will You Come To See You Like I Do?* The sculptures are formed as knitted and woolen figures that have been installed in public places such as the Miklagarður supermarket in Tórshavn, and in the essay, Poulsen contextualizes them within broader experimental developments in Faroese contemporary art. ***Laila Mote*** also works with creatures in her work, albeit with different means and aims. In her essay, she presents her approach to self-representation as a racially minoritized artist in the Faroe Islands through the "creatures" that populate her work, surrealism as a metaphor for alienation, and the strategic use of Faroese landscape imagery.

This special issue also includes three publication reviews that extend beyond the Faroese art context, but explore topics introduced in the main body of this publication. ***Helene Birkeli*** writes about Isabelle Gapp's *A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavia and North America, 1890-1930* (2024); ***Pauline Koffi Vandet*** reviews the catalog *Rise of the Sunken Sun* (2024) made for Inuuteq Storch's exhibition at the Venice Biennial 2024; and ***Adam Bencard*** reviews the anthology *Altid forandret* on the works of Emil Westman Hertz.

Except for the reviews, all of the contributions to this special issue have been translated from the original Danish and English into Faroese. For this prodigious work, we cannot thank Faroese poet ***Beinir Bergsson*** enough. The translations will be available upon publication on the website periskop-tidsskrift.dk. It is our hope that the availability of the texts in various languages will help strengthen the conversation on Faroese art history today and in the future.

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NOTES

1 Original quote in Danish: "Færøerne har været så fattige på bildende kunst."

2 Original quote in Danish: "Vi kæmper selv med at komme af med klichéerne, men det er ikke let, når andre foretrækker at beholde os i en romantiseret, naturdefineret optik."

3 For nearly fifteen years, Listasavn Føroya has been under the directorship of two Danes, Nils Ohrt (2011-19) and subsequently Karina Lykke Grand (2019-24), and the two most recent and largest volumes on Faroese art are also penned by Danes (Ohrt 2021; Wivel 2011).

4 Original quote in Faroese: "Og danskarar elska føroyska list, teir kunnu næstan ikki fáa nóg mikið, og jú meira føroysk, jú betri. Men hví í grundini? Hava tey ikki ordilig listafólk í Danmark?"

5 Original quote in Faroese: "[...] tá útlendingar koma til Føroyar, vilja tey hava eina autentiska uppliving: lundar, Vestmannabjørgini, Mikines, fiskar, flagtak, seyðir, o.s.fr. Hetta er tað sama, ið ger seg galdandi í listini og er við til at uppihalda *færø-kunst*."

6 Original quote in Faroese: "Listin fevnir serliga um figurativar málningar av landslagi og náttúru, eisini kann tað vera løtumyndir av grindadrápi og føroyskum dansi. Í nýggjari tíð fevnir færø- kunst eisini um hálv-figurativar landslagsmálningar. Landsløgini eru oftast av reinari náttúru – eingin tekin eru um menniskju, bilar og skip."

7 For examples of such exhibitions in the years 2003-17, see Olsen (2019, 213).

8 Original quote in Danish: "Om nogen national eller lokal skole er der ikke tale, hver fugl synger med sit næb [...]"

9 Elinborg Lützen; Ingálvur av Reyni; Ruth Smith; Sámal Joensen-Mikines; Torbjørn Olsen; Zacharias Heinesen; Hans Jákup Glerfoss.

10 Original quote in Danish: "Også repræsentationen af rigsfællesskabets kunst – både historisk og i nutiden – fremstår som en stadig pågående del af fortællingen om nationalstatens historie og kulturelle identitet, der vel at mærke er et forsømt område, som kræver særlig opmærksomhed." "SMK acquisition strategy 2018–21", draft (internal document).

11 This approach to contemporary Faroese art was mirrored in the later exhibition *BROT: Faroese Contemporary* (2022-23) at the Listasavn Føroya that both counterbalanced the traditional survey shows and the museum's own more traditional hanging of the permanent collection in themes such as "Wool and knitting", "Landscape", and "Ocean".

12 The seminar was organized by Vár Eydnudóttir, Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen, and Bart Pushaw. Speakers included Nivi Christensen, Kalpana Vijayavarathan, Bart Pushaw, Malan Marnersdóttir, Nina Cramer, Kim Simonsen, Aká Hansen, Jóhan Martin Christiansen, Kinna Poulsen, Laila Mote, Vár Eydnudóttir, Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen, and Isabelle Gapp.

VÁR EYDNUDÓTTIR

Holding Hands at the Heart of Empire

In 1905, people from the different corners of the Danish empire held hands at a colonial exhibition in Tivoli, Copenhagen. The colonial exhibition (*Dansk Koloniudstilling (Grønland og Dansk Vestindien) samt udstilling fra Island og Færøerne*) displayed people and objects from Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat), the Virgin Islands (former Danish West Indies), Iceland and the Faroe Islands to tighten the connections between Denmark, its colonies and northern dependencies (Bruun 1905). Today, the relations between the colonies and dependencies of Denmark seem largely disconnected and consciousness of colonial entanglements beyond the Danish mainland metropole is limited. As this article will show and counter, intra-imperial connections involving the Faroe Islands are often overlooked in studies of the Danish empire.

The article uncovers colonial relations of the past by analysing photographs from a scrapbook presumably created by the main organiser of the colonial exhibition, Emma Gad. The photographs show participants interacting at the exhibition, and the article asks: What kind of conversations about this forgotten past are made possible by these photographs? How can these photographs be used to reflect upon the ways ideas of race, whiteness, civilization, nationality, and empire have operated in the colonial encounters facilitated at the Tivoli exhibition? Throughout the article, the photographs point to histories of shared experiences between the colonies and dependencies that exhibition participants were supposed to represent in an orchestrated encounter at the heart of the Danish empire.

The historical case of the colonial exhibition is barely known in the Faroe Islands today, despite the large number of visitors it attracted and the comprehensive media coverage at the time, which also influenced the Faroese public debate. In contemporary research on Nordic colonialism, the colonial exhibition has received increased attention; however, the limited discussion of Faroese

participation makes it relevant to address the ways in which the Faroe Islands were represented in the exhibition together with Denmark's other colonies and dependencies.

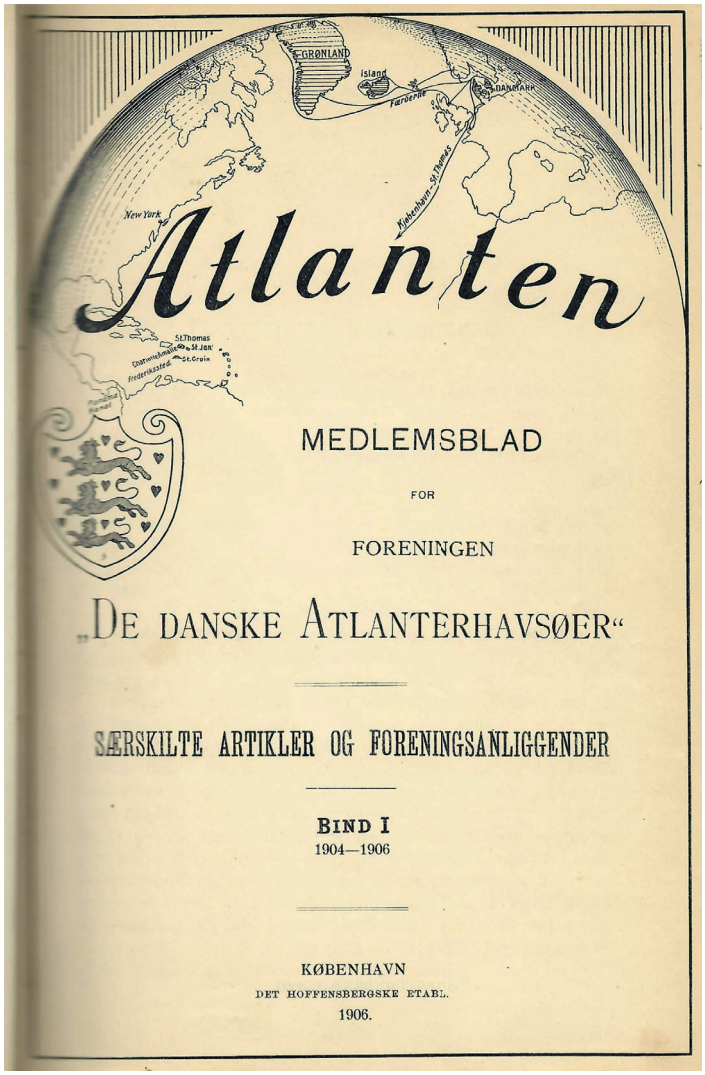
Colonial Disconnectedness

The Faroe Islands are routinely relegated to the margins of discussions on colonialism such that even in contemporary research on Nordic colonialism, the country most often simply does not seem to exist. This erasure of the Faroe Islands is generally unarticulated—as if simply forgotten or ignored—but is sometimes explained by the ethnicity of the majority Faroese population. In *Danmark – en kolonimagt* (Brimnes et. al. 2017, 6)—a five-volume publication on Danish colonial history—the Faroe Islands and Iceland are deemed irrelevant to the scope of the encyclopaedic project due to the populations' Nordic (white) heritage and the chronology of the foreign settlement:

> The Faroe Islands and Iceland are not considered as colonies even though the trade and other relations with these North Atlantic possessions during long periods have been organised like in the colonies. However, we find it more significant that the colonisation took place before modern European colonialism, and that the populations cannot in the same way be considered as ethnically and culturally different from the inhabitants of Denmark-Norway.

Other accounts of Nordic colonialism include Iceland without the Faroe Islands (Naum and Nordin 2013; Rud and Ivarsson 2021). The omission of the Faroe Islands in studies of Nordic colonialism as opposed to Iceland cannot be excused with "ethnicity" but demonstrates a general lack of awareness and research on the Faroese role in the Danish colonial network.

Some of the confusion around situating the Faroe Islands in colonial history can be attributed to the fact that the Faroe Islands never had the official status of a colony. Thus, there are conflicting conceptions of whether Faroese-Danish relations can be deemed colonial or not. Within Faroese academic debates, there are various perspectives on the Faroese-Danish relationship, ranging from those who view the Faroese national movement (considered to have started at the Christmas gathering (*jólafundurin*) in 1888) as unambiguously "decolonial" (Skarðhamar 2014), to those who characterise decolonial analyses as promoters of "imagined colonialism" that position the Faroe Islands as (false) victims of colonial domination (Simonsen 2012, 255).



[1] The front cover used by *Atlanten* between the years 1904-19.

I argue that the disregard of the Faroe Islands within the Nordic colonial context contributes to what I term *colonial disconnectedness*. Colonial disconnectedness makes it difficult to account for the Faroe Islands' colonial entanglements—not only their relation to Denmark and the Danish political, cultural, and linguistic influence in the country, but also (and more importantly) how to consider the Faroe Islands within the larger Danish colonial network. I do not mean to equate the coloniality of the Faroe Islands with the brutality of racism, enslavement, and resource extraction that Denmark inflicted on other parts of its empire, but we do need to acknowledge the Faroe Islands' entanglement in this colonial network. This entanglement includes: the transit trade post established in the Faroe Islands from 1768-1793 linking the harbour of Tórshavn (then named Frederiksvaag) to other colonial harbours like Frederiksted (St. Croix) through colonial commodities;[1] the Royal Danish Monopoly store (1708-1856), which controlled the trade and supply to and from the Faroe Islands within which locals could exchange knitted jumpers and socks (subsequently stored at the Faroese Warehouse (*Færøsk Pakhus*) in Copenhagen) for imported goods; and the so-called Faroese Harbour (*Føroyingahavnin/Færingehavn*) in Kangerluarsoruseq, Greenland that the Danish Administration of Greenlandic Affairs (*Grønlandsstyrelsen*) permitted the Faroese to establish in 1927 and which laid the foundation for an expanding Faroese fishing industry.[2] The fact that these historical connections and their material and human legacies are routinely disregarded in contemporary research on Nordic colonialism hinders the possibilities for historical contextualisation of how coloniality operates in the local Faroese present while also leaving out nuances of the colonial relations within the Danish empire.

Atlantic Connections

This article does not aim to settle the debate about whether the Faroe Islands can be considered a colony or not. Rather, my aim is to draw attention to some of the ways the country has been entangled in the Danish colonial project and the imaginary of the Danish empire. An example of this is seen in *Atlanten*—a member's magazine that was published monthly in the years 1904-19 by the Danish association The Danish Atlantic Islands (*De danske Atlanterhavsøer*). The magazine's front cover **[1]** shows a globe highlighting St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix, Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, as well as maritime routes between these areas and the colonial metropole, Denmark. Additionally, New York and the Panama Canal are indicated to emphasise the geopolitical value of Danish possessions across the Atlantic Ocean. The large title *Atlanten* at the centre of the globe, above the Danish state coat of arms, proudly signals the country's valuable ownership over the Atlantic.

The Danish Atlantic Islands was established in 1902 in response to Denmark's plans to sell the Virgin Islands to the United States. The association consisted of a group of prominent people dedicated to promoting the maintenance of the empire. Among the association's supporters was Princess Marie of Orleans, the wife of Prince Valdemar of Denmark. As described in the association's articles, their aim was to improve the economic viability of the distant parts of the empire and to strengthen the solidarity between its citizens by producing and distributing knowledge, providing supervision, and influencing public and political opinion regarding the Danish relation to the Atlantic islands (*Atlanten* 1904, 28-29).

At the colonial exhibition in Tivoli in 1905, the association sold postcards with prospects "from all the colonies and from the exhibition itself" (Bruun 1905, 30)[3] and contributed presentations on the Atlantic islands, one of which featured bird-catching in the Faroe Islands (*Social-Demokraten* 1905b). The association was also directly linked to the exhibition committee, as one of their members, Moses Melchior, was president of the exhibition. Contextualising the colonial exhibition in Tivoli in relation to the involved organisers and associations provides an impression of a larger network of interests and actors invested in highlighting the value of the empire during this period.[4] Another central figure is the famous Danish writer and socialite, Emma Gad, who was the main organiser of the colonial exhibition and later also became a member of The Danish Atlantic Islands. Gad played a pioneering role in the Danish Women's Society (*Dansk Kvindesamfund*), where she organised gatherings and established associations promoting women's work. The colonial exhibition was organised on

behalf of the Danish Crafts Association (*Dansk Kunstflidsforening*), which Gad took part in founding in 1900 and chaired for several years. The proceeds of the colonial exhibition would go towards financing summer courses at the crafts association for women from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Southern Jutland.[5]

Like the illustration on the front cover of *Atlanten*, the colonial exhibition exemplifies the Faroese position within the Danish colonial network and the relation to Denmark's other colonies and dependencies at the beginning of the twentieth century. The scrapbook photographs, to which I will now turn, bear witness to the ways in which these geopolitical and economic entanglements also entailed contact between people from across the Atlantic.[6]

Emma Gad's Scrapbook

Emma Gad's scrapbook is in the archives of the National Museum of Denmark. Since most of the scrapbook has not yet been digitised, public awareness of its content is limited. The scrapbook is thus an understudied historical source that gives access to otherwise unnoticed aspects of the exhibition. I have found the photographs in the scrapbook particularly relevant in the exploration of Faroese colonial entanglements.

Importantly, the scrapbook should not be understood as objective documentation of the colonial exhibition. Rather, it is a handmade collection of photographs, newspaper articles, caricatures, letter correspondences and financial documents related to the colonial exhibition across 135 pages. The scrapbook is stamped "Danish Crafts Association" and has been referred to as "the scrapbook of the exhibition organisers" by historian Per Nielsen (2016, 175) and as "the scrapbook of Emma Gad" by ethnologist Bjarne Stoklund (2008, 154). Gad's likely authorship of the scrapbook demands an awareness of how the selection, organisation, and handwritten text between the documents shape the narrative of the colonial exhibition from the perspectives of its organisers.

Engaging with the scrapbook as an archival object, I am inspired by cultural theorist Daniela Agostinho (2019) who in her account of the digitisation of historical records from the former Danish West Indies in the Danish National Archives addresses the limitations and possibilities of archival encounters. Referencing postcolonial media theorist Roopika Risam, Agostinho (2019, 145) reflects on the way the archive can neutralise violent colonial encounters in ways that reproduce ideas of colonial innocence or benevolence while presenting an opportunity to confront colonial dynamics and their legacies in the present:

> While colonial archives are always beset by colonial politics, knowledge gaps and traces of violence, they can also represent an opportunity to confront colonial dynamics, to challenge narratives of colonial innocence, and to complement the absences and silences of the archive with materials and narratives that reflect the experiences of documented communities.

Furthermore, Agostinho proposes that this familiar problem in archival and postcolonial studies should be seen in light of Denmark's reiteration of colonial innocence during the centennial of the sale of the former Danish West Indies to the United States in 1917. In this context, archives hold the possibility not only to generate new knowledge, but also to confront what scholar of comparative colonialism Lisa Lowe (2015, 39) describes as the "politics of our lack of knowledge".

Furthermore, my analyses of the scrapbook's photographs draw inspiration from visual culture theorist Tina Campt and her notion of the haptic. Campt (2012, 108) discusses "the physical and affective haptics of [...] embrace" across racialised positions in multiracialised family photographs in early twentieth-century Germany. She analyses haptic details as insights into social relations, as "modes of sociability and subjectivity" and "tactual condensation of sentiment" (Campt 2012, 114). Similarly, my analyses focus on haptic details like hand holding as ambivalent evidence of connection across colonial and racialised difference. In addition to hand holding, eye contact, costumes, and poses all shape my photographic interpretations.

The Colonial Exhibition

The colonial exhibition took place in Tivoli, Copenhagen from May 31 to September 24, 1905. In addition to being motivated by the topical debates on the value of the Danish possessions in the Atlantic, the exhibition also reflects the prevalence of human exhibitions at a time when the display of so-called "exotic people" was popular entertainment in Europe. As postcolonial scholar Rikke Andreassen (2003) points out, the 1905 colonial exhibition in Tivoli was one of around 50 human exhibitions hosted in Denmark in the years 1878-1909, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. The exhibitions were a combination of the scientific paradigm of evolution and the mass entertainment industry narrating and controlling the hierarchical world order of the time. The exhibitions produced notions of authenticity to visualise the purportedly distinctive characteristics of the exhibited people and cultures and the extent to which they were influenced by (western) civilization. Photographs of the colonial exhibition brought the mass entertainment of stereotypical colonial visuality to a broader

[2] "Living room with Faroese girls." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

[3] "Greenlandic Panorama with Miss Detlevsen." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

audience. These photographs emphasise the ethnographic gaze and the visual establishment of the coloniser-colonised dichotomy determining who is being looked at and who is looking.

Although the Danish colonies were exhibited at different occasions, the exhibition in Tivoli is the only colonial "survey" exhibition that took place in Denmark. Whereas other human exhibitions displayed separate groups of people like Singhalese in Copenhagen Zoo 1890, Amazonians in the Circus Building (*Cirkusbygningen*) in 1897, and Chinese in Tivoli 1902 (Andreassen 2003), the colonial exhibition brought together a variety of people and objects based on "the aim to tighten the connections between Denmark and its colonies and northern dependencies" as the catalogue stated (Bruun 1905, 2).[7] The exhibition was structured in sections that represented the different cultures with furniture, hunting tools, taxidermy, crafts, and colonial commodities, accompanied by people representing what throughout the exhibition was referred to as "our" possessions in the Atlantic: Greenland, the West Indies, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The exhibition also included an Icelandic log house, a Faroese kitchen and living room, a West Indian restaurant, and a pergola with stalls selling lottery tickets and specialities from the colonies and dependencies,[8] as well as a Danish farmer's cottage placed at the entrance of the exhibition to "symbolise the connection between the motherland and the Danish Atlantic islands" (Bruun 1905, 3-4).[9] At the centre of the entrance hall was a white bust of Crown Princess Louise of Denmark, the protector of the exhibition, around which the exhibition design was structured.

Udsigt over St. Thomas, et af Carl Lunds Mesterværker paa Koloniudstillingen.
I Forgrunden den paa Udstillingen ansatte Vestindianerinde.

Islænderinder udenfor det islandske Hus.

[4] "View over St. Thomas, one of the masterpieces of Carl Lund at the Colonial exhibition. In the foreground the employed West Indian and the exhibition." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

[5] "Icelandic women outside the Icelandic house." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

The colonial exhibition visualised the cultural and ethnic diversity of the Danish empire, while also rigidly delineating the different colonies and dependencies. Victor Cornelins, a seven-year-old boy from St. Croix sent to Denmark with four-year-old Alberta Viola Roberts to be exhibited in Tivoli, writes in his autobiography about his experience as an exhibition participant, or object, representing the former Danish West Indies. Cornelins (1976, 26-27) describes how the exhibition participants visited each other in the different sections in mornings, when there were few visitors:

> [To walk around at the exhibition] was possible in the forenoon when there were not as many visitors. Then the participants at the different sections often went to visit each other. Alberta and I also went out to see what it looked like at the other places, both together and alone. I was particularly fond of the Greenlandic section. [...] However, the exhibition staff could not be responsible for giving naïve visitors the wrong impression about what kind of people lived in Greenland (when I was there); therefore, they had to implement something that could keep me in the West Indian section on those fully visited afternoons and nights. [...] They acquired a cage!!! Here Alberta and I were placed.[10]

Cornelins' first-person account highlights the exhibition organisers' insistence on "authentic" representations of colonial territories, emphasising a racialised division between who belonged where within the exhibition's sections.

[6] "From Iceland, the West Indies, and the Faroe Islands." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

Cornelins' autobiography demonstrates the exhibition's dehumanising effect on the two small children who were brought to Tivoli specifically to attract a high number of visitors (Andreassen and Henningsen 2011), which according to Cornelins himself only increased when they were caged. The emphasis on "authentic" representations of the different colonies and dependencies is also evident in a selection of photographs that reappear throughout the scrapbook where the exhibition participants are photographed at their respective sections—many of them in front of the large landscape panoramas painted for the exhibition by Carl Lund **[2-5]**.[11]

Holding Hands

In addition to the nationally isolated representations of the participants, the scrapbook includes photographs that visualise intimate connections between the exhibited participants across the distant geographies of the Danish empire **[6]**.[12] These photographs depict people in national costumes standing side by side, holding each other's hands at different locations of the exhibition space in Tivoli. The costumes were supposed to emphasise their cultural belonging and are in the archival material referred to as both national, regional, and folk costumes. The costumes have most likely had different cultural meanings in the different places: whereas the costumes worn by the Faroese, Greenlandic and Icelandic participants are very similar to what are characterised as national costumes today, the white dress and the madras check headscarf worn by the Caribbean woman is not understood as a national costume, but as Sunday best worn on special occasions in the US Virgin Islands (Nielsen 2016).

The photographs can be understood as spontaneous snapshots of the interacting participants, as suggested by anthropologist Kristín Loftsdóttir (2019), who in her analysis of the photograph of three women described as representing "Iceland, the West Indies and the Faroe Islands" understands the seeming friendship between participants as a possible example of their agency and resistance against the categorisation imposed on them by the organisers. "Perhaps, just as

Victor bravely resisted the categorisation as racially subjugated other, only to be put more firmly in his place", she writes, "these women were able to transcend this position for a few stolen moments" (Loftsdóttir 2019, 43). Considering Cornelins' first-person account of how the exhibition participants visited each other, it is likely that some of the images simply document the natural interaction that occurred between them at the exhibition and their active refusal of the curated division.

Another photograph of "Miss Detlevsen and William" depicted among foliage and conch shells in front of the West Indian harbour panorama could be a documentation of a spontaneous moment, as their expressions seem natural and relaxed **[7]**. The spontaneity is emphasised by the voyeuristic position of the photographer behind a plant. Contrastingly, the photograph of the five women described as "Faroese and Greenlandic young girls" positioned in a coordinated line facing the camera at the West Indian restaurant space is unquestionably staged **[8]**. This photograph is printed in a Danish newspaper collected in the book, and the grainy quality of the photograph distances the image and makes it difficult to discern the haptic details of the contact between the women that appear to be holding hands.

It is relevant to consider the photographs in relation to the original aim of the colonial exhibition and the desires of visitors. As mentioned earlier, the exhibi-

[7] "West Indian Panorama with miss Detlevsen and William." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

[8] "Faroese and Greenlandic young girls." National Museum of Denmark.

tion was partly driven by the need to attract a large number of visitors in order to collect money for the Danish Crafts Association. The exhibition has therefore inevitably been influenced by attempts to meet the visitors' expectations, which according to Andreassen (2013, 28) were largely characterised by a specific demand for authenticity conforming to "pre-existing stereotypes of different races and people". The desire for a specific visuality is also demonstrated in Cornelins' (1976, 25) recollection of how visitors manoeuvred him and Alberta in order to capture certain images: "To some, this interest was so strong that they touched us, turned us around to make us photogenic before they took their photographs."[13] This, together with Victor's traumatic memory from the colonial exhibition, bear witness to the incongruence between the "innocent" photographs that appear in the scrapbook of Victor and Alberta and the children's violent experiences. Victor's memoir also indicates the relevance of considering the photographs from the Tivoli exhibition as a reflection of the visitors' colonial imagination, within which the hand holding might be an orchestrated gesture that juxtaposes the participants cultural and racialised characteristics. The ethnographic gaze is further emphasised by the caption underneath many of photographs designating the people's geographical belonging.

[9] "The Restaurant." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

Staged Encounters

Another example of the encounter between the exhibited people, is found in an article in the Danish newspaper *Social-Demokraten* (1905a) that describes a meeting in the exhibition's restaurant **[9-10]** at the day of the opening:[14]

> In the big rotunda where a painted panorama of St. Thomas forms the background, the Greenlandic and the Faroese women are sitting in a cosy chat with a cup of coffee. We greet the young ladies from Greenland, who are sweating in their skin clothing. They are Miss Johanne Nielsen from Umanak [Uummannaq], Miss Lisbeth Andreas, whose father is a hunter, and Miss Marie Kleist, the daughter of a cooper in Julianehaab [Qaqortoq], who is not as experienced with the Danish language yet as the other two. They explain that despite all the wonderful things they experience down here (in Denmark), they have no more sincere wish than as soon as possible to return home to the icebergs with the cool, fresh air.
>
> The Faroese women are Mrs. Rigmor Lützen from Klaksvik [Klaksvík] and Elgine Kruse from Ejde [Eiði]. And lastly, we must mention the Icelandic ladies,

[10] "The Restaurant." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

> Ragnheiður Jónsdóttir, married to carpenter Brynjulfsson from Reykjavik [Reykjavík], and Miss Oktavia Grønvold from Akureyri.
>
> A young n**** dressed in shining white is placed by the buffet. It is Mrs. Henriette Constance from St. Croix, married to a local carpenter, Peter Jensen from Copenhagen.
>
> The black lady approaches the group. "I would like to hear the young women speak Greenlandic", she says. The Greenlandic women suddenly stop the conversation and look surprised at their black compatriot. "Do you get scared because I am so black?" the n**** asks modestly. "Ah no, we are also a bit dark brown ourselves", the Greenlandic women replied laughing. "Come sit down and have a cup of coffee in our company", they add amicably. The n**** takes a seat in the circle around the steaming coffee. Immediately after, a photographer shows up and takes a picture of this interesting group photo.[15]

This passage can be understood as an oral version of the group photographs discussed here. Along with visual documentation, the written account articulates a photographic visuality and indicates how ideas of race, gender and cultural authenticity functioned in the encounters captured at the colonial exhibition. The passage appears in different versions, one of which was reprinted in a summarised form in the Faroese newspaper *Tingakrossur* two weeks after the opening ceremony. Literary scholar Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson (2003, 147) points out in his analysis of the last paragraph that the passage demonstrates the internal dynamics at play within the exhibition's predefined hierarchy. He describes how the Afro-Caribbean woman breaks the exhibition's racialised boundaries by taking on the role of the spectator, looking at the exhibition and showing interest in the Greenlandic participants. Jóhannsson argues that, in addition to the ways in which the women are also looking at each other, the "sisterly coffee-drinking" ("systurleg kaffidrykkja") illustrates their shared position within the exhibition that is ultimately established within the coloniser-colonised dichotomy by the white Danish photographer who captures the "interesting group photo" (147).

The photograph referred to in the end of the passage has, so far, not been located. It can therefore be considered as an "imagined record" (Gillian and Caswell 2015) that adds to the visual documentation of the scrapbook. In contrast to Jóhansson's reading of the passage, the non-existence of the photograph leads me to question the veracity of the encounter and the extent to which the passage is merely an expression of the journalist's colonial imagination. Historian Per Nielsen (2016, 173) points out that the conversation described in the article must be considered a "journalistic essay" ("journalistisk fristil")

that is not necessarily a reflection of what transpired at the exhibition. Rather, he argues, the journalist seems to have staged a miniature colonial encounter, a cultural study that, in accordance with the idea of the exhibition, signals diversity and community. Nielsen also points out that the description of Henriette Jensen reflects the language used by white Danes to describe a Black working class woman at the time. In continuation of Nielsen, I would argue that the racist language and the intense focus on the Afro-Caribbean and Greenlandic women's skin-color compared to the unmentioned skin-color of the Faroese and the Icelandic women clearly demonstrate the racial logics of the exhibition and how racial discrimination impacted the exhibited people differently.

Like the existing photographs of the different participants, the passage introduces the women by their specific place of origin (and here also by their names), emphasising the women's symbolic meaning in relation to the nation (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989), after which they are described according to their fathers' and husbands' professions. The focus on the clothing illustrates the symbolic meaning of national or regional costumes as presumed authentic expressions of the various cultures. As such, the clothing could be considered a demand for conforming to the visitor's pre-existing stereotypes rather than the participants' own choice. As described in *Social-Demokraten*, the West Greenlandic animal skin costume might not be something that the Greenlandic women would choose to wear during a European summer, had it not been for the exhibition, as it made them sweat. The performative function of the folk costumes is also mentioned in Cornelins' (1976, 22) memoir, where he describes how easy it was to "transform white Copenhageners to Faroe Islanders, Icelanders and Greenlanders by dressing them in the different folk costumes" compared to the difficulty of making them look "like black native West Indians".[16] Even though the passage in *Social-Demokraten* seems to illustrate that the exhibition participants were not just ethnic Danes who wore different folk costumes, Cornelins' account emphasises the performative aspect of the exhibition and his conception of how some of the identities could be enacted by white Danes wearing specific costumes while others could not.

Considering the Faroese national costume in relation to other photographs of Faroese women during this period, it is remarkable how the costume does not seem to reflect the desired clothing of Faroese women at the time. As illustrated in the photographic book *Female Pioneers* (Hansen 2018), within early photography in the Faroe Islands, Faroese women rarely wore the national costume when being photographed by Faroese photographers at the turn of the century. Rather, they wore contemporary "European fashion" with long dresses,

skirts, and hats when sitting for their studio portraits. In everyday life, the women seem mostly to have worn working clothes—skirts, knitted jumpers and shawls—as depicted in other historical photographs.[17] The Faroese women's use of the "foreign fashion" even seems to have been a topic of debate in the Faroe Islands during this period, as brought forward by Malan Simonsen (1987, 81) in her account of how women's clothing was discussed in the Faroese newspapers. Again, this could indicate how the clothing of the exhibited people did not necessarily reflect the authenticity of the different people on display at the colonial exhibition, but rather corresponded to the preconceived notions of the different cultures as well as Emma Gad's and the Danish Crafts Association's strong interest in local handcrafts.[18]

Colonial Negotiation

It is relevant to consider how the colonial exhibition was negotiated both publicly between the exhibited colonies and dependencies, and among the individual exhibition participants. Emma Gad's scrapbook includes clippings from the public debate, documents concerning the practical circumstances of the exhibition, photographs, and some private papers, such as a letter correspondence with the exhibition's protector Crown Princess Louise. However, the perspectives of the exhibited people are not readily accessible through this archival material. Other accounts on the colonial exhibition (e.g. Andreassen and Henningsen 2011) give insight into the difficult process of finding local people in the Virgin Islands to travel to Denmark to partake at the exhibition and some of the individual histories of the Afro-Caribbean participants (Henriette Jensen, William Smith, Victor Cornelins and Alberta Viola Roberts). The backgrounds and perspectives from the representatives of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands are less documented.

In my own research on the Faroese participants, I was able to trace both Elgine Kruse and Rigmor Lützen's relatives through their surnames and their place of origin, as stated in the passage in *Social-Demokraten* mentioned above.[19] I learned that neither of them had children, possibly making their life stories less accessible. However, through the descendants of their siblings I learned that both were of Danish origin, which is interesting considering the ethnic and "authentic" dimensions of the colonial exhibition. Their Danish origin might also explain why they were in Denmark during the beginning of the 1900s, most likely as students or as part of family visits. According to Kruse and Lützen's relatives, the colonial exhibition was not part of their family narratives. This is a significant detail in comparison to Henriette Jensen's participation, which

seems to have been a memorable event (Nielsen 2016). Again, this incongruence between participants' experiences indicates the unequal internal dynamics of the exhibition that are also reflected in the public debates and understandings of the relationship between the Danish colonies and dependencies in general.

With regards to the public debates, Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud (2022) argues that there is no sign of dialogue with either the Afro-Caribbean or the Greenlandic population about the exhibition in the Danish media coverage, and internally in Greenlandic media there does not seem to have been any debate other than articles representing Danish voices and the Icelandic opposition. Contrastingly, the Icelandic reactions to the colonial exhibition take up a great deal of space in both Danish and Icelandic articles collected in the scrapbook. Kristín Loftsdóttir (2012) points out that it was especially the Icelandic student society in Copenhagen that initiated a heated debate, as they found it degrading to their culture and nationality to be categorised within a colonial exhibition alongside what they described as "uncivilised savage people". The Icelandic protests came to influence a great deal of the media coverage leading up to the exhibition, and the Danish newspaper *Politiken* printed a caricature depicting Emma Gad holding representatives of the Danish West Indies, Greenland and the Faroe Islands on a leash while trying to get a hold on the Icelandic representative that is eager to flee the Tivoli exhibition seen in the background. This caricature and the focus on the Icelandic opposition could be seen as reflected in the photograph of the three women representing "Iceland, the West Indies and the Faroe Islands" **[6]**. The crossed arms of the confident Icelandic woman turning her side to the camera might be a contrasting gesture to the arm holding of the Caribbean and the Faroese women, who both are facing the camera. The photograph seems to indicate an active negotiation between the photographer staging the image and the women. Yet, the smile on the Icelandic and the Caribbean women's faces leads me to question whether this might be yet another attempt to make a satirical caricature of the debates leading up to the exhibition dominated by the Icelandic protesters.

Even though the Faroese debates, judging by the contents of the scrapbook, do not seem to have reached the Danish media's attention, the Icelandic protests also initiated debates in Faroese newspapers, where several comments expressed similar concerns in terms of questions around colonial status, race and civilization. One protestor argued that if the Faroese would not follow the Icelandic withdrawal from the exhibition, it would position them "even worse—alone on the bench with e***** and n****" (Framburðfelagsmaður 1905).[20] Like the Icelandic protests, most of the critics used the emphasis on the Nordic origin of the Faroese

[11] Illustrated guide with 45 images from the Tivoli Exhibition, 1905, by Andreas Bruun.

to prove the perceived difference between them and the Afro-Caribbean population of the West Indies and the Inuit population in Greenland. However, the racist views that were expressed in order to distinguish the different countries on display must be understood as more significant than a mirroring of the mentality of the Icelandic protest. These viewpoints indicate how Faroese actively positioned themselves within a racial hierarchy of humanity during the turn of the century. But viewed in comparison to the unequivocal Icelandic stance, the Faroese reactions indicate a more ambiguous and complex self-conception, as expressed in the more unclear opinions on the Faroese participation. This ambiguity seems to have emerged both from the precise terms of the relationship with Denmark, whether or not the Faroe Islands should be considered a colony, a dependency or rather a Danish county (amt), as well as questions around the Faroese position within the paradigm of civilization. One newspaper comment questioned the Faroese level of civilization and the strong disassociation with the Greenlandic population by stating that "No, spiritually we are truly not worthy of placing ourselves as superior to 'S**********'—to use the so popular Icelandic designation of the indigenous peoples of Greenland [...] Any scorn or deception against the Greenlanders in that direction would be completely unfair" (*Tingakrossur* 1905).[21] This both illustrates how the Faroese have actively positioned themselves within a racial hierarchy of humanity, while at the same time demonstrating the Faroese ambiguity in its position within the Danish colonial network.

As a result of the Icelandic protests against the exhibition, a decision was made to change the original title Exhibition from the Monarchy's Dependencies and Colonies: Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the West Indies in a way that clearly delineated Iceland and the Faroe Islands from Greenland and the West Indies and from the "colonial" categorisation. As seen on front cover of

the exhibition catalogue **[11]**, the final title was: *Danish Colonial Exhibition (Greenland and the Danish West Indies) and Exhibition from Iceland and the Faroe Islands*. In addition to the delineation between the countries in the title, a hierarchy was also made between the display of the countries in the exhibition itself. As pointed out by Thisted and Gremaud (2020, 40), this also manifests in the illustrations on the cover of the exhibition catalogue, where symbols of Denmark and Iceland are displayed paralleled as equals, whereas the symbols of the Faroe Islands, the West Indies and Greenland are smaller and placed below each other, framed within the extensions of the royal blue crown. The incongruity of the Faroese position within the exhibition set-up emphasises the ambiguous Faroese position in the Danish Empire during this period as non-comparable to the Icelandic level of "civilization", while at the same time as racially distinguishable from the Afro-Caribbean population of the West Indies and the Inuit population of Greenland.

[12] "Summer course in Danish Crafts Association. Young girls from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Southern Jutland and the West Indies." *Kvindernes Aarbog 1912.*

Holding On

As documented in Emma Gad's scrapbook, proceeds from the exhibition —1,771.95 Danish Kroner—were transferred to the Danish Crafts Association to support a recurring summer course for women from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the former Danish West Indies and Southern Jutland. Every summer, around 10 women were invited to receive instruction in weaving, hand spinning, lace, and embroidery from 1 June to 1 October (Dansk Kunstflidsforening 1906). A photograph, available today on www.emmagad.dk and originally printed in the 1912 book *Kvindernes Årbog,* depicts "Young girls from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Southern Jutland and the West Indies" at a summer course **[12]**.[22] The photograph is most likely taken at the annual party held at Charlottenborg, where the women's appearance seems to have attracted special attention, as seen in an article in the Danish newspaper *Dagbladet* from 21 September 1910:

> In front of the platform, which was raised in back of the hall, was the most characteristic and beautiful decoration of a line of the association's students, young girls in national costumes from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Southern Jutland, and the West Indies. The young Icelanders with the high, white Silkhats made the most festive, and a n**** with a red bow in the frizzy hair, the most peculiar effect.[23]

The photograph and the article in *Dagbladet* bear witness to the way the colonial encounters of the Tivoli exhibition continued at the Danish Crafts Association's summer courses. In a similar manner to the photographs from the colonial exhibition, the women in their respective national costumes perform their cultural belonging and together they visualise community and the global reach of the Danish empire—this time excluding Greenland. The handholding of the women in the middle of the group seems even more visible than in the photographs taken at the exhibition, as the women are placed closer together in what looks like an orchestrated studio photograph.

The documentation of the summer courses shows that even though the colonial encounters facilitated at the Tivoli exhibition might seem to be a unique example of human connections across the Danish empire, these encounters were not that rare after all, as they have continued several years after colonial exhibition at the Danish Crafts Association and possibly elsewhere as well. The exact duration of the summer courses is unclear, but towards the transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States in 1917, Emma Gad seems to have changed her opinion regarding the Danish Atlantic islands. With reference to her acquaintance with women from the West Indies through the summer courses, Gad states that the West Indies have been "an unnatural appendage to us [...] it is as if we have never realised that the islands once were bought for money and therefore do not naturally belong to us" (Lehman 1916, 18).[24] Compared to the discussions around a sale of the former Danish West Indies during the colonial exhibition in 1905, Gad does not seem motivated to campaign against the sale of the islands at this time. She compares the interest, which increased as a reaction to the discussions of selling the islands a few years before, with an air balloon that ascended skyward but fell to the ground as soon as the decision was made to keep the islands. Similarly, Marie Bak (2020) has argued that the colonial exhibition that was supposed to strengthen the Danish imperial image instead turned out to weaken it—especially due to the Icelandic protests that attracted a great deal of the attention around the exhibition. One could therefore argue that the imperial image, stretching across the globe as illustrated in *Atlanten* and at the Danish

colonial exhibition in Tivoli in 1905, lost its viability when the former Danish West Indies became the US Virgin Islands in 1917, which put end to The Danish Atlantic Islands and the summer courses at the Danish Crafts Association.

Conclusion

The archival material I have analysed in this article has enabled me to critically address Faroese colonial disconnectedness by making visible the country's entanglements within the larger network of the Danish empire. From the numerous images and clippings collected in Emma Gad's scrapbook, I selected photographs of the adult handholding representatives from Denmark's different colonies and dependencies. In addition, I discussed supplementary images and newspaper articles to contextualise the colonial encounters displayed in the scrapbook photographs. At first glance, the scrapbook photographs visualise unlikely community and friendships between participants in Denmark's 1905 colonial exhibition. Yet placing the participants' intimate contact within their geopolitical context revealed these photographs' imbrication within colonial divisions of space and the racialised hierarchies at the foundation of the colonial exhibition and indeed of the Danish imperial project at large.

ABSTRACT

In 1905, people from the different corners of the Danish empire held hands at the colonial exhibition (*Dansk Koloniudstilling* (*Grønland og Dansk Vestindien*) *samt udstilling fra Island og Færøerne)* in Tivoli, Copenhagen. This article uncovers colonial relations of the past by analysing photographs from a scrapbook presumably created by the main organiser of the exhibition, Emma Gad. The photographs show participants interacting at the exhibition, and the article asks: What kind of conversations about this forgotten past are made possible by these photographs? How can these photographs be used to reflect upon the ways ideas of race, whiteness, civilization, nationality, and empire have operated in the colonial encounters facilitated at the Tivoli exhibition? The article seeks to answer these questions with a particular attention to the role of the Faroe Islands in order to counter the fact that the country is routinely relegated to the margins of discussions on colonialism. At first glance, the scrapbook photographs visualise unlikely community and friendships between participants. Yet placing the participants' intimate contact within their geopolitical context revealed these photographs' imbrication within colonial divisions of space and the racialised hierarchies at the foundation of the colonial exhibition and indeed of the Danish imperial project at large.

NOTES

1 The Danish merchant Niels Ryberg established the transit trade (in Faroese known as transithandilin, Vágsbotnshandilin or Rybergshandilin) in the western harbour of Tórshavn (Vestara Vág). The transit trade enabled Ryberg to smuggle products such as spirits, tea, tobacco and porcelain from the Danish colonies (the East Indies and the West Indies) to England, Scotland and Ireland through the Faroe Islands (Joensen 2017). The role of the Faroe Islands as a transit trade post contributed to making the Danish colonial trade highly profitable during the colonial wars when Britain put a high taxation on imported goods.

2 Today, the harbour is an abandoned tourist attraction. Literary scholars Malan Marnersdóttir (2021) and Bergur Rønne Moberg (2020) have put forward the Faroese colonial aspects reflected in the literature, the place naming and the conquest mentality of the Faroese harbor in Kangerluarsoruseq and the other areas that the Faroese eventually got access to on the southern west-coast and in the north by the east-coast of Greenland. Ole Wich (2013) has researched political documents concerning the negotiations of the Faroese access to the fishing areas.

3 Original quote in Danish: "[...] Prospektpostkort fra samtlige Kolonier og fra selve Udstillingen".

4 Here it is relevant to mention the national committees that took part in organising the exhibition. The Faroe Islands also had an organising committee; however, knowledge about the committee and its role in the exhibition is still very limited.

5 Southern Jutland has historically been an area of geopolitical dispute between Germany and Denmark. It was under German rule in the years between 1864 to 1920, which is likely the reason why it has been of political and cultural interest to invite women from this area to the summer courses at the Danish Crafts Association.

6 A selection of the images in the scrapbook is accessible at the online collection of the National Museum and some of the newspaper articles collected in the scrapbook can be accessed through digital sources such as "emmagad.dk", which entails a comprehensive and insightful collection curated by Tonny Hald.

7 Original quote in Danish: "[...] der har til Formaal at knytte Baandet bestandig fastere mellem Danmark og det Kolonier og nordlige Bilande".

8 According to the exhibition guide, Greenlandic fur, Icelandic antiquities, Danish basketwork, postcards and tombola were on sale. Photographs of the pergola indicate that other things were on sale or in the lottery like black dolls, conch shells and spirits from the West indies.

9 Original quote in Danish: "Den danske Bondehytte, der ligesom symboliserer Tilknytningen mellem Moderlandet og de danske Atlanterhavsøer".

10 Original quote in Danish: "Dette kunne lade sig gøre om formiddagen, når der ikke var ret mange besøgende, da gik medvirkende på de forskellige afdelinger ofte på besøg hos hinanden. Alberta og jeg gik også ud for at se, hvordan der så ud andre steder, både sammen og hver for sig. Jeg var særlig glad for den grønlandske afdeling. [...] Udstillingens ansvarshavende kunne imidlertid ikke tage på deres samvittighed, at naive gæster fik forkerte begreber om, hvilke mennesker der levede på Grønland (når jeg altid opholdt mig der), derfor måtte man ty til et middel, der kunne fastholde mig til den vestindiske afdeling på de fuldt besøgte eftermiddage og aftener. [...] Man anskaffede et bur!!! Her blev Alberta og jeg anbragt."

11 These are not the only impressions of the panoramas in the scrapbook. For example, the Faroese participants were photographed in front of Carl Lund's panorama of Tórshavn.

12 I use the concept "intimacy" based on Lisa Lowe's account in her book *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (2015). Focusing on the intimate connection between Africa, America, Asia and Europe, Lowe explores the interconnectedness of the world through colonialism, slavery, trade, and Western liberalism.

13 Original quote in Danish: "Denne interesse var hos nogen så stærk, at de befamlede os, vendte og drejede på os for at gøre os fotogene, før de tog deres billeder."

14 I choose to censor reproductions of historical quotes that include racist language.

15 Original quote in Danish: "I den store Rotunde, hvor Rundmaleriet fra St. Thomas danner Baggrunden, sidder de grønlandske og færøiske Kvinder i hyggelig Passiar ved en Kop Kaffe. Vi hilser paa de unge Damer fra Grønland, der sveder i deres originale Pelsdragter. Der er Frøken Johanne Nielsen fra Umanak, Frk. Lisbeth Andreas, hvis Fader er Fanger, Frk. Marie Kleist, der er Datter af en Bødker i Julianehaab og som endnu ikke er saa fuldt rutineret i det danske Sprog som de to andre. De forklarer, at trods alt det vidunderlige, de oplever hernede, har de intet kærere Ønske end snarest muligt at kunne vende hjem til Isfjældene med den kølige, friske Luft. De færøiske Damer er Frøken Rigmor Lüssen fra Klaksvig og Elgine Kruse fra Eide. Og endelig skal vi nævne de islandske Damer, Fru Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir, gift med Tømrermester Brynjulfsson fra Reykjavik, og Frøken Oktavia Grønvold fra Akureyri. En ung N****, klædt i skinnende Hvidt, har Plads ved Bufeten. Det er Fru Henriette Constance fra St. Croix gift med en derboende Tømrer Peter Jensen fra København. Den sorte Dame nærmer sig Gruppen. 'Jeg vilde saa gærne høre de unge Piger tale Grønlandsk,' siger hun. Grønlænderinderne standser pludseligt Samtalen og ser forundret paa deres sorte Landsmandinde. 'De bliver da vel ikke bange, fordi jeg er saa sort?' spørger N**** beskedent. 'Aa nej, vi er to ogsaa selv lidt mørkebrune,' svarer de grønlandske Damer leende. 'Kom og sæt Dem og drik en Kop Kaffe i vort Selskab,' tilføjer de venligt. N**** bænker sig i Kredsen ved den dampende Kaffe. Straks efter møder en Fotograf og tager en Plade af dette interessante Gruppebillede."

16 Original quote in Danish: "Det var let at forvandle hvide københavnere til færinger, islændinge og grønlændere ved blot at iklæde de respektive folkedragter. [...] Vanskeligere var det at få dem til at illudere som sorte indfødte vestindere."

17 I base this observation on my own research on historical photographs from the early 20th century of people working in the Faroese bacalao industry, found in the local archive of Sandavágs Fornminnisfelag and the National Museum of the Faroe Islands. These photographs do not indicate any daily use of the Faroese national costume. However, it is important to note that the national costume gained an important value during the Faroese national movement, which is considered to have started in 1888 and gained support throughout the 20th century. Ethnologist Jóan Pauli Joensen (2003), points out that the Faroese national costume was revitalised during this period as it turned into a national symbol.

18 Here it is important to note that there are significant differences between the cultural history of the Faroese and the Greenlandic women's use of so-called national or folk costumes. As pointed out by Rosannguaq Rossen, the West Greenlandic dress was not commonly described as a folk dress or national costume before later in history. The Faroese and the Greenlandic relation to "European fashion" has developed very differently, and the question of the "authenticity" of the folk costumes worn at the colonial exhibition is therefore not directly comparable.

19 Conversation with Malan Egilstrø on 4 May 2023 and Bogi Lützen on 11 April 2023.

20 Original quote in Danish: "I saa Tilfælde kommer vi til a blive endnu værre stillede – Alene sammen paa Bænk med E***** og N****!"

21 Original quote in Danish: "Nej åndeligt set har vi sandelig ikke Lov til at stille os fornemt-overlegne overfor "S**********" – for at bruge den så yndede islandske Betegnelse af Grønlands indfødte Befolkning. [...] Nogen Haan eller Bedragelse mod Grønlænderne i den Retning vilde være aldeles uretfærdig."

22 "Unge Piger fra Island, Færøerne, Sønderjylland og Vestindien".

23 Original quote in Danish: "Foran den Talerstol, der var rejst i Hallens Baggrund, sad som den mest karakteristiske og smukkeste Prydelse en Række af Foreningens Elever, unge Piger i Nationaldragter fra Island, Færøerne, Sønderjylland og Vestindien. De unge Islænderinder med de høje, hvide Silkehuer gjorde den festligste, og en n**** med rød Sløjfe i det krusede Haar, den ejendommeligste Virkning."

24 Original quote in Danish: "et tilklistret unaturligt Anhang til os – det er som om vi aldrig er kommet ud over, at de fjerne Øer engang er købte for Penge og ikke tilhører os med nogen indre Ret."

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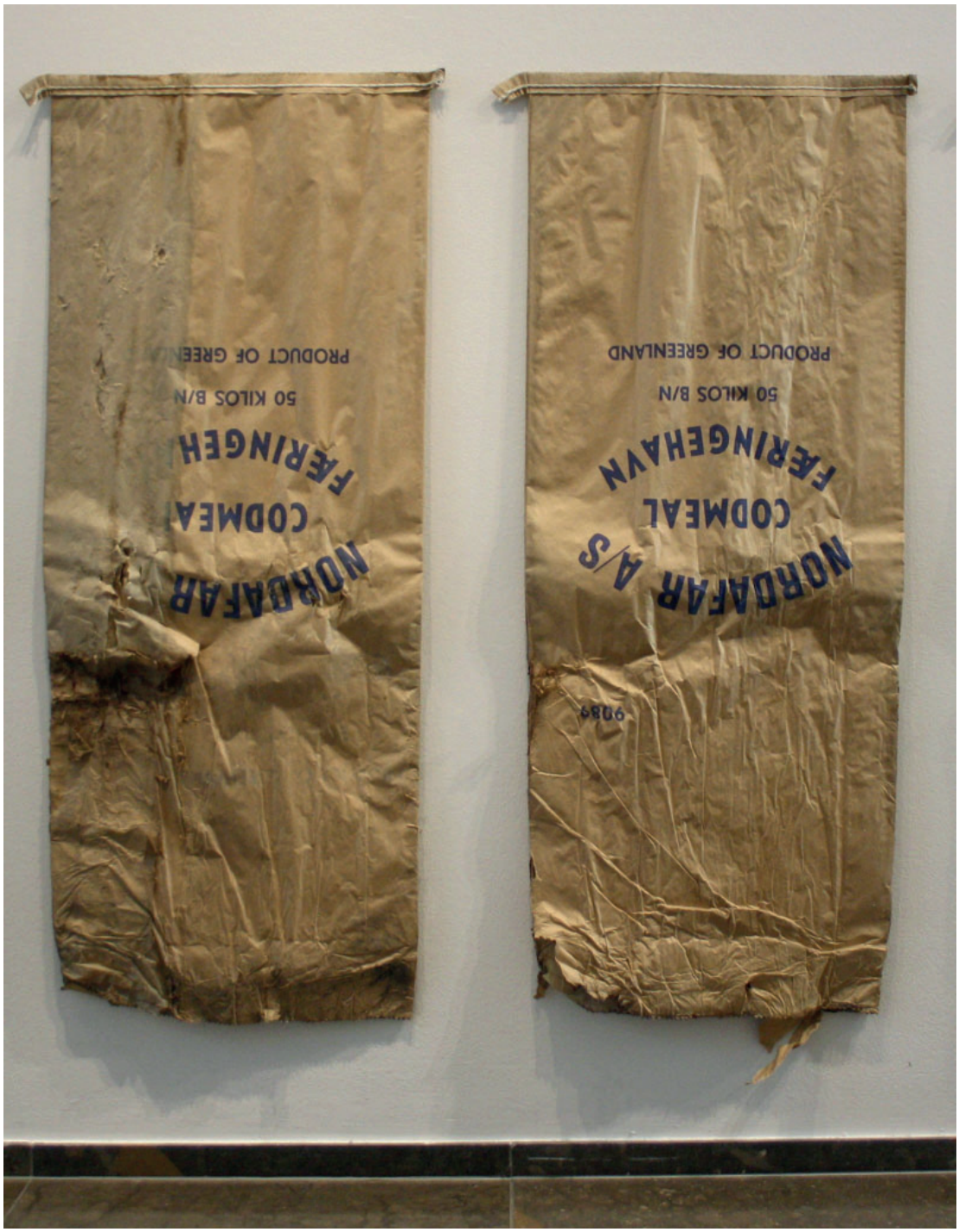

Jóhan Martin Christiansen: *DISH*, 2017. Installation med gipsrelief og objekter fra Nordafar. Katuaq, Nuuk Nordisk Kunstfestival. © Jóhan Martin Christiansen.

NIVI CHRISTENSEN

DISH
på Nuuk Kunstmuseum

I et hjørne på Nuuk Kunstmuseum ligger en besynderlig hvid flade af gips, ovenfor står en aluminiumsfiskekasse, på væggen hænger en stor brun papirspose, og ved siden af ligger to gule mursten. På posen står der "NORDAFAR A/S CODMEAL FÆRINGEHAVN. 50 KILOS B/N. PRODUCT OF GREENLAND". Både de fundne genstande – murstenene, fiskekassen og papirsposen – og gipsafstøbningen er levn fra samme nedlagte fiskefabrik. Genstandene er en del af kunstprojektet *DISH* indsamlet og skabt af den færøske kunstner Jóhan Martin Christiansen. *DISH* kredser om den nedlagte og efterladte fiskefabrik Nordafar, som kunstneren besøgte i sommeren 2017. Værkerne var en del af Christiansens soloudstilling, også med titlen *DISH*, der blev vist i Grønlands Kulturhus Katuaq. Udstillingen åbnede i efteråret 2017 under Nuuk Nordisk Kulturfestival. I udstillingen indgik flere gipsafstøbninger, forskellige readymades og et videoværk filmet af den grønlandske fotograf Ulannaq Ingemann. Hver for sig og sammen er genstandene et led i en kunstnerisk dokumentation af Nordafar.

Den besynderlige hvide flade er en direkte gipsafstøbning af jorden ved Nordafar. I gipsen fornemmer man strukturen fra noget pap – sand og græs har sat sig fast i overfladen. Der er hjul på gipsskulpturen, så det ligner lidt, at den svæver i luften. *DISH* er en kunstnerisk registrering og fortolkning af et sted og dets historie – og så er det et resultat af Christiansens egne refleksioner over relationen mellem Grønland og Færøerne, forankret netop dér. Det er Christiansens egen personlige historie, som har ført ham til stedet, til en fabrik, som har figureret i familiens historier, fordi Christiansens egen far arbejdede der som ung.

I foråret 1953 blev firmaet Nordafar stiftet.[1] Nordafar som ord er en sammentrækning af **Nor**ge, **Da**nmark og **Fær**øerne. Det var en fiskeristation ca. 50 km syd for Nuuk ved det, der i dag er kendt som Færingehavn på dansk og Kangerluarsoruseq på grønlandsk. Historien om Færingehavn går tilbage til midten af 1920'erne. Færingerne pressede Danmark for at få lov til at fiske i Grønland, og efter stort pres gav Danmark efter og tillod dem at fiske i grønlandsk farvand. Det skete til trods for protester fra Grønland. Der pågik en del forhandlinger om retten, og i 1937 resulterede det i, at Færingehavn blev anlagt som international fiskerihavn med sygehus, radiostation og pakhuse, og altså senere etableringen af firmaet Nordafar, som havde et delt ejerskab imellem Norge, Danmark og Færøerne. Færøerne og andre fiskerinationer mistede deres fiskerettigheder i grønlandske farvande i forbindelse med Danmarks indlemmelse i EF (i dag EU). Nordafar gik konkurs i 1989 og står i dag ubeboet tilbage som en spøgelsesby. Der har de seneste år været forhandlinger i gang om oprydning og nedrivning af Nordafar.

Jóhan Martin Christiansen omtaler selv historien med Nordafar som en færøsk kolonihistorie i Grønland.

I værkserien *DISH* udforsker Christiansen både sin egen familiehistorie, den fælles historie om Færingehavn imellem Grønland, Danmark og Færøerne og så det helt specifikke forladte sted – Færingehavn. På Færøerne lever fortællingen om Færingehavn og Nordafar fortsat. Jóhan Martin Christiansens egen far kom som 15-årig til Nordafar i 1958 med et færøsk fiskeskib, og udstillingen og værkserien er et resultat af en række personlige samtaler med ham. Samtalerne bliver måske, måske ikke, en dag en del af værkserien.

Jóhan Martin Christiansen lægger sig også i forlængelse af en lang tradition af særligt danske, men også nordiske og europæiske kunstnere, som skaber værker i og med Grønland som omdrejningspunkt. Christiansens værker fremstår derfor også som en påmindelse om, at tilrejsende kunstnere er en pågående tendens og ikke et afsluttet kapitel af den grønlandske kunsthistorie. På Nuuk Kunstmuseum er Christiansens værker blandt andet udstillet i samspil med værker af J.E.C. Rasmussen, en dansk maler, som rejste i Grønland i slutningen af 1800-tallet, og som er kendt for at male storslåede grønlandske landskaber. På værket *En Junidag på Gaabhåbsfjorden* er motivet Nuuks fjord i et dramatisk lys. Lige-

Jóhan Martin Christiansen: *DISH*, 2017. Installation med gipsrelief og objekter fra Nordafar. Nuuk Kunstmuseum. © Jóhan Martin Christiansen.

som Rasmussen har Christiansen også fundet sit motiv i nærheden af Nuuk, men mens Rasmussen fokuserer på en *grønlandskhed*, har Christiansen fokus på efterladt industri og et ekko af et sted, en familiehistorie og en færøsk historie i Grønland. Begge kunstnere bidrager med et blik på Grønland og med perspektiver til den grønlandske historie, og den danske kolonihistorie. Implementeringen af Christiansens værker på museet er et aktivt forsøg på at aktualisere blikkene igennem kunsten.

Efter Jóhan Martin Christiansens udstilling *DISH* i kulturhuset Katuaq har et udsnit af værkerne været udlånt til Nuuk Kunstmuseum. Under udstillingen i Katuaq blev en del af gipsafstøbningerne totalskadet, og udstillingen måtte lukke før tid. Det kan forekomme paradoksalt, at Jóhan Martin Christiansens eget forsøg på at dokumentere et sted i forfald faktisk er forgået hurtigere end det egentlige sted. Der eksisterer i dag tre af Jóhan Martin Christiansens gipsafstøbninger fra Nordafar – en i privateje, en opbevaret og en på udstilling på Nuuk Kunstmuseum.

NOTE

1 I 2023 skabte Grønlands Nationalmuseum og Arkiv udstillingen *NORDAFAR*, der blev fulgt op af en digital udstilling, der kan findes på Grønlands Nationalmuseums hjemmeside: www.nka.gl (https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a6b42155b4b9447b98d649ab5f950300).

BART PUSHAW

Blue Puffins

The Avian Aesthetics of Díðrikur á Skarvanesi

In this essay, I offer some ideas about how to think about what are currently known as the earliest extant paintings in Faroese art history, a series of five gouache paintings made in the nineteenth century by the artist Díðrikur á Skarvanesi. In all the images, Díðrikur depicts a similar subject: different species of local birds arranged in profile view. My interest in these paintings is two-fold. On the one hand, I am interested in the historicity of these paintings. Since these paintings have no clear precedence in Faroese art history, I want to think critically about the social, political, and economic contexts that made it possible for Díðrikur á Skarvanesi to be able to create paintings in the 1830s and 1840s. On the other hand, I like birds. Part of my interest is simply aesthetic and reflective of my own avian affinities. In some ways, the gaze I bring to these paintings may seem all too stereotypical, but I think it warrants a more personal reflection on why I am writing on this topic here in *Periskop*.

First, a quick anecdote about my last time in Tórshavn. I was standing at the counter of the gift shop at Listasavn. In front of me was a small package nestling a fragile object inside. As I was waiting to pay, a door behind the counter swung open. Briskly stepping into the space was the then-director of the museum, Karina Lykke Grand. We had already planned to meet the following day, so our encounter that afternoon was unexpected. She glanced at me, then glanced at the box, and exclaimed, smiling, "Oh, I know exactly what that is." Despite not seeing what I had purchased, she assumed correctly. I had purchased a small glass puffin. My cheeks turned red. I was embarrassed in the moment because I was so predictable. I had not seen Karina in some four years, but she immediately connected my presence at Listasavn to puffins. She even described me to a fellow art historian she later met as "really enthusiastic – and he loves puffins!"

My penchant for the small seabird is far from unusual. In fact, it is so stereotypical that Icelandic scholars have coined a name for the outsider obsession with the bird, what Katrín Anna Lund, Katla Kjartansdóttir, and Kristín Loftsdóttir (2018) have called "puffin love." Describing the omnipresence of puffin souvenirs and gifts along Laugavegur, Reykjavík's popular shopping thoroughfare, Lund, Kjartansdóttir, and Loftsdóttir make note of a local shopkeeper who finds the tourist consumption of puffin paraphernalia to be "disgusting" (151). They analyze this response as indicative of the way many Icelanders find this foreign fanaticism with puffins to be as tacky as it is artificial. But for tourists, they argue (153), the puffins are attractive commodities not only because of their cute-

[1] Díðrikur á Skarvanesi: *Fuglar*, 1840. Listasavn Føroya.

ness, but also their awkward and clumsy gait, a human-like and thus endearing quality.

To a similar extent, many tourists in the Faroe Islands expect to see the charismatic clown-faced bird, and this expectation directly informs what outsiders want to see in Faroese art. As Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen (2019, 213) rightly argues, "when foreigners come to the Faroe Islands, they want an authentic experience: puffins, the bird cliffs of Vestmanna, Mikines, fish, turf rooves, sheep, etc. It is the same when it comes to Faroese art, upholding this notion of [a monolithic] *færø-kunst*." I sympathize with the critique of this outsider desire for authenticity. It limits the possibilities for what Faroese art has been and can be, without any regard for the choices artists make. In an academic sense, I wholeheartedly agree. But as a tourist, I was excited to purchase the small glass puffin at the Listasavn shop. Nowadays, the puffin sits quietly in my office next to its friend, a glass oystercatcher I had bought on my first trip to the Faroe Islands. The glass birds bring me joy every time I see them. I open this essay on this personal reflection to draw attention to a tension I find unresolved. On the one hand, I want studies of Faroese art to be fresh, insightful, critical, and generative. On the other, I am keenly aware of the foreign position from which I write about Faroese art history, and my own desire for the very authenticity that so many writers—including the editorial board of this edition of *Periskop*—are tired of contending with. What I hope to offer here is, perhaps, a third way. "Puffin love" might undergird my visual interest in the paintings, but it can also be a tool to consider why, exactly, these birds are the first subject of extant Faroese painting, and to take seriously the historical and political conditions that informed why an artist would devote his oeuvre to them in the nineteenth century.

Díðrikur á Skarvanesi took birds seriously. As far as we know, birds were the only subject he deemed worthy of recording in pigments and inks on paper. It was only upon close examination of Díðrikur's paintings in person that I began to consider that he might be doing something besides simply representing his avian kin. In what fol-

lows, I argue that Díðrikur á Skarvanesi painted local birds with political and cultural motivations that critique the conditions he and his community found themselves in. First, I pursue a close visual analysis of his paintings and elucidate some of their surprisingly complex pictorial qualities. Then I consider the strange sense of temporality that has structured how many understand these images. After doing so, I focus on specific historical contexts in the early nineteenth century, with particular attention to social history of ornithology and collecting. Doing so is an important step in considering the artist's choice of motif, and his consistent choice to represent birds as if they were individual specimen. Afterwards, I focus on the materials of the paintings by thinking about their wider economic histories that challenge notions of Faroese isolation under the period's trade monopoly. I conclude with an argument about why we should not consider his paintings to be outliers of Faroese history, but instead rightful inheritors that understand birds as metaphors to understand and reflect on society.

Looking at the Paintings

Facing the same direction, the birds do not interact with each other **[1]**. Instead, they appear static and silent, as if they were scientific specimens. The artist's decision to portray each of the birds as posed ever so stoically on small round pedestals resembles a state of taxidermy. Carefully collected, Díðrikur's birds occupy a schematic space of observation, juxtaposition, and comparison one might expect in images of natural history. In one painting, three distinct registers organize the birds, a compositional choice that creates a sense of order and control so common to the kind of knowledge production of scientific illustration. Díðrikur's avian aesthetics appear to be didactic and striking in their clarity.

Upon closer inspection, however, the images reveal other painterly preoccupations. Note how the birds are arranged. Yes, they face the same direction, but their feathers also overlap to create a dynamic rhythm of patterns: speckled black and brown tail feathers appear next to a crisp contrast of black and white, mottled feathers appear against the jet-black plumage of another. If we read the birds from right to left, the repetitive visual form of overlaid feathers, and thus overlaid patterns, creates a series of upward lines, not unlike the crescendo of waves. When we follow Díðrikur's patterns, swooping from the rectangular shape of the tailfeathers up the body of each bird, we can see dynamic curvilinear forms. Note the sinuous, almost serpentine curves that twist in the body of the oystercatcher (*tjaldur*) and the puffin (*lundi*) in the upper left-hand corner. Along that same top row, Díðrikur depicted a guillemot (*lomviga*), second from the right, with a comparatively sharp, even jagged linear language. Directly below on the second and third registers, respectively, the artist painted the bodies of the red-breasted merganser (*toppont*) and the pied raven (*hvítravnur*) as if they were miniature compositions of surrealist black organic forms on a white monochrome background. One could describe Díðrikur's aesthetics here in the service of avian authenticity, as he renders the mottled coloration of each bird as it appeared to him. But given the artist's clear interest in pattern and composition, it is just as plausible to read the painting not so literally, and instead playfully.

His painting *Mánadúgvur* **[2]** depicts seventeen pigeons of the same species yet renders them in a dazzling, almost kaleidoscopic array of patterns and bright colors—brilliant yellows, striking blues, radiant reds. Such vibrant colors hardly typified the birds Díðrikur knew in the Faroe Islands, and instead are more reminiscent of birds in warmer, tropical locales. Even more so than in his *Fuglar*, *Mánadúgvur* evinces how the plumage of each bird is a miniature painterly world unto itself. *Mánadúgvur* insists on the fantastical, not least through the artist's Danish inscription, "maanens duer", a label that lingers between languages, between natural and supernatural. In Faroese, a mánadúgva is a wood pigeon in English, what Danish speakers refer to as a *ringdue*. While maanens duer is a literal translation from the Faroese name into Danish, it also implies a subtle semantic shift. Rather than being simply "moon doves," *maanens duer* signifies the notion

[2] Díðrikur á Skarvanesi: *Mánadúgvur*, 1840. Listasavn Føroya.

of "doves of the moon," as if to imply these birds belong to a different celestial domain and are, indeed, otherworldly. If Díðrikur does suggest something supernatural in *Mánadúgvur*, he also anchors the birds to the earth. As in *Fuglar*, Díðrikur portrays each of the mánadúgvur upon a pedestal, continuing those visual markers of taxidermy, scientific specimen, and natural history collection.

Adding to the supposed mystery are the tears and rips of the paper surfaces of the paintings. In one extant painting of chickens, only half of the image remains. All the paintings have endured clear pigment loss. At one point, someone carefully excised the head of a seagull, leaving a ghostly void in its place **[3]**. Just as it is complicated to discern what is artistic intent and what is simply the ravages of time, it is as if Díðrikur deliberately resists any dichotomy of fact or fiction, and instead insists on both.

Temporality

The paintings of Díðrikur á Skarvanesi are the oldest artworks in the museum's collection. For many, the images are intriguing simply due to their existence in the historical record. Created sometime in the 1830s and 1840s, the works are the earliest extant paintings attributed to a Faroese artist. Díðrikur's birds therefore assume another mantle: they are the beginning of Faroese art history. While that achievement is remarkable, the creation of artworks in the Faroe Islands in the first half of the nineteenth century usually merits a reflection on the long temporal gap until the emergence of the next known Faroese painters, such as Niels Kruse (1871-1953), Jógvan Waagstein (1879-1949), Bergithe Johannesen (1905-95), and Sámal Joensen-Mikines (1906-79). By comparison to the oils of the early twentieth century, Díðrikur's paintings are almost archaeological. Lest "archaeological" seem too dramatic a descriptor, it is worth noting that at least one artist today makes a deliberate juxtaposition of Díðrikur á Skarvanesi with cave painting. In 2023, the artist Edward Fuglø (b. 1965) opened a new light installation *Díðriksdúgvur og aðrir dýrgripir: Hellismyndir í nýggjum ljósi* ("Díðrikur Doves and Other Hidden Treasures: Cave Paintings Reimagined") in the new tunnel that connects the islands of Streymoy and Sandoy under

[3] Díðrikur á Skarvanesi: *Fuglar*, 1840. Listasavn Føroya.

the sea, an homage to "the colourful birds of the imagination that Díðrikur let loose as he unleashed Faroese visual arts" (Guttesen 2023). I draw attention to Fuglø's installation here because it frames Díðrikur á Skarvanesi as a primordial figure of Faroese art history, one whose emergence is as clandestine as ancient cave paintings made thousands of years ago.

By transforming the 1830s and 1840s into an archaic, prehistoric time, Fuglø's work, and the writing about it, reproduce a strange temporality that often haunts Faroese art history, an insistence Faroese art is somehow delayed, out of synch—or, in contrast—up to date with, just as relevant as, in conversation with and responsive to other artistic trends from elsewhere. Whether defensive or apologetic, this framework presumes that the country's geographical location in the North Atlantic is synonymous with a devaluation of its cultural production. Instead of understanding Faroese art against a standard or canon, it is crucial that art historians evaluate Faroese art on its own terms. Rather than presuming that the early nineteenth century was, pardon the pun, ensconced in some impenetrable cultural fog in the Faroe Islands, we must understand what conditions might have motivated Díðrikur to paint in the first place. In order to do so, I argue it is critical to locate his images within specific social and political conditions of the period, namely the history of ornithology.

Ornithology and Scientific Specimen

Díðrikur painted each of the thirty-nine birds who populate his five extant paintings as posed atop a small pedestal. Since all of the birds stand against an empty background, the small pedestals are the only elements that anchor the birds in pictorial space. Scholars have interpreted these pedestals as potential signs of the artist's process. Did Díðrikur create his paintings from working with models of real taxidermied birds? Some of the most detailed sources about Díðrikur stem not from the nineteenth century, but rather from the mid-twentieth century, when the Listafelag Føroya acquired four of the paintings and displayed them to the public for the

first time in the 1950s. In that moment, copious postal correspondence revealed a robust oral history. One letter penned by Svanhild Joensen (quoted in Joensen 1970, 281), a resident of Tvøroyri, where Díðrikur's paintings were "rediscovered", claimed that Díðrikur "had painted shot birds". Others attested to a different, but intriguing narrative. In 1970, Hanus Debes Joensen (281) summarized the common story iterated across many letters by different authors: "Díðrikur would take an old horse out to Stóravatn, shoot it, and leave it there as a lure for birds." Afterwards, the artist would "be in the vicinity and draw the [birds that came]". This narrative about enticing birds with carcasses to serve as models certainly added to the historiographic reading of Díðrikur as unusual, to say the least.

The earliest art historical writing on Díðrikur á Skarvanesi speculates that the artist must have conceived of his paintings in conversation with scientific illustrations. Hanus Debes Joensen penned the most thorough investigation of Díðrikur á Skarvanesi and his bird paintings in a 1970 edition of *Fróðskaparrit*. Joensen finds a compelling case for one particular illustrated book as a possible model for Díðrikur: Johann Ernst Christian Walter's elaborate illustrated volume *Nordisk ornithologie*. With its last volume published in Copenhagen in 1828, the same time the twenty-six-year-old artist traveled to the imperial metropole, the book featured large colored illustrations of local bird species endemic to Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, as well as Kalaallit Nunaat.

In the eighteenth century, Europeans began creating large-scale publications that claimed to reproduce flora and fauna with inimitable accuracy. Artists played a pivotal role in this scientific imaginary, claiming their works were "trustworthy" and based on firsthand observation. The impetus for such books was an interdisciplinary response to the popularity of species classification by Linnaeus and others in the eighteenth century. This drive to catalog and order reflected a larger period imperative to classify and thereby control knowledge, especially in contested or distant geographies under colonial rule (Bleichmar 2012). A certain visual style emerged that juxtaposed an animal or a plant against a plain backdrop, that empty space pivotal for the viewer in divorcing flora and fauna from their ecosystem of origin. By collating images of specimens into albums, the resulting books manifested imperial power relations, where scientists from the metropole observed, managed, and controlled knowledge of—and therefore reinforced foreign power over—the colonies.

The colonial history of scientific illustration is relevant for the images Díðrikur may have seen while in Copenhagen. After all, the very notion that birds of the Faroe Islands should be juxtaposed, analyzed, and explained together with birds from Kalaallit Nunaat, Iceland, and Denmark is itself a colonial gesture. But in the Faroe Islands in particular, the ability for foreign scientists to study birds depended upon specific navigation of a colonial bureaucracy that deliberately limited how the Faroese could access the outside world, and how the outside world could in turn access the Atlantic nation. Despite these barriers, the archipelago was known to foreign scientists and budding ornithologists as a country "well stored both with Land- and Sea-fowl" since at least the seventeenth century (Birkhead 2022, 164). In 1655, the Danish physician Ole Worm, famous for his Copenhagen Wunderkammer, the Museum Wormanium, kept a great auk (*gorfuglur*) as a pet, as well as at least two specimens of Faroese pied ravens (*hvítravnur*) in his collection (Simonsen 2012, 97-99; Birkhead 2022).

The status of Faroese birds as collectibles, so desired by outsiders, dramatically shaped the country's ecosystems over the following centuries. By the mid nineteenth century, the great auk was extinct. The pied raven, a black raven with a genetic color aberration of white mottled feathers, was unique to the Faroe Islands, and recorded there since at least the Middle Ages (Botni 1952). Their rarity transformed the birds into hot commodities. Over the nineteenth century, wealthy collectors arranged for the hunting and acquisition of pied ravens, both as specimens to be taxidermied, others

specifically for their unique patterned skins. This hunting intensified so quickly that it drove the specific gene pool that created these distinctive ravens into extinction by the early twentieth century (Van Grouw and Bloch 2015). Over the course of many centuries, then, we can trace an ongoing thread of Faroese birds themselves as the object of resource extraction from the Faroe Islands by and for foreign interest.

I contend that this social history of foreign ornithology is critical to understanding Díðrikur's creative choices in *Fuglar*. Already in 1970, Joensen (291-292) argued that "we know enough about how normal it was in those times to send birds and birdskins from the Faroe Islands abroad," but concedes that Díðrikur's name never seems to be mentioned in the records by the scientists and collectors who amassed birds. It seems telling that Joensen presumes that Faroese readers were well aware of how commonplace it was to send local birds and birdskins abroad in the nineteenth century. The Danish Royal Trade Monopoly made outside access to the country so difficult in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the appearance of any foreigner must have been noteworthy. In small villages where people's livelihoods were intimately intertwined with bird colonies, it must have been impossible *not* to know about the ornithologists and collectors there. The very same isolation emphasized about the Faroe Islands time and again may be precisely why Díðrikur knew of the potential fate of some birds, whether he met with ornithologists or not.

By portraying all of his avian figures on pedestals, Díðrikur invites associations of taxidermy, but, more importantly, he also invokes a fraught social history of foreign collectors decimating local bird populations. Understood through this lens, his paintings therefore become critical documents of an age of avian extinction and extraction in the Faroe Islands.

Blue Puffins

What does it mean to paint a puffin with a blue face **[4]**? I first asked this question to the audience who had gathered at "Confronting Coloniality," a seminar I convened with Anna Vestergaard Jørgensen and Vár Eydnudóttir at the Nordic House of the Faroe Islands in Tórshavn in March 2023. A unanimous answer emerged from the audience: the blue pigment we see today in Díðrikur's paintings must have been a discoloration over time, concealing an original color more akin to gray. It is true that puffin plumage changes color with the seasons. We are most familiar with the white plumage at face and stomach, and bright orange bill and webbed feet because that is when puffins share landscapes with people in the summertime. In the fall and winter, after puffins have left their summertime colonies and live on the open water, their plumage changes from white to gray and even black. Regardless of season, juveniles always sport this black and gray facial plumage, and it is these colors that usually distinguish younger birds as non-breeding birds, critical knowledge that informed historical Faroese relationships to puffins (Birkhead 2022). This context about the shifting colors of puffin plumage created a reasonable explanation to my question. Díðrikur painted blue, or perhaps created a bluish gray pigment, precisely in the pursuit of scientific accuracy.

After the seminar, I returned to Listasavn to look at Díðrikur's paintings more closely. Upon detailed inspection of *Mánadúgvur*, for instance, I took note of how the artist painted with saturated blue pigments to paint iridescent feathers in crescent shapes against a faint yellow body. The materiality of Díðrikur's gouache is clear **[5]**. See how the watery base of the pigment pooled beyond the space where Díðrikur placed his brush. Before the paints had fully dried, the blues and yellows had their own rendezvous on the paper surface. Creating a barely visible hue, neither blue nor yellow, this encounter of pigments produced the most delicate green. I linger here on these material traces of pigment, water, and paint because they provide insight not only into the artist's process, but also the actual materials he had at his disposal. Until further technical analysis is completed, it nevertheless remains difficult to know for certain whether Díðrikur did use blue pigments or not.

[4] Detail of the puffin's blue face in Díðrikur á Skarvanesi: *Fuglar*, 1840. Listasavn Føroya.

[5] Detail of Díðrikur á Skarvanesi: *Mánadúgvur*, 1840. Listasavn Føroya.

Since the puffin appears to sport blue facial plumage today, why was the seminar audience so skeptical about blue being an intentional choice of the artist? Their unanimous desire to explain the blue as a discolored gray likely reflects a desire to confirm the scientific accuracy of his paintings. *Fuglar* seems so concerned with order and juxtaposition, as if it was a visual roll call of the avian inhabitants of the Faroe Islands. For this reason, few have framed *Fuglar* through the same inventive lens Díðrikur deployed elsewhere, as in the vibrant patterning of his *Hani og høna* **[6]**. In Díðrikur's other paintings **[3]**, he portrays subtle details that indicate an interest in the fantastical. Take a look again at the second oystercatcher (*tjaldur*) along the top register of the painting. He painted the bird with slight variations from its neighbor of the same species, one closely corresponds with reality, the other does not. What might have motivated Díðrikur to insist on the liminal, between naturalistic and fantastical?

The blue pigment may be key to this question. For centuries, blue signified elite access to distant trade. Harvested primarily from mountains in Afghanistan, lapis lazuli—an ancient deep blue gem—became a material marker of luxury, wealth, and power already 4000 years ago among the Sumerians. When ground into powder,

[6] Díðrikur á Skarvanesi: *Hani og høna,* 1830. Listasavn Føroya.

lapis lazuli was the basis of the pigment ultramarine, widely used and keenly coveted among European artists across the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. In the eighteenth century, Prussian blue, a new synthetic pigment, replaced the costly lapis lazuli and revolutionized the availability of the color across the globe. In one of its most famous uses, Prussian blue created the affective power of Katsushika Hokusai's iconic *Great Wave off the Coast of Kanagawa* (1831). At the time, Edo Japan's policy of sakoku, a closed state, strictly limited Japanese access to the wider world, not least by reducing what foreign products entered the country. Hokusai's use of the color was therefore a novel marketing strategy, revealing his access to clandestine merchants in the midst of East Asia's so-called "blue revolution."

Part of the mobility of Prussian blue was related to the globalization of trade routes. The British East India Company had introduced Prussian blue to China, and Chinese merchants made the material cheaper and more accessible to the Japanese. There is something relevant about Japan's policy of isolation that resonates with the restrictive state of the trade monopoly occurring simultaneously in the Faroe Islands. Both societies grappled with draconian restrictions on what products could enter and exit, and similar restrictions limited the movement of people beyond their home archipelago as well. Reflecting on this wider global history of Prussian blue provides an important model to speculate upon Díðrikur's access to the blue. We know that Prussian blue was also available in Copenhagen in the early nineteenth century, and artists used it at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (Filtenborg, Buti, Vila, and Wadum 2016). At precisely the same time, Tórshavn became particularly important as a locus of trade between Denmark and Danish colonies and outposts in Tranquebar, Ghana, the Virgin Islands, Kalaallit Nunaat and Iceland. As Jóan Pauli Joensen (2017) has explained, a transit trade initiated by the Danish merchant Niels Ryberg smuggled colonial commodities like tea, tobacco, and porcelain through Tórshavn and into Scotland, England, and Ireland, enriching Danish merchants in the early nineteenth century. Future research should examine whether or not Prussian blue reached

the Faroe Islands through the trade monopoly or possibly through contemporaneous smuggling efforts. At the very least, blue signifies a connection to a global economic network. Blue may therefore suggest that Díðrikur's paintings are not simply images of local subject matter, but material signifiers of the interconnectedness of the Faroe Islands with the wider world.

Bárður Jákupsson (2000, 8) remarks that the fact Díðrikur "got his hands on colors, brushes, and paper—those certainly weren't available in Tórshavn at all—remains a mystery". What Jákupsson hints at here is how the literal materials of painting indicate some kind of Faroese engagement with the wider world despite the reality of the restrictive trade monopoly. We know Díðrikur traveled to Copenhagen in the summer of 1828, and returned home at least by 1834, if not earlier (Joensen 1970, 276-280). Whether he acquired his painting materials in Copenhagen, at the trade post in Tórshavn, or even in conversation with others on the ship, remains difficult to ascertain without more archival research. Instead, we might be able to speculate about the social and cultural conditions that might have motivated what Díðrikur wanted to say with his images, as he painted flocks of Faroese birds with vibrant colors and patterns only acquired from—and thus reflective of—the wider world.

Towards a Social Reading

Faroese birds and trade monopolies have been long entangled in the Faroese imagination, not simply through the extraction and extinction of avian specimens by collectors and scientists but codified in the country's nineteenth-century literature. In 1806-1807, Nólsoyar Páll (Poul Poulsen Nolsøe) penned *Fuglakvæði*, a ballad that casts a searing critique of the restrictions of Denmark's monopoly trade that exploited and disenfranchised Faroese families. Told through characters of Faroese birds, the text features the brave oystercatcher (*tjaldur*) who defends smaller birds from the machinations of a threatening falcon, a metaphor for Denmark and the colonial trade monopoly. Kim Simonsen (2012, 233-237) argues that it is important to realize that Faroese projected an anachronistic national sentiment onto *Fuglakvæði*, beginning decades later in the 1890s. He concurs with other scholars that Nólsoyar Páll's role in the Faroese national imagination was more so symbolical than it was historical. In other words, he emphasizes that it is difficult to know of the immediate reception or influence of *Fuglakvæði* at the time of its publication. I find it tempting to ponder the correspondences between the ballad and Díðrikur's paintings, not least because Díðrikur, like Nólsoyar Páll, had experienced a bit of the world outside of the Faroe Islands.

What I find so critical about *Fuglakvæði* is that it exists as a crucial precedent within Faroese cultural expression. In the absence of local visual arts that could have informed Díðrikur and his painting style or subject, *Fuglakvæði* provides a touchstone that demonstrates how Faroese thinkers imagined local birds as allegories and metaphors through which they could interpret their current reality. Just as *Fuglakvæði* engages the consequences of the trade monopoly, so, too—I hope to have demonstrated—do the very materials of Díðrikur's paintings invoke a certain economic history.

Considering the cast of characters in *Fuglakvæði* illuminates an important fact about Díðrikur's paintings: there are no falcons or other local birds of prey. The same birds who stand in as allegories for corrupt Danish officials and monarchs never appear in any of the paintings. Of course, it is impossible to know if Díðrikur never painted raptors, if those paintings are simply no longer extant, or if he excluded them from his oeuvre deliberately. I want to emphasize that I do not think that Díðrikur's paintings directly represent *Fuglakvæði* nor do I believe that Díðrikur was even necessarily aware of the ballad. Rather than seeing Díðrikur's birds as literal embodiments of the ballad, thinking alongside *Fuglakvæði* can help us see the political and social potential embedded within the artist's avian aesthetics. If Nólsoyar Páll's birds represented an exploited class of Faroese society, Díðrikur's birds may represent a population unrestricted. Precisely those

spaces where Díðrikur deviates from naturalistic representation are instances where the artist renders birds that exist otherwise, beyond the current limitations of their species, and beyond the normative representations of scientific illustrations. Painted with materials and the artist's lived experience from the wider world beyond the Faroe Islands—and outside the economic restrictions of the trade monopoly—Díðrikur's birds could indeed be visual metaphors about envisioning possible futures, one, perhaps, of self-determination.

Conclusion

Almost every consideration of Díðrikur á Skarvanesi mentions the strangeness of his paintings, not so much in their style, but rather in their very existence. For Jákupsson, it is no less than a "mystery" that a farmhand could even finagle access to the very materials necessary to create paintings: mineral pigments, ink, brushes, and even paper. Implied in his commentary "those certainly weren't available in Tórshavn" (*hetta var als ikki at fáa í Havn*) is a reference to the status of the capital as site of trade commodities. In the early nineteenth century, the Faroe Islands were still subject to a restrictive trade monopoly, making free trade forbidden. Designed for the economic benefit of the Danish crown, the monopoly disenfranchised Faroese families, and strictly controlled what came in and out of the country. The colonial framework of the trade monopoly isolated the Faroe Islands, thereby making Díðrikur's ability to make paintings remarkable.

Once we move beyond the supposed incredulity that a Faroese person did, indeed, make paintings in the early nineteenth century, we can understand them better as cultural works reflective of complex social, political, and economic conditions. Here, I have attempted to place Díðrikur's paintings in a variety of contexts. His visual references to taxidermy and scientific specimens invoke the history of ornithology, foreigners transforming Faroese birds into collectible commodities, and the extraction and extinction of local bird species happening in real time at the moment Díðrikur produced these paintings. Clear as they may seem, the paintings also resist the same affiliation with the natural sciences that they evoke. The dynamic patterns, green tail feathers, and blue faces challenge any presumption of fidelity to nature. Instead, Díðrikur á Skarvanesi purposefully played with the boundaries between fact and fiction, insisting that his avian subjects, and their viewers, remain instead in the liminal. In that space, the artist could question the colonial structures of Faroese society under Danish monopoly, referencing the trade both by the status of birds as commodities to be taken, but also painting materials as themselves connected to global networks of economic exchange. In doing so, Díðrikur built on a tradition of powerful cultural metaphors already inaugurated in nineteenth-century Faroese culture by Nólsoyar Páll's famous *Fuglakvæði*. And he did so, I think, not least because the artist kindled his own avian affinities. Maybe, like me, he was also afflicted with "puffin love."

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MAXINE SAVAGE

Landscapes Envisaged
Ruth Smith's (Self)Portraiture

Skundmiklu hendur tínar
royndu at binda hana í myndum:
oyðudæmda landið
á glið móti havindum
móti veldiga einseminum -
sama yvirbrá sum í andliti tínum,
eisni tað myndað við skundmiklum hondum.

Your deft hands
tried to capture it in pictures:
the desolate land
gliding towards the sea
towards the vast loneliness –
bearing the same countenance as your face,
that, too, pictured with deft hands.

-Karsten Hoydal, "Til Ruth / To Ruth," 1972[1]

I first encountered Ruth Smith's (1913-1958) work in 2016 during a tour of Listasavn Føroya in Tórshavn. I rounded a white-walled corner and there was *Andlitsmynd, Leif/Nes* (*Portrait, Leif/Nes*, 1957-1958) **[1]**, with its energetic brush strokes, rich color, and Nes' cluster of seaside houses – all, I would learn later, characteristic of Smith's work. The painting was hung in landscape orientation, despite its title claiming it primarily as a portrait.[2] What initially drew me to the painting was the portrait of Leif, Smith's son and the painting's eponymous subject. His bust emerges out of the lower-right edge of the work, appearing like a reflection in a body of water, perhaps a lake, as a rough grayish-blue background halos his shoulders and head, meeting ripples of blues and peachy yellows. The scale of this supposed reflection seemed surreal. And upon closer inspection, I could make out the road running under Leif's left shoulder and across, or behind, his torso, the fence that borders the upper corner of his lake-like backdrop and the beginning of an ocean landscape with clouds over the horizon. This was no reflection, at least not in the naturalist sense, but a meeting and merging of landscapes and portrait.

Following my 2016 introduction, Smith's work remained a fascination for me. When invited to contribute to this collection, I knew I wanted to write about her work as it remains little discussed outside of Faroese and West Nordic art circles. Revisiting her catalog, this puzzling meeting of portraiture and landscape came to the fore in a way I had previously failed to recognize. In the scholarship on Smith, it is often repeated (almost as some kind of apologia for her perceived failure to stay in one genre)[3] that she lacked resources, including a wealth of supplies, and thus often resorted to reusing canvases (cf. Warming 2007, 81-82). Nils Ohrt (2015, 135) attributes her genre blurring as a characteristically fluid boundary between sketches and finished works. Ohrt (2021, 242-3)

[1] Ruth Smith: *Andlitsmynd Leif/Nes* (Portrait Leif/Nes), 1957-8. Oil on canvas, 70 x 79cm. Listasavn Føroya, Tórshavn.

specifically discusses *Andlitsmynd, Leif/Nes* as unfinished in his 2021 work *Mellem Færøerne og maleriet*, due to "its three separate motifs in various angles [...]. Smith's original intention was to paint the view of Nes [...then] came the ocean view and then Leif, so that the painting appears as a bulletin board with three pictures". While these explanations are plausible, they have never fully satisfied my sense of Smith's work. As I reviewed Smith's catalog, those explanations became less and less compelling.

While Smith's portrait of her son Leif ignited my initial fascination with the artist, for the rest of this essay I examine Smith's self-portraiture in particular as it engages with, or meets, or becomes, landscape. Consider Smith's *Landslag málað út yvir sjálvsmynd, Landscape over self-portrait* from 1957 **[2]**. Two of Smith's central motifs are on display here: the self-portrait and the Nes landscape. Smith's self-portrait, painted first, has the subject's bust facing the viewer directly, sans glasses, and clothed in red (a common feature of Smith's self-portraiture). A yellow wall and shelves of books can be made out in the background. The figure is partially obscured with greens and browns of Nes' hillside cutting diagonally across the face, just below the eyes. The blue-gray-black houses of the town emerge, perched on the figure's chin still slightly visible beneath the greenery. The steep hills cover the figure's bust, with red arms and chest peeking through the clouds and mountainside. This work is presented landscape-side-up in the catalog of Smith's work in Dagmar Warming's foundational 2007 text on the artist, *Ruth Smith: Lív og verk*. However, in a recent post by Sirið Sten-

[2] Ruth Smith: *Landslag málað út yvir sjálvsmynd* (Landscape over self-portrait), 1957. Oil on hardboard, 61.5 x 52cm. Ruth Smith Savnið, Vágur.

berg (2023), Minister of Social Affairs and Culture, on the Ruth Smith Savnið's (the museum dedicated to the artist in Vágur) Facebook page, this work is presented portrait-side-up, with the caption noting that it "can be turned both ways". While it is certainly possible that Smith might have continued to paint Nes over her face, it is hard to imagine that her visage would not continue to bleed through. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that this would be how one would effectively "re-use" a canvas.

Traces of the merging of portrait and landscape, however, go back further in Smith's oeuvre. *Sjálvsmynd* (*Self-portrait*) from 1956 **[3]**, which closely resembles a similar portrait from 1955, depicts the half-length subject in three-quarter view, positioned in an open doorway with

[3] Ruth Smith: *Sjálvsmynd* (Self-portrait), 1956. Oil on canvas, 78 x 58cm. Listasavn Føroya, Tórshavn.

the landscape of Nes in frame. The background is almost split in two, the light blue of the door and its yellow threshold meet the blue, greys, and greens of Nes' familiar coastline. Similarly to *Andlitsmynd, Leif/Nes*, I misread this image initially – the door frame was the frame of a painting, the outdoors a painted landscape. Instead, Smith has brought the landscape of Nes into the frame of her own self-portrait – no possible interpretation of indecision or re-using a canvas here. While the portrait takes up a common motif for women's self-portraits, that of the artist at work with palette in hand (Calabrese 2006, 223), it also shows hints of Smith's interest in place – the left edge of the palette even seems to meld into the landscape. The subject's characteristic red shirt visually centers the

two worlds of her art, the meeting of her palette: the interior of her home and the landscape of Nes. Ohrt (2015, 148) views the palette here as functioning like a shield, comparing the subject to a European "painter prince," but it can also be a symbol of transformation, echoing the threshold of the doorway, a space where landscape becomes portrait, portrait becomes landscape.

An earlier portrait from 1939, *Sjálvsmynd* (*Self-portrait*), has a similar composition. The half-length subject also has palette and brush in hand, though Smith's familiar red pigment is limited to a bright collar peeking out from underneath a green jacket and a daub of crimson paint ready to be mixed. The 1939 portrait differs from the two from the 1950s in that the background is not split between outdoors and doorframe. Instead, the white doorframe borders the right edge of the image, with the light green and yellows of the landscape dominating the rest of the background. Regarding another of Smith's self-portraits, this one with an abstract background in various shades of blue (*Sjálvsmynd*, 1950), Warming (2007, 94) writes,

> it does not seem as if the figure comes out of the blue colour, but as if she is in it. There is no actual space behind the figure, just the colour blue and the hint of a horizontal line to the left of the figure, such that one senses the sea and the sky. The blue of the sea closes up around her, fatefully surrounding her [... she is] in the colour blue's embrace.

[4] Ruth Smith: *Sjálvsmynd* (Self-portrait), ca. 1958. Oil on wood, 50 x 53.5cm. Ruth Smith Savnið, Vágur.

I've come to view the 1939 and 1950s self-portraits similarly. Nes isn't out through the door, mere steps away, rather it is here already, in Smith's home, surrounding her/the subject.

If some of Smith's self-portraits feature the landscape enveloping the subject, *Sjálvsmynd* (*Self-portrait,* ca. 1958) **[4]** has her likeness threatening to dissolve into the landscape. As in *Andlitsmynd Leif/Nes* **[1]**, the figure's scale is at play here with the subject's bust dominating the length of the canvas. The form of Nes' houses almost flickers behind Smith's face, gray shadows behind her eyes and cheeks. The bright greens of the hillside contrast with the rough and decisive red strokes that indicate a familiar jacket. The wavy grey and charcoal strands of hair meet a similarly colored shifting sky. The two motifs are clear, but like *Landslag málað út yvir sjálvsmynd* 1957 **[2]**, their separateness is not. Approaching Smith's collected works in this way, attuned to the face and body in her landscapes and the landscapes in her self-portraits, you start to see hints of merging everywhere. Finger-like sea green forms emerge between houses and grassy foregrounds are populated with tufts that echo the turn of a nose. A subject's face lined with age suggests diagonal hillsides and lively backgrounds mimic ocean waves. This dynamic blurring further complicates the separation of Smith's genres.

The fragile separation is nigh obliterated in *Landslag málað út yvir sjálvsmynd* (*Landscape over self-portrait,* undated) **[5]** and *Kvøldarskíggj yvir sjálvsmynd* (*Evening sky over a self-portrait,* 1957). The names of these two works give the trick away, as both can be deceptive in their subject matter. *Landslag málað út yvir sjálvsmynd* **[5]** features a dark, sketchy cluster of black houses nestled into a foreground of bright yellows, greens, and blues with a textured black and yellow mass in the lower right corner. These forms meet transparent streaks of a white, red, and blue ocean, under a warm cloudy sky. Visible under the water are the features of Smith's face: her dark hair rises out of the left end of town, a dark eye floats over one of the houses' chimneys, and the hints of nose and mouth align with a pale line (perhaps previously a shelf or window ledge?) that makes its way up through the central cloud and middle of the painting. The collar of the figure's red shirt and slope of her top shoulder can be made out through the water and sky. The yellow-black mass becomes recognizable as the other half of her torso and shoulder. *Kvøldarskíggj yvir sjálvsmynd* similarly features Smith peering out from a landscape, as half of her oversized face and bust appears to rest on a bank of clouds floating over the ocean. In the latter painting, light pinks, purples, and greens wash over the sky, making the tans, oranges, and whites of her figure even harder to discern. While the titles of these two pieces (as well as *Landslag málað út yvir sjálvsmynd* 1957 **[2]**) aim at description, i.e. these are paintings where a portrait was painted followed by a landscape over top, in their adherence to temporal order they also imply an, arguably unnecessary, orientation to these works. The works become landscapes, albeit with an interesting back story, but remain landscapes nonetheless. Just as *Andlitsmynd Leif/Nes* becomes primarily a "portrait," the works themselves seem to push at the limits of these categories.

And this category trouble perhaps explains the apologia that haunts scholarship on Smith's work. Warming's and Ohrt's repeated acknowledgements that Smith's work does not always appear finished, that multiple motifs meet in one canvas, and that she did not have enough resources all feel oddly confessional and often unnecessary. At times, they themselves seem to recognize the limits of this view. Warming (2007, 82) notes that through conserving Smith's work she has realized that "the restless, unfinished and nervous in her works [...is] actually very intentional. It is not an expression of indecision but a constant search for a truth, with a sure and serious work technique". And Ohrt (2021, 179), writing on one painting, notes that "even though the picture is unfinished, it is a complete work of art, and it is difficult to imagine it more finished". That said, this issue of "unfinished-ness" still seems to haunt Smith's reception. For these works to be unfinished implies that an end goal for these pieces was

[5] Ruth Smith: *Landslag málað út yvir sjálvsmynd* (Landscape over self-portrait), undated. Oil on canvas, 54 x 64.5cm. Ruth Smith Savnið, Vágur.

not reached, that the "truth" of these paintings is different than what we have before us.[4] That a landscape really is not a portrait, and a portrait really is not a landscape, they are just not finished yet. The claim that Smith's works are unfinished is often seemingly used to idealize works into pieces that simply do not and will not exist and to diminish the works that do.

Smith's tendency to think portrait and landscape together is, as I hope I have demonstrated, a strong thread throughout her collection. And while I hesitate to describe all the pieces discussed in this essay as simply portraits, we might see traces of modern portraiture and the anti-portrait in her work. Omar Calabrese (2006, 24) places the twentieth century as the time of "the negation or even destruction of the self-portrait". This sentiment is echoed by Tomáš Jirsa (2016, 13), who, writing on portraiture in the twentieth century and beyond, notes that "scratched, smudged or blurred faces do not make the subject present, rather capturing its identity in the pro-

cess between appearing and disappearing". Similarly, Judith Weiss (2013, 135, 140) discusses forms of modern portraiture "that privilege the disappearance, slipping away, revocation and obliteration of the face" asking "how much face is needed to represent it as such?" These conceptions all find resonance with Smith's landscape/portraits, where the figure's face and identity resist stability and are often in flux. Johnstone and Imber's (2021, 1) definition of the anti-portrait is even broad enough to potentially encompass Smith's "landscapes," as the anti-portrait "resists or disrupts the received art-historical conventions of its genre [...and] embodies the compulsion to cross borderlines and sully 'pure' genres, even while paradoxically reflecting on and regulating the margins of its own". I offer these expansive readings of portraiture to suggest that perhaps we need not fret about Smith's demonstrated interest in ignoring genre boundaries and producing works with an air of irresolution or ambivalence. Instead, I hope this essay has succeeded in suggesting that Smith's landscape/portrait hybrids are rich, intentional explorations into emotional and subjective expression that warrant further scholarly investigation.

NOTES

1 Quoted in Warming 2007, translated by Kai Nieminen. All other translations mine unless otherwise noted.

2 This painting was presented in portrait orientation at Ruth Smith's funeral, where it was displayed next to her open casket. On this occasion, Nils Ohrt likens the work to a kind of epitaph (2021, 242).

3 There also exists in the scholarship another apparent apologia regarding the wealth of self-portraits Smith created. All caution that this trend should not be read as evidence of narcissism or excessive self occupation, but rather as necessity because the only model Smith had at hand was herself (for example: Ohrt 2021, 219; Warming 2007, 42). This seems unecesary and gendered.

4 Smith's abrupt death in 1958 at the age of 45 has surely contributed to this feeling that she, and relatedly we spectators, have been robbed of what could have been.

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ISABELLE GAPP

Aquatic Art Histories of the North Atlantic

Frida Zachariassen and the Faroe Islands Fisheries

[1] Frida Zachariassen: *Kvinnur stakka fisk* (Women stack fish), c. 1950s. Private Collection, Faroe Islands. Image: Listasavn Føroya.

Fishy forms have been parsed out into triangular patterns on the surface of the dock in Frida Zachariassen's (1912-1992) *Fiskagentan* (*Girl dries fish*, 1954) **[2]**. They are scattered around the feet of the women splitting and stacking them. In a contemporaneous painting, *Kvinnur stakka fisk* (*Women stack fish*, c.1950s) **[1]**, the split and salted Atlantic cod are being piled one atop of the other, each fish coming together to form a whole, a mirage of white. Here, the woman in pink in the foreground holds the tailfin of a split cod in her hand, the hollowed-out space of its belly made visible through a deep blue line. Indicative of Faroese inshore fishing, that is, fishing carried out close to the shore and often from small boats, Zachariassen's work explores the contact between the fisheries and fishers, of the boats in the harbour and the people and fish on the shore. *Kvinnur stakka fisk* and *Fiskagentan* are both examples of women working post-harvest, when the fish are being prepared and packaged. They draw attention to the women involved in the processes of fisheries labour, but also pressure the restrictive gendered framings of the fishing industry in and around the North Atlantic.

In recognising the role of women in the local Faroese fishing industry, Zachariassen depicts alternatives to

the prevailing scenes in art history of oilskin-clad fishermen hauling their catch onto the decks of fishing boats or onto the shore. As Elspeth Probyn (2014, 594) writes, "If in myth women meld with the sea, historically they have tended to be tied to shore." On North Atlantic shores, women washed, split, brushed down, and salted the fish before laying them out to dry. In the Faroe Islands, as in the neighbouring Lofoten Islands, Norway, for example, the cod were also hung on purposefully designed racks or beneath the rafters of buildings to dry in the sun until cured. Similar traditions of wind-dried cod or stockfish also characterised the inshore fishing of Shetland. Photographic archives of the Faroe Islands, Denmark, Iceland, neighbouring Scotland, and trans-Atlantic Newfoundland abound with images of women preparing cod and herring alike, the fish themselves piled high on the docks or on the factory floor.

Many places identify through and with fish, especially in the North Atlantic region. In Norway and Iceland, for example, artists including Gunnar Berg (1863-1893), Anna Boberg (1864-1935), Jón Stefánsson (1881-1962), and Gunnlaugur Scheving (1904-1972) all painted scenes characteristic of their local fisheries. Art historian Maura Coughlin (2020) encourages us to read art through fish when thinking about nineteenth-century French coastal fisheries and communities. With this essay, I propose that Zachariassen's paintings not only document the social history of the Faroese fishing industry during the 1950s, but that they also speak to the wider historical involvement and importance of women in fisheries around the North Atlantic. Here, I pursue an art history of fisheries in the Faroe Islands through the works of Frida Zachariassen, as they manifest intimate relationships between people, land, and fish in a pictorial form that warrants closer scrutiny.

[2] Frida Zachariassen: *Fiskagentan* (Girl dries fish), 1954. Bank Nordik, Klaksvík. Image: Listasavn Føroya.

Fishing in the Faroe Islands

For centuries, codfish had driven "transatlantic commerce as a staple of both the European diet and the Atlantic slave trade" (Kurlansky 1997, 82). Off the French Atlantic coast, cod had already been over-fished by the sixteenth century, with Iceland and Newfoundland continuing to provide far-reaching sources of this desirable white fish. For European fishermen, the Lofoten fishery was, and remains, one of the largest and most important deep-sea fisheries for Arctic cod. It remained especially strong until the early twentieth century, witnessing, like the Faroe Islands, a transformation from small-scale coastal fisheries to deep-sea, trawl fisheries. During the post-war period, the Faroese fisheries underwent waves of uncertainty, confrontation, and financial insecurity. Yet fishing remains the primary economic activity in the Faroe Islands. Focused on the small-scale fishery of Klaksvík, on the island of Borðoy, in the north of the Faroe Islands, Zachariassen's paintings, such as *Kvinnur stakka fisk* and *Fiskagentan*, exist within and respond to a significant

[3] Frida Zachariassen: *Úti i Klaksvík* (Out in Klaksvík), 1952. Bank Nordik, Klaksvík. Image: Listasavn Føroya.

moment of transformation throughout the North Atlantic fishing industry and community.

Born in Klaksvík in 1912, Zachariassen's fishery paintings were likely shaped by a personal and geographical intimacy with the Faroese coastal fisheries. Zachariassen's father, Jógvan Rasmussen or Jógvan i Grótinum, was a boat-builder and central figure in Klaksvík, fostering relationships with neighbouring Icelandic fishers, particularly those based out of Seyðidfjørður on the east coast. Zachariassen's husband, the fisherman Guttorm Zachariassen, died in a fishing-related accident in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1945, less than a year after they were married. To what extent these events impacted Zachariassen's artistic career requires a closer study of her biography.

Zachariassen was trained in drawing at a technical college in Denmark and was later accepted to the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, an opportunity she turned down to instead pursue a more financially lucrative career in business. Among her drawings and paintings are not only scenes of the Faroe Islands, but also Sweden, Iceland (1955 and 1976), Shetland (1956), and Norway (1958). These travels signal Zachariassen's mobility as an artist, demonstrating North Atlantic connections within the artist's own oeuvre and between and among these geographies and coastal societies. From the late 1940s onwards, Zachariassen remained in Klaksvík, and it was during the following two decades that she created most of her work. Her paintings were the subject of a solo-exhibition at Listasavn Føroya in 2010 and more recently, *Kvinnur stakka fisk* and *Fiskagentan* were included in the exhibition *The Sea*, similarly staged at Listasavn between 2020-2021. Despite this prolific career, Zachariassen's work has been little discussed outside of the Faroe Islands and warrants greater consideration within a wider art historical discourse.

Art historian Malan Marnersdóttir (2010, 136) argues that the angular and geometric style that became so synonymous with Zachariassen's work from the 1950s onwards "echoes the mechanical nature of modern working life." Marnersdóttir (2010, 119) further stresses the importance between people and land, with many of Zachariassen's geometric landscapes making visible the human presence: "Figures are usually painted at work:

they process fish, they are about to leave on fishery in small boats, they off-load ships, shop, harvest grass and feed sheep." Other paintings by Zachariassen depict these shoreline activities, with the masts of the vessels docked in the harbour rising like a desolate forest against the backdrop of a village. Figures in yellow oilskins and navy overalls move bales and buckets along the shore, their genders similarly obscured by the abstract rendering of their faces and forms. Beyond the human form, Zachariassen's *Fiskagentan* and *Kvinnur stakka fisk* are also noteworthy for their depiction of the fish. They remind us that the fish is both a resource and commodity.

Beyond the fish itself, Zachariassen's paintings also evince the ongoing interchangeability and extractive nature of fishing and its related shoreline activities. In her painting *Úti i Klaksvík* (*Out in Klaksvík*, 1952) **[3]**, she depicts the steam trawlers and traditional wooden fishing boats moored in the harbour, their chimneys and masts obstructing the view of the town beyond. In the Faroe Islands, the traditional wooden-oar boats, or útróður, facilitated small-scale inshore fishing. The vessels typically used for cod fishing were fitted with eight rowers or áttamannafar. Archival photographs from the Shetland Museum & Archives show several Faroese fishing boats in Lerwick harbour. Many of these shots were taken during the 1960s and demonstrate the persistent connections between North Atlantic fisheries (Wonders 2015). While the use of útróður continued as a commercial and personal practice, large-scale commercial fishing vessels and trawlers eventually replaced smaller boats throughout the twentieth century.

Similar to Zachariassen, Swedish painter Anna Boberg's paintings of the Lofoten fishing industry (Gapp 2021) recognises the shift between traditional modes of fishing and the increased industrialisation of the fisheries – the mechanisation of modern life, to borrow from Marnersdóttir. As in the Faroe Islands, trawling vessels had been introduced into the Lofoten fishery in the early twentieth century to replace the local Nordland boat, with Boberg (1934, 10, as cited in Gapp 2021) writing, "Who, at the time of my earlier visits to Lofoten, could imagine [...] that the power of the motor would in a staggeringly short time end tradition. The slow, hammering of the oars was replaced by the engine's rapid bangs, pure sailing was over forever." By including both the útróður and steam trawlers in *Úti i Klaksvík,* Zachariassen appears to comment on the coexistence of the two modes of fishing, as the one slowly outpaced and replaced the other. This mourning for the loss of traditional fisheries plays to the indefensible but commonplace assumption that the ocean has existed outside of history (Bolster 2014, 6).

Changing from so-called "traditional fisheries" to the more mechanised modes of the fisheries, trade rapidly altered coastal communities. So substantial was the transformation of the Faroese fishery during the 1950s that the inshore fisheries which had characterised the local fishing communities were required to move offshore, increasingly depending upon resources beyond the islands' geographical borders. It was also during this time that any hope of financial optimism in the Faroe Islands was brought to an abrupt halt. The nationwide investment in old-fashioned British steam trawlers proved catastrophic when coal prices suddenly soared. The Faroese bank Sjóvinnubankin, which had partly financed this endeavour, declared bankruptcy. Unemployment rates rose, and many were forced to move abroad to seek employment. Leveraging this time of national economic crisis, in 1954 two major Faroese fisheries strikes were organised by the national fisheries trade union Føroya fiskimannafelag, which also succeeded in rallying fishermen around the secessionist party Tjóðveldisflokkurin. The women's fisheries association, Havnar Arbeiðskvinnufelag (or Tórshavn's Working Women's Association), rallied behind the fishermen striking in 1954, despite their own strike funds having been depleted after countless conflicts with employers since their founding in 1936.

The Shore Crew: Women as Fishers

Fiskagentan was painted the same year as the two Faroese fisheries strikes took place. The women who

worked the roles that Zachariassen presents would have likely been involved in such industrial action. With arms outstretched and with her boots disappearing into piles of white fish that are strewn across the floor of the dock, the woman central to Zachariassen's composition in *Fiskagentan* directs her attention toward the viewer and might be read as taking both a literal and metaphorical stand.

Where much has been written about historic maritime masculinities, little has been framed around women in these watery, fishy, coastal domains (see Downing et al. 2021). In their introduction to fishy feminisms, Christine Knott and Madeleine Gustavsson (2022, 1670) argue that "At their most basic, fisheries involve human-fish interactions, and feminisms involve highlighting and challenging inequities." The argument that Knott and Gustavsson make locates gender within the larger system of fisheries. While part of this is recognising the number of women who participated in fisheries and later fish plants, it also extends to social and political engagement with concerns such as workers' rights, as Havnar Arbeiðskvinnufelag shows. With this in mind, Zachariassen's paintings, especially *Fiskagentan*, might be viewed through the lens of the intense union-led strike action that took place across the Faroese fishing industry during the early 1950s.

Recent curatorial work scrutinises the roles of women as launderesses, seamstresses, vendors, and shoemakers within nineteenth-century painting, but fishing is perhaps unsurprisingly absent.[1] In 1950 there were 4,846 women (adult and children) of a total population of 31,781 associated with the Faroese fishery and whale hunt (Danmarks Statistik 1959). Zachariassen's work, therefore, is particularly noteworthy, not only for recognising the significant role women had in the Faroese fishery industry, but also for being works made by a woman. The art historical emphasis on women as workers (artists) and women at work coalesces with Zachariassen. Importantly, these paintings question to what extent Zachariassen personally interacted with the women she painted and engaged with the women's association.

Women have long had a stabilising effect on the shoreline activities of fisheries, they perform roles as daughters, sisters, wives, and friends. These women were unlikely to

[4] Johannes Klein: *Fiskevaskning Vestmanhavn i Færøerne* (Washing fish in Vestmanhavn, Faroe Islands), 1898. The National Museum of Denmark. Public Domain.

[5] Sámal Joensen-Mikines: *Skipini fara ein várdag* (Ships Depart on a Spring Day), 1937. Listasavn Føroya. Image: Listasavn Føroya.

[6] Sámal Joensen-Mikines: *Skilnaður* (Departure), 1955. Listasavn Føroya. Image: Listasavn Føroya.

be on the boats, especially far out to sea, instead they were extensively involved in the fisheries on or near the shore. Women "formed an amazing migration along with the fish and formed an important part in the more-than-human assemblage of fish, institutional encouragement and technology," writes Probyn (2014, 594). Johannes Klein's photograph *Fiskevaskning Vestmanhavn i Færøerne* (*Washing Fish in Vestmanhavn, Faroe Islands*, 1898) **[4]** shows women scrubbing the fish clean, those same white forms splayed open as in Zachariassen's *Kvinnur stakka fisk*. Women would prepare the salted fish before laying them out to dry in the sun until cured. They "tended the fish, taking it in each night, or during rainy weather" (Wright 2001, n.p.). Women's labour "was integral to pre- and post-harvest tasks such as baiting long-lines, cleaning boats, washing clothes, gutting fish and sometimes the administration work related to the crew and the boat", write Siri Gerrard and Danika Kleiber (2019, 259).

Framed by shades of blue, white, pink, and yellow, the women in Zachariassen's *Fiskagentan* and *Kvinnur stakka fisk* are depicted within the spaces they inhabit and work. Inspired by Marilyn Porter's (1985) writing on Newfoundland, Gerrard (1983) introduced the concept of women as the "shore crew." Zachariassen's women are shown as a part of the local fishing industry, rather than apart from it. Unlike the solitary woman standing on the precipice of a cliff looking out towards a departing vessel and the vast expanse of the North Atlantic in Faroese painter Sámal Joensen-Mikines' *Skipini far ein várdag* (*Ships Depart on a Spring Day*, 1937) **[5]**, Zachariassen firmly roots the female body within a fishy domain. Women are shown handling, packaging, and salting the fish. By contrast in Joensen-Mikines' painting, as in another of his works *Skilnaður* (*Departure*, 1955) **[6]**, women are reduced to onlookers, anticipating the departure and arrival of the men.

Writing about the roles of women and men along Sweden's west coast, Anders Gustavsson (1986) also notes that during the early twentieth century, women were those who made the oilskin clothes that the men wore out into the fishing grounds near Iceland and the Shetland Islands. Originally made of old sailcloth covered with a thin layer of tar, or later cotton duck (a plain but strong woven canvas) soaked in linseed oil, by the 1950s this waterproof fishing gear was commonly made of PVC. Yet, in Zachariassen's *Fiskagentan*, it is the women who are dressed in oilskins, as opposed to the more commonly seen oilskin clad men in paintings such as Joensen-Mikines' *Postbáturin* and *Grind Killing* (1970, Ribe Kunstmuseum). Zachariassen's own paintings of the whale hunt warrant closer attention but were beyond the scope of this essay, especially given that women were not historically allowed to participate in the grindadráp (grind killing).

We might also observe the transition of women's fash-

ion from the more traditional silhouettes of the women in the background of *Fiskagentan* to the 1950s-style ensembles in *Kvinnur stakka fisk*. While in the latter, the women have been abstracted into simple forms, their distinguishing facial features removed, in *Fiskagentan* the central figure holds the viewers' attention, with the fish serving only to frame the composition. Writing in her self-published book *Brún og brá* (1979), Zachariassen acknowledged her own stylistic tendencies: "the idea that the line should be enhanced still prevails, though it is not always well chosen. Everybody did agree with this kind of abstraction, and in the 1950s and for a bit longer, I was no exception" (as cited in Marnersdóttir 2010, 42). Through the emphasis on line and form, both *Kvinnur stakka fisk* and *Fiskagentan* appear to emulate printmaking through their abstraction. In the blocks of colour and delineated shapes and lines, they evoke linocut and woodblock printmaking techniques. These parallels with methods of artistic process, abstraction with modernisation, and printmaking with technological advancement go further to consider the shifting spaces in which the women in Zachariassen's paintings worked, from the dock to the factory floor.

Women as shore crew changed dramatically following the Second World War. As Coughlin (2020, 149) notes, the "industrialization of fishing that added freezing to early conservation techniques such as drying, salting or canning [...] affected ocean ecosystems and the fishing populations that depended on the sea." Zachariassen's paintings are indicative of this change. As in *Kvinnur stakka fisk*, women began to be contained within the industrial structures of the processing plant.

Concluding Words

While women didn't cross geographical borders as part of the fishing industry, Zachariassen's artwork offers transnational modes for thinking through women's involvement in the North Atlantic fisheries and beyond. With women today comprising approximately half of fisheries workers globally (Harper et al. 2013), greater attention is warranted to the role women have historically played in fisheries. As a woman painter depicting women at work, Zachariassen also offers unique insight into these often-separate and distinct perspectives through her paintings. Zachariassen's *Fiskagentan* and *Kvinnur stakka fisk* offer important alternatives to the art historical emphasis on nineteenth-century labour and fisheries on the French and New England coastlines and introduce avenues through which to explore the aquatic and maritime connections in North Atlantic art histories.

NOTES

1 Most recently, these exhibitions include the Cleveland Museum of Art exhibition *Degas and the Laundress: Women, Work, and Impressionism* (2023-24) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art exhibition *Mary Cassatt at Work* (2024).

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JÓHAN MARTIN CHRISTIANSEN

Protest, maske, yngling, strejke

Lidt om mit udvalg af Janus Kambans værker

Februar 2016. Jeg er lige flyttet ind i atelierhuset, som billedhuggeren Janus Kamban (1913-2009) har testamenteret til billedkunstnere og forfattere, for at påbegynde arbejdet i forbindelse med min kommende soloudstilling i Færøernes Kunstmuseum, som åbner i september. Tiden i det højloftede hus for enden af 1950'er-kvarteret med rækkehuse og smalle veje blev skelsættende for mig, både som menneske og kunstner, men også, fordi ukendte nuancer af mennesket og kunstneren Janus Kamban blev synlige for mig. Dette vender jeg tilbage til lidt senere.

Janus Kamban er klassisk uddannet billedhugger på kunstakademiet i København ved professor Jørn Utzon Frank og mest kendt som kunstneren, der igennem et fortættet og forenklet udtryk har skildret klassiske færøske motiver såsom fåret og sølivet. Kamban er også kendt for sine vidunderlige, enkle grafiske tryk, hvor der zoomes ind på naturen, hverdagen ved havnen osv.

Jeg vil ikke vove at påstå, at Janus Kamban er en overset figur i den færøske kunsthistorie, tværtimod er han en central skikkelse, både som kunstner, initiativtager og facilitator, leder for kunstmuseet og som aktiv debatterende borger. Kamban skrev fx artikler om kunst, religion, politik og samfundsforhold. Men der er sider af Kambans liv, som måske bevidst, måske ubevidst, er blevet nedtonet, eller som dem, der skriver kanon, helt enkelt ikke har interesseret sig for. Det har hverken passet ind i billedet af færøsk kunst eller det på den tid konservative færøske samfund.

Det var i mødet med Kambans bibliotek, at jeg fik øje på en kunstner med en radikalt anderledes position, end hvad jeg var vant til at få genfortalt. På reolerne stod bøger om den store verden, om samfund, historie og lignende forhold, men også bøger, både fag- og skønlitteratur, om kroppen og seksualitet. Bøger, som jeg var stødt på et helt andet sted i mit liv, bøger, som vi læste i miljøet omkring bøssekollektivet på Vesterbro, hvor jeg boede igennem ti år. Dette var ikke bøger, som jeg forbandt med et lille kunstnerhus i Tórshavn.

Mit udvalg af Kambans værker har ikke været vist så meget før. Det er værker, som viger fra den klassiske fortælling i færøsk kunst om fiskeri eller natur, idet de peger på historier, som ikke nødvendigvis er blevet fremhævet. Vi ser en mand, der protesterer, en flok i strejke, ynglinge med bolde og en troldlignende figur, der holder en maske – måske et selvportræt som et Janushoved. Netop heri ligger måske en nøgle til en større og tvetydig forståelse af mennesket og kunstneren Janus Kamban. At via disse værker kan vi forhåbentlig også få øje på de historier og værker, som ikke er blevet fremhævet så meget før. Værker, der fortjener at blive vist, set, formidlet, fortolket til fordel for en mere kompleks forståelse af, hvad færøsk kunsthistorie egentlig er, at sømænd og queerliv kan stå side ved side.

Selv om jeg aldrig har mødt Janus, så har jeg nu igennem disse "nyopdagelser" og læsninger af hans praksis pludselig fundet en ny allieret i den færøske kunsthistorie – en kunsthistorie, som måske glider over fra ental til flertal.

Janus Kamban: titel ukendt (mænd med container), ca. 1976. Foto af Ole Wich, affotograferet af Jóhan Martin Christiansen.

Janus Kamban: titel ukendt (dreng med bold), slut 1980'erne. Foto af Ole Wich, affotograferet af Jóhan Martin Christiansen.

Janus Kamban: titel ukendt (ung mand med bold), start 1980'erne. Foto af Ole Wich, affotograferet af Jóhan Martin Christiansen.

Janus Kamban: titel ukendt (protestfigur), 1980'erne. Foto af Ole Wich, affotograferet af Jóhan Martin Christiansen.

Janus Kamban: titel ukendt (figur med maske), ca. 1983. Foto af Ole Wich, affotograferet af Jóhan Martin Christiansen.

LOTTE NISHANTHI WINTHER

Krop og hjem

Forhandling af slægtskab i Astrid Andreasens *Babyboom*

Færøsk billedkunst indgår i forskellige typer af oversigtsværker (Winther 2014, 4). I disse oversigter er nogle kunsthistorier veletablerede. Det er især dem, hvor kunstnere gennem modernismens forestillinger om autenticitet og originalitet gør Færøernes natur til destination for dannelses- og ekspeditionsrejser (Sven Havsteen-Mikkelsen) eller hjemstavnsfortællinger (Sámal Joensen-Mikines).[1] Andre kunsthistorier er underbelyste. Det er f.eks. dem, hvor kunstnere med deres værker omvendt vender sig bort fra nationens natur og insisterer på at skabe stoflige eller konceptuelle undersøgelser af det abstrakte værks poetik (Hansina Iversen). I disse færøske kunsthistorier er Astrid Andreasens *Babyboom* (1997) **[1]** et værk, der er, om ikke direkte kanoniseret, så heller ikke ukendt, og som det er værd at genbesøge. I dette essay vil jeg derfor se på, hvordan værket på en flertydig måde forhandler slægtskaber i senmoderniteten.

Babyboom

Babyboom består af 26 sammenstrikkede skibstrøjer med hvert deres mønster. Brunt, lyst og indfarvet uld udgør værkets materialer. Garnet er fra Mona Olsens spinderi i Klaksvík, der lavede garner af færøsk uld på gamle engelske maskiner i perioden 1967-2000.[2] Ophængt i et gridsystem forbinder trøjerne sig serielt i en vertikal og horisontal komposition. De kraftigt indfarvede felter spejler facadefarverne i en traditionel færøsk bygd,[3] og tekstilobjektet iscenesætter således krop og hjem på en både konkret og fabulerende måde. Andreasen har strikket på *Babyboom* i sin egen stue, og efter et halvt år kunne værket færdigmonteres i målene 260 x 160 cm. Ved at anvende skibstrøjer som grundstruktur benytter kunstneren sig af en slags hverdagsobjekter og lokalhistorie. Det er en strategi, hun også har anvendt i værket *Jens Vejmand* (*Palleba)* fra 1997, der er ophængt på et plejehjem i Tórshavn – Røktarheimið á Mørkini – og som forvandler hjemmesko (*Skóleistur*) til en stiliseret folkemængde.

Feministisk praksis

Kunstkritiker Trine Rytter Andersen (2006) læser Andreasens praksis i et feministisk perspektiv, idet hun kobler de usikre levevilkår, som arbejdet for at finde fodfæste som fuldtidskunstner indebærer, til livet som mor. Hun ser kunstnernes praksis som bestående af tre spor: billedkunst, designs og videnskabelig tegning. I lange perioder stykker Andreasen sin rolle som kunstner sammen med et arbejde som lønmodtager, og generelt har de færøske kvindelige kunstnere haft vanskeligere ved at opnå professionel interesse og vinde terræn uden

[1] Astrid Andreasen: *Babyboom,* 1997. Strikkede uldtrøjer, 258 x 159 cm. Listasavn Føroya. © Astrid Andreasen.

for Færøerne end deres mandlige kolleger (6). *Babyboom* bliver af Andersen læst som et værk, der dels – gennem sin titel – hylder et højt fødselstal på Færøerne, og dels udtrykker en uformel anerkendelse af, at striktrøjer fungerer som en "nationaluniform", der følger en færing fra vugge til grav (92). En nationaluniform, må det tilføjes, der gennem generationer er blevet skabt af kvinder i hjemmet og i kvinders bearbejdning af garnet som råmateriale. Men også en nationaluniform, der i takt med kvinders ændrede arbejdsforhold og yngre generationers digitale liv i sjældnere grad bliver opdyrket som (kunst) håndværk. I forlængelse heraf fungerer *Babyboom* også som en hommage til Mona Olsens særlige erhverv som kvindelig garnproducent.

Den nationale ramme

Babyboom blev i 2006 solgt til den offentlige samling på Listasavn Føroya, Færøernes Nationalgalleri, hvor det ofte hænger fremme. Den nationale rammesætning af værket fremhæves også i den tekst, værket på nuværende tidspunkt ledsages af i ophængningen på Listasavn Føroya. Her bliver *Babyboom* forklaret med udgangspunkt i uldens historie, der her betragtes som noget særligt færøsk: "Mænd til søs bærer ofte sweatre af uld, da de er gode til at holde varmen i. Et udvalg af de mange karakteristiske mønstre ses i Astrid Andreasens strikkede værk *Babyboom* med de mange sammenstrikkede trøjer."[4]

Men værket er knyttet til en national fortælling gennem mere end sit materiale. Kunstneren fortæller selv, at hun med titlen *Babyboom* refererer til fertile kvindekroppe og mere specifikt *færøske* kvindekroppe, idet den færøske fødselsrate omkring værkets skabelse er markant højere end de andre nordiske landes.[5]

Jeg vil imidlertid gerne udfordre dette nationale "babyboom" som den altoverskyggende forståelse af værket og afsøge andre af værkets affektive logikker og samfundsmæssige kontekster. I årene 1973-2020 var Færøerne nemlig *også* modtager af det højeste antal transnationalt adopterede børn i forhold til sin population (DIA 2022). De fleste børn er kommet fra Indien, Colombia, Sydkorea og Etiopien, men der lever børn fra i alt 28 forskellige lande i det færøske samfund i dag.

Udviskede slægtskaber

I et senkapitalistisk industrisamfund som det færøske er færøtrøjen almengjort både som håndarbejde, souvenir, nostalgi og kulturarv. Ansporet af *Babybooms* iscenesættelse af trøje og hjem kan jeg imidlertid ikke undlade at spørge til, hvilke kroppe og ansigter der bebor de mange trøjer. Hvordan er de racialiserede? Hvilke slægtskaber udtrykker de, og hvilke udviskes med de ansigtsløse figurer?

At få udvisket sine brune og sorte slægtskaber og erstattet dem med hvide er omstændigheder, som transracialt adopterede lever med og imod. Disse omstændigheder finder samtidig sted i en uafsluttet forhandling med majoritetssamfundets normer og fortællinger om slægtskaber. På Færøerne er den altovervejende slægtsforståelse den hvide kernefamilie. Men i et samfund, hvor brune slægtskaber sjældent bliver adresseret offentligt, kan et værk som *Babyboom* – trods dets (hvide) nationale fortælling – faktisk være med til netop at synliggøre og tilgængeliggøre brune slægtsfortællinger. *Babybooms* ansigtsløse figurer viser os ingen ydre fysiognomiske træk. Der er hverken kindben, læbemuskulatur, øjenform eller modermærke, der kan etablere et menneskeansigt. Og alligevel – eller måske snarere derigennem – forstår jeg alle disse ikketræk i værket som et billede på udviskede slægtskaber.

Den skandinaviske adoptionskritik har i mange år gjort opmærksom på de bagvedliggende ideologier, markedsmekanismer og raciale strukturer, der konstruerer fænomenet transnational adoption.[6] I dette komplekse system udslettes, tilføjes og forhandles slægtskaber; brune og sorte kroppe og omsorgsforståelser udviskes af et hvidt opsyn og en hvid omsorgsforståelse. I den sammenhæng handler kritikken af transnational adoption meget lidt om, hvorvidt den enkelte hvide danske eller færøske adoptant er en god eller dårlig forælder eller bedsteforælder. Kritikken sætter i stedet fokus på strukturelle forhold,

der generelt gør sig gældende for transnationale adoptioner med modtagerlande i Norden. Omstændigheder, hvor den brune krop forhandler raciale slægtskaber, kulturelle tilhørsforhold, identitet og tvivlsomme samtykkepapirer fra biologiske familier. De strukturelle forhold kan erfares som tab af identitet, oprindelsessprog, kultur og forbindelser til biologisk slægt. Ikke desto mindre peger disse omstændigheder på, at den transnationalt adopterede engang levede i et andet land under et andet navn med en anden religion og et andet statsborgerskab. Ændringer i disse forhold produceres igennem adoptionssystemet og omdannes til nye fælles vilkår for transnationalt adopterede i den danske og færøske velfærdsstat og dens familieidealer.[7]

Uudfoldet identitet

Det er tankevækkende, når et feministisk funderet værk som *Babyboom* knytter tråde til andre ubemærkede feministiske diskurser, der handler om konstruerede moderskaber, børn, racialisering og slægtskaber. Det gør det umuligt at adskille en kunsthistorisk analyse fra min egen baggrund. Jeg kan således ikke huske, hvornår min færøske morfar ikke har sat sin færøske slægt og fædrelandskærlighed højere end min asiatiske slægt og ophav. Den færøske natur er eksempelvis også for mig blevet et enestående sted at opholde sig i, ikke mindst fordi den aldrig spørger, hvor jeg kommer fra. Men min forbindelse til færøsk natur og kultur er etableret på bekostning af mine oprindelige slægtskaber, tilhørsforhold og sansninger af landskaber i det globale syd.

Vender vi blikket tilbage til *Babyboom*, er kroppene strikket sammen og forbundne. I min læsning af værkets tilsyneladende ligefremme og lavmælte sprog bliver uldtrøjerne tegn på kroppe, der både er forsvundne og usynlige, og som ikke er fysisk til stede i værket. Det er samtidig kroppe, der qua uldgarnets farve og materialitet er varme, brune og livskraftige. Kroppene er der ikke, men trøjerne overbeviser os om, at de *kunne* være der. De tomme trøjer gengiver symbolsk en uudfoldet identitet, dvs. en identitet, der engang eksisterede med oprindelsesnavne, oprindelsesslægtskaber og genkendelig spejling i andre menneskers ansigtstræk, men som aldrig kan blive udfoldet i et livsspor, fordi private data eller fysiske slægtskaber ikke findes eller er tilgængelige via et samfundsskabt, transnationalt adoptionssystem.[8]

Brun hjemlighed i Norden

Mangel på racial og biologisk genkendelse er et levet vilkår for brune kroppe i et majoritetshvidt samfund, hvor den enkeltes brune slægtskab er blevet udvisket. Men i et konkret og fabulerende sprog viser *Babyboom* et fællesskab af kroppe, der er forbundne, et fællesskab af brune kroppe i racial isolation, men også et fællesskab af livskraft, der peger tilbage på de frugtbare mødre, der har båret og født deres babyer. *Babyboom* viser således, hvordan intimitet og (om)sorg går i sammenfiltret udveksling med normative og nationalt funderede billeder på slægtskaber. I denne læsning kan værket siges at forestille et alternativt, men samtidigt udfoldet, fællesskab til den hvide nation eller den hvide kernefamilie, nemlig et fællesskab blandt transnationalt adopterede.

Babyboom er blot et værk blandt mange, der giver anledning til at undersøge vilkårene for brun hjemlighed. Brun hjemlighed er mit eget begreb for de materielle og affektive betingelser, der former idéer om hjem og tilhørsforhold for transnationalt og transracialt adopterede i Norden. Brun hjemlighed beskriver det at befinde sig mellem fremmedgørelse fra og tvunget assimilation ind i en hvid national norm, men også forskellige måder at genetablere de forbindelser, transnational adoption har forsøgt at udviske. Denne genetablering kan f.eks. være at skabe et sammenhængende sprog for tabte og skabte slægtskaber eller at finde andre indgange til kærlighedslogikker og økokritik med udgangspunkt i perspektiver fra det globale syd. Ved at undersøge, hvordan brun hjemlighed kommer til udtryk i, eller kan analyseres i relation til, kunstværker bliver det muligt kritisk at genoverveje racialiserede repræsentationer, globale magtdynamikker og kunsthistoriens nationale rammer, der alt for ofte tages for givet.

NOTER

1 Her tænker jeg blandt andet på malerierne *Kirkegården, Tórshavn* (1931) af Sven Havsteen-Mikkelsen, som ejes af Bornholms Kunstmuseum, og *Mykines bygd på Færøerne. Gråvejr* (1955) af Sámal Joensen-Mikines, som ejes af Statens Museum for Kunst og kan tilgås på SMK Open: https://open.smk.dk/artwork/image/KMS4911.

2 Tak til underviser og forsker Olga Birkopstø fra Fróðska-parsetur Føroya for oplysninger om Mona Olsens garnproduktion og til skolelærer Nita Næs fra Hvalba Skúla for omsorgsfuld udveksling af færøske slægtserfaringer.

3 Samtale med Astrid Andreasen d. 7. maj 2024.

4 "Uld og strik", udstillingstekst, Tórshavn: Listasavn Føroya, u.d. (besøgt marts 2023).

5 Samtale med Astrid Andreasen d. 10. maj 2024. Se også Trine Rytter Andersen (2006, 93).

6 Jeg henviser her generelt til adoptionsforsker Lene Myongs forfatterskab (e.g. Myong 2009) og til kunstnerkollektivet UFO's arbejde med en adoptionskritisk epistemologi (Myong 2024). Se desuden Tobias Hübinette (2021) og Kasper Eriksen (2024).

7 Upubliceret skypesamtale om huller i slægtskabsforståelser mellem adoptionsforsker og professor Lene Myong og undertegnede. Samtalen er en del af mit æstetisk eksperimenterende og uafsluttede billedprojekt, som jeg løbende arbejder på, *The Welcome House Project*. Dele af projektet er afviklet og fandt sted i mit hjem i København (2018) og henvendte sig til ikketransnationalt adopterede naboer (se også Mencke 2021).

8 D. 16. januar 2024 blev der foretaget et foreløbigt stop af transnationale adoptioner til Danmark og Færøerne, da landenes eneste formidlingsbureau, DIA, blev midlertidigt lukket. Ved lukningen har Social-og Boligminister Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil oplyst, at der skal "[...] være den nødvendige sikkerhed for, at adoptionen er gennemført på ordentlig vis i forhold til biologiske forældre [...]" (Brønd og Holmbo 2024).

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DAVID W. NORMAN

Tita Vinther
Weaving the Monochrome

Between the early 1990s and 2010s, the Finnish-Faroese fiber artist Tita Vinther (1941-2019) produced a series of textiles following a minimal yet enigmatic formula. In each, after weaving a simple rectangular form from a single color of light wool, Vinther hand-stitched individual strands of dyed or natural horsehair directly into the tapestry's matrix. Their titles often evoke subtle variations in natural environments, as in *Sirm* (*Drizzle*, 1993) **[1]**, one of several in this format in the collection of the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, its light, natural wool and bleached horsehair suggesting the glow of daylight dampened by haze. Others, such as the all-black *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt* (*The Black Sheep of the Family*, 2011) **[2]**, produced nearly two decades later, evoke affective or relational positions, in this case the stigmatizing experience of being marked as *other*.[1] Unique in this series, the tips of horsehair ornamenting *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt* are coated in copper.

Although Vinther produced these monochrome weavings across a long stretch of her career, they are quite modest compared with the full range of her practice, which radically expanded weaving's traditional formats, materials, and subject matter. Anne-Kari Skarðhamar (2011, 98-99) has noted that Vinther's work sparked debate in the Faroe Islands about the boundaries between "art" and "craft." The sense of constraint these categories imply can be seen in Vinther's choice in 2002 to weave a straitjacket in connection with an exhibition by the feminist artist collective Dyr (Door), which she co-founded with Guðrið Poulsen and Astrid Andreassen. Her oeuvre includes room-sized installations mimicking sails and nets constructed from human hair (*Pætursnótin / Peter's Net*, 1998, and *Sejl / Sail*, 2006) **[3]**, as well as dense, three-dimensional works that play with sculptural conventions, such as *Koparmorgun, Koparsól, Kopargleði* (*Copper Morning, Copper Sun, Copper Joy*, 2009), its coils woven from copper thread piled into glass vitrines. Yet despite what these experimental formats might suggest, Vinther was also deeply committed to preserving weaving's history, as she demonstrated in 1991 by constructing a replica of medieval Faroese sails from homespun wool for the Roskilde Viking Ship Museum (Skarðhamar 2011, 93).

The minimal wool and horsehair compositions may seem to offer much less to interpretation than these large-scale projects, yet by aligning the medium of weaving with a monochrome format, they provide an opportunity to reevaluate a common rhetorical trope in discussions of Faroese contemporary art in Denmark.[2] In an essay contributed to the catalogue for *Kolonialen*, Nordatlantens Brygge's inaugural exhibition, Jens Frederiksen (2004, 75) expressed a fraught yet often-repeated assumption when he claimed that art is a "comparatively recent phenomenon" on the islands. Frederiksen was actually referring to *painting's* (and to a lesser extent sculpture's) "com-

[1] Tita Vinther: *Sirm* (Drizzle), 1993. Wool and horsehair, 127 x 96 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands.

paratively recent" position in Faroese art history, but this tendency to equate traditional medium categories with art writ large appears fairly regularly. Dagmar Warming (2006, 14), for instance, wrote of Vinther's experiments involving human hair, "she is not weaving a canvas—a two-dimensional image—but almost a three-dimensional sculpture." Although this description captures key aspects of Vinther's site-responsive projects, framing her textile practice as *either* a question of sculpture *or* painting prevents us from understanding weaving as an artform in its own right—one that, in contrast to Frederiksen's assessment, has deep roots in this context.

To the extent Vinther's single-colored textiles engage—yet are unconstrained by—questions particular to painting and sculpture, they provide an opportunity to look beyond an art historical framework centered on those particular medium traditions. Aligned with recent exhibitions organized by the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, such as *Landslagið í broyting / Changing Landscapes* (2022), that emphasize how artists across generations have simultaneously intervened in global and local arts discourses, I offer an expansive frame of reference for evaluating Vinther's contributions to Faroese art history. In contrast to the national or regionally-structured survey exhibitions her work was most often shown within during her lifetime, Vinther's background was highly transnational: born in Finland, she spent much of her childhood in Denmark before settling in the Faroe Islands in 1960, and apprenticed or took courses in weaving in each of these countries between the 1960s and '70s. In keeping with the mobility that shaped her life, this essay unfolds as a series of meditations on Vinther's monochrome weavings that place them in dialogue with an eclectic range of discourses. These minimal textiles, I hope to show, provide opportunities for seeing Faroese art history engaged with global conversations in feminist art circles regarding postminimalism's revisions of Minimalist seriality, the category of craft and its attachments to questions of artistic labor, as well as the monochrome trope's more troubling racialized origins.

Arts and Crafts

Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen (2023, 7) has observed that artists' use of sheep's wool often immediately evokes ideas about "connection to the homeland, the natural setting of the Faroe Islands and humankind's role in it," associations that reflect the long history of wool production on the islands.[3] Throughout the Middle Ages and

the Early Modern period, sheep herding provided many Faroese people with a foundation for self-sufficiency, and as one of the Faroes' most important export products, a basis for cultural exchange in the wider North Atlantic. During the centuries before the formation of the Denmark-Norway personal union, wool was frequently transported to the port of Bergen in a trade route largely operated by Faroese traders themselves (Øye 2008, 225). In other words, before artists began encoding ideas about the islands' ecological and cultural distinctiveness into landscape painting—a tendency that could be contextualized within nineteenth- and early twentieth-century national consciousness movements (Nauerby 1996)—the materiality of wool traced deep connections between the region, its population, and the environmental and economic conditions that link them.

Yet wool's availability as a material for art reflects dramatic shifts in its cultural status. Following the rise of automated spinning and weaving technologies in the nineteenth century, the Faroese textile industry plummeted, and today much wool is discarded as a waste product. Karina Lykke Grand notes that while sheep were rarely if ever represented in earlier periods of Faroese art when textiles remained central to the Faroese economy, wool's connotations have shifted from "survival" to "surplus" as it becomes increasingly associated with luxury goods and tourists' romanticized attitudes about the Faroese landscape (Karina Lykke Grand quoted in Eriksen, Armand, and Alminde 2019). Between weaving's long history in Faroese vernacular arts, its economic obsolescence, and the heightened value of manual processes in our post-Fordist moment, the thorny question of "craft" arises.

In her monograph on Vinther's practice, Skarðhamar (2011, 90) divides Faroese art history into two streams: one identified with "Faroese folk art, the other [...] German Expressionism"—a seemingly innocuous assessment. Yet histories of art in the North Atlantic have often marginalized "folk art" or craft traditions, as the *Kolonialen* exhibition exemplified (the show's Faroese section included only painting, sculpture, and prints). As T'ai Smith (2016, 80) explains, although craft "underpins almost any work of art," modern and contemporary art history has long effaced questions of the handmade, while "craft" is disproportionately used to categorize the products of feminized, racialized, and working-class labor often excluded from the discourses and institutions of art. If "craft" suggests closer attention to the interaction between a maker and the process of fabrication than "art" might allow, it

[2] Tita Vinther: *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt* (The Black Sheep of the Family), 2011. Wool, horsehair, and copper, 176 x 110 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands.

[3] Tita Vinther: *Segl* (Sail), 2006. Human hair, linen, and rusted iron, 135 x 530 x 400 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands. Photo: Ole Wich.

also poses a risk of essentializing manual processes, portraying artforms like weaving as entirely culturally-determined, or worse, exoticizing them as quaint, outmoded, or out-of-time—qualities Kim Simonsen (2022) notes are entirely general to Danish stereotypes about the Faroe Islands.

Vinther's monochrome weavings rest uneasily between an art-craft binary. Woven on a vertical, warp-weighted loom—an ancient mechanism with a long history in Nordic tapestry production—they demonstrate her deep commitment to the medium in its own right. Yet the addition of horsehair gives the textiles a tinge of animalistic or anthropomorphic strangeness that clearly separates them from ordinary functional objects. The weaving that becomes a landscape by way of horsehair—animal fiber turned into plant fiber through the weaver's hand—presents a kind of enchantment akin to such paradoxical objects as the BLESS Beauty Hairbrush **[4]**. The locks of lush hair flowing from the brush's base tauntingly proclaim its non-functionality, transforming the designed object into a mirror image of its imagined human counterpart. Just as the brush allegorizes its own situation of use, Vinther's woven landscapes call our attention to weaving's animal origins and the environments that support them.

The monochrome weavings destabilize both "art" and "craft" alike, but working against weaving's exclu-

sion from fine arts contexts likely served much more specific goals. Vinther was likely keenly aware of textile art's gendered connotations, and she exhibited in explicitly feminist spaces fairly regularly. Beyond her projects with Dyr, in 1997 she was included in an exhibition curated by Olivia Petrides at the Chicago-based Artemisia Gallery, named after Artemisia Gentileschi (Cassidy 1997). Understanding the challenge her work poses to a sharp division between art and "folk art" in Faroese art history, then, raises further questions about the gendered nature of this division, one that Vinther's reference to the painted monochrome throws into relief.

Weaving and Painting

Unlike Warming's assessment of Vinther's large-scale installations, the horsehair-tinged weavings easily call to mind painting's forms and conventions, not least through their engagement with the monochrome trope. Textiles are, after all, intimately entangled with the history, theory, and materiality of painting; in many cases, weaving is painting's literal foundation in the form of woven canvas. Likewise, the grids present in much modern painting—which recursively echo the canvas's flat, rectilinear surface—find their match in weaving's dependence on the loom, which choreographs space into an orderly matrix of warp and weft. Vinther's single-color textiles might initially appear to demonstrate this structuralist affinity that aligns monochrome discourse with weaving practice, especially in their dependence on the wall. Both *Sirm* and *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt* are supported by metal rods concealed behind their upper and lower ends, maintaining their taut, upright hanging and calling to mind what Rosalind Krauss (2008, 133) argues is perhaps painting's core, medium-specific tension: the illusionistic act of lifting a horizontal expanse "into the vertical field of the canvas and thereby onto a geometry that 'measures' and 'controls' it."

Yet even in photographs, *Sirm* drips with tactility—the quality Bauhaus textile artist Otti Berger (1930) identified as *weaving*'s essential, medium-specific principle. Like condensation seeping past a window screen, the pale horsehair gently opens the textile's "ground" into a denser, three-dimensional space—into the open air, like the trickling rainfall its title suggests. If, as Krauss proposes, painting's status as a medium stems from the act of forcing a horizontal expanse to conform to the human subject's vertical orientation, measuring and containing the canvas's spatial limits like a stretch of earth fenced in by property lines, then attempting to render elemental conditions in the textural qualities of wool suggests another perspective altogether **[5]**. Also in contrast to the monochrome trope, and particularly its associations with Minimalism, for all their seriality the single- or bicolored weavings are each highly variable. Whereas *Sirm*'s horsehair is distributed unevenly across the tapestry, with the largest concentration pooling in the lower right, in *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt* the material is densely layered. As much as these works engage the thought of the monochrome, their sinuous, physically irregular materials disrupt any assumptions of formal purity.

Susan L. Stoops (1996) has described how feminist artists have developed similarly heterogeneous, material-centered approaches to abstraction that reject the masculinist tenets of Minimalism, which boasted of removing any trace of subjectivity from the art experience. Between the 1970s and 1990s, artists like Eva Hesse, Dorothea

[4] BLESS Beauty Hairbrush, 1999, 2024. © BLESS.

[5] Tita Vinther: *Pætursnótin* (St. Peter's Net), 1998 (detail). Collection of the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands. Photo: Ole Wich.

Rockburne, and Lenore Tawney claimed abstraction's conceptual openness as a vehicle for conveying situations of difference. Consider, for instance, Olga de Amaral's *Riscos* (*Cliffs*) and *Tierra y fibra* (*Earth and Fiber*) weaving series, which she produced across much of the 1980s **[6]**. These tapestries' vertical strips, produced by weaving together wool and horsehair, call out to the grid only to shake it loose, identifying the weaving's physical and chromatic mass with the physical irregularity of land itself. These cords and ribbons also, it so happens, invoke a distinctly woven knowledge system much older than the grid: the system of recording numerical information in knotted devices that Inca makers referred to as a *quipu* (Hamilton 2018, 42).

To engage the monochrome format only to unmoor it from painting discourse and Minimalism alike is to reconceive this trope within a more open-ended set of questions, in which female subjectivity, the cultural history of wool, and other "particularities" are central, not marginal. The woven monochrome, tinged with a raw, organic material and the natural variability it produces, advances toward a capacity for difference nascent to yet often disavowed within monochrome discourse. For feminist artist Mary Kelly (1981, 44), color itself, to the extent it resists semiotic capture by "never really acced[ing] to the signifier," introduces a "difference in the field" of signification that challenges modernism's

masculinist valorization of authorship. Yet assigning "difference" to chromatic form has rarely been a neutral gesture in art history, and here Vinther's engagement with the monochrome trope approaches a much less liberating dynamic.

Blackness and Surface

In addition to stitching single strands of hair into the surface of textiles, in some cases Vinther wove larger sections of horsetail into plaits before adhering them to the wool. This is the case in *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt*, the surface of which appears significantly denser than others in this series. Skarðhamar (2011, 96) states that Vinther began plaiting horsehair for some textiles after she observed a Black woman having her hair braided by a hairdresser. She titled her first weaving involving plaited horsehair *Maria* (2003), after Mahalia Jackson's rendition of "Ave Maria."

This instance of racialized observation aligns Vinther's practice with the anti-Blackness at the heart of the monochrome trope's history. When Kazimir Malevich inscribed a racist joke onto the frame of his *Black Square* (1915) **[7]**, Hannah Black (2016, 6) has explained, he conscripted Blackness into modernism's service through a form of symbolic subjugation that enforces the invisibility of Black subjects: "The painting masquerades as the negation of representation, but in light of the joke about darkness, negation itself becomes representation; what is represented is the nothingness of certain subjects, which indicates a certain nothingness in subjectivity itself." Although the moment that led to *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt* does not equal the explicitly racist origins of *Black Square*, the racialized dynamics of observation that informed Vinther's work build on a similarly nonreciprocal structure of representation. The weaving almost reenacts the moment of observation, suggesting the back-turned head of the one observed, who cannot return her gaze to the one looking.

Vinther's act of observation reflects a much broader pattern of perceiving racial difference as and through surface. Jasmine Nichole Cobb (2023, 132) describes "feeling sensed with the eyes," the experience of being read as surface, as central to the affective experience of anti-Blackness. Yet for Black artists, the pictorial surface can also be an area of experimentation that "focus[es] our attention on blackness as a contrived surface," whether by challenging racist representations or highlighting the ways Black subjects assert agency through self-fashioning. Lorna Simpson's *1978-88* (1990), for instance, a composition of four photographic prints depicting nearly identical braids, grounds the act of hair plaiting in rather different situations of surface observation than *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt*. Overlaying the braids are the year markers 1978, 1982, 1988 and the words "cut, tangle, tie, tug, knot, part, tear, twist, split, weave"—each both a noun and a verb, conveying either stasis or mobility, and a spectrum of associations from the violent to the nur-

[6] Olga de Amaral: *Tierra y fibra 5,* 1988.
Wool and horsehair, 160 x 160 cm. © Olga de Amaral.
Photo: © Diego Amaral. Image courtesy of Lisson Gallery.

[7] Kazimir Malevich: *Black Square,* 1915. Oil on linen, 79.5 x 79.5 cm. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

turing. Huey Copeland (2013, 92) argues that Simpson's career-long investigation of Black hair culture in works such as this foreground "a contingent form of relation across space and time" that signifies "the unchanging facts of black female oppression, but [also] a willingness to be connected" across generations.

The title of *Tað er tvætt í hvørjari ætt* underscores the difference of Vinther's position from that taken up by Simpson. It is difficult to reconcile this title with the instance that led Vinther to begin plaiting hair. She may have been attempting to reflect on her own experiences of struggling with family belonging. As Vinther was born amid the outbreak of the Second World War, when she was only one year old her Finnish parents sent her to a foster home in Vejle, Denmark, where Danish became her first language, likely creating challenges when she was repatriated in 1947 (Skarðhamar 2011, 87). Still, an individual experience such as this diverges sharply from the collective connections Copeland describes, even as relational ideas indeed informed Vinther's perspectives on feminism and weaving's history.

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These are only some of the discussions that Vinther's practice could facilitate. As I hope these reflections make clear, the narrow art historical parameters I introduced at the outset are far from sufficient. Vinther's work itself compels us to look to different directions.

NOTES

1 Although Vinther's Faroese title literally translates to "Every family has its black sheep," her monograph assigns to the work slightly different Danish and English titles: "Familiens sorte får" and "The black sheep of the family." The Danish and English titles likewise lack the rhyming quality of the Faroese.

2 As I do not read Faroese and am subsequently limited to utilizing Danish, English, and multilingual sources, my essay takes a more speculative tone, focusing on broad issues raised by her work and by authors who have commented on Faroese art in a Danish context. A more thorough assessment of Vinther's work within Faroese critical discourses would likely raise different questions than mine.

3 Olsen noted this in her discussion of contemporary textile artists Ragnhild Hjalmarsdóttir Højgaard and Alda Mohr Eyðunardóttir.

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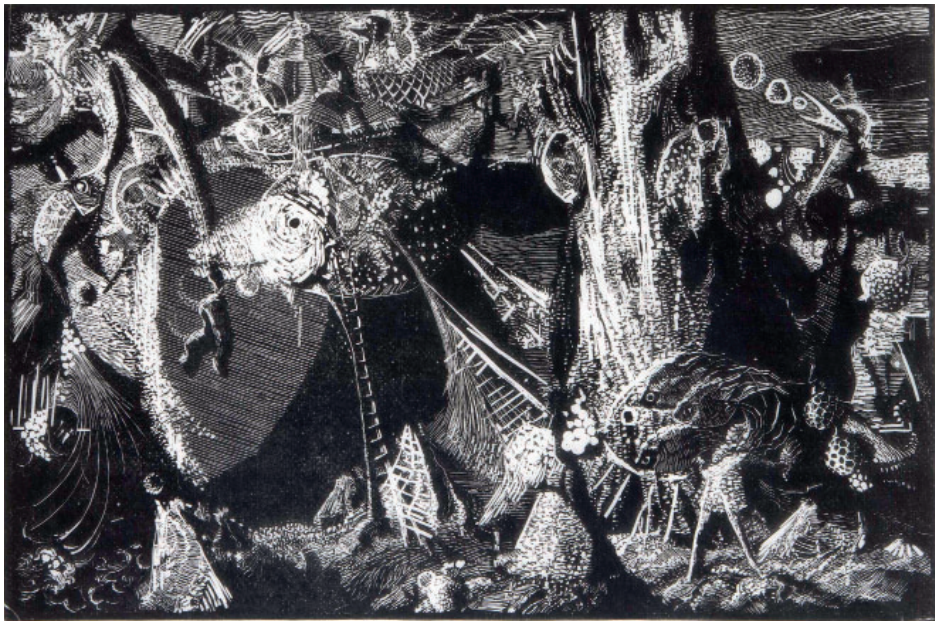
ANNA MARIA DAM ZISKA

Elinborg Lützen
Subsea Dreamscapes

Elinborg Lützen (1919-95) was the first graphic artist from the Faroe Islands. Although she is a central figure in Faroese art history, there exists relatively little material and research on the artist, apart from the exhibition catalogue edited by Nils Ohrt (2021) and brief summaries on her work in surveys on Faroese art such as Mikael Wivel's *Century* (2011) and Bárður Jákupsson's *Myndlist í Føroyum* (2000). This essay aims to expand analyses of Lützen's work and, in particular, shed light on her linocuts of subsea scenes. In doing so, the essay discusses how Lützen's work breaks away from Faroese traditions and draws on ideas of surrealism.

Lützen was born in Klaksvík in the Faroe Islands in 1919 and moved to Copenhagen at the age of 18. In the years 1937-40 she was a student at *Tegne- og Kunstindustriskolen for Kvinder*, a school in Copenhagen which aimed to improve women's access to academic training in visual arts and handicrafts. Like many other people from the Faroe Islands, Lützen resided in Denmark during the Second World War, unable to move back to the Faroe Islands due to the occupation. It was here that she began her relationship with Sámal Joensen-Mikines, whom she was married to from 1941-52 (Jákupsson 2019). Several other Faroese artists such as Ingálvur av Reyni, Jóannis Kristiansen, Frimod Joensen, Janus Kamban, Ingolf Jacobsen, and Ruth Smith also lived and worked in Copenhagen at this time. It was also during this time that these artists founded the Faroese art association, Listafelag Føroya, which is still active today and has held numerous important exhibitions showcasing Faroese art through the years. The association became a pillar within the Faroese art scene and also founded Listaskálin, the first proper exhibition space in the Faroe Islands, known today as the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands.

Although Lützen began her artistic studies already in 1937, it was not until more than twenty years later that she began working intensively in the medium that she is known for today, namely linocuts. In 1957-58, she was a student at *Kunsthåndverksskolen* in Bergen, Norway, where the prominent graphic artist Povl Christensen was her professor. In 1960, Lützen began working almost solely with linocuts, which she continued to do for the rest of her career (Jákupsson 2019, 14). Lützen's linocuts are predominantly landscapes and "fairy-tale pictures". While Lützen's prints and watercolours of landscapes often depict specific settlements and neighbourhoods in and around her hometown, Klaksvík, the fairy-tale pictures seem to be based on pure imagination. These pictures do not depict specifically Faroese motifs, but rather appear like surrealistic dreamscapes. Furthermore, Lützen has also illustrated numerous children's stories and fairy-tales in Faroese publications, the most popular being *Í skýmingini* by Sofía Petersen (1948).



[1] Elinborg Lützen: *Á havsins botni* (The Bottom of the Sea), undated. Linocut, 45 x 65 cm. The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands.

Subsea Worlds

Lützen's fantastical prints are arguably the artist's strongest work and stand out from the rest of Faroese art being made at the time. The best example, I would argue, of this type of work by Lützen are the two prints titled *The Bottom of the Sea* (undated) **[1]** and *Fairy-tale Picture II* (1973) **[2]**, which show surrealistic subsea scenes with strange creatures and shapes.

The two prints both depict a rather abstract scene from a sunken ship and large undersea rocks. Different kinds of fish, jellyfish and seashells populate the ocean, while tools and items such as fishing nets and rope ladders remind us of life on land (Jákupsson 2019). The tools such as the rope ladders also seem to indicate a more abstract link between different dimensions of life. A large bird is placed at the left top corner of the print, while small human-figures stand on the seabed. The human-figures are engaged in a range of curious activities. In the print titled *The Bottom of the Sea,* a man is defending himself from a swarm of large flatfish, and in *Fairy-tale Picture II,* two female figures have got their braids stuck in a large shell and appear to be dragging it along the bottom of the ocean. In *Fairy-tale Picture,* what seems to be a pig's body with no head is floating around in the sea, while the skeleton of the large bird in the left corner is partly visible. These unsettling details serve as memento mori—a reminder of the inevitability of death—which Lützen frequently employed in her prints (another example is the print titled *Fairy-tale Picture* (1973) **[3]**, where three hooded skeletons appear at the foot of a mountain). Along with their surrealistic motifs, the dimensions of the figures in the subsea prints further strengthen the sense of surrealism. While the bird and certain fish are enormous and take up a lot of space in the print, the human-figures are dwarfed and at times difficult to spot. Furthermore, many completely abstract shapes appear in the prints, making the works somewhat difficult to decode. Although it is impossible to see exactly what all the shapes and figures in these two prints are, they convey an unnerving and dream-like atmosphere.

With the exception of a few prints from the 1970s which were multi-coloured, Lützen's prints are solely black and white. She is best known for her very dark

[2] Elinborg Lützen: *Ævintýrmynd II* (Fairy-tale Picture II), 1973. Linocut, 42 x 63 cm. The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands.

prints, where she uses little to no shading, which also can make her prints difficult to understand or decipher at times. This adds to the inscrutability of her prints and their surrealistic effect. In many of her prints, Lützen would use only a small amount of ink in order to make the prints grey instead of completely black. This effect is further enhanced by Lützen using a spoon made out of horn in order to carefully transfer the print onto paper, instead of using a printing press. Her technique made the printing process long and arduous, resulting in the prints being printed in limited editions of most often 10-20 copies (Jákupsson 2019, 14). It is worth mentioning that Lützen's spoon, along with most of her other printing tools as well as several linoleum blocks, sketchbooks, and notebooks, were donated to the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands by the artist's family and can be found in the museum's archives.

Lützen in "the Space of the Unconscious"

The existing scholarship on Lützen is, unfortunately, quite limited, and most of the texts written about the artist fail to examine her work in depth due to their biographical focus. In his survey on Faroese art, *Century*, Mikael Wivel (2011, 420) briefly discusses Lützen's fairy-tale images. Wivel (2011, 422) states that Lützen is the "most amazing storyteller in Faroese art" and compares her to Pieter Breughel and Hieronymus Bosch, as her depictions fall "midway between the surreal and the realistic". Wivel (2011, 422) writes as follows about Lützen's subsea prints:

> Here she has two approaches. Either she gives it the character of magic and has the most remarkable creatures appearing side by side with fish and clams—or else she lets it all rip in a kind of insane turbulence that puts any attempt to identify the subject to shame.

While Wivel splits Lützen's undersea prints into two distinct groups, I argue that her prints encompass both approaches, which are not as separate as Wivel suggests. Both *Fairy-tale Picture II* and *The Bottom of the Sea* depict highly detailed creatures and items, but when you look more closely, they also contain abstract elements which

are impossible to identify. This combination of recognizable motifs and abstract shapes, along with the absurd scenarios and figures, as well as the size ratio of the different creatures give the prints surrealistic attributes that are unusual in Faroese art, which is often perceived as being focused on landscapes.

In his essay in the exhibition catalogue on Elinborg Lützen, artist and former director of the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands Bárður Jákupsson (2019, 18) states that: "[Lützen] steps into the space of the unconscious, although we ought not call her a surrealist". Unfortunately, Jákupsson does not reason or explain this statement further. It is possible that Jákupsson refers to the fact that a large part of Lützen's oeuvre consists of prints of landscapes and settlements. Although Lützen did not work solely with surrealism, it is evident that many of her works explore the ideas and possibilities of the surrealistic approach.

Surrealism was a twentieth-century artistic movement which explored the mind, focusing on the unconscious and dreams. Surrealist artists were often focused on the beauty that was found in the "unexpected and the uncanny, the disregarded and the unconventional" (TATE, n.d.). In his *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), André Breton (2010, 477) defines Surrealism as a:

> Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.

Using Breton's definition, one cannot call Lützen a surrealist, as she did not to our knowledge work with automatism in her work, and her prints are not "exempt from any aesthetic concern". However, regarding surrealism as not only a twentieth-century movement but also as a transhistorical artistic approach or style allows us to see and read Lützen's work through a surrealistic lens. For instance, it is clear that Lützen was focused on the unconscious and dreams. This is not only visible in her image-subjects, but also in her titles, which sometimes refer to dreams (Ohrt 2019, 53), such as the print *Subsea Dream*

[3] Elinborg Lützen: *Ævintýrmynd* (Fairy-tale Picture), 1973. Linocut, 42 x 63 cm. The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands

Image (undated), which depicts a similar subsea scene to the two I have discussed earlier in the essay. This focus on the unconscious, along with Lützen's depiction of strange creatures and uncanny settings, clearly demonstrates that she was working with the surreal in her art.

Although subsea landscapes are not a common surrealist setting, several surrealistic paintings include water in the form of the ocean, lakes or rivers. For instance, Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (c. 1500), where strange animals, human-like figures, mermaids and other creatures are engaged in strange activities in a garden with rivers and a large lake. In Salvador Dalí's painting *The Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory* (1952), we see both above and under the sea, where three clocks appear to be melting, one large fish is swimming, and abstract shapes similar to bricks and missiles seem to be floating in the water. One can imagine that Lützen has seen these famous paintings and has been inspired by them, as important elements from both works are also present in Lützen's subsea prints. Moreover, Lützen was from Klaksvík, the "fishing capital" of the Faroe Islands, so it is likely that her fascination with the aquatic is further strengthened due to her own surroundings.

While landscape painting had been a longstanding tradition in Faroese art and abstract painting was developing quickly in the mid twentieth century, mythical surrealistic art was more or less non-existent in the Faroe Islands in Lützen's time. One of Lützen's only contemporaries to dabble in the field of surrealism was the author and visual artist William Heinesen (1900-1991), whose images often depicted fantastical creatures, trolls, and other characters from Faroese sagas. However, while Heinesen's work most often revolves around Faroese culture and society, Lützen's subsea prints do not refer to anything specifically Faroese. Nor are they abstract (although they do contain some abstract elements such as different unidentifiable objects and strange shapes). In this way, Lützen's fairy-tale images are distinct from the work of her contemporaries in the Faroese art scene. Lützen's surrealistic dreamscapes hold a special place in Faroese art history, and their influence is arguably visible in the work of contemporary Faroese artists such as Silja Strøm (b. 1987), Sigrun Gunnarsdóttir (b. 1950), and Edward Fuglø (b. 1965), whose paintings often portray peculiar creatures, odd size ratios and other surrealistic elements reminiscent of Lützen's dreamscapes.

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ANNA VESTERGAARD JØRGENSEN

Fremkaldelse

Hansina Iversen og Julie Sass

I Den Danske Ordbog står der om *fremkaldelse*: "1. det at fremkalde en film; 2. det ved (taktfast) klappen og evt. hujen at få én eller flere optrædende til igen at vise sig foran publikum og lade sig hylde efter en forestilling eller koncert; 3. det at få noget til at opstå."

Som en del af temanummeret "Færøsk kunsthistorie i dag" har vi inviteret færøske Hansina Iversen (f. 1966) og danske Julie Sass (f. 1971) til hver især at udvælge et udsnit af den andens arbejder. Gennem de seneste 10 års tid har deres praksisser på forskellig vis berørt hinanden igennem udstillingsarbejde, der har fremkaldt kunstneriske forbindelser mellem egne og andre kunstneriske projekter. Hvor Julie Sass og Hansina Iversen først og fremmest er kunstnere med base i abstrakt maleri, så er det de to kunstnere som deltagere i og initiativtagere til kuratoriske projekter, denne lille tekst fokuserer på. For hvilken betydning har udstillinger for, hvilke kunsthistorier der kan skrives – for, hvem der kommer til syne, og på hvilke præmisser? Hvordan fungerer kuratering, med andre ord, som en slags fremkaldelse?

Abstraktioner

I Hansina Iversens litografi *Sepia* (2017) er sort trykfarve malet direkte på den litografiske sten. Øverst i billedet kan man tydeligt følge penselføringen: en, to, tre, fire retningsændringer, før stregen forsvinder ud af papiret. Resten af billedets farveflader er mere diffuse, og den sorte farve opløses i nuancer af grå, der fremhæver farven som væske. Den litografiske proces er i sig selv en form for billedfremkaldelse: Når trykpressen presser papiret mod den litografiske sten, oversættes arbejdsprocessen til et endeligt værk. I *Uden titel 18/30* er processen stadig synlig, den *er* værket, der således nok er abstrakt, men også utroligt konkret som materiale, bevægelse, tilstedeværelse.

I 2018 var værket en del af udstillingen *En kort historie om abstraktion* (Rønnebæksholm), hvor Julie Sass gav sit kuratoriske bud på en kunsthistorie om abstraktion. Ved siden af hang dels et kobbertryk af Sass selv, dels tre kalligrafisk inspirerede værker af Henri Michaux (1899-1984). Som papirværkerne hang dér side om side, spejlede de hinandens afsøgning af det skarpt optegnede i opløsning – og omvendt. Værkerne fremkaldte, med andre ord, æstetiske og formalistiske komponenter imellem sig. "Kunstnerne har ikke nødvendigvis set hinandens værker, men eksemplerne viser, at der på tværs af tid og sted er visse sammentræf i de kunstneriske eksperimenter", som Sass (2018, 36) har beskrevet mødet mellem Michaux og Iversen på Rønnebæksholms væg.

Også hos Hansina Iversen finder man en kunstnerisk-kuratorisk praksis, hvor hele udstillingsrummet inddrages i en samlet iscenesættelse. I *Speaking in Tongues* (Møstings Hus, 2020), der blev lavet i samarbejde med Jóhan Martin Christiansen (f. 1987), belyste Christiansens installatoriske værker Iversens abstrakte malerier, der omvendt skabte en farveintens baggrund for oplevelsen af installationerne (Christiansen og Iversen 2020). Udstillingen trak tråde tilbage til et tidligere udstillingsprojekt mellem Christiansen og Iversen: *Lonely Hearts* på Listahøllin i 2018. Her omfavnede Hansina Iversens maleriske praksis de rå værftslokaler snarere end omvendt. Som Mariann Enge (2018) skrev om udstillingen, "[...] flytter Hansina Iversen maleriet ut av lerretsformatet og over i et veggmaleri som tar i bruk hele rommet – hele rommet *er* på sett og vis verket."

Senere, i 2021, kuraterede Hansina Iversen årets Ólavsøkuframsýning (Olai-udstilling) på Listasavn Føroya. Det er en årlig udstilling, der siden 1948 har været afholdt af Listafelag Føroya (Færøernes Kunstforening). Til 2021-udstillingen havde Hansina Iversen kurateret en udstilling-i-udstillingen med titlen *Grøn eru grá hús*. Den tog udgangspunkt i malerier af Ingálvur av Reyni (1920-2005) som en fejring af, at kunstneren ville være fyldt 100 år. Desuden var Julie Sass, Jóhan Martin Christiansen og Randi Samsonsen (f. 1977) inviteret til at bidrage med værker, der hang side om side med av Reynis. På sin vis var også denne udstilling en fortælling om abstraktion, men med av Reynis abstrakte kompositioner som omdrejningspunkt og ikke Julie Sass' praksis som udgangspunkt (som på Rønnebæksholm). Det var, selvfølgelig, en *anden* historie om abstraktion.

Andre kunsthistorier

En velkendt trope i kunsthistorien er, at færøsk kunst er særligt forbundet til naturen. Eksempelvis skriver Lisbeth Bonde (2014, 36), at "I Hansina Iversens værker er der et særligt lysspil eller nogle atmosfæriske stemninger, som jeg vil

hævde, relaterer sig til den færøske natur." Og på Listasavn Føroya beskrives det, hvordan "Færøske kunstnere har en stærk tradition for at male abstrakte og ekspressive landskaber", og at bl.a. Hansina Iversens malerier kan "[...] vække mindelse om organiske former fra naturen".[1] Selv forklarer Hansina Iversen (citeret i Sass 2016, 6), hvordan det netop *ikke* er den færøske natur, der er afsæt for hendes værker:

> Naturen påvirker og omslutter alt her på Færøerne, men det er ikke det, der optager mig. Jeg bliver ikke inspireret af naturen. Jeg er optaget af en anden slags møder. Der er flere, der forholder sig til alt det blå derude og det påskønner jeg, men i forhold til mine malerier er det noget helt andet, en anden farveskala simpelthen, der er spændende for mig.

Selvom Hansina Iversens værker ofte beskrives i en kontekst af færøsk kunsthistorie, med dens angiveligt særlige tilknytning til naturen, så er det altså *også* muligt at se hendes oeuvre i andre kunstneriske slægtskaber. Udstillingsprojekter som *En kort historie om abstraktion*, *Lonely Hearts*, *Speaking in Tongues* og *Grøn eru grá hús* giver med andre ord vigtige alternative måder at møde de udstillede værker på, idet de bryder med en national ramme (eller overhovedet ikke interesserer sig for den).

Forbindelser

At kuratering netop handler om det, der opstår mellem de udstillede genstande, er velbeskrevet i litteraturen. "To consider the inbetweenness *of things* is thus to normalize an understanding of the material world as being constituted by movement and mediation", som Paul Basu (2017, 2) skriver. At anskue verden gennem det, der er imellem, betyder med andre ord at bemærke bevægelser og skiftende betydninger i og mellem genstande. Men udstillinger forgrener sig også og får betydning uden for udstillingsrummet, efter at udstillingen er lukket.

Udstillingen *Grafiske forbindelser* (2014) er et godt eksempel på, hvordan udstillinger vokser. Udstillingen blev til på initiativ fra Jonas Hvid Søndergaard og var kurateret af Kinna Poulsen i samarbejde med det grafiske værksted Steinprent i Tórshavn og blev vist på Vendsyssel Kunstmuseum, Kastrupgårdsamlingen og Nordens Hus på Færøerne. Her blev der vist værker af en række af de danske kunstnere, der havde arbejdet med Steinprent, herunder Julie Sass. Hansina Iversen deltog godt nok ikke selv på udstillingen, men hun og Julie Sass fortæller, at det var i forbindelse med udstillingen – der således både skabte

æstetiske og mellemmenneskelige forbindelser – at de første gang lærte hinandens værker at kende.[2] I sin åbningstale til udstillingen påpeger Kinna Poulsen (2015), hvordan udgangspunktet for udstillingen var en udforskning af litografi som medie, men at de væsentligste "forbindelser" i udstillingen egentlig var de mellemmenneskelige: mødet med nye mennesker, praksisser og værker for både tilrejsende kunstnere og de, der er bosiddende i Tórshavn – samt de nye samarbejder, nogle af disse forbindelser medførte.

På en udstillingsplakat til udstillingen *Black Fog Rising* (Steinprent, 2019) har Julie Sass synliggjort de forbindelser, en udstilling udgør. Hun er ikke selv til stede på plakaten, men hendes værker bliver vist frem af en række af de personer, der var involveret i udstillingen, direkte og indirekte. Yderst til venstre holder Hansina Iversen et værk, ved siden af Jan Andersson fra Steinprent. I midten, iført en sort frakke, holdes en snor oppe af Kinna Poulsen, der netop kuraterede forbindelsen. På plakaten bliver de netværk, som udgør en udstilling, synliggjort. Den er i sig selv en fremkaldelse af det, der normalt er usynligt i udstillingsrummet.

NOTER

1 "Form og farver", udstillingstekst, Tórshavn: Listasavn Føroya, u.d. (besøgt marts 2023).

2 Samtale med Hansina Iversen og Julie Sass, 26/2 2024.

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^ Hansina Iversen: *Sepia,* 2017. Litografi lavet i Steinprent . © Hansina Iversen.

ᒣ Julie Sass: *Uden titel,* 2023 (udgivet i samarbejde med Steinprent til udstillingen Vandretilstande). Heliografi, litografi på 300g gråt syrefrit italiensk papir, ca. 76x56 cm . © Julie Sass.

> Julie Sass på Steinprent, Tórshavn, 2023 © Steinprent/Sass.

Til de følgende sider har Hansina Iversen og Julie Sass udvalgt en håndfuld af hinandens værker og projekter, som de finder særligt interessante, og hvor slægtskabet mellem de to kunstnerskaber kommer til udtryk

Julie Sass: Plakat til udstillingen *Black Fog Rising,* Steinprent, Tórshavn, 2019. Jan Andersson, Hansina Iversen, Eyvind Akraberg Hansen, Kinna Poulsen, Mathilde Rude, Randi Samsonsen, Louise Aakerman Nielsen, Frida Mattras Brekku, Dagmar Malena Winter. Foto: Bardur Eklund.

En kort historie om abstraktion (udstillingsfoto), kurateret af Julie Sass, Rønnebæksholm, Næstved, 2018. Fra venstre til højre: Julie Sass, *Uden titel (efterbillede, mørk)*, 2018; Julie Sass, *Uden titel (tredeling, sprækker),* 2018; Sonja Ferlov Mancoba, *Masken*, 1977; Julie Sass, *Uden titel (S.J. Tribute, brun),* 2018. Foto: David Stjernholm.

Hansina Iversen: Udsmykning af Løgtingið (Lagtingshuset), 2006. Silketryk på glas og udskåret bullseye glas. © Hansina Iversen. Foto: Torben Eskerod.

Hansina Iversen og Jóhan Martin Christiansen: *Speaking in Tongues* (udstillingsfoto), Møstings Hus, 2020. © Hansina Iversen og Jóhan Martin Christiansen. Foto: Torben Eskerod.

Grøn eru grá hús (udstillingsfoto), kurateret af Hansina Iversen, Listasavn Føroya, Tórshavn, 2021. Fra venstre til højre: Julie Sass: *Modelleret maleri,* 2021 (forskellige medier på bomuld, 160x140 cm); Ingálvur av Reyni: *Kurpali* (Lille værelse), 1961 (100x140 cm). Foto: Julie Sass.

Julie Sass: *Collage Painting,* 2021. Akryl og pigment på bomuldslærred, 160x140 cm. © Julie Sass. Foto: Erling Lykke Jeppesen.

Hansina Iversen: *Purple Rain,* 2023. Olie og airbrush på lærred, 160x150 cm. © Hansina Iversen Foto: Finnur Justinussen.

KINNA POULSEN

Uden for rammerne

Om Randi Samsonsens skulpturer og den blomstrende udvikling inden for færøsk samtidskunst

Da Randi Samsonsen mandag morgen den 20. juni 2022 trillede sine store skulpturer fra lageret i Miklagarður ind i selve supermarkedet, var det et syn for guder, der vakte stor opmærksomhed, morskab og overraskelse blandt morgengæster, rengøringspersonale og andre arbejdsfolk. Både selve udstillingen *When Will You Come To See You Like I Do?* og modtagelsen af den udgør eksempler på den enorme udvikling, der er sket inden for færøsk billedkunst i løbet af det 21. århundrede, og som har flyttet færøsk billedkunst fra en forholdsvis homogen størrelse til noget, der i dag peger i alle mulige retninger. Det er et forløb, der stadig forekommer relativt ubemærket blandt en del kunstinteressenter i den sydlige del af kongeriget Danmark, hvor man i danske anmeldelser af færøsk billedkunst stadig kan opleve henvisninger til den historiske og klichébehæftede "Færøkunst". Dette begreb figurerer eksempelvis i overskriften af Tom Jørgensens anmeldelse "Færøkunst i det sydvestsjællandske" (2023), hvor anmelderen lægger ud med at konstatere, at det er en kendsgerning, at det lokale landskab påvirker billedkunsten i det pågældende område. Som argument finder han to eksempler på landskabskunst i dansk og engelsk kunsthistorie tilbage i 1800-tallet og går siden i gang med en positiv anmeldelse af en udstilling med færøsk samtidskunst, som han ligeledes mener afspejler det færøske landskab. Og jo, der skal være plads til alle meninger, men som færøsk kurator og kritiker kan man ikke undgå at blive irriteret over den automatiske naturoptik og de utidige naturromantiske klichéer, der synes at præge den generelle modtagelse af færøsk samtidskunst i Danmark.

Et af flere eksempler på færøsk eksperimentalkunst, der intet har med naturen at gøre, er Randi Samsonsens udstillingsprojekt med titlen *When Will You Come To See You Like I Do*?, der bestod af en gruppe med fem tekstilskulpturer, som i løbet af sommeren og efteråret 2022 blev udstillet i henholdsvis et supermarked, en svømmehal og et bibliotek beliggende i Tórshavn. Skulpturerne har alle hæklet overflade, der omslutter organiske, bugnende former. Tre af dem står på fire ben, hvoraf den højeste knejser omkring to meter op i højden. Den har to forskellige farver, en rødviolet forneden og en blåviolet foroven. En lidt mindre skulptur med nogenlunde samme form er rød og hvid, imens en mindre skulptur er gul, hætteformet og placeret direkte på gulvet uden synlige ben eller sokkel. Den lysegrønne er af samme størrelse, men er lidt mere kantet, imens den sidste er rundere med orangeblå foroven og pinkblå forneden. Der er altså tale om ret forskellige figurer med fælles materielle

Randi Samsonsen: *When Will You Come To See You Like I Do?* Installation i Miklagarður, Tórshavn, 2022. Foto: Bárður Eklund. © Randi Samsonsen.

og formmæssige karakteristika. Skulpturerne er bløde og flertydige og forekommer på en gang enkle og komplekse, håndgribelige og abstrakte, lune og mystiske, søde og faretruende.

Skulpturerne er håndhæklede, og deres håndværksmæssige oprindelse er bevidst og demonstrativ, ifølge Randi Samsonsen:

> At hække er meget tidskrævende og en teknik, der udelukkende kan udføres i hånden. Jeg prøvede forskelligt andet, syede tøj sammen, forsøgte mig med maskinstrik, der alt sammen var spændende, og som kunne have gået noget hurtigere. Men i sidste ende er det selve strukturen i det hæklede og teknikkens grundlæggende enkelhed, der gav bedst mening, og som jeg forventer taler til beskueren. Mennesker sanser lige så meget flader og strukturer med huden som med synet. Når jeg bruger uldgarn og hækling, kan huden huske materialet, for den har mærket det materiale før. (Poulsen 2022)

Grundmaterialet består af flerfarvet uldgarn, der altså er hæklet, syet sammen og herefter fyldt med stole, træ, plast, stof og reb. Materialemæssigt er skulpturerne præget af et bevidst banalt udtryk med deres associationer til barndommens hjemmestrikkede og hæklede tørklæder og grydelapper, der forekommer milevidt fra museernes højtidelige verden af gamle malerier. Samtidig er værkerne med deres larmende uanvendelighed og monumentale størrelse andet og mere end hyggelige brugsgenstande. Værkerne er decideret anmassende og trænger sig på beskueren. Det handler ikke kun om størrelse og form, men også om strukturen, det hæklede materiales taktilitet, hvordan vi sanser det, og hvordan vores hænder og hud husker den noprede overflade. De uregelmæssige værker er væsensforskellige fra supermarkedets systematik, de gentagne opstablinger af varer med helt klare formål. Det håndlavede materiale er også tænkt i modsætning til alt andet masseproduceret materiale inde i supermarkedet, der for det meste består af pap, plastik og metal. Materiale, form og placering giver således associationer til antimaterialistiske, antiæstetiske og antikapitalistiske

Randi Samsonsen: *When Will You Come To See You Like I Do?* Installation i Miklagarður, Tórshavn, 2022. Foto: Kinna Poulsen. © Randi Samsonsen.

strømninger omkring kvindebevægelsen i 1970'erne.

Ved at placere værkerne i et supermarked og andre steder, som vi ikke forbinder med noget kunstnerisk, håber Samsonsen på at få os til at afbryde vores automattænkning både i forbindelse med indkøb, men også i vores interaktion med kunst. Billedkunstneren mister lidt overblik og kontrol over sine værker, da de bliver placeret et sted, der intet har med kunst at gøre, og netop denne mangel på kunstnerisk topstyring er en decideret befrielse, hævder Randi Samsonsen og uddyber: "Sådan et sted som Miklagarður er der så meget, som jeg ikke kan styre eller redigere. Farver, lys og andre visuelt larmende objekter. Hvordan værkerne bliver modtaget eller opfattet, om de overhovedet opfattes som skulpturer eller andet er jo helt op til den enkelte, eftersom de er udstillet uden for kunstinstitutionelle rum. Det er både en befrielse og en smule farligt. Men det er helt klart afgørende. At miste kontrol er med til at lære mig, hvad værkerne, beskueren, og jeg selv kan" (Poulsen 2022).

Det, at værkerne tydeligvis er placeret uden for deres komfortzone i det ritualiserede kunstudstillings- eller ferniseringsrum, påvirker opfattelsen og modtagelsen af dem. Der var mange, der passerede værkerne uden at kigge op, men blandt de fortravlede kunder var der dog flere, der standsede op og kiggede og reagerede, før de ilede videre med deres dosmersedler. Skulpturerne stod i supermarkedet en uge, og som kunde dér oplevede undertegnede, at de blev diskuteret, især den højeste af skulpturerne, der var placeret tæt ved kassen, hvor folk stod i kø.

Randi Samsonsen: *When Will You Come To See You Like I Do?* Installation i Miklagarður, Tórshavn, 2022. Foto: Bárður Eklund. © Randi Samsonsen.

De fleste af skulpturerne oplevede at blive krammet, da de mindst reserverede af modtagerne – børnene – fandt ud af, at man vistnok godt måtte røre ved figurerne.

Udstillingstitlen stammer fra det kendte jazznummer *The Beauty Of All Things* af Kurt Elling og Laurence Hobgood fra 1997 – en sang, der handler om tilværelsens, kærlighedens og menneskets skønhed og indeholder en principiel form for åbenhed: Hvornår vil du se dig som jeg?

Det forekommer at være et åbent spørgsmål, der kan gå flere veje, alt efter om det er et filosofisk, eksistentielt spørgsmål, eller om det er beskueren, der spørger skulpturen, eller omvendt. Tekstilskulpturerne er antropomorfe med deres særlige materielle og formmæssige kropslighed. Skønhedsmæssigt er det mere Venus fra Willendorf end Venus fra Milo, der falder os ind, for figurerne er præget af en kluntethed, der er mere elskelig, end den er elegant, og forekommer som en del af kunstnerens strategi med henblik på at afvæbne beskueren mentalt. Skulpturerne minder i form om *Barbapapa*, en fransk børnebog fra 1970, som børn har været fascineret af lige siden 1970'erne. De er lette at tegne med en sammenhængende, bølgende konturstreg, og den formmæssige enkelhed er nok en af årsagerne til deres enorme popularitet. De formummede figurer er imidlertid også foruroligende flertydige, og man fornemmer noget skjult og bagvedliggende. Netop samme dobbelthed fornemmes i Randi Samsonsens skulpturer.

Randi Samsonsen er uddannet fra Designskolen Kolding i 2012 som master i design med speciale i tekstildesign. Hun arbejder i dag som tekstilkunstner og har udstillet i Norge, Danmark, Island, Finland, Tyskland, Canada, USA og i sit hjemland Færøerne. Samsonsen arbejder også som underviser og udvikler af tekstilafdelingen på Glasir Tórshavn College på Færøerne. Her underviser hun i design og tekstilværktøjer. Hendes værker hænger på Færøernes Kunstmuseum, og

fra november 2023 til november 2024 udstiller hun den store, kollektive kunstinstallation *Things Matter* på Trapholt.

Randi Samsonsens udstilling *When Will You Come To See You Like I Do?* i bl.a. Miklagarður i 2022 udgør et af flere eksempler på den rivende udvikling, der er sket inden for færøsk billedkunst i løbet af det 21. århundrede. Udstillingen var banebrydende i mere end en forstand. Det var ikke alene første gang, Færøernes største supermarked lagde lokaler til en kunstudstilling. Det var samtidig en kunstudstilling, der ikke mindede om andre udstillinger, med værker, der udtryksmæssigt ligger et godt stykke fra den gængse forestilling om, hvordan kunst ser ud. En sådan udstilling er på mange måder omstændelig, men bliver en sand bedrift, hvis man betænker, hvor svært det rent faktisk kan være at arbejde uden for institutionerne i et land, der står svagt kunstinstitutionelt, hvor der eksempelvis ikke findes et kunsthistorisk institut eller et kunstakademi, og man først nu i skrivende stund er ved at etablere en universitetsbaseret kunstuddannelse.

Randi Samsonsens udstilling var på mange måder frisk og frejdig, men skulpturprojektet krævede også stort mod. Det gør den slags projekter, der drejer på flere af de kendte parametre i et land uden megen erfaring inden for eksperimentalkunst, og hvor ikke mindst skulpturudtrykket har været begrænset til relativt traditionelle bronzeskulpturer. Selvom færøsk billedkunst generelt står stærkt med veluddannede aktører, så foregår uddannelsen udenlands. Efter endt skolegang vender de færøske kunstnere – nogle af dem – tilbage til Færøerne og fortsætter deres praksis her, hvor kommercielt salg er hovedårsagen til, at forholdsvis mange færøske kunstnere kan leve af deres kunst. På Færøerne er de allerfleste hjem prydet med færøsk originalkunst. Der er virkelig mange kunstsamlere på Færøerne, hvor det ikke kun er noget for de velhavende, men for alle, der gider, og det er der mange, der gør.

At beklage kommercialismen inden for færøsk billedkunst vil være formålsløst og det samme som at undsige den, men efterhånden må vi nok også stå ved dens ikke så positive påvirkning i forhold til den eksperimenterende kunst på Færøerne, hvilket har været med til at forsinke udviklingen på den færøske kunstscene. Vi har fået etableret et kunststøttesystem og en generel forbedring af forskellige strukturer omkring kunsten, hvilket sammen med flere værkstedslejemuligheder for kunstnere vil forbedre tingenes tilstand. Og som man måske kan fornemme af Randi Samsonsens projekt, så er det allerede i gang og i færd med at ske.

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LAILA MOTE

Creating Creatures

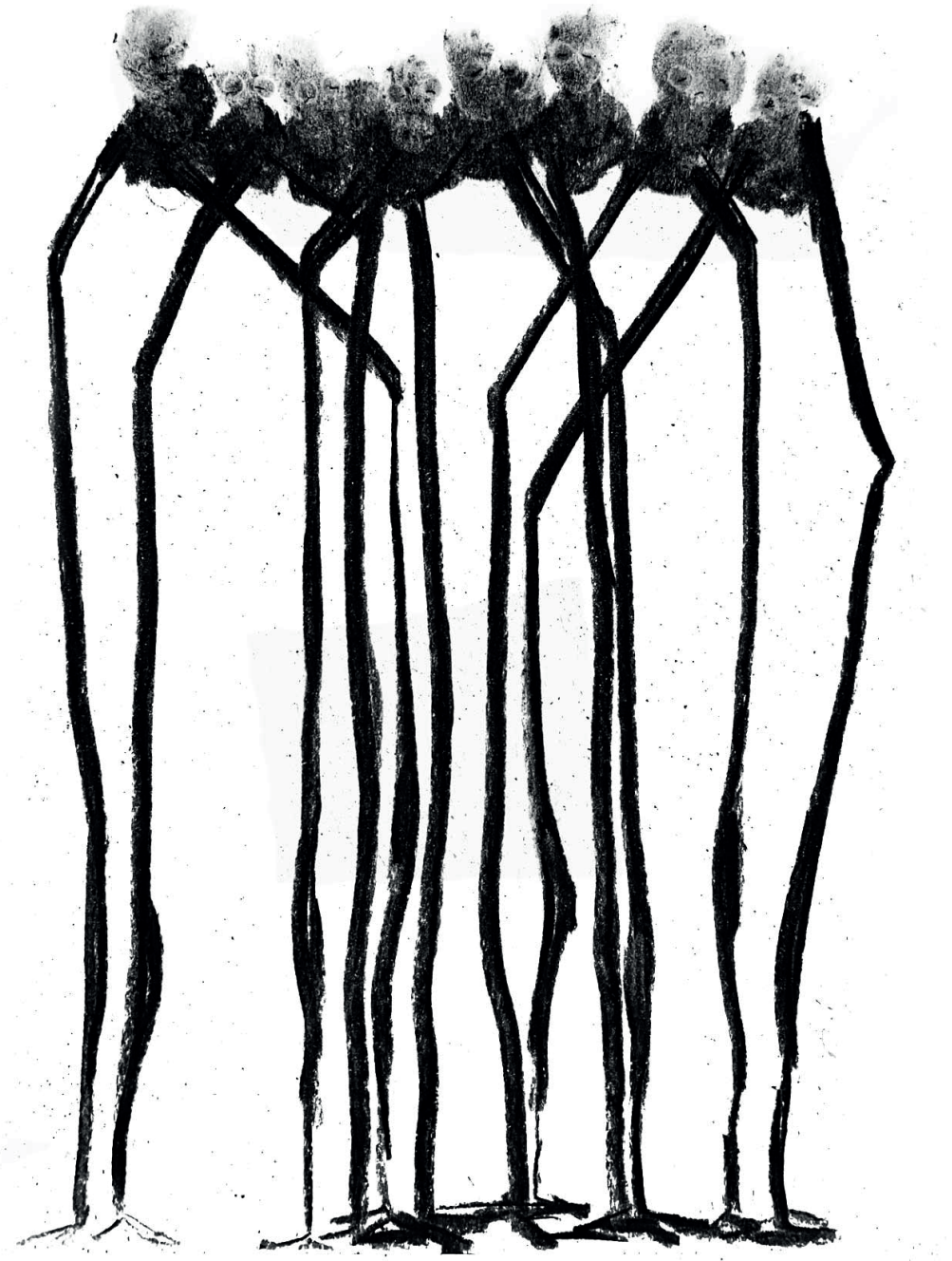
This essay is an exploration of my artistic journey and a reflection on how my upbringing as a woman of color in the Faroe Islands has profoundly influenced my creative practice. Through sharing my story and artworks, I hope to provide a platform for marginalized voices and offer readers an insight into a life that may be unfamiliar to many.

Artistic Roots

Born and raised in the Faroe Islands to a Faroese mother and Kenyan father, I began my artistic journey in childhood with the creation of creatures initially inspired by the mythical beings found in tales and folklore. As I matured, these creatures evolved, transforming into deeply personal symbols. In retrospect, I recognize that these creatures served as a means to articulate and navigate the complex emotions stemming from my upbringing as a minoritized person in the insular society of the Faroe Islands. I felt as though I was an alien creature kid, awaiting my spaceship, and my drawings became both my escape and vehicle for self-representation.

Childhood Memories and Realizations

A childhood memory that will forever be etched in my mind centers around the revelation of my father's, and by extension my own, ethnicity. This pivotal moment occurred when he accompanied me to daycare. It was then that a child, encountering my father's distinct appearance, expressed their surprise with the words, "You have a huggabugga dad." This encounter triggered my own curiosity and led to the realization of my distinct racial identity, making me acutely aware of the differences that set me apart. As a child, the world is not fully understood, and many questions arise, often seeking expression through emotional exploration.



[1] Laila Mote:
Family Portrait #2, 2022.
Charcoal on paper.
© Laila Mote.

However, as my adolescence unfolded, the intuitions and emotions I harbored as a child gave way to stark realizations. Stepping into the world on my own, devoid of protection, exposed me to a mix of racism and sexism in Tórshavn's nightlife. In response to these hardships, I began to mask my true self, as many individuals of color do, as a defense mechanism to blend in and mitigate the discrimination I encountered. Masking is a phenomenon that compels one to regulate behavior and mannerisms as a means of self-preservation. In her book on colonial traumas and antiblack racism in Europe, *Plantation Memories* (2008, 20), artist and psychologist Grada Kilomba writes about the mask as a silencing mechanism of colonial control: "The mask re-creates this project of silencing, controlling the possibility that the Black subject might one day be listened to and consequently might belong." I couldn't control my skin color, but I could control my behavior and, to some extent, aspects of my appearance. This manifested in the daily ritual of straightening my hair for a decade, a relentless effort to conform in a climate where rain and humidity was a constant enemy.

Artistic Evolution and Expression

My artistic journey is marked by experimentation with various media, including charcoal sketches, watercolors, acrylics, linocuts, digital art, animations and more. The creatures I create have also continually evolved, mirroring my own growth as an individual and artist. A noticeable trend is their gradual shift toward a more human-like appearance, which correlates with my growing comfort in my own skin.

Because I hold a great deal of respect for the media I work with, the choice of medium for each artwork shapes the anatomy of the creatures. This is why I enjoy experimenting with various media. I see it as revealing different aspects of one's personality, eliciting various feelings and emotions depending on the medium. For instance, charcoal (see for example *Family Portrait #2* **[1]**) is one of the most honest and impulsive media for me. I frequently find myself switching off my mind and dedicating only a brief amount of time to each piece, employing rapid movements to enhance the charcoal texture. The process involves creating around ten quick drawings, analyzing them, and ultimately selecting one while discarding the rest.

On the other hand, digital art (see for example *Fremmandur uppruni á Litlu Dímun* and *Fremmandur uppruni á Kallinum* **[2-3]**) can be both impulsive and deliberate. It allows for quick and easy changes in color, shapes, compositions etc. without leaving any traces. This feature also affords the opportunity for deeper exploration and experimentation without risking the artwork, thanks to

[2] Laila Mote: *Fremmandur uppruni á Kallinum,* 2023. Digital print. © Laila Mote.

the remarkable "Ctrl + Z" function. In contrast, my charcoal works are driven purely by emotion and intuition. As with other media, I hold immense respect for my computer as a tool for art; therefore, I prefer my digital creations to maintain a distinctly digital aesthetic, with the anatomy of the creatures taking shape accordingly.

For some, my artworks may stir up a sense of discomfort, as I often incorporate detailed skin textures, hair and other human features on my creatures (see for example *Mítt sanna andlit / Unmasked #8* and *Mítt sanna andlit / Unmasked #7* **[4-5]**). My thoughts behind this juxtaposition, strange alien figures with human attributes, is to challenge the viewer to perceive the creature's humanity. This is one of the reasons I've always been drawn to surrealism—the ability to craft worlds that challenge reality. This contrast between the surreal and the real serves as a pathway to understanding the daily experi-

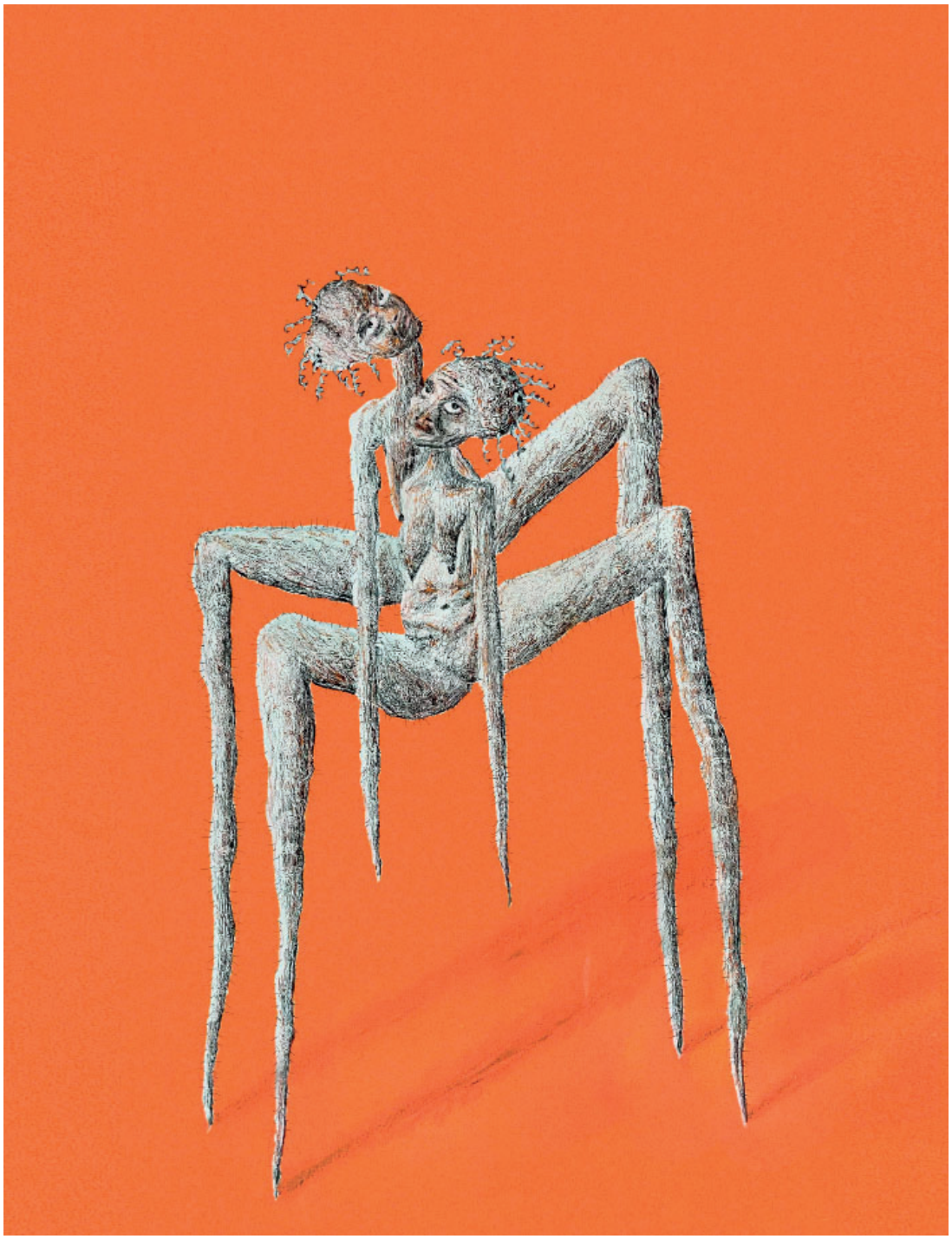
[3] Laila Mote: *Fremmandur uppruni á Litlu Dímun,* 2023. Digital print. © Laila Mote.

ences of myself and other minoritized groups, simultaneously aiming to offer solace to those seeking recognition, to those who can see themselves within the creatures. My hope is that this intersection prompts viewers to contemplate the complexities of identity, alienation, and belonging.

Art for Advocacy

As I have grown older, I have delved into the broader issues plaguing the Faroese society. The realization that racism and discrimination is deeply embedded in the structural fabric of our society has become a central focus in my work. In my younger years, my art served as an outlet for my personal emotions, and I kept it somewhat private until a few years ago. Today, my approach is more conceptual, as I actively strive to illuminate topics and emotions that resonate with me as a woman of color, aiming to provide visibility for other minorities

[4] Laila Mote: *Mítt sanna andlit / Unmasked #8*, 2023.
Acrylic, watercolor, ink, and modelling paste on acrylic paper, 50 x 70cm. © Laila Mote.



[5] Laila Mote: *Mítt sanna andlit / Unmasked #7*, 2023.
Acrylic, watercolor, ink, and modelling paste on acrylic paper, 50 x 70cm. © Laila Mote.

[6] *Samhugi við Palestina,* 2024, sticker. © Laila Mote.

and stimulate dialogue about discrimination. This effort is both vulnerable and demanding, given the personal nature of my work. However, I leverage this vulnerability as a strategic tool, recognizing that people often require a tangible representation to fully grasp complex issues.

Simultaneously, I have explored ways to distribute a social justice message and start conversations outside of art's conventional spaces, such as exhibition and museum spaces. I believe that visual art can both respond to urgent political issues and foster greater social awareness over time. In 2024 I brought my work to public space with a design for the organization Samhugi við Palestina **[6]**. My wish for my work to circulate broadly also led me to embrace digital art and art prints in 2022, recognizing their potential to democratize art and make it more accessible. By offering art prints in different scales and price points, and by incorporating Faroese landscapes into my work, I have aimed to make my art more inclusive. Striking a balance between the weirdness of the creatures and the ordinary in the landscapes, I found myself gradually drawing the interest of the general public in the Faroe Islands, with prints steadily finding their way into homes across the country. It is my hope that these pieces will encourage conversations, perhaps challenging ones, on a more regular basis.

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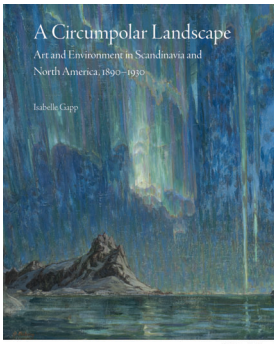
A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavia and North America 1890-1930

By Isabelle Gapp

Lund Humphries, London, 2024, 208 pp.



In 1994, W.J.T. Mitchell (1994, 20) announced that "the classical and romantic genres of landscape painting evolved during the great age of European imperialism now seem exhausted, at least for the purposes of serious painting." However, artists in the 21st century have continued to redefine, transform and reanimate landscape as a genre, even for the purposes of addressing its imbrication in imperialist worldmaking. The discipline of art history's interest in the genre of landscape has also been renewed by the Ecological and New Materialist Turns, not to speak of the proliferation of post- and decolonial perspectives beyond the Francophone and Anglophone geographical spheres. Returning to the land – and its representation – appears to be a cyclical motif that accompanies ecological crisis and change. Isabelle Gapp's *A Circumpolar Landscape* takes up this renewed interest in representations of place with a comparative focus on modernist landscape painting in North America and Scandinavia. Rather than organizing these depictions in traditional modes of style, school, or chronology, Gapp conducts her comparison around biotopes (forest, lakes), landscape topographies (mountains, ice) and environmental phenomena (northern lights). She demonstrates her ecocritical position through her attention to changing environmental conditions and extractive practices in the Sub-Arctic and Arctic. Serving this aim, she argues, "landscape painting might act as interlocutor between past and present environments" (Gapp 2024, 10).

European landscape painting has helped formulate foundational Western ideological conceptions of the relationship between human and environment. Artists working in the picturesque and Romantic modes drew on long-developed techniques of framing, perspective, and zoning to distinguish "wilderness" from the human-made or pastoral. Intimately bound up with colonial capitalist enterprise, this construction of "wilderness" as that which is beyond human culture has rendered Indigenous communities as part of the natural world and therefore often without legal claim to land (Fletcher, Hamilton, Dressler and Palmer, 2021). Bringing this lens to Scandinavian landscape imaginaries is as politically urgent as ever. In 2010, the The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate ignored the centuries-old practice of Sámi reindeer herding by granting permission to construct two large wind power farms in Fosen, Trøndelag (Roan and Storheia). Even after the Supreme Court ruled that the projects were in breach of the UN's charter for civil and political rights in 2021, the state remained silent and refused to concede the rights of the reindeer herding families. Sámi youth responded with mass civil disobedience in the Government headquarters in the autumn of 2022 and winter of 2023, sparking a legal case that is still ongoing at the time of this writing.

A Circumpolar Landscape's first chapter, *Taming the Wilderness*, is therefore key in setting up the book's critique of settler colonial narratives of place. Reading Norwegian painter Peder Balke's paintings of Northern Norway alongside Frederick Turner's *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893), Gapp argues they both contributed to the creation of a discursive threshold along latitudinal axes between the wild, uninhabitable north and the civilizing power of the south. The artists could thus mobilize the concept of "nature" in order to tame these landscapes and serve the pur-

poses of national identity construction and historical commemoration (Gapp 2024, 28). Some more nuanced discussion of Norwegian romantic nationalism in the nineteenth century may have been helpful here, as it is largely in the post-war era that *national* significance has been attached to Balke's landscapes. Another technology of image making was more immediately instrumental in nationalizing the landscape in its own time, however, as Gapp points out. Working with geologists, national parks and transport authorities, photographers such as Anders Beer Wilse in Norway, W.G. McFarlane in Canada and geographer Axel Hamberg in Sweden helped make land traversable and exploitable for mineral resources at the expense of Indigenous Sámi and Inuit communities.

In Chapter 2, *Into the Woods*, Gapp draws attention to the way in which forests represented an environment for modernist exploration of pattern, texture and theosophic mysticism. In the work of Canadian artist Emily Carr in British Columbia and Swedish artist Gustaf Fjæstad in Värmland, forests function as near-anthropomorphic presences on the canvas. In *Totem Walk at Sitka* (1907), Carr renders a clearing path lined by First Nations Tlingit and Haida totem poles – fictionally grouped together to integrate with the canopy of repetitious trees filling the entirety of the composition. Gapp compares Carr with the contemporaneous Emilie Demant Hatt's work with the Sámi author and reindeer herder Johan Turi on the Swedish side of Sápmi (also discussed in Chapter 3), emphasizing the political complexities of the female ethnographic gaze.

In Chapter 3, focused on depictions of lakes, Gapp (2024, 179) seeks to "reconcile the aquatic shift in visual culture with the Scandinavian art historical framing of atmospheric painting or *stämningsmåleri*". Seen from a North American perspective, Kirk Varnedoe's influential 1982 exhibition *Northern Light* shown in Washington, Brooklyn, Minneapolis and Göteborg (Sweden) brought together a range of artists, including Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Vilhelm Hammershøi, Harriet Backer and Peder Severin Krøyer, under the seductive idea that there is a particular Nordic psychology produced by the environmental play between climate, light and topography as expressed through the medium of modernist painting. This view, extended to North America itself, was also promoted by Roald Nasgaard in his *The Mystic North* (1984). Gapp shifts away from these anthropocentric accounts by instead reading the work of Kitty Kielland, Helmer Osslund, Franklin Carmichael, and Tom Thomsons in conversation with John Gillis' (2013, 10-13) notion of the "hybridity of land and sea" as an ecological continuum. As an example of how this "aquatic shift" might be undertaken in art history, Gapp (2024, 92) skillfully interweaves painting and environment in her reading of Carmichael's *Grace Lake* (1931):

> *Grace Lake* is set into the granite and syanite of the Shield, painted in shades of gray, brown, yellow and orange. Interspersed among the cliffs and rocky foreground, where a great abundance of metamorphic rock composes this never-ending coastal precipice, are patches of lichen, moss and other vegetation. The translucent blue might indicate ecological damage, notably acidification, caused by industrial mining, a prevalent industry in the region during the 20th century.

This chapter also attends to connections between geology and modernist color techniques, which is picked up again in Chapter 4 (*Moving Mountains*). Gapp's account of the visual culture of Kiruna's iron mining industry is particularly worth highlighting here. At *Göteborgutställningen* (the *Gothenburg Exhibition*) of 1923, Axel Sjöberg's large-scale painting *Kirunavaara* towered over a mining display dedicated to Trafik Aktiebolaget Grängesberg-Oxelsund, a railway company which owned a major share of the Kiruna mining company (LKAB). Here, Gapp argues, the atmospheric genre of *stämningsmåleri* was inserted ideologically to soften the industrial realities seen through the engineering drawings and mapping technologies that made Kiruna

exploitable. This perspective arguably has even more generative potential. There is undoubtedly more work to be done to reveal connections between the visual culture of mining and modernist "geological" experimentation.

The last two chapters consider representations of the northern lights (5, *Kaleidoscopic Horizons*) and glacial ice (6, *Icy Imaginaries*). Chapter 5 diverts attention from the coloristic effects of the aurora borealis to the way artists have played with its monochromatic potential between light and dark in graphic media. Gapp also distinguishes between travel depictions and those made by Sámi artists; in Nils Andersson Valkeapää's[1] copper print *Northern Lights* (*Guovssahasat*, or *Lovers*, 1929), the phenomenon is rendered in two jagged abstracted lines, secondary to – or perhaps a part of – the two human characters' narrative below. In contrast, Gapp argues in Chapter 6, icescapes particularly enabled modernist preoccupation with colorism and tonalism to unfold. Due to a phenomenon known as Rayleigh scattering, the dense molecules of glacier ice scatter light and make it appear in blues and greens (Gapp 2024, 171). Gapp's emphasis on the nuanced color usage of Anna Boberg in Lofoten and Lawren Stewart Harris in the Canadian Rockies therefore challenges pervasive perceptions of polar icescapes as white – both literally and ideologically. Opening her final chapter with the double entendre of the "white male exploration narrative," Gapp combines a feminist and ecocritical reading to acknowledge (white) women's ethically ambivalent role in picturing glaciers under recession. Art, as ice, is seen to archive and mediate environmental change.

Although Gapp's book is a timely study of landscape painting that transcends national frameworks, the sheer amount of material and contexts inevitably means that some nuances and close readings will be missed. Her treatment of Canadian and Swedish image culture is the most nuanced and arguably holds the most flow in her analysis. There could be more historical analysis of Scandinavia's internal geopolitical relationships, which is certainly relevant for a critical reading of its landscape and extractive policies. Some inaccuracies, especially regarding the Norwegian context, occasionally weaken Gapp's analysis predicated on ecological precision. It is not entirely clear what Gapp (2024, 169) refers to when describing the indigenous territory of Sápmi extending to Narvik. While it has no formal boundaries, Sápmi is commonly acknowledged to stretch from Davvinjárga/Nordkáhppa (Norwegian: Nordkapp) in the north to Trööndelage in the south (Norwegian: Trøndelag), much further south than Narvik. In her description of Peder Balke's journey to Northern Norway, she states: "In the 1830s he travelled to the Svalbard archipelago and on to Telemark in the Norwegian Arctic, before venturing further south to the city of Bergen [...]" (Gapp 2024, 27). This is both historically and geographically misleading; his journey to Northern Norway in 1832 went as far as Nordkapp, but Balke stayed on the mainland. Balke had earlier made a separate trip through Telemark and to Bergen (both in Southern Norway). Many of Balke's depictions of the north are geographically unspecified in their titles, however, and he likely saw François-Auguste Biard's paintings of Svalbard from the French "La Recherche" expedition between 1838-1840 during his stay in Paris (Ljøgodt 2021, 86). That Balke's views represent a romantic and homogenizing "vision" of the north is undeniable.

Overall, *A Circumpolar Landscape* offers a welcome rereading of Northern landscape painting in the way that it re-connects artistic practice to environmental change and extractive industries. With her interdisciplinary "toolbox," Gapp roots her analysis in the art historical through evocative visual groupings of geographically disparate motifs and ekphrastic descriptions of composition, color and texture. More than an aesthetic argument, however, it challenges often taken for granted settler colonial myths about nation-bound "wilderness" that still dominate discourses about the North, and which obfuscate the continued and multiple use of these spaces. Especially in the Scandinavian context, Indigenous land use is still virtually absent from tradi-

tional art historical scholarship. Gapp's mobilization of Indigenous perspectives to deconstruct and historicize the rhetoric of these artworks presents a welcome counterweight to the still deep-seated nationalist narratives which center a seemingly timeless depopulated landscape as their origin.

HELENE ENGNES BIRKELI

NOTES

1 Should not be confused with the later Sámi multi-artist Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1943-2001).

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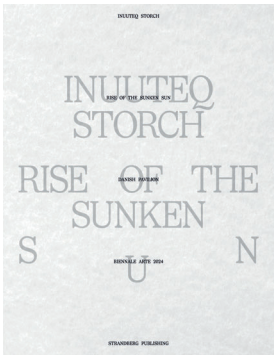
Inuuteq Storch – Rise of the Sunken Sun
Red. Louise Wolthers,
med bidrag af Heather Igloliorte

Strandberg Publishing, København, 2024, 308 sider.



Jeg mellemlander en del forsinket i München Lufthavn på vej til La Biennale di Venezia (Venedig Biennalen) sammen med hovedparten af mine medpassagerer. For at nå min næste flyforbindelse, der skal føre mig til slutdestinationen, bliver jeg nødt til at løbe tværs gennem lufthavnen. Under armen har jeg udstillingskataloget *Inuuteq Storch – Rise of the Sunken Sun* (2024), der med sit fine, halvtransparante forsideomslag helst skal forblive intakt. Imens jeg kæmper mig gennem lufthavnen, mærker jeg svedperlerne på min pande, og samtidig ænser jeg også, hvordan panikken spreder sig til hele min krop. Men midt i dette kaos slår det mig, at jeg faktisk er usikker på, om jeg er mest nervøs for at misse mit fly eller at få ødelagt udstillingskatalogets skrøbelige omslag. Jeg når mit fly og bliver samtidig vidne til omslagets skrøbelighed, der markeres med de første, men ikke sidste, ridser og revner.

Venedig Biennalen, der i år markerer den 60. internationale kunstudstilling, er særlig historisk for Den Danske Pavillon. Det er første gang, at en kunstner fra Kalaallit Nunaat (Grønland) er udpeget som repræsentant for Danmark til at præsentere en soloudstilling. Ja, faktisk er det den første kunstner fra den nordatlantiske del af rigsfællesskabet, der alene repræsenterer Danmark på biennalen. Det er også første gang, at Den Danske Pavillon viser en udstilling, der udelukkende består af fotografi. Og det er første gang, at en så ung kunstner skal repræsentere Danmark på egen hånd. På mange måder er det derfor en særlig (kunst)historisk begivenhed, når Inuuteq Storch (f. 1989) viser den fotografiske soloudstilling *Rise of the Sunken Sun* i Den Danske Pavillon.

Der har allerede været adskillige omtaler og anmeldelser af udstillingen, der er kurateret af Louise Wolthers, forskningsleder og kurator ved Hasselbladstiftelsen i Göteborg, og på tidspunktet for udgivelsen af *Periskop #32* er det absolut sidste chance for selv at opleve udstillingen. Særligt derfor er det også nærliggende at forholde sig til det tilhørende udstillingskatalog *Inuuteq Storch – Rise of the Sunken Sun*, der bliver en – bogstaveligt talt – mere håndgribelig manifestation af udstillingen.

Udstillingskatalog

Såvel udstillingen som udstillingskataloget består af Storchs seks tidligere og nyere værkserier *At Home We Belong* (2010-15)*, Keepers of the Ocean* (2019)*, Mirrored* (2021)*, Sunsets of Forgotten Moments* (2023)*, Soon Will Summer Be Over* (2023) og *Necromancer* (2023)*,* som giver indblik i mangfoldigheden af den moderne kalaallit-identitet på hver deres måde. Med *Necromancer*, som er skabt under COVID-19-pandemien, arbejder Storch med skarpe kontraster i grynede, sort-hvide billeder, der medvirker til en opløsning af tid og sted. Samtidig trækker han her på fotografiets historiske repræsentation af at være et medie, som skaber en magisk bro mellem fortid og nutid (Wolthers 2024, 24).

I *At Home We Belong* kommer vi tæt på Storchs nærmiljø, idet billederne er taget i hans hjemby Sisimiut, den næststørste by i Kalaallit Nunaat med sine omtrent 5.000 indbyggere. Storch anvender sit kamera til at skabe nuancerede billeder af sine umiddelbare omgivelser, der, gennem gradvise formørkelser af de sort-hvide fotografier, synes at skabe en modpol til udefrakommende blikke. Blikke, der ofte er bundet op omkring en eksotisering af og en stereotyp fortælling om Kalaallit Nunaat og landets indbyggere (Wolthers 2024, 88).

En anden måde, hvorpå Storch skaber modbilleder, er gennem en aktivering af et omfattende familiearkiv, der

består af fotografier, som hovedsageligt er taget af hans bedsteforældre mellem 1940 og 2000. Familiebillederne vises i serien *Sunsets of Forgotten Moments*. I en ikke-kronologisk orden fremstår farvefotografierne som mosaikker, der er nærværende beviser på levet liv. Flere af fotografierne ligner også dem, jeg kan finde i mine egne familiealbum. Igen opstår her en slags magi, idet fotografiet både er omgivet af en ubegribelig tidslighed, og i det faktum, at nogle af fotografiernes portrætterede formentlig er døde i dag. Som den franske semiolog, filosof og litteraturteoretiker Roland Barthes essayistisk skriver i *Det lyse kammer: Bemærkninger om fotografiet* (1980/2018, 117) – der anses som et af de væsentligste bidrag til udforskningen af fotografiets ontologi – besidder fotografiet en *før-fremtid*. Det vil sige, at man i disse arkivfotografier simultant aflæser, at døden *vil ske* og *er sket*. Denne konfrontation mellem livet i fotografierne og fraværet af selvsamme liv i virkeligheden er med til at skabe en magisk forbindelse mellem fotografi, tid, død og repræsentation, som kan medvirke til, at fotografierne synes fængende. Også med tanke på, at alle disse mennesker burde have fået lov til at opleve Storchs væsentlige bidrag til den fotografiske kultur i og uden for Kalaallit Nunaat.

På samme måde gør *Mirrored*, Storchs homage til den første professionelle kalaaleq fotograf John Møller (1867-1935), sig bemærket. Denne serie tager udelukkende udgangspunkt i Møllers sort-hvide arkivfotografier fra 1880-1930'erne, hvor fotografiets direkte relation til tid, død og repræsentation ej heller går ubemærket hen. Der er, selvfølgelig, en række læsninger af fotografierne, som kan tage udgangspunkt i sociale og kulturelle afkodningsstrategier. Men som fotografientusiast er det værd at lade sig forbløffe over fotografiets mangeartede evner, affekter og muligheder for fortolkning, idet mediet danner grundlag for Storchs kunstneriske praksis.

Det er da heller ikke tilfældigt, at Møllers fotografier i Venedig-kataloget efterfølges af *Keepers of the Ocean*, der netop synes at forbinde Møllers fotografier med Storchs egne. Som en bro mellem fortid og nutid skabes der visuelle paralleller fra Møllers historiske arkivfotografier til Storchs samtidsfotografi. *Soon Will Summer Be Over* arbejder ligeledes med den ikke-lineære fortælling. Denne gang skildrer Storch Qaanaaq, en by, der markerer sig ved både at være Kalaallit Nunaats nordligste og den sidste til at blive koloniseret. Af den grund syntes danske opdagelsesrejsende, videnskabsfolk og fotografer, at området var særligt dragende, eftersom de ønskede at registrere befolkningens "autentiske" inuitkultur (Wolthers 2024, 56). I Storchs serie udgør befolkningen også det primære omdrejningspunkt. Men hvor der i tidligere fotografiske praksisser oftest kredses om skildringen af "den fremmede", står Storchs praksis derimod som en stærk repræsentant for selvrepræsentation og -fremstilling.

Udstillingskatalogets forskellige serier adskilles af en kort projektbeskrivelse og af den samme semitransparente papirtype som forsideomslaget. Indimellem er det semitransparente papir anvendt til korte, poetiske tekster, som peger tilbage på Storchs egne fortællinger. Disse elementer i udstillingskataloget afspejler den fysiske udstillings gennemgående anvendelse af formidlingstekster og poetiske tekster på semitransparent stof. Generelt ses en tydelig sammenhæng mellem udstillingens arkitektur og udstillingskatalogets design. Dette er produktet af både Storchs udstilling og af samarbejdet med vennerne fra det grafiske designstudie Spine Studio og deres særlige kærlighed til bogmediets mulighed for gennemtænkt rytmisk sekvensering, visuel identitet og udvalg af papirtyper og -formater.

Værkserierne akkompagneres af et introducerende og relevant tekstbidrag fra Louise Wolthers, der kontekstualiserer Storchs kunstneriske praksis og skitserer den i forhold til fotografihistorien. Inden udstillingskatalogets afsluttende sider med installationsbilleder fra Den Danske Pavillon har inuk kurator og kunsthistoriker Heather Igloliorte fra Nunatsiavut i Canada forfattet en perspektiverende tekst. Igloliorte reflekterer over kolonialitetens implikationer i inuitsamfund i dag og situerer endvidere Storch som del af den spirende, cirkumpolare samtidskunst. Begge tekstbidrag formidler Storchs fotografiske praksis og reflekterer over hans repræsentation på Vene-

dig Biennalen. Al tekst fremgår udelukkende på engelsk, hvor jeg personligt gerne havde set et flerstemmigt bidrag med en reel aktivering af sproget kalaallisut. Eksempelvis er performancekunstner og digter Jessie Kleemanns tresprogede digtsamling *Arkhticós Dolorôs* (2021) et velskabt bevis på, at en flersproglighed kan lykkes.

Hverdagsbilledernes magt

Som kurator er jeg taknemmelig for udstillingsrum og sætter pris på de mange kunstneriske udtryk, diskursive fortællinger samt personlige og kollektive følelser og affekter, der kan opstå i dem. Samtidig anerkender jeg, at fysiske udstillingsrum ikke nødvendigvis kommer alle til gode. Både Storchs soloudstilling og generelle kunstneriske praksis er vigtig og relevant for et bredt publikum, hvorfor det også synes væsentligt at skabe et udstillingskatalog, der udfolder Storchs bidrag til Den Danske Pavillon.

Som format er fotobogen – her som et fotografisk udstillingskatalog – lettere at tilgå og opleve end det at skulle arrangere og betale for et ophold i Venedig – en by, der i forvejen er ved at drukne i både vand og turister. Udstillingskataloget synes således mere demokratisk i sin form ved at være lettere tilgængeligt for langt flere mennesker med forskellige baggrunde og på tværs af kontinenter og landegrænser. Netop udbredelsen af Storchs kunstneriske praksis mener jeg er relevant, da størstedelen af hans værkpraksis er *vernacular photography*: Et begreb, der nu anvendes i fotografihistoriske og -teoretiske kredse til at beskrive hverdagsfotografiers æstetiske betydning og kulturelle indflydelse. Den australske kunsthistoriker Geoffrey Batchen (2000, 262) har beskrevet begrebet som "ordinary photographs, the ones made or bought (or sometimes bought and then made over) by everyday folk from 1839 until now, the photographs that preoccupy the home and the heart but rarely the museum or the academy." Det er almindelige fotografier, der kredser om hjemmet og optager hjertet, men som museerne eller akademierne sjældent beskæftiger sig med. Selvom Batchens artikel er 24 år gammel, og der både er kommet nyere teori og øget fokus på hverdagsbilledernes betydning – som for eksempel den danske fotografiprofessor Mette Sandbyes bog *Kedelige billeder: Fotografiets snapshotæstetik* (2007) og med åbningen af Den Nationale Fotosamlings permanente udstilling *Kameraet og os* på Det Kgl. Bibliotek i 2021 – er der stadig noget interessant over Batchens betragtninger. Hvorfor er det først nu, at fotografi og hverdagsbilleders snapshotæstetik alene repræsenteres på Den Danske Pavillon? Det er der sikkert en række forskellige svar på. Men én ting forekommer sikkert: De fotografiske dokumentationer af hverdagslivet har (langt om længe) opnået en bredere anerkendelse for deres vigtige rolle.

Danmarks fortsatte koloniale aftryk fremstår i Storchs fotografier som et vilkår. Et vilkår, der både er voldsomt gennemtrængende, og som fremtræder som en markør i den almindelige borgers hverdag. Det vil sige, at der både er fotografier med Dannebrog og indrammede billeder af Jesus Kristus, der fremstår som en integreret del af interiøret. Mens der også er de familiære portrætter af Storchs familie, venner og bekendte, imens de strikker, spiser, gestikulerer, fester, sover, krammer hinanden, forbereder deres fangst og giver sutteflaske til deres baby.

Med sine storslåede fotografier af landskabet og det stille hverdagsliv i Kalaallit Nunaat er Storch en kunstner, der insisterer på retten til selvrepræsentation. Denne insisteren på at rette blikket indad er både stærkt og beundringsværdigt, da han er med til at skabe fundamentet til en fotografisk kultur i Kalaallit Nunaat, der både konfronterer de koloniale blikke og kredser om historieskrivning fra eget perspektiv – med alle dets ridser og revner.

PAULINE KOFFI VANDET

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Emil Westman Hertz: Altid forandret

Red. Nanna Stjernholm Jepsen, med bidrag af Mikkel Bogh, Rune Gade, Ida Marie Hede, Nicoletta Isar, Anders Gaardboe Jensen, Nanna Stjernholm Jepsen, Ferdinand Ahm Krag, Maria Kjær Themsen og Line Marie Thorsen

Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2024, 328 sider

I sin selvbiografiske roman *In the Body of the World* fra 2013 fortæller den feministiske pioner og forfatter Eve Ensler, bedst kendt for *The Vagina Monologues* (1996), om sine oplevelser, da hun efter et arbejdsophold i Congo får konstateret kræft i underlivet. Romanen beskriver det efterfølgende lange, komplicerede og invasive sygdoms- og behandlingsforløb, et forløb, der for Ensler ender med gradvist at nedbryde den oplevede afstand mellem krop og verden – både hendes egen og andres. Hun skriver:

> Suddenly the cancer in me was the cancer that is everywhere. The cancer of cruelty, the cancer of greed, the cancer that gets inside people who live downstream from chemical plants, the cancer inside the lungs of coal miners. The cancer from the stress of not achieving enough, the cancer of buried trauma. The cancer that lives in caged chickens and oildrenched fish. The cancer of carelessness. The cancer in fast-paced must-make-it-have-it-smoke-it-own-it formaldehydeasbestospesticideshairdyecigarettescellphonesnow. [...] Cancer, a disease of pathologically dividing cells, burned away the walls of my separateness and landed me in my body... (Ensler 2013, 7)

Burhøns, grådighed, kulminearbejdere, formaldehyd, stress, traumer, cancer; sygdommen skaber i Ensler en fornemmelse for verdens stoflige forbundethed, med alt, hvad det indebærer af smerte og uens livsvilkår. En levet erfaring af verdens grundlæggende materialitet, dens stofskifte, så at sige, skabt af cancercellernes ubønhørlige vækst.

Den danske kunstner Emil Westman Hertz' (1978-2016) samlede værk har et slægtskab med dette blik på verden. Hertz døde i 2016 som blot 37-årig af leukæmi, efter et mangeårigt sygdomsforløb, der begyndte kort efter hans afgang fra Kunstakademiet i 2008. Hans værker blandede en lang række medier, og han arbejdede både som billedhugger, tegner, grafiker og fotograf. Ligesom Enslers vidtfavnende liste af sammenhænge mellem alt fra sygdom og cigaretter til formaldehyd, så var Hertz' værker ofte overvældende blandinger af materialiteter: bivoks, medicinpakker, planter, muslingeskaller, neonskilte, fotografier, sivflettede skamler, tegninger og meget mere. Her er fx en materialeliste fra installationen *Nine Of Wands* (2015): Træ, jern, bivoks, papir, bast, skumgummi, gips, harpiks, plastik, polysteren, bjørneklo, bark, snor m.m. En fortættet ophobning af stoflighed. I sine værker blandede han oftest disse medier i store, fysiske kollager, hvor hans forskellige værktyper flettede sig sammen i omskiftelige og historietætte udsagn. Genstande, tegninger, fotografier og skulpturelle elementer fra en installation optrådte ofte i andre opsætninger på andre udstillinger, og værkerne var på den måde både konkret og symbolsk uafsluttede og foranderlige, som bogtitlen *Altid forandret* også peger på.

Altid forandret er det første samlede værk om Hertz' korte, men omfangsrige og stadig akut aktuelle kunstproduktion, der indtil nu har været relativt ubeskrevet. Den utroligt smukke bog – layout, papirkvalitet, billedmateriale, alt ved bogen er gennemtænkt og af høj kvalitet – er redigeret af kunsthistorikeren Nanna Stjernholm Jepsen, der selv har skrevet et kapitel i bogen og desuden også tidligere har forfattet den glimrende artikel "Altid forandret: Sygdommens materialitet hos Emil Westman

Hertz" i *Periskop* (2021). Bogens andre bidragsydere tæller kunsthistorikerne Mikkel Bogh, Rune Gade, Maria Kjær Themsen, Anders Gardboe Jensen og Line Marie Thorsen, forfatteren Ida Marie Hede samt en samtale mellem kunsthistorikeren Nicoletta Isar og kunstneren Ferdinand Ahm Krag. Derudover er der en forbilledlig billedside, der viser både Hertz' udstillede værker og installationer samt fotografier og tegninger fra hans arkiver. Alene billedsiden er omfattende og fængende nok til helhjertet at anbefale bogen, men heldigvis holder teksterne også et tilsvarende kvalitetsniveau.

Fælles for teksterne i bogen er, at de alle, udover at være nyskrevne til *Altid forandret,* emmer af respekt og en hel del beundring for Hertz' værk. De er alle over en kam værknære; man fornemmer, at forfatterne er blevet båret af kunstnerens optagethed af verdens stoflighed mod læsninger, der undersøger og understreger denne materielle flertydighed. De bliver aldrig for indspiste eller teoretiske og er forbilledligt rige på konkrete læsninger af værkernes udformning og stoflighed – man fornemmer værkernes nærhed i forfatternes refleksioner, de vender hele tiden tilbage til dem og opdager ting i dem. Værkerne bliver aldrig bare et afsæt for at ride en teoretisk kæphest eller lave en rutinepræget genrelæsning. Værkerne trænger sig på i al deres åbne, uafklarede materialitet. I sin indledende artikel "Membraner og mellemrum" bruger Nanna Stjernholm Jepsen således begrebet "porøsitet" til at udfolde, hvordan installationen *Prinsens Have* (2014) skaber stoflig resonans mellem krop og verden. Det er kendetegnende for værkernes insisterende materialitet, at porøsitet som analytisk begreb trækker i retning af en række fysiske videnskaber som fysik, biologi og geologi, altså videnskaber, der også indeholder en nærhed over for verdens fysiske opbygning og strukturer. "Sansning og materialer er også viden", som Jepsen skriver i artiklens afslutning. Andre artikler trækker også på den slags videnskabelige resonanser. Anders Gaardboe Jensen undersøger bl.a. i artiklen "Emil Westman Hertz' rituelle maskerade" kunstnerens komplekse metode og beskriver ved hjælp af blandt andet kvantefysik og matematik Hertz' "formafsøgende tilgang til materialernes virksomme natur". Tilsvarende bruger Line Marie Thorsen viden fra biologien om de bjørnekloplanter, der er et tilbagevendende indslag i Hertz' værker, til at læse på tværs af planter, sygdom, dødsforestillinger og kosmisk, materiel sammenhæng.

Forfatterne får alle noget ud af at nærlæse værkerne, spekulere med dem og sætte dem ind i kunsthistoriske kontekster. Særligt artiklerne fra Mikkel Bogh, Anders Gaardboe Jensen og Rune Gade udfolder denne kunsthistoriske kontekstualisering og bringer Hertz' værk i samtale med bl.a. Giacometti, Dürer og fotografikunstens historie. Det bliver gjort både med stor viden – det er trods alt nogle af landets mest erfarne kunsthistorikere, der fører pennen – og indsigt. Mere personlig og tekstuelt eksperimenterende – og, i denne anmelders mening, bogens bedste tekst – er Ida Marie Hedes tekst "At trække sit ansigt af" om ansigter i Hertz' værker. Det er måske den tekst, der på sin egen måde bedst formår at resonere med den materielle sensibilitet og porøsitet, der kendetegner Hertz' værker og deres uafklarede åbenhed. Hedes tekst, ligesom Hertz' værker, krydser angst, død, krop, materialitet og fornemmelsen af at være uomgængeligt forbundet. Smukt skriver Hede (184) som afslutning:

> I det hele taget at kunne forestille sig sin egen krop i andre tilstande, i andre forbindelser. At blive bange for alt det usynlige, der er inden i én, og derfor næsten ikke kunne begribe, hvad det kunne udvikle sig til, ja, hvad hele verdens materialitet kunne bestå af. At prøve at forstå sin krop som én puls i et dunkende system, en stor verdenskrop, og give den ord eller form. Der er øjeblikke, hvor éns krops tilstand åbner sig for forbindelser til andre kroppe.

Denne samtidige påkaldelse af det konkrete og det hallucinatoriske, af det nærværende og det angstprovokerende, det faste og det flydende spejler Hertz' værker på fornemste vis.

I denne oplevelse af kroppen i verden ligger også kimen til et kritisk spor, som kunne foldes ud i læsningen af Hertz' værker, nemlig de politiske, økonomiske, sociale, økosystemiske og samfundsmæssige betydninger af denne påkaldelse af vores grundlæggende materielle indlejrethed; vores vilkår som del af materielle, og i sidste ende planetariske, systemer. Den potentielle politiske læsning af Hertz' værk fylder mindre i artiklerne, men svæver alligevel i baggrunden som en slags skygge. For hvad betyder det, at verden er materielt sammenbundet? Hvilke konsekvenser, økosystemiske og personlige, følger med erkendelsen af vores indlejrethed i verdens materialitet? Der er ikke i sig selv noget nyt i at tænke over det materielle, men den globale situation, vi befinder os i, synes at skærpe nødvendigheden af og trangen til at gøre det netop nu. Den feministiske videnskabsteoretiker Stacey Alaimo (2018, 435) har skrevet om "trans-corporeality", altså en overskridende og gennemløbende materiel kropslighed, hvis form og politiske betydning hun beskriver således:

> Trans-corporeality means that all creatures, as embodied beings, are intermeshed with the dynamic, material world, which crosses through them, transforms them, and is transformed by them [...] The trans-corporeal subject is generated through and entangled with biological, technological, economic, social, political and other systems, processes, and events, at vastly different scales. Trans-corporeality finds itself within capitalism, but resists the allure of shiny objects, considering instead, the effects they have, from manufacture to disposal, while reckoning with the strange agencies that interconnect substance, flesh and place. It does not contemplate discrete objects from a safe distance, but instead, thinks as the very stuff of the ever-emergent world.

Hertz' kræftsygdom, ligesom Enslers oplevelse af sit kræftforløb, skaber forbindelser mellem *flesh* og *place*. Og disse forbindelser er ujævnt fordelt; ikke alle kroppe har samme stofskifte, ikke alle bor *downstream from the chemical plant*. Ikke alle får de samme dele af verden igennem sig. Sygdommen viser os den materielle forbundethed i al sin flertydighed: udsathed, porøsitet, sårbarhed, resiliens, modstandskraft, forgængelighed. I Hertz' værker genfinder man disse vilkår spejlet igen og igen; i montrerne, i medicinpakkerne, i ansigter formet af biers arbejde i voks, i de sidelæns introducerede kulturelle og mytologiske figurer og begreber. At pege på altings forbundethed er ikke et endemål i sig selv, men et startpunkt – hvad vil og kan vi gøre med den indsigt? *Altid forandret* er et stort og forbilledligt arbejde med at gøre en kunstnerisk produktion tilgængelig for et større publikum, også efter at det kropslige stof, der har sammensat værkernes materialer, selv er skiftet til nye former.

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