

Mom's Balls

2nd Edition - Recycling

Neðri Háls í Kjós
(Hvalfjörður, Iceland)
1. sept - 8. sept 2019
Daily from 13:00 - 18:00

ARTISTS:

Ted Berglund
Margrét H. Blöndal
Tue Greenfort
Judith Hopf
Indriði Ingólfsson
Elín Jónsdóttir
Ágústa Oddsdóttir
Mika Rosenberg
"Der 6'er"

Co-ordination:
Egill Sæbjörnsson



Judith Hopf. Trying to build a mask out of a hard drive package, 2013
Powder bed 3D-print 24 × 23 × 20 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Deborah Schamoni, Munchen

Press text:

The first edition of “Mom’s Balls” focused on the works of Ágústa Oddsdóttir (1947) and her mother Elín Jónsdóttir (b. 1921 d. 2010), but the second edition will examine “Recycling”, a recurring theme, in both their works and within their relationship.

Ágústa that has collected hand crafted things and materials from her mother and presented in conjunction with her own work is both under influence from her mother (aren’t we all?) and tries to present the way she and people from her generation used materials. Their attitude is clearly different, nothing was ever thrown away and everything was reused. Specially from the 70’s the “Market” over flooded our lives with cheap goods that changed our attitude. It made people rather throw away things and buy new ones, than reusing what they had.

Since quite some time, many artists have worked with environmentalism where recycling is a part of the subjects but more recently recycling has become more and more a subject of it’s own with artists such as Daniel Webb that collected all his plastic for a year as arts practice. Tony Cragg collected plastic items from his walks on the beach decades ago and those works can be seen with another view nowadays. Duchamp’s readymades are reused things but can hardly be seen as recycling because the concept of recycling didn’t exist in the times these works were developed. One can only talk about recycle art after that the concept of recycling becomes part of reality.

Recycling has been an important part and issue in Ágústa’s art since the 1990’s. She started framing her drawings into aluminium boxes with plastic covers instead of using traditional frames and preferred painting on used pizza boxes instead of canvas. As well she drew and painted stories on cardboard packaging from household objects. The name of the exhibition, found by Karen Wright, refers to Ágústa’s work of balls made out of recycled clothes from her family that otherwise would have been thrown away.

Elín and Ágústa were quite close and much of Ágústa’s work is related to her mother, her stories she collected from their joint walking trips that took place nearly daily for 20 years. They would walk for one hour and then talk for one hour. Afterwards Ágústa would write down things that stuck from the conversation and often draw little illustrations to each story. This “diary” she kept secret while her mother lived, to keep the integrity of this process intact. This time spent with her mother was part of Ágústa’s process of healing, and enjoying, also the difficult parts of live from earlier times.

Art therapy and healing through art is thus also an important part of Ágústa’s approach to art. She attended art therapy with Sigríður Björnsdóttir for 10 years and that is very much also the basis for her work. Sigríður Björnsdóttir that was married to Dieter Roth for 10 years and has 4 children with him is one of the pioneers of art therapy or “therapy through art” as she called it. Healing and experiencing a “new path” in live was a large part of Ágústa’s reason for choosing the path of becoming an artist, and her work was done domestically since she graduated 1997, the same year as her son Egill Sæbjörnsson from the Icelandic College of Arts and Craft. Recycling can also be seen as a healing path for life on the Planet and is part of a new way of living.

Although recycling may seem like a modern concept introduced with the environmental movement of the 1970s, it's actually been around for thousands of years. Prior to the industrial age, you couldn't make goods quickly and cheaply, so virtually everyone practiced recycling in some form. However, large-scale recycling programs were very rare -- households predominantly practiced recycling

Many artists come to mind when thinking about recycling. When we look at Icelandic artists, Margrét H. Blöndal's work comes easily into mind although many other artists deserve mention in a more thorough survey. This exhibition is not meant to be an all encompassing portrait of which artists work with recycling. It is a free assemble of invited artist that touch the theme in one way or another

The way Margrét H. Blöndal (1970) uses found material and often recycles scrap to create her small intimate universes somehow reverberates with how for example Elín Jónsdóttir saw potential in the material beside her and around her. One could say that Elín also used those objects to "create her nest" or simply make them part of her daily life in her apartment. It is this potential and almost introvert approach that Margrét delves into that reflects how artists still see beauty or other expressions in things that other people would simply throw away. Her view and Elín's views somehow collide and show a bridge between two or three generations. Margrét's works make us feel how "unimportant" daily objects can create small worlds that seem to have their own "law", something beyond the accepted meaning of the things they are made of.

Indriði Ingólfsson (1991) has made indoor shoes from pizza boxes which is a very playful approach to reusing materials. In Brazil this kind of shoes are called Havaianas and are very popular. First havaianas were made out of used car tires by poorer people living in favelas, but were later picked up as fashion items and are now mass produced from non-recycled plastics and sold all over the world. The work of Indriði perhaps exemplifies the attitude of his generation towards material and recycling whereas Elín was doing something that many people of her generation and past generations found "normal practice" and never used the word recycling.

Tue Greenfort (1973) has throughout his artistic practice posed ecological questions, worked with the often invisible and hidden worlds and relationships of natural and non natural materials in our environment. His approach to the world, opens up our view of what is around us, and that the world has many things to offer, what we have up until now only grasped a limited view of. Tue's work shows the relation between human and non human actors and how humans are dependent on the complex world of different forces around them. Tue will create a new work for this exhibition with Mika Rosenberg

Mika Rosenberg (1996): Today, our new ecologies become present in virtual reality, genetic modification, industrial and environmental landscapes and flux of political climates. Through the spirit and imagination, future worlds are dreamt up and built. Amid ecological devastation, the authenticity of climate change has become a politicized question. The adapting environment has developed a dystopian narrative, science is the new world deity as both a protector and destroyer in the case of man and its collaborators. Mika Rosenberg who's work focuses on bridging the gap between systems biology, technology, poetics, and art. Mika's work begins to weave together taxonomical narratives where coevolution is brought to the forefront as technology and science attempts to mediate our differences (from human to human, non-human to non-humans and, finally, nonhuman to human.)

Judith Hopf (1969) mask is a scanned cardboard packaging box, reprinted with a 3D printer. Again, like some of the other artists in this exhibition, she sees a potential in the material of packaging and packaging as a phenomena. The work both pays attention to the existence of packaging and by scanning and reprinting it with 3D printer she creates a link between consumerism and it's uselessness in a tragicomical way. Being aware of packaging and other waste, points out the need of being conscious the damage that the industrial age and the market of overflowing cheap replaceable products has made. This attitude is now more and more accepted but still has a long way to go on global scale.

Ted Berglund (1978) sees things laying around in the streets, takes them home and paints onto them, there is a lot of lightness surrounded his practice but it also raises questions about all the trash that people dispose off. Ted's work in this exhibition is done with acrylics and spraypaint over a poster dated 2019 of a Berlin Atonal festival. The work, spontaneously named "hAllo iCelANd!" after Ted was invited to be in the show, forms a light freely drawn landscape or other impressions depending on the person's view looking at the work.

"Der 6'er" (name and birth year unknown) is often seen in Berlin with a bike, which is heavy hung with old paint buckets that he has gotten for free or found in garbage, and he walks around the streets and paints his signature tags, the Nr. 6 or 1cm.de or 69a.com, paints a smiley or other things onto objects left in the streets. The poster in the exhibition, collected from the streets of Berlin by Egill Sæbjörnsson in 1999 is an Apple Computer Poster stating: Think different, and "Der 6'er" painted a big blue 6 over it. Certainly, HE was thinking different, much more different than most of us

Artist's Biographies:

Ted Berglund (1978) is an American artist, living in Berlin. He studied with George Baselitz. Ted often starts the day at the cafe Five Elephants in Berlin where he drinks his morning coffee and watches the life go by, trying to see every person as an enlightened person, the people on the U-bahn, in the street and at the bakery. He finds trash in the street, things he sees beauty in, potential, and he paints onto it, adding to something what there already is. It is this attention to the environment that caught our attention and is the reason why we wanted him to be part of the exhibition

Margrét H. Blöndal (1970) ushers the familiar into unexpected constellations. In drawings and sculptures the world is rearranged and looked at askew. Her installations use commonplace materials almost like words, but words used out of context and mispronounced and yet they still make perfect sense.

Tue Greenfort's (1973) interdisciplinary practice deals with issues such as the public and private realm, nature and culture. Interweaving these subjects with the language of a research based art practice the artist formulates an often direct critique of current economical and scientific production modes. Fascinated by the dynamics in the natural world, Greenfort's work often evolves around ecological thinking and its history, including the environment, social relations, and human subjectivity. Tue Greenfort lives and works in Berlin and Zurich. He is represented by Johann König Gallery in Berlin. As a participant in dOCUMENTA(13) in Kassel, Greenfort was co-curator of an archive on multi-species co-evolution, „The Worldly House“. He has had extensive solo presentations at SculptureCenter (2013), Berlinische Galerie (2012), South London Gallery (2011), Kunstverein Braunschweig (2008) and Secession, Vienna (2007). Among his publications are to mention „Linear Deflection“, published by Walther König in 2009 and „Photosynthesis“, published by Sternberg Press in 2006.

Mika Rosenberg (1996) is an American-French interdisciplinary artist currently residing between Miami, FL and Berlin, DE. Rosenberg studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, and at Bard College, Berlin. Her work focuses on bridging the gap between systems biology, technology, and art.

Judith Hopf (1969) was born in Karlsruhe, Germany, and lives and works in Berlin. She is a Professor and Vice-Rector of Fine Arts at the influential Städelschule art academy in Frankfurt. Coming to prominence among a generation of artists working in Berlin in the 1990s, she famously arranged a series of salons with fellow artists and other creative producers at b_books, a well-known bookstore in the Kreuzberg district of the city. She presented her exhibition OUT at the National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen in 2018. She has had additional one-person shows at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museion, Bolzano, Italy; Neue Galerie, Kassel; Maumaus, Lisbon; PRAXES Center for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Malmö Konsthall, Sweden; Studio Voltaire, London; and Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe. She has also participated in Documenta XIII, La Biennale de Montréal, and the Liverpool Biennial

Indriði Ingólfsson (1991) was born in Reykjavík, but lives and works in Berlin. Indriði works both within the music world and the art world and where practices either collide or try to swallow him. These days he is knee deep in visual art. Indriði has taken part in group exhibitions in New York, Iceland & Mexico as well as taken part in various performance projects across Europe. Indriði's work is often nonsensical but sentimental.

Ágústa Oddsdóttir (1947) lived at the farm Neðri-Háls until she started college during the wintertime in Reykjavík but she worked at the farm each summer until 20 years old. Ágústa got married to Sæbjörn Kristjánsson 1972 and they have two sons, Egill and Kristján Oddur. For 12 years Ágústa was teaching sociology at Flensburg College but after 1988 she started to study art and finished Icelandic School of Art and Craft 1997. Since graduating from The Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts in 1997 Ágústa has worked “silently” on her art, to be discovered by Karen Wright in 2017. The first exhibition to cover parts of her art was Mom's Balls at Neðri-Háls in september 2018.

Elín Jónsdóttir (b 1921 d 2010) was born in Dýrafjörður where she was brought up by her parents who lived there as farmers and inventors. She had usual grammar-school education as a child. She went to a „Húsmæðraskólinn að Laugum, Þingeyjarsýslu, during the winter 1943-1944 where she also learned dying yarn and weaving, sewing and other hand crafts. The winter 1945-1946, she was head over the kitchen at the Núpur, gymnasium school at Dýrafjörður. In 1947 she married Oddur Andrússon, from Neðri-Háls í Kjós and from autumn 1947 they took over the administration of the farm at Neðri-Háls. They had 6 children and Ágústa is the oldest. The youngest, Lilja, is born in 1960. All her life Elín made tapestries, clothes on her children, knitted countless blankets and left a bulk of objects that her daughter, Ágústa, has collected and held together.

“**Der 6'er**” is a legend in Berlin. Not much is known about him, he is apparently Dutch, not a trained artist, but has been painting the number 6 onto trash in the streets of Berlin since the 1990's or even longer. What is interesting about him is that he never painted onto property, only trash, street repairs, old furniture thrown into the streets, bottles, waste and rubbish. Once asked why he paints the number 6 he said with tongue in chin: “Because it's so easy and to promote more sex”. He leaves all his works in the street for other people to look at. Many people have collected these objects and they hang in their houses. He seems to stand entirely outside of the market which is quite unique for the times we live in. His works are more like the sunshine, the wind or the rain, entirely free and non guarded and never for sale, just like all the things that nature gives

Egill Sæbjörnsson's (1973) art can be described as “paintings that are alive”, like some sort of augmented reality paintings without using the glasses. Studying art in the 90's in Iceland and Paris, Sæbjörnsson became interested in the means of technology, virtual reality and the internet as a reflection upon the real world. Using video projection onto objects placed by a wall, or using other computer programs for creating self generative projections or by integrating arduinos he has searched for a technological continuation of painting. Practicing Tibetan meditation methods from the age of 16 and attending art therapy inspired his view on art. Using video projections onto every day objects Sæbjörnsson reveals the relationship between the physical world and our thoughts or our emotional and mental reality and how the two intermingle. The artworks are usually quite accessible on purpose by mixing in humour and many layers, making them witty, ingenious and deep, all in one. His integration of music has had an important role for his performances and installations and Egill also releases his music individually. He is possibly best known for his imaginary friends, Ugh and Boogar – 36 metre tall, coffee loving, human eating trolls, who gained notoriety at the Venice Biennale in the summer of 2017. Egill Sæbjörnsson was nominated for the Ars Fennica Prize in 2019.

At the bar of Hotel Holt is a video projection piece presented during the time of the Mom's Balls exhibition.