

CHRISTOFFER MUNCH ANDERSEN

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The Complete Abstract Illusion

by Ditte Vilstrup Holm

"You did not expect to see such perfection! You are looking for a picture, and you see a woman before you. There is such depth in that canvas, the atmosphere is so true that you can not distinguish it from the air that surrounds us. Where is art? Art has vanished, it is invisible! It is the form of a living girl that you see before you. Have I not caught the very hues of life, the spirit of the living line that defines the figure? ... And the hair, the light pours over it like a flood, does it not? ... Ah! she breathed, I am sure that she breathed! Her breast – ah, see! Who would not fall on his knees before her? Her pulses throb. She will rise to her feet. Wait!"

Honoré de Balzac, "The Unknown Masterpiece", 1831

Something that has haunted visual art since its origin is the perfect representation: the painting that was so credible that reality and the artwork could not be distinguished from each other. According to Pliny the Elder's account, Parrhasius was victorious in a contest over Zeuxis. While Zeuxis could paint a bunch of grapes in such a lifelike manner that birds flew down and tried to eat of the fruits, Parrhasius managed to trick Zeuxis with a curtain that was so lifelike that Zeuxis himself tried to draw it aside.

Things didn't work out as well for Frenhofer, the fictive artist in Honoré de Balzac's short story, "The Unknown Masterpiece", from 1831, which I have quoted above. He merely fooled himself and disclosed his madness by conflating his artwork with a real live woman. Everybody else could see that Frenhofer's masterpiece, the work he had been working on for more than a decade, was nothing but a mishmash of abstract brushstrokes: a portrait of a woman that was so excessively re-worked that nothing could be discerned any longer on the canvas's surface. Only one foot, which could be spotted in the one corner, jutting out from

beneath the jumble of brushstrokes, testified to Frenhofer's ambition.

However, the anti-hero, Frenhofer, became a heroic figure for the modern artist. In his indomitable ambition to bring forth the consummate synthesis between nature and art, Frenhofer embodied a perfect emblem of the modern artist's frustrations as he tried to invent a new artistic ideal, now that the new medium of photography was handling the task of making realistic representations. And painting's modern ideal was, quite precisely, the abstract composition, of which Frenhofer's abortive masterpiece, in all its far-sightedness, had offered a presentiment: a composition where form and color were no longer means for achieving a lifelike illusion but rather qualities in their own right.

Christoffer Munch Andersen's paintings inscribe themselves within the history of artistic illusion. This is distinctly evident in the attention he pays to the smallest visual details, in the solicitude with which he has reproduced the motive on the surface and, of course, in the motive's illusionistic appearance. However, his illusions harbor no ambition of being conflated or confused with nature itself. The mere dimensions of the pieces serve to counter any such delusion. Munch Andersen's works consciously couple illusion and abstraction by taking up motives that, in their painterly adaptation and processing, can oscillate between the two positions. The two extreme points in painting's compass of expression collide here in works that succeed in being both illusion and abstraction, at one and the same time. Parrhasius and Frenhofer rolled into one!

Superficially speaking, the motific content in Munch Andersen's paintings is comprised of small and insignificant cultural products, with Danish culinary culture as a central

point of rotation. However, the motives also constitute a calculated surface phenomenon, which has been singled out so as to pose as motor for experiments with our visual culture. These experiments have to do both with calling attention to aesthetic qualities in otherwise overlooked cultural products and with painting's self-contained visuality. It's a matter of playing with visuality's history, with both the abstraction that stems from the history of painting and the abstraction that crops up in our dealings with the apparently insignificant objects of everyday life. It's about the perfect representation, which, today, is as much a picture of a picture as it is a picture of nature. And it's about surprising and delighting the gaze, about evoking recognition and provoking laughter in us but also about the new discovery, the rediscovery and the recapturing of our visual culture.

In "The Unknown Masterpiece", Frenhofer discusses art's expression with a great deal of sympathetic insight and knowledge. He speaks about the struggle between line and color. He discusses the relationship between the ideal and the naturalistic motif. And he demonstrates the decisive effect that the concluding brushstrokes need to make in order to bring the motives to life. Frenhofer's ambition is to create the complete synthesis of ideality and lifelike reproduction. It's a life-and-death struggle and in the end, Frenhofer loses both his work and his life.

In Christoffer Munch Andersen's paintings, a similar kind of struggle plays itself out: a struggle between illusion and abstraction. Every now and then, this can take on a dramatic expression. But sometimes – and frequently in one and the same piece – there's also a lightness and a humor, which can be recognized as having stemmed from the 17th century classical Dutch still lifes, where the trompe l'oeil craving, the act of fooling the eye, played an important role. Illusion's history, for that matter, is a multifaceted one. It treats of sculptures that take on life and start to walk and it treats of perspective, which was effectively introduced in the Renaissance for purposes of engendering spatial illusions. It is, however, the still life tradition – or the tradition

of nature morte – which has most directly turned its focus toward making faithful reproductions and it is along this line of tradition that Munch Andersen's work is situated.

Christoffer Munch Andersen's motific world consists of small inconsequential objects, things that typically don't cost more than a buck and half, as one of his friends vividly put it. Among his motives can be found a flat wooden ice cream stick, a couple of beer-bottle caps and of late, a few guitar plectrums. And similarly, a lunch packet, an unopened one as well as one that has been consumed, thin-sliced slivers of sandwich chocolate in light and dark varieties, the frog's-head sponge cake and the milk cartons, the take-out pizza carton and the remnants of two grilled hot dogs with buns on the side. These are well-known objects. Many of them possess a considerable measure of practical utility value. Several of them have probably also made a journey in and through our own shopping baskets. Others we know from the bakery or from the fast food joint. But at the same time, most of them are so prevalent in our society that we have a tendency not to pay them any notice at all. On the contrary, Munch Andersen does! In his works, we are moving through the supermarket's shelves with a shopping basket, loaded for a totally different experience than that belonging to consumption. We are on an aesthetic hunt for the small details in our surrounding environment, those that we've grown accustomed to ignoring.

When you interpret Munch Andersen's works in extension of the still life tradition, there is a conspicuous distance to his selection of foodstuffs. It's not the exclusive cornucopia that's being put on display here, but rather its antithesis. Not noma (the gourmet restaurant), but Netto (the discount convenience store)! What we have here are mass-produced industrial wares or budget-priced take away commodities like fast food concoctions and old school baker's bread. Christoffer Munch Andersen is playing consciously on the contrast that this sets up in relation to the classic 17th century still life. He chooses a multi-fruit juice as a humorous reference to the past's sumptuous tableau

of fruits and a plastic tray for sliced meats as a contrast with the haunch of venison that typically hangs decoratively from the ceiling. Not to mention the beer can's bottom and top, which gleam forth in silver and gold!

In this respect, Munch Andersen is following in the footsteps of, say, Warhol's Campbell's Soup cans' motives, even though the interpretative perspective is not quite the same today. The impact that Industrialization had on our culinary culture's aesthetic appearance was present, of course, in the work of the pop artists and Munch Andersen is paying the same attention to low- and popular-culture's products as were his pop-art forerunners. However, today's debate on climate and health issues provides some altered horizons of interpretation. Whereas the Dutch still life, with its sumptuous and natural raw ingredients, pointed indirectly toward human mortality, the problem for mankind in the present day is almost the diametrical opposite one: our industrial production is, unfortunately, neither perishable nor transitory but is, on the contrary, a contributing cause of our being slowly asphyxiated in our own rubbish. The packaging and the containers that are piled up and accumulating in Munch Andersen's pieces accordingly constitute a reinterpretation of the still life's vanitas.

But there's also another reason why Christoffer Munch Andersen chooses to portray food commodities in containers and cartons. This has to do with structure – or geometry, to be precise – and this element constitutes the second dimension in his paintings – the compositions' abstract quality – which, much like the motive's recognizability, persistently presses its way forward and imposes itself. As the artist himself puts it, his paintings are extremely constructed. Nothing is left to chance.

His working procedure is as follows: a physical object is selected, isolated and photographed. The object is retained henceforth throughout the entire artistic process as a consultation object, i.e. as a standard of reference, for the finished work. The photograph is further processed and reworked in Photoshop, where the structure is tightened

up and the motive might even become adapted, moreover, to compositional principles like The Golden Section, and it is this painstaking construction that is subsequently transferred onto the canvas in a precise notation. The colors are brought to light from the photograph as well as from Photoshop and are recreated with paint, while the lighting effects and surface-reflections are constructed in the motif. The motives have frequently been chosen because, in terms of composition, they readily lend themselves to being fit into a rectangular or square frame but basically, the MDF panels are cut so as to conform with the motive's format and not vice versa. In some cases, this gives rise to a cogent object-character, in the form of a relief, when it comes to certain flat motives, such as the flat wooden ice cream stick or the more recent plectrum-pieces.

In this respect, Christoffer Munch Andersen's work is situated in extension of one well-known and amusing strategy from the classical still life tradition, where the illusion was fortified by the fact that the painting resembled, even in its very shape, the object it was picturing. One of the more renowned trick-pictures is Cornelius Gijsbrecht's "Reverse Side of a Painting" (1670). The work seems to be intended for being placed in a corner inside the artist's studio, where an unwitting visitor might be so bold as to turn the canvas around, only to have his curiosity rewarded by yet another reverse side of a stretched canvas.

It is not Munch Andersen's intention, however, to generate any climate of confusion with reality's objects; it is rather to establish a relationship between abstract painting's history and a number of cultural products. The game that is being staged with the collaboration of his audience has to do with establishing new couplings between the abstract and the realistic. Whereas the still life painters customarily avoided perspective effects in order to ensure that the illusion would be maintained, regardless of what position the motive was contemplated from, Munch Andersen, in certain cases, eliminates perspective effects in order to render the motive more abstract and concentrated around the canvas's stretched surface. The frontal depiction of the

motives simultaneously contributes toward concealing any perspective-related lines that otherwise could turn up. These strategies have been instrumental in getting his paintings to appear both extremely illusionistic and highly abstract.

In several works, there are references to very specific abstract works. The take-out pizza cartons point back at Robert Ryman's white compositions but also toward the tradition of stripe paintings, which is reinterpreted here through the cardboard carton bottom's extremely delicate folds. The series of milk carton's bottoms is another example of a reference to specific works, seeing as they can be interpreted as paying respect to Jo Baer's minimalist edge-compositions. The thin-sliced slivers of sandwich chocolate's delicate wave pattern calls up art's psychedelic visual disturbances to mind, while the leavings on the hot dog tray could be said to be reminiscent of a Kandinsky painting. The mere fact that Christoffer Munch Andersen isolates motives and turns them into an aggregate object for a single painting underscores the motives' transformation into abstract compositions. In the same vein, his serial organization of certain motifs sets up couplings to abstraction's typical serial form as well as to pop art's and the ready-made's manner of playing with industrially produced commodities.

His approach to everyday objects can be linked to conceptual art; this is emphasized by the underplayed humorous titles and interrelations between the works. Many works have completely down-to-earth titles, which refer to the motive's point of departure while other titles encourage a certain viewing of the motive in the direction of either its function or expression. Two capsules can accordingly be either "Stacked" or "Bent", while beer bottles are "Full" or "Empty". Coffee filters are presented as "Twisted, brown and bleached", the multi-juice carton as "CMYK (fruit)" and the black plastic tray as "Black (meat)".

Stylistically speaking, Christoffer Munch Andersen harbors a marked preference for the geometrically well structured. This is consistent with the meticulousness that he invests in the motives' visual processing and interpretation.

Could this be why the frog's head sponge cake inevitably has to wind up as an assault victim: murdered and battered? Already as a newly-purchased confection, it occurred to Munch Andersen that the sponge cake was too inferior a piece of craftsmanship to qualify for being photographed: it just didn't live up to the idea of a frog's head sponge cake. Munch Andersen was consequently compelled, in this case, to adjust the object itself before it could be photographed and further processed as a painterly motif.

In Christoffer Munch Andersen's painstaking reworking of the motives, what can be detected is a clear sense of affection for the artistic and expressive qualities in otherwise unimpressive everyday motifs. A number of the motives actually come to be endowed with a kind of aesthetic ennoblement through their way of being interpreted in Munch Andersen's paintings. By way of example, we can mention the slivers of sandwich chocolate, the hot dog tray and the flat wooden ice cream stick. Every now and then, there is both an ennoblement and a dimension of consumption at play in Munch Andersen's motific world, as in the plectrum-pieces, which stand forth as a salute to a diminutive but effective musical implement and, at one and the same time, underscore its use and its consumption through the objects' wear and tear. Even those motives that we might very well, when actually confronted with the figure, turn away from and perceive as repulsive – the remnants after fights with pizza, hot dogs or baker's bread – seem to be visually inviting in Munch Andersen's presentations. We approach the spots with our curiosity intact and willingly go about making a careful study of the remnants that have been left behind in the cardboard cartons.

In the classical art of painting, it was generally thought that the motives ought to be appetizing so as to seduce the audience. Zeuxis painted grapes, Frenhofer the most beautiful woman. Frenhofer's ambition was to create the most perfect picture of the most perfect woman. By making use of the ideal model, he believed that he could both achieve the faithful reproduction of nature and secure art's ideal.

The ambition failed to bear fruit for Frenhofer. However, Christoffer Munch Andersen has actually managed to bring about such a synthesis between reality and ideality. Rather than look for this ideality in nature and create, on this basis, the ideal masterpiece, Munch Andersen brings an illusionistic realism to light by rendering an idealized abstraction of the motive, which simultaneously allows the motive to vibrate and fluctuate on the canvas's surface. Maybe you can even say that it's breathing?

This effect is due to a conscious artistic choice, where hard edges are omitted. The illusion in Munch Andersen's paintings is therefore impressive at a certain distance, but when you move up close, the motive's sharp edges dissolve and become blurred. The illusion evaporates into the surface's soft edges. Even if the motives had been transferred to MDF panels in a lifelike size, nobody – in other words – would let herself be seduced into eating the grapes or into turning the back of a canvas around. This simultaneously serves as a demonstration about how Christoffer Munch Andersen, in the artistic process of making decisions, assigns greater importance to his paintings' abstract qualities than he does to the classic play with image and reality. If Frenhofer could exclaim: Where is art? Art has vanished, it is invisible!, the answer in the present day would be the contrary: Where is art? In everything! – it's only a matter of seeing this and allowing it to come forth in its manifest expression.

You look down into a shopping basket. It's empty. The basket's medium-blue plastic shines and reflects the light from above. The steadily grooved pattern of holes in the basket's bottom is reflected as a series of undulating forms in the larger plastic portions in the basket's corners and sides. The plastic is moving about! At no point in time are you in any doubt that the motific point of departure is a real shopping basket, but the picture is simultaneously a sharp and precise aesthetic composition in its own right.

“Blue (basket)”, 2009

Den fuldendte abstrakte illusion

af Ditte Vilstrup Holm

"I ventede ikke så megen fuldkommenhed! I står foran en kvinde, og I søgte et billede. Der er så megen dybde i dette lærred, luften er så sand, at I ikke længere kan skelne den fra luften, som omgiver os. Hvor er kunsten? Tabt, forsvundet! En ung piges egne former. Har jeg ikke grebet farven, kernen i den linie, som synes at afslutte kroppen? ...Og dette hår, oversvømmer lyset det ikke? ...Men nu trak hun vejret, tror jeg! ...Dette bryst, se? Åh! Hvem ville ikke tilbede hende på knæ? Hendes kød sitrer. Hun rejser sig op, vent."

Honoré de Balzac, "Det ukendte mesterværk", 1831

Den perfekte repræsentation har hjemstøgt billedkunsten siden dens oprindelse: det maleri, der var så troværdigt, at virkelighed og kunstværk ikke kunne skelnes fra hinanden. Parrhasios vandt ifølge Plinius den ældre dysten over Zeuxis. Mens Zeuxis kunne male en klase vindruer så naturtro, at fuglene forsøgte at spise af dem, så lykkedes det Parrhasios at narre Zeuxis med et forhæng så troværdigt, at Zeuxis forsøgte at trække det til side.

Derimod mislykkedes Frenhofer, den fiktive kunstner i Honoré de Balzacs fortælling "Det ukendte mesterværk" fra 1831, som jeg citerer foroven. Han narrede kun sig selv og afslørede sin galskab ved at forveksle sit kunstværk med en levende kvinde. Alle andre kunne se, at Frenhofers mesterværk; det værk, han havde arbejdet på i over ti år, ikke var andet end et virvar af abstrakte penselstrøg. Et billede af en kvinde så overbearbejdet, at intet længere kunne skelnes på lærredets overflade. Kun en fod i det ene hjørne, som stak frem under penselstrøgene, vidnede om Frenhofers ambition.

Men antihelten Frenhofer blev en heltefigur for den moderne kunstner. I sine ukuelige ambitioner for at skabe den perfekte syntese mellem natur og kunst udgjorde

Frenhofer et godt sindbillede for de moderne kunstneres frustrationer; når de forsøgte at opfinde et nyt kunstnerisk ideal, nu hvor det nye fotografiske medie tog sig af den naturtro repræsentation. Og maleriets moderne ideal blev netop den abstrakte komposition, som Frenhofers mislykkede mesterværk fremsynet havde ladet ane; en komposition hvor form og farve ikke længere var midler til at opnå en troværdig illusion, men kvaliteter i deres egen ret.

Christoffer Munch Andersens malerier skriver sig ind i den kunstneriske illusions historie. Man ser det tydeligt i hans opmærksomhed over for de mindste visuelle detaljer, i den omhu med hvilken, han har gengivet motivet på fladen, og naturligvis i motivets illusionistiske fremtrædelse. Men hans illusioner har ikke ambition om at blive forvekslet med naturen selv. Bare størrelsesforholdet modvirker et sådan bedrag. Munch Andersens værker kobler bevidst illusion og abstraktion ved at vælge motiver, der i deres maleriske bearbejdelse kan veksle imellem de to positioner. De to yderpunkter i maleriets udtryk kolliderer her i værker, som lykkedes at være både abstraktion og illusion på én og samme tid. Parrhasios og Frenhofer forenet!

Overfladisk set er det motiviske indhold i Munch Andersens malerier små uanseelige kulturprodukter med dansk madkultur som centralt fokuspunkt. Men motiverne er også et kalkuleret fladefænomen, der er udvalgt for at agere motor for eksperimenter med vores visuelle kultur. Disse eksperimenter handler både om at fremhæve æstetiske kvaliteter i ellers oversete kulturprodukter og om maleriets selvstændige visualitet. Det handler om at lege med visualitetens historie, både den abstraktion som stammer fra maleriets historie og den som dukker op i vores omgang med hverdagens uanselige genstande. Det

handler om den perfekte repræsentation, som i dag er lige så meget et billede af et billede som et billede af natur. Og det handler om at forundre og fryde blikket, om at vække genkendelse og latter hos os, men også om nyopdagelsen, genopdagelsen og generobringen af vores visuelle kultur.

I "Det ukendte mesterværk" diskuterer Frenhofer kunstens udtryk med stor indlevelse og kundskab. Han taler om kampen mellem stregen og farven. Han diskuterer forholdet mellem det ideale og det naturalistiske motiv. Og han demonstrerer den afgørende effekt, som de sidste penselstrøg har for at bringe motiver til live. Frenhofers ambition er at skabe den fuldendte syntese af idealitet og naturtro gengivelse. Det er en kamp på liv og død, og Frenhofer taber til sidst både sit værk og sit liv.

I Christoffer Munch Andersens malerier udspiller der sig en lignende kamp; en kamp mellem illusion og abstraktion, og den kan af og til have dramatiske udtryk. Men til tider – og ofte i samme værk – er der samtidig en lethed og humor, som genkendes fra 1600-tallets klassiske hollandske stilleben, hvor trompe l'oeil-begæret, det at narre øjet, spillede en væsentlig rolle. Illusionens historie er for så vidt mangesidet. Den omhandler skulpturer, som får liv og begynder at gå, og den omhandler perspektivet, som effektivt introduceredes i Renæssancen for at skabe rumlige illusioner. Det er dog stilleben-traditionen eller traditionen for nature morte, som mest direkte har forholdt sig til den naturtro gengivelse, og det er den tradition, som Munch Andersen lægger sig i forlængelse af.

Christoffer Munch Andersens motivverden består af små uanselige objekter. Ting der typisk ikke koster mere end en 10'er, som en af hans venner malende har beskrevet det. En ispind, et par ølkapsler og seneste nogle plektre er blandt hans motiver. Ligeledes er madpakken, uåbnet såvel som spist, pålægschokoladen i lys og mørk variant, Kaj-kagen og mælkekartonen, pizzabakken og resterne efter to ristede med brød. Det er velkendte genstande, og mange af dem har en stor praktisk brugsværdi. Flere af dem har sandsyn-

ligvis også været en tur forbi vores egen indkøbskurv. Andre kender vi fra bageren eller fastfood-jointen. Men samtidig er de fleste så udbredte i vores samfund, at vi ikke plejer at lægge mærke til dem. Det gør Munch Andersen derimod. I hans værker går vi igennem supermarkedets hylder med en indkøbskurv ladet til en helt anden oplevelse end forbrugets. Vi er på æstetisk jagt efter de små detaljer i vores omgivelser, som vi plejer at ignorere.

Fortolker man Munch Andersens værker i forlængelse af stilleben-traditionen, er der en markant distance til hans valg af fødevarer. Det er ikke den eksklusive rigdom, der bliver stillet til skue her, men dens modsætning. Ikke noma, men Netto! Det er masseproducerede industrivarer eller lavpris take-away varer som fastfood og old school bagerbrød. Christoffer Munch Andersen spiller bevidst på den kontrast, dette sætter op over for det klassiske 1600-tals stilleben. Han vælger en multifrugtjuice som en humoristisk reference til fortidens overdådige tableau af frugter og en plastikbakke for udkåret kød som kontrast til den dyrekølle, der plejer at hænge dekorativt ned fra loftet. For ikke at nævne øldåsens bund og top, som glimter i sølv og guld!

Som sådan følger Munch Andersen i sporet på for eksempel Warhols Campbell Soup-motiver, men fortolkningsperspektivet er ikke helt det samme i dag. Industrialiseringens betydning for vores madkulturs æstetiske fremtoning var naturligvis til stede hos popkunstnere, og Munch Andersen har samme opmærksomhed over for lav- og populærkulturens produkter som dem. Men vor tids klima- og sundhedsdebat giver nogle andre fortolkningshorisonter. Hvis det hollandske stilleben med sin overdådige naturlige råvarer indirekte pegede på menneskets forgængelighed, er menneskets problem i dag næsten det diametralt modsatte: vores industrielle produktion er desværre ikke forgængelig, men derimod medvirkende til, at vi langsomt kvæles i vores eget affald. Emballagerne, som hober sig op i Munch Andersens værker, er således en nyfortolkning af stillebens forgængelighedsmotiv.

Men der er også en anden grund til, at Christoffer Munch

Andersen vælger madvarer i emballager. Det handler om struktur – eller geometri for at være helt præcis – og dette element udgør den anden dimension i hans malerier, der ligesom motivets genkendelighed vedvarende trænger sig på: kompositionernes abstrakte kvaliteter. Som Munch Andersen selv udtrykker det, er hans malerier ekstremt konstruerede. Ingenting er overladt til tilfældighederne.

Hans arbejdsproces er som følger: Et fysisk objekt udvælges, isoleres og fotograferes. Objektet bibeholdes herefter under hele den kunstneriske proces som konsultationsobjekt for det færdige værk. Fotografiet bearbejdes i Photoshop, hvor strukturen strammes op og motivet endda tilpasses kompositoriske principper som for eksempel det gyldne snit, og det er denne omhyggelige konstruktion, som siden overføres til lærredet i en præcis optegning. Farverne fremdrages fra såvel fotografiet som Photoshop og genskabes med maling, mens lyseffekter og overflade-spejlinger konstrueres i motivet. Motiverne har ofte været udvalgt, fordi de kompositorisk kunne passe ind i en rektangulær eller kvadratisk ramme, men grundlæggende skæres MDF-pladerne til efter motivets format og ikke omvendt. Det skaber for nogle flade motiver, som for eksempel ispinden eller de nye plekter-værker, en egentlig objekt-karakter i relief-form.

Her lægger Christoffer Munch Andersen sig i forlængelse af en velkendt humoristisk strategi fra den klassiske stilleben-tradition, hvor illusionen blev styrket ved, at maleriet også i sin form lignede det objekt, som det forestillede. Et af de mere berømte trick-billeder er Cornelius Gijsbrechts "Bagsiden af et opspændt lærred" (1670). Det virker tiltænkt et hjørne i kunstnerens atelier, hvor en uforvarende besøgende måske ville driste sig til at vende lærredet, blot for at få sin nysgerrighed gengældt af endnu en bagside af et maleri.

Munch Andersens intention er dog ikke at skabe en forveksling med virkelighedens objekter, men at etablere en relation mellem det abstrakte maleris historie og en række kulturprodukter. Den leg, som iscenesættes med publikum, handler om at etablere nye koblinger mellem det abstrakte

og det realistiske. Mens stilleben-malerne traditionelt undgik perspektiviske virkninger for at sikre, at illusionen blev fastholdt uanset fra hvilken position, motivet blev betragtet, fjerner Munch Andersen i nogle tilfælde perspektiviske effekter for at gøre motivet mere abstrakt og koncentreret omkring lærredets udstrakte overflade. Den frontale afbildning af motiverne medvirker samtidig til at skjule evt. perspektiviske linjer. Disse strategier er medvirkende til, at hans malerier fremstår både ekstremt illusionistiske og ekstremt abstrakte.

I flere værker er der referencer til helt specifikke abstrakte værker. Pizzabakkerne peger tilbage på Robert Rymans hvide kompositioner, men også til traditionen af stribe-malerier, som her er nyfortolket igennem papbundens meget sarte folder. Serien af mælkebunde er et andet eksempel på referencen til specifikke værker, idet de kan fortolkes som hilsner til Jo Baers minimalistiske kantkompositioner. Chokoladepålæggets delikate bølgemønstre minder om op art'ens psykedeliske synsforstyrrelser, mens efterladenskaberne på pølsebakken kan minde om et Kandinsky-værk. Bare det, at Christoffer Munch Andersen isolerer motiverne og gør dem til genstand for et enkelt maleri, understreger motivernes forvandling til abstrakte kompositioner. Ligesom hans serielle organisering af visse motiver leverer koblinger til abstraktionens typiske serielle form, såvel som til popkunstens og ready-madens leg med de industrielt producerede varer.

Hans tilgang til hverdagens objekter kobler an til konceptkunsten, og det understreges af hans underspillede humoristiske titler og værk-relationer. Mange værker har en hel nøgtern titel, som refererer til motivets udgangspunkt, mens andre leverer en vinkling af motivet i retning af enten dets funktion eller udtryk. To kapsler kan således være enten "Stablet" eller "Bøjet", mens ølflasker er "Fuld" eller "Tom". Kaffefiltre præsenteres som "Drejet, brunt og bleget", multijuicekartonen som "CMYK (frugt)" og den sorte plastikbakke som "Sort (kød)".

Stilistisk har Christoffer Munch Andersen en præference for det geometrisk velstrukturerede. Det stemmer

overens med den omhu, han ligger i motivernes visuelle bearbejdning og fortolkning, og måske er det derfor Kaj-kagen nødvendigvis måtte ende som et overfaldsoffer, myrdet og maltrakteret? Allerede i nyindkøbt stand syntes Munch Andersen, at den var for dårligt håndværk til at kunne fotograferes. Den lignede ikke ideen om en Kaj-kage. Munch Andersen måtte derfor i dette tilfælde justere selve objektet, før det kunne fotograferes og viderebearbejdes som malerisk motiv.

I Christoffer Munch Andersens omhyggelige bearbejdning af motiverne ligger der en klar kærlighed til de kunstneriske og ekspressive kvaliteter i ellers uanseelige hverdagsmotiver. En del motiver får faktisk en æstetisk ophøjelse i kraft af deres fortolkning i Munch Andersens malerier. Som eksempler kan nævnes pålægschokoladen, pølsebakken og ispinden. Engang i mellem er der også både en ophøjelse og en forbrugsdimension på spil i Munch Andersens motivverden, som i plekter-værkerne, der både er en hyldest til et lille, men effektivt musikredskab, og samtidig understreger dets brug og forbrug i kraft af objekternes slitage. Selv de motiver vi i faktisk fremtoning sikkert ville vende os bort fra og anskue som frastødende – resterne efter slagsmål med pizza, pølser og bagerbrød – fremstår visuelt indbydende i Munch Andersens præsentation. Vi nærmer os nysgerrigt pletterne og vil gerne med omhu studere de rester, der ligger tilbage i papæskerne.

I den klassiske malerkunst troede man, at også motiverne skulle være indbydende for at forføre sit publikum. Zeuxis malede vindruer, Frenhofer den smukkeste kvinde. Frenhofers ambition var at skabe det mest fuldendte billede af den mest fuldendte kvinde. Ved at bruge den ideale model mente han, at han både kunne opnå den troværdige gengivelse af naturen og opretholde kunstens ideal. Den ambition mislykkedes for Frenhofer. Men Christoffer Munch Andersen har faktisk lykkedes at skabe en sådan syntese mellem virkelighed og idealitet. Frem for at søge idealiteten i naturen og herigennem skabe det ideelle mesterværk, fremdrager Munch Andersen en illusionistisk realisme i

kraft af en idealiseret abstraktion af motivet, som samtidig tillader motivet at vibrere og fluktuere på lærredets overflade. Måske kan man faktisk sige, at det ånder eller trækker vejret?

Denne effekt skyldes et bevidst malerisk valg, hvor hårde kanter udelades. Illusionen i Munch Andersens malerier er derfor effektiv i en vis distance, men går man tæt på, opløses motivets skarpe kanter og bliver sløret. Illusionen fordufter i overfladens bløde kanter. Selv hvis motiverne var blevet overført til MDF-plader i naturtro størrelse, havde ingen med andre ord ladet sig forføre til at spise af druerne eller vende bagsiden af et lærred om. Det demonstrerer samtidig, hvordan Christoffer Munch Andersen giver sine maleriers abstrakte kvaliteter større vægt i den kunstneriske beslutningsproces end en klassisk leg med billede og virkelighed. Hvis Frenhofer kunne udbryde: Hvor er kunsten? Tabt, forsvundet! Så er svaret i dag det modsatte: Hvor er kunsten? I alting! – det handler blot om at se det og lade det komme til udtryk.

Du kigger ned i en indkøbskurv. Den er tom. Kurvens mellemblå plastik skinner og reflekterer lyset oppefra. Det regelmæssige rillede mønster af huller i kurvens bund spejler sig som bølgende former i de større plastikpartier i kurvens hjørner og sider. Plastikken rør på sig! Du er ikke på noget tidspunkt i tvivl om, at det motiviske udgangspunkt er en faktisk indkøbskurv, men billedet er samtidig en skarp og præcis æstetisk komposition i sin egen ret.

"Blå (kurv)", 2009

Familiar Close Ups





Mørk pålægschokolade (Dark Chocolate), 92 x 175 cm, oil on canvas, 2008





Snitte II (Danish Pastry II), 75 x 100 cm, oil on canvas, 2008

Snitte I (Danish Pastry I)

175 × 175 cm

oil & enamel on canvas

2008







Blik konstruktion (Circular Construction)

100 × 175 cm

oil on canvas

2008





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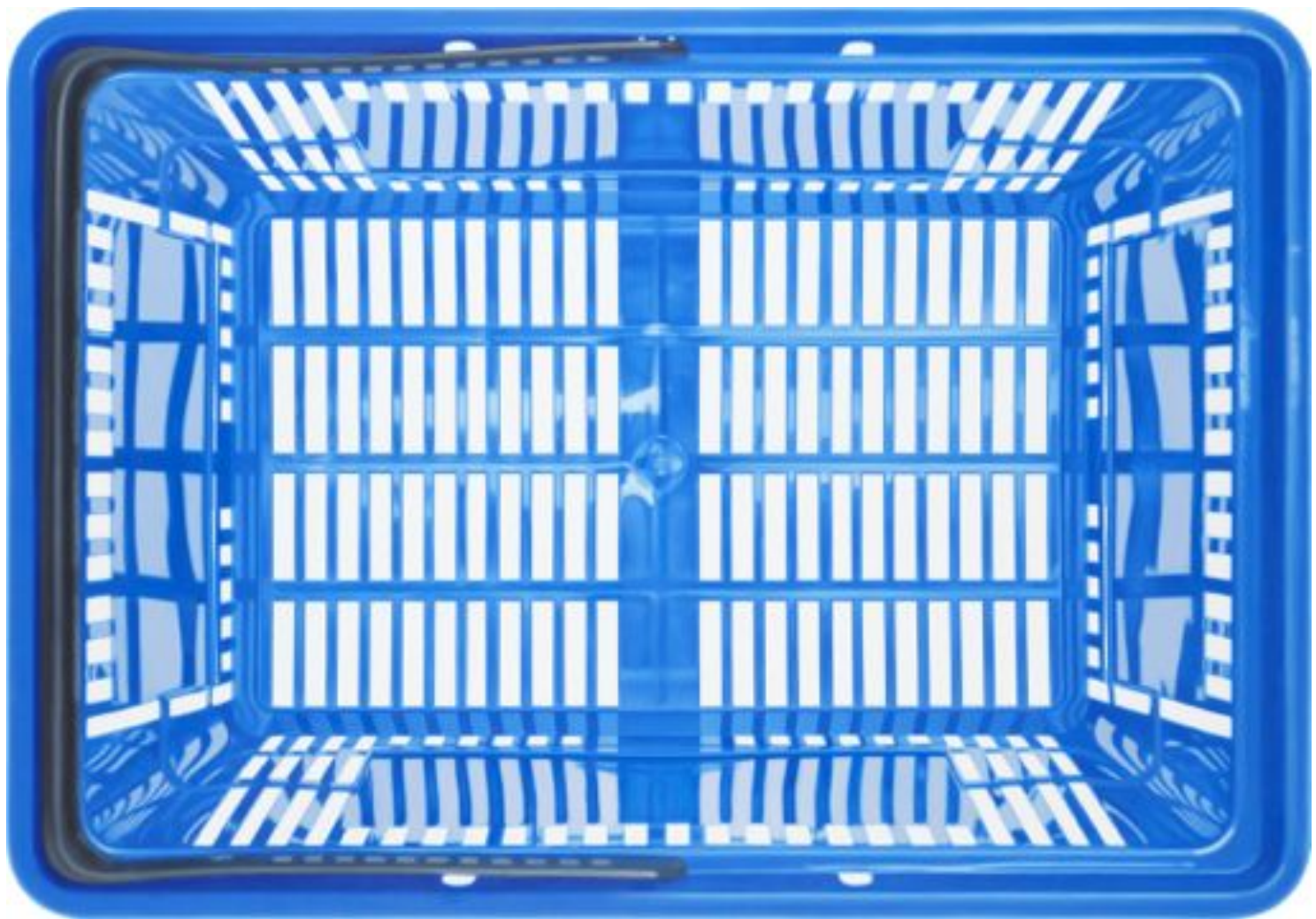
To The Edge

Blå "kurv" (Blue "basket")

122 x 175 cm

oil on shaped MDF

2009





Sort "kød" (Black "meat"), 137,5 x 137,5 cm, oil on shaped MDF, 2009





Sølv (Silver), 122 x 122 cm, oil on circular MDF, 2009





CMYK “frugt” (CMYK “fruit”)

137,5 × 137,5 cm

oil on canvas

2009

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Drejet, brunt & bleget (Turned, Brown & Bleached), 2 pcs. overall size 175 x 255 cm, oil on shaped MDF, 2009





Milk & Juice

Letmælk (Light Milk)

137,5 × 137,5 cm

oil on canvas

2010







RGB, 3 pcs. 40 x 40 cm. each, oil on canvas, 2010









Magenta “solbær” (Magenta “black currant”)

80 x 80 cm

oil on canvas

2010



05 07 2011

Sunm-C
Solboer

Vejle Brewery





Fyldt (Full), 160 x 80 cm, olie på lærred, 2011



Tømt (Empty), 160 x 80 cm, olie på lærred, 2011





Bøjet (Bent), 115 x 165 cm, oil on canvas, 2011

Pick Paintings





Pink Pick

90 x 76 x 1,6 cm

acrylic, oil, lacquer and wax on shaped MDF

2012





Purple Pick “Pearloid”

95 x 70 x 3 cm

acrylic and lacquer on shaped MDF

2012







Green Pick “Transparent”

93 x 81 x 2,8 cm

acrylic and lacquer on shaped MDF

2012





Brown Pick, 80 × 70 × 3 cm, acrylic on shaped MDF, 2012

Black Pick

95 x 96 x 2,2 cm

acrylic on shaped MDF

2012



Yellow Pick

95 x 82 x 1,9 cm

acrylic on shaped MDF

2012





CHRISTOFFER MUNCH ANDERSEN
PickPaintings

30.03.2012 - 28.04.2012

Other Works



Lunch Pack, 160 x 350 cm, oil on canvas, 2007







Left Over, 40 × 40 cm, oil & enamel on canvas, 2007

Rødt og gult på hvidt (Red & Yellow on White)

115 x 175 cm

oil on shaped MDF

2009







Ispind (Ice Cream Stick), 260 × 26 × 5,5 cm, oil on shaped MDF, 2011

Kaj komposition (Kermit Cake Composition)

122 × 122 cm

oil on canvas

2010







Elevation II, 175 x 175 cm, oil on canvas, 2007

Frontal Symmetry II
175 × 200 cm
oil & acrylic on canvas
2007



Pink Flower
100 × 122 cm
oil on canvas
2010







Culture Morte, 200 x 213 cm, oil & enamel on canvas, 2007

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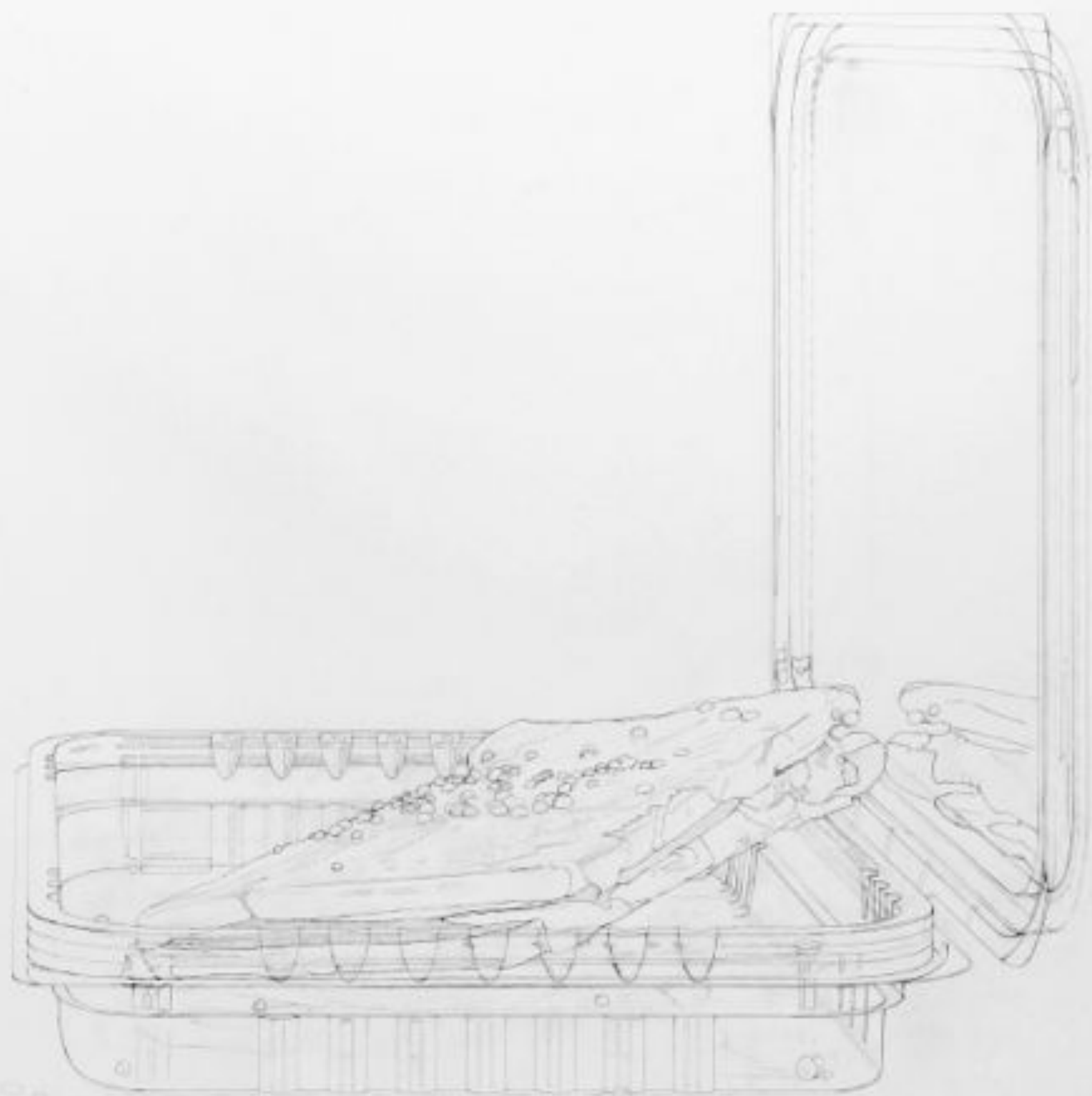
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Christoffer Munch Andersen - page 49 - 53, 57, 60, 66-89, 93, 94, 97, 103, 110-112

Graphic design

Jakob Fagerholt og Christoffer Munch Andersen

Print

Narayana Press

Thanks to

The Danish Arts Council Committee for Visual Arts / Kunstrådets billedkunstudvalg

Augustinus Fonden

The Danish Cultural Institute, Benelux

Henningsen Gallery

Galleri Franz Pedersen

ISBN 978-87-995356-0-6

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