

TRANCIENCE, TIME AND PRESENCE

THE WORK OF ELISABET NORSENG

By Elisabet Norseng

MY ART IS BASED ON ADDING. All visual elements are representations of executed actions. (Among other properties to be explained later) And even more so, left as they are as indelible traces upon the once so white paper surface. They have clearly got an irreversible character.

The combination of such a “presence of performed actions” and the fragile character of the traces make an experience of **TRANCIENCE**, as if pointing further on. (Aspects of time connected to this will be discussed later on)

The best way to obtain all this, is rather to let a few elements expose themselves upon the surface, and to keep the openness.

This will as well be the best suited method to display their **MUTUAL INTERACTIONS**: My pictures will often be built on elements of same or related class, each element with a strong individuality; or in other words, in the tension between resemblance and distinctiveness. (Important items will be density, colour, direction, size, tactility, transience / energy, singularity / group affinity, construction / rhythm etc. It is a work of precision, sensibility and concentration. More than being analytic, this is a synthetic process; to gather and perceive the overall impact, on all levels, and over time. **THAT WHICH IS IN BETWEEN THE ELEMENTS IS AS REAL AND AS IMPORTANT AS THE ISOLATED ELEMENTS THEMSELVES.** As I see it, the same applies for real life. There is a general tendency to estimate objects only as separate items, a point of view which tends to conceal the significance of the relations any item creates to any other; qualities which simultaneously is and is not a part of that item’s character and properties. That is one reason why I don’t let the elements become too thing-like, the art critic Michael Casey has even described my art as being anti-fetishistic,- and rather focus on qualities of relation.

When making elements of a fine, fragile and volatile nature, **ON THE BORDER OF VISIBILITY.** I practice **AN EXERCISE IN SENSITIVITY AND CONCENTRATION, OF AN ALMOST EXTRA-EMOTIONAL CHARACTER**, still highly subjective; (close to an objectifying of being a subject) a quality of presence, of existence, hopefully permanently present in my works. I appeal to the public to likewise tune in their receptiveness. **MY PICTURES ARE THUS, UNFORTUNATELY, BUT INTENDEDLY, - NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REPRODUCE.**

THIS IS AN ANTI-IMPERIALISTIC VISUAL LANGUAGE. Today’s visual language demands an immediate and forceful impact and a facility of reproduction, demands which in my view strongly influence the art world and make it more subject to market forces than to freedom of expression. A tendency which threatens to leave out the finer nuances and personal awareness. I consider to be of such great importance in our lives, if not to get alienated. Further, it may easily damage our ability to receive and differentiate. I find it impossible and self-contradicting to carry out criticism within the prevailing language, as it annihilates any space for subtleties. More-over, those who tries to work within this language, however heroic, - tends to end up viewing the world in a reflective way: Split up, analyse and make literary, (in an attempt to relate and disclose) and unaware become a powerless part of the today’s language, swallowed up. The most harmful implication is that one easily regards reality as being static. But reality is changing, inconstant and alive. And if not acting accordingly to that, one cannot possibly cope or become an influential part: I am then thinking on the role of art today.

The only constructive possibility I have discovered, is to constantly create new moods of expressions of today, outside this language, creating alternatives beyond this language. To me this is a very serious matter concerning the openness and freedom of our society. I try to be a participant in this work. I see it as the only possible way, is to take care of the small, the silent, the fine and the bashful.

TIME IS A VERY IMPORTANT MATTER IN MY WORKS

As explained there is a strong element of irreversibility. That is clearly **PAST** time: You can not undo, go back: The consequence of acting is indisputable and very visibly exposed on the surface as tracks. But in these tracks, there is two different sides of **PRESENT TIME** to be found: One in the fact that the action itself; the courage of executing, the decision and the physical movement, is immanent; a quality of executive presence. Creation is **NOW**, and changing things. It is actually the only way to change things radically.

Secondly, PRESENCE; being there and now, will be there as a result of precision, concentration and sensibility, it is part of the pictorial process and attitude. (As described earlier).

But irreversibility do have a side of continuation, that things may change, that acting have an impact and that may proceed. The fragile and volatile qualities amplifies this, and so does the openness; adds an aspect of transience, of being temporary, of being non-static, of inconstancy; (that which cannot be held, which slips away, which changes and removes itself, and opposes definition) there is immanent potentiality, **FUTURE**. An impossible, but comprehensible paradox originates through all this, a sort of **UNIFICATION AND PRESENCE OF DIFFERENT TIME MODES** simultaneously. I doubt this could be possible without this choice of multilateral means, so transience, so on the border of existence, so vulnerable.

THESE PICTURES ARE ON THE BORDER OF VISIBILITY AND ARE PERCEIVED DIFFERENTLY according to light, viewing distance, motion, regrouping of elements, the viewer's character and mood etc. And since internal interactions and relations are many, it follows a multiplication of implications. This creates another and intended time perspective and level of transience: **ONE IS NOT FINISHED WITH THE PICTURE ON FIRST VIEW**, it has got a life and is renewing itself facing the viewer. This aspect of time is extremely important to me. One could even say it makes a parallel to the real time-life of the viewer, an overlapping. Put together with my above notion on situational intensified perception, **THE VIEWER BECOMES PART OF THE PICTURE**, or anyway of the pictorial process. You might say that my pictures come alive when watched.

The complex interactions and relationships, (as already mentioned) will also work as a space-time matter, which could be defined as **VIEWING TIME**. Yet another time related matter; the eyes movements, in these pictures to a considerable extent, due to the spread and exposed character of the elements upon the surface and to their strong reciprocal affinities.

Other aspects: I often work in series, concentrating on a certain problem or setting, a process which may add **A CONCEPTUAL OR CONSTRUCTIVE ELEMENT** to the work. This includes often constellations such as number of dots, rows, triangular constructions,

repeated settings of colour, and not at least, the paper size itself; series of similar solutions; it is a way of being conscious, to sharpen the eye, to stay attentive, and to refine the means.

Simultaneously it is a mode of research, of open-mindedness; It is a way to go beyond my own taste and current moods. This is a cooler approach, taking it down, being more distant, adding a certain **STRICTNESS**, a higher degree of precision, also technical, which however may support items very different from itself. But I do then have to get more or less opposed qualities like control, transience and action, to work at once.

There is a quality of **QUIETNESS** to my art, possibly related to the silence of concentration and absorption,- to the extra-emotional qualities of perception, of sensing, the awareness of precision, and the remote strictness, the closeness of delicacy, and not at least to the stillness carried by the unification of different times levels. The result is a kind of **CONTEMPLATION**. But it also creates a **PSYCHOLOGICAL TIME SHIFT**, making it possible to stay in touch with oneself and others, with a high degree of awareness and openness. Read; tolerance and reflection.

I am not telling people stories, but do rather focus on basic qualities of being, like presence, acting, sensing, organic processes, comprehension, awareness. I am further trying to fusion all this, which may be considered as an existential approach, with an experience of times, of quietness and of absorption.

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