

FRONT

Finn Naur Petersen



Udgives i forbindelse med installationen Front
i Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, 21.6. - 19.10.1997.

Redaktion: Finn Naur Petersen, Karsten Ohrt, Andreas Jürgensen
Foto: Bent Ryberg, Poul Pedersen, Daniel Bés kian, Antonio Wohlert
Oversættelse: Marianne Ajana, s. 6. Dan A. Marmorstein, s. 25
Layout: Finn Naur Petersen
Produktion: Winther Grafik · Litotryk A/S

Published in connection with the exhibition Front
at Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, Odense, Denmark, 21.6. - 19.10.1997.

Editors: Finn Naur Petersen, Karsten Ohrt, Andreas Jürgensen
Photography: Bent Ryberg, Poul Pedersen, Daniel Bés kian, Antonio Wohlert
Translation: Marianne Ajana, p. 6. Dan A. Marmorstein, p. 25
Layout: Finn Naur Petersen
Production: Winther Grafik · Litotryk A/S

ISBN: 87-7766-064-1

©Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, forfatterne, the authors

FRONT

Finn Naur Petersen



Fig. 1

KUNSTHALLEN BRANDTS KLÆDEFABRIK 1997

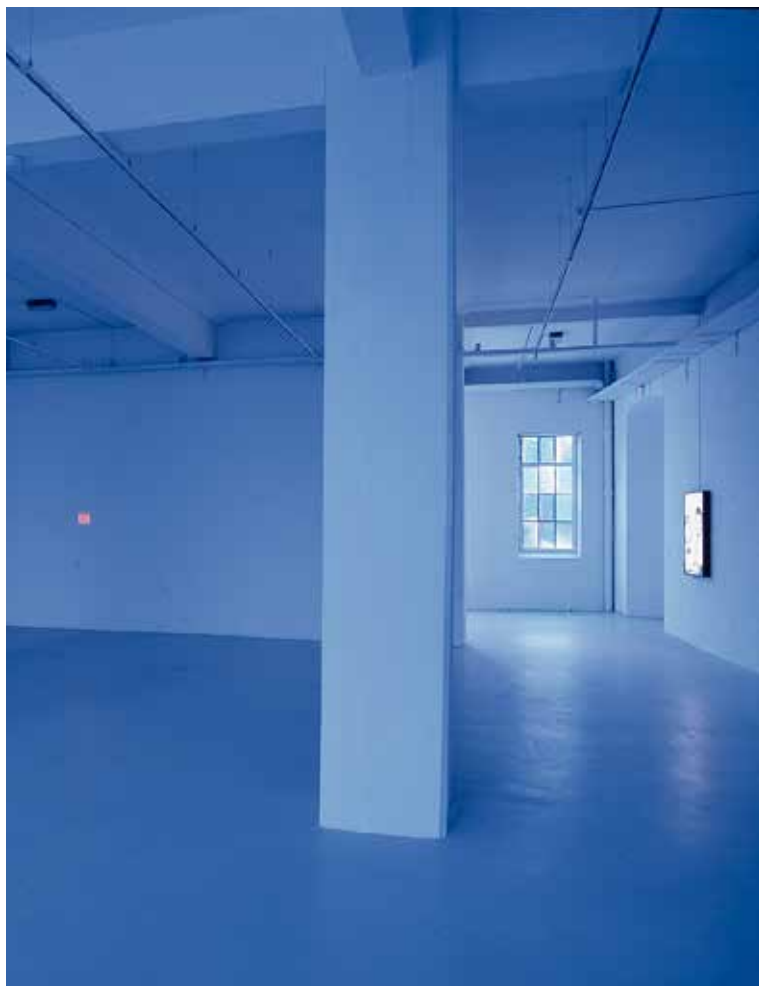


Fig. 2

FRONT

Da installationskunsten opstod for godt 40 år siden, hæftede man sig meget ved, at den blev vist på nogle - for kunsten - meget afsides beliggende steder: i baggårde, i skove, på marker, i bjerge, på gader eller i ørkener. Stederne signalerede i sig selv en væsentlig distance til kunstens etablerede rum.

Nu er installationskunsten efterhånden blevet en integreret del af samtidskunsten, den kan endda betragtes som værende den karakteristiske kunstform for anden halvdel af vores århundrede. Installationskunsten har udviklet sig til en for vor tid symbolsk udtryksform, og forslagene til, hvori dens symbolik ligger, er mange: dens begrænsede fysiske eksistens kan ses som symbol på altings forgængelighed; dens udprægede hensyntagen til det rum, den bliver vist i, kan ses som en metafor for idealet om sensibilitet overfor vores fysiske, psykiske og naturlige omverden; installationers inddragelse af andre kunstarter, især arkitekturen, kan ses som symbol på grænseoverskridning, ekstasen som "tilstand", som man ynder at sige; o.s.v.

I og med at installationskunsten opnåede den status og respekt, den har idag, er dens forhold til kunstens etablerede rum også mere afklaret. Kunsthaller og museer har hentet installationskunsten ind fra gaden, ud af skovene og ned fra bjergene, for at indlemme den i deres øvrige udstillingsvirksomhed. Installationskunst, der førhen var en alternativ og provokerende virksomhed, har etableret sig som et kunsthistorisk emne.

Selvfølgelig er der kunstnere og teoretikere, der synes, at institutionerne derved har fjernet installationskunstens egentlige og provokative brod. De ser udviklingen først og fremmest som et forløb af tab, og med et nostalgisk blik tilbage til 60'erne og 70'erne begræder de denne proces.

Men på den anden side har installationskunsten også selv trængt sig ind på den etablerede kunstscene og ligefrem tvunget institutionerne til at tænke og arbejde i baner, som hidtil har været utænkelige. I forhold til en maleri- eller en skulpturudstilling kræver en installationsudstilling andre former for forberedelse og indsats. Den forudsætter et konkret og helhjertet engagement fra institutionernes side og en usædvanlig tæt og intensiv dialog mellem kunstneren, håndværkerne og de mange andre, der involveres i en installations realisering. Installationskunstens kompromisløse forhold overfor det rum, den vises i, og det tidsrum, den eksisterer i, har stærk indflydelse på, hvordan kunsthaller og museer for moderne kunst i dag fungerer - eller burde fungere.

Finn Naur Petersen (født 1954) er en del af denne udvikling. Han begyndte i 80'erne med at bygge installationer på afsides beliggende steder. Senere installerede han også værker på udstillingsinstitutioner, dog havde disse værker stærkt skulpturelle aspekter. De kunne tages ned og bygges op igen, hvor og hvornår det skulle være. Installationens særlige egenskab, kun at eksistere for et bestemt rum og i et bestemt tidsrum, blev her nedtonet.

Med det nye værk *Front* forholder tingene sig igen anderledes. *Front* arbejder med hele rummet, og idet det farvede glas også inddrager yderrummet rundt omkring Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, synes værket faktisk ikke at have nogen begrænsninger i rummet. Installationen er skabt specielt til Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabriks såkaldte Betonrum. Samtidig eksisterer *Front* rent fysisk kun i et bestemt tidsrum, nemlig fra den 20. juni til den 19. oktober 1997. Herefter reetableres Betonrummet igen, og værket vil leve videre alene i form af dokumentationer - og som et minde.

Vi er meget glade for, at Finn Naur Petersen med så stor indsats og indføling har arbejdet med rummet, og er stolte over at have stillet rammerne til rådighed for en så vellykket installation. Vi takker Glarmester Frese og Søner, København, Pilkington i Danmark samt Glarmesterlauget i Danmark for deres støtte til projektet.

Karsten Ohrt og Andreas Jürgensen
Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik

FRONT

About forty years ago when installation art first emerged, it was in particular noted that it was exhibited in some - for art - highly remote places: in backyards, in forests, on fields, on mountains, on streets or in deserts. In themselves these places signalled a significant distance to the established rooms of art.

By now installation art has gradually become an integral part of contemporary art; it can even be seen as the characteristic art form of the second half of our century. Installation art has developed into a symbolic expression mode of our time, and the suggestions for what this symbolism actually means are many: its limited physical existence may be seen as symbolizing the transitoriness of everything; its definite concern for the space in which it is created may be regarded as a metaphor of the sensitivity ideal towards our physical, psychological and natural environment; the inclusion in installations of other art forms, particularly architecture, may be symbolizing transcendence, ecstasy as a "condition," as it is often said; etc.

The status and respect, which has today been achieved by installation art, also mean that its relationship to the established rooms of art has become clearer. Kunsthallen and museums have taken this art in from the street, out of the forests and down from the mountains to include it in their other exhibitions. Installation art, which used to be an alternative and provocative enterprise, has established itself as a topic in art history.

Of course, there are artists and theorists who believe the institutions by that have removed the original and provocative sting from installation art. They primarily see this development as a series of losses, and they look nostalgically towards the 60s and 70s while deploring this process.

On the other hand, however, installation art had on its own also penetrated the established art scene and virtually forced the art institutions to think and work along different lines, which until then had been inconceivable. Compared to an exhibition of paintings or sculpture, an exhibition of installations calls for other kinds of preparation and effort. It presupposes a specific and wholehearted involvement by the institutions and an exceptionally close and intensive dialogue with the artist, the artisans and the many others who are involved in the materialisation of an installation. Today the uncompromising relationship with the room in which installation art is shown and the span of time during which it exists have a powerful influence on how kunsthallen and museums of modern art function - or on how they ought to function.

Finn Naur Petersen (born 1954) is a part of this development. He too started in the 80s by building installations in remote places. Later he also installed works in exhibition institutions; these works had some rather sculptural aspects however. They could be dismantled and reconstructed where and when wanted. Thus the unique quality of the installation, only to exist in a specific location and for a certain time span, was de-emphasized here.

With this new work *Front*, the way things are related again differ. *Front* works with the entire room, and, since the coloured glass also takes in the outer space around Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, the work does in fact not appear to have limitations of any kind inside the room. This installation has been specifically created for the so-called Concrete Room in Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik. At the same time *Front* exists only for a specific period of time, namely from 20 June to 19 October 1997. Afterwards the Concrete Room is reestablished once more, and this art work will only remain alive through documentations - and as a memory.

We are delighted that Finn Naur Petersen has put such a great effort and sensitivity into his work with this room, and we are proud to have provided the framework for an installation that has turned out so well. We thank glazier Frese and Sons, Pilkington in Denmark and also the Glaziers' Association in Denmark for their support to this project.

Karsten Ohrt and Andreas Jürgensen
Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik



Fig. 3

TRANSFORMATIONSENERGIER

Ann Lumbye Sørensen

Finn Naur Petersen har til stadighed arbejdet med en procesorienteret kunst, hvor der er en fin overensstemmelse mellem praksis og hans dybe fascination af vækst, både konkret og set som en poetisk metafor. Men hans store installationers midlertidige karakter medvirker også til at understrege det forhold, at kunstudøvelsen ikke adskiller sig fra livets øvrige foreteelser. Ting opstår og ting forgår.

DE STEDBESTEMTE Udstillinger

I første halvdel af 1980'erne arbejdede Finn Naur Petersen tæt sammen med fire andre kunstnere i værkstedet *Leifsgade 22* i København. Kernen i dette samarbejde var markante fællesprojekter, som blev gennemført i nedlagte industribygninger, men dog også inden for kunstinstitutionens rammer. Når industribygningerne fremhæves her, skyldes det, at gruppens kunstneriske dialog med disse nærmest historieløse og oversete bygninger på dette tidspunkt var enestående på dansk grund. Strategien bevirkede en ny vurdering af de ældre industribygningers arkitektoniske kvaliteter, og for kunstnerne var det en udvidelse af mulighederne for æstetiske undersøgelser. Spørgsmålet om at definere kunsten blev sat til diskussion med disse midlertidige, stedbestede udstillinger, hvor grænsen mellem selve stedet og de tilføjede strukturer blev afprøvet.

Den kunstneriske praksis var kort skitseret at genbruge stedets egne materialer i kombination med nye bearbejdede elementer. Gulve blev brækket på, mure gennembrudt og vinduer erstattet med



Fig. 4



et andet materiale. Det var en eksperimenteren med flade og volumen, vertikale og horisontale forløb samt materialers tekstur og farve. Resultaterne forvandlede stedets triste forladthed, og samtidig blev betragteren udfordret til

en ny orientering via de kunstneriske indgrebs kollektive pejlinger. Finn Naur Petersens sensibilitet for materialerne og hans sans for det mikrokosmiskes betydning medvirkede i høj grad til at give bygningernes grove rum en poetisk dimension, der kunne henvise til eksistensens skrøbelighed og spiritualitet.

Fællesprojekterne fra værkstedet *Leifsgade 22* var et dansk bidrag til en international tendens, der tog sit udgangspunkt i materialernes og udtrykkets balance med det eksisterende sted og forkærligheden for alternative udstillingsrum. Projekterne er en særlig kategori og den *stedbestemte udstilling* er en ny genre inden for samtidskunsten med rødder tilbage til 1960'ernes land-art, hvor kunstnerne opgav de konventionelle udstillingssteder til fordel for uprøvede lokaliteter fjernt fra det traditionelle kunsthverv.

Kunstværkets status som handelsvare blev undermineret, og kunstbegrebet mere rummeligt. I 1970'erne blev eksperimenter med installation samt video og performance vigtige ingredienser i den stedbestede udstillings billedforråd. De projektorienterede udstillinger med midlertidige værker har siden hjemmøgt vidt forskellige urbane lokaliteter, som for eksempel kirker, fængsler og nedlagte fabriksbygninger. Udstillingsinstitutionen har samtidig overtaget en lignende praksis; i Danmark eksempelvis tilblivelsen af Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik.

Fig. 5



FRONT - EN TIDSLOMME

Finn Naur Petersen har i de senere år udvidet sin kunstneriske praksis med en ny og fortællende dimension, idet han blandt andet overfører visse figurative billedelementer fra udstilling til udstilling som en art bagage af vigtige ting. Men et strejf af nostalgi ønsker han at bevare om ikke alt, så noget fra glemslen. Den fotografisk bearbejdede serie *Kissing the Islands* (1996-97) er nok en satire over turistens fotoover, men afslører også en indadvendt side hos kunstneren, en side, der kommer til udtryk med installationen *Front*.

Når betragteren overskrider tærsklen til *Front*, forlader han eller hun samtidig kunstinstitutionen for at blive omsluttet af værket. Den første desorientering må efterfølges af en accept af en anderledes sted med nye regler. I kraft af sin fragmenterede og uafsluttede karakter - som en igangværende

Fig. 6



proces - danner installationen sekvenser af endnu ikke fastlagt betydning. Kunstnerens pointe er, at søge etableret en overenskomst mellem betragter og værk, så en dialog kan skabes. Installationens elementer må derfor bestå af genkendelige, almene tegn som resonansbund for de efterfølgende koblinger, som skaber den personlige oplevelse. *Front* er således et åbent kunstværk, der først taler til genkendelsen, derefter til overraskelsen og forundringen.

Lys strømmer ind gennem koboltblå vinduespartier og bader et sceneri i en nærmest sakral stemning. De oprindelige klare ruder er smadret i tusind stykker, og glasskårene flyder på gulv og karme. men blandt voldens banale spor ligger forsøvede hverdagsgenstande, familiens nødvendighedsartikler feticheret i lighed med ritualet at forsøve barnets første sko som evigt minde. Nogle af disse forsøvede ready-mades har været brugt i anden sammenhæng, men til *Front* er antallet forøget for med flere nuancer at

Fig. 7

afdække og indkredse begreber som barndom, erindring og betydning.

I passagen mellem installationens to rum hænger på en væg en lyskasse med et stort fotografi af to drenge, et typisk familiefoto af kunstneren som barn og hans bror. Dette indslag kan ses i sammen-



hæng med en i den aktuelle kunst udbredt interesse for selvbiografisk stof som afsæt for refleksioner om identitet og historisk forankring. Den tilstand mellem banal genkendelse og en nydelsesfuld forførelse gennem installationens materialeanselighed, som betragteren udsættes for, kan sammenlignes med de billeddannelser, der skabes hos læseren af et digt.

Aktiveringen af dagdrømmen er en rød tråd i Gaston Bachelards *La poétique de l'espace* (1957), hvor den franske filosof påviser, hvordan poesien kan omskrive huset og dets særegne rum til lokaliteter for egne erindringer og for de steder, hvor vi i barndommen havde vore dagdrømme. Finn Naur Petersens installation har potentiale til at nå betragterens ikke-artikulerede niveauer i bevidstheden. Således kan Front med sit både hemmelighedsfulde og objektive, konkrete billedsprog være en tidslomme for dagdrømmens nødvendige eskapisme fra det informations- og overvågningssamfund, som så ofte er påpeget som vor tids vilkår.

Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

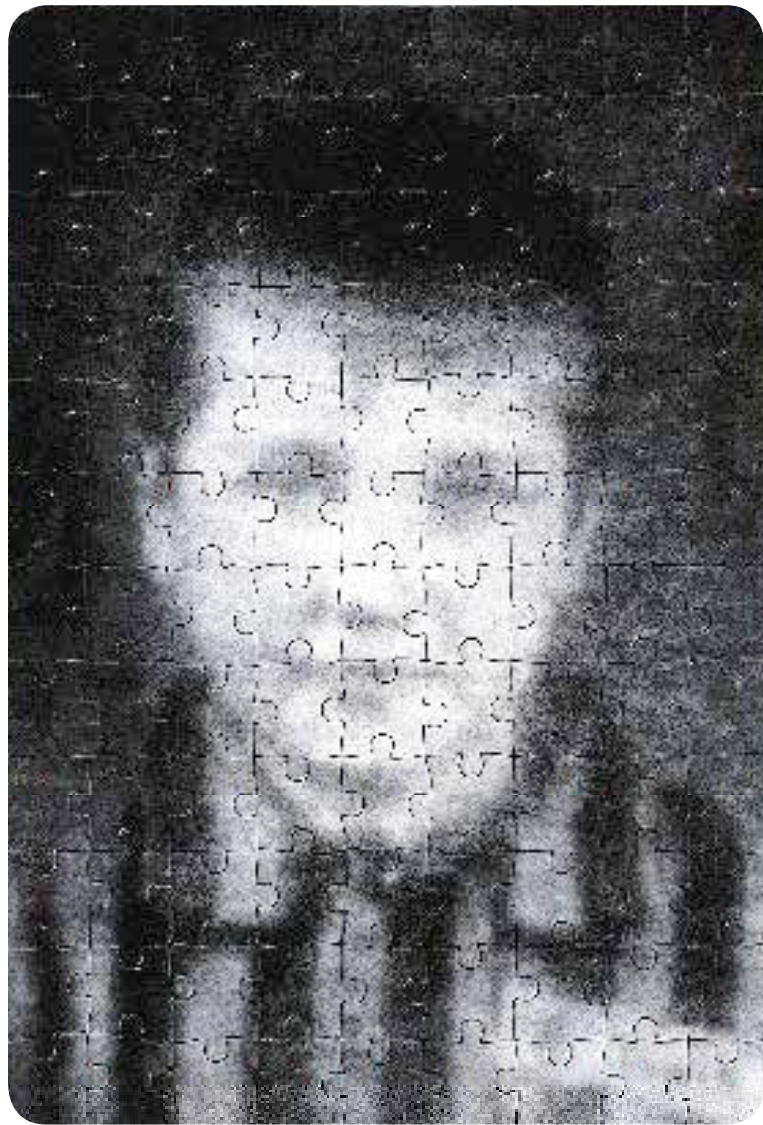


Fig. 13



Fig. 14-22



Fig. 23

Fig. 24

Fig. 25-28



Fig. 29



Fig. 30

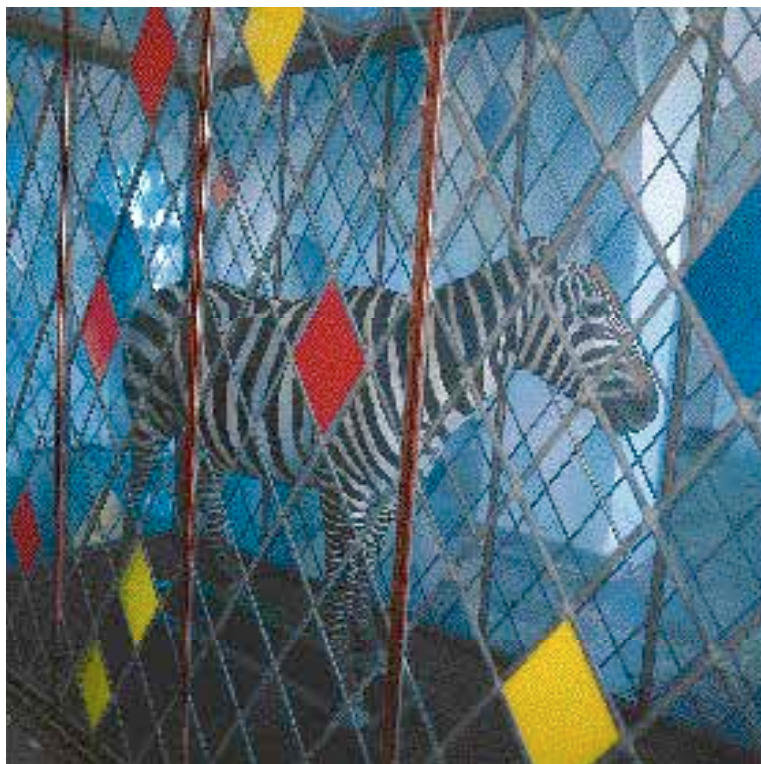


Fig. 31



Fig. 32



Fig. 33

TRANSFORMATIONAL ENERGIES

By Ann Lumbye Sørensen

Finn Naur Petersen has been working continuously with a process-oriented art, where there is a precise accordance between his praxis and his profound fascination with growth, both in the concrete sense and when seen as a poetic metaphor. However, the provisional character of his large-scale installations contributes as well to underscoring the fact that the execution of art does not separate itself from the rest of life's phenomena. Things come into being and things pass away.

THE SITE-SPECIFIC EXHIBITIONS

In the first half of the 1980s, Finn Naur Petersen worked in close collaboration with four other artists in the Copenhagen workshop Leifsgade 22. The nucleus of this collaboration was a series of striking cooperative projects which were held in closed-down industrial buildings, but nonetheless also within the framework of the art institutions. When special mention is made here of the industrial buildings, it is because, on Danish soil, this group's artistic dialogue with these almost historically detached and overlooked buildings was unique, for this point in time. Their strategy effected a new evaluation of the older industrial buildings' architectonic qualities and for the artists, it was a widening of the possibilities for aesthetic investigations.

The question about defining art was put up to debate with these temporary, site-specific exhibitions, where the boundary between the place itself and the added



structures was tested out. The artistic praxis, to put it succinctly, constituted a re-utilization of the site's own materials in combination with new re-processed elements. The floor was taken up, the walls were broken through and the windows were replaced with some other kind of material. It was an experimentation with surface and volume, with vertical and horizontal elapse as well as with the materials' texture and color. The results transformed the site's melancholic desolation and at the same time, the spectator was tempted forth into a new orientation by the means of the artistic encroachment's collective soundings. Finn Naur Petersen's sensibility for the material and his sense for the microcosmic's significance contributed to a large degree in providing the buildings' coarse space with a poetic dimension, which could then refer to existence's vulnerability and spirituality.

The collaborative projects from the Leifsgade 22 workshop constituted a Danish contribution to an international tendency which took its mark in the materials' and the expression's balance with the existing site and the affection for alternative exhibition spaces. The projects belong to a special category of the site-specific exhibition, a new genre within contemporary art with its roots reaching back to the 1960s land-art, where the artists relinquished the conventional exhibition spaces in favor of untested premises remotely situated from the traditional art scene. The art work's status as a commodity was undermined and the very notion of art became more spacious. In the 1970s, experiments with installations as well as video and performance art came to be crucial ingredients in the image vocabulary of site-specific exhibitions. Ever since that time, project-oriented exhibitions - featuring temporary works - have been ravaging a wide spectrum of differ-

Fig. 34

ent urban premises: churches, prisons and closed-down factory buildings, for instance. The exhibition institution has simultaneously adopted a similar praxis. In Denmark, as an example, there was the formation of the Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik in the city of Odense.

FRONT - A POCKET OF TIME

In recent years, Finn Naur Petersen has widened his artistic praxis with a new and narrative dimension insofar as he is now, among other things, transferring certain figurative pictorial elements from one exhibition to the next as a kind of luggage containing important things. With a touch of nostalgia, he wants to preserve, if not everything, then at least something from falling into oblivion. The photographically re-processed series entitled *Kissing the Islands* (1996-97) is indeed a satire on the tourist's camera-lust, but it also discloses an introverted aspect on the part of the artist, an aspect which manifests itself with the installation entitled *Front*.

As the spectator crosses the threshold to *Front*, he or she is simultaneously exiting the art institution only to be encompassed by the work. The first disorientation ought then to be followed up with the acceptance of a different place, governed by new rules. By virtue of its fragmented and non-terminated character - as in an ongoing process - the installation fashions sequences of an as of yet non-established significance.



Fig. 35

The artist's point is to attempt to establish an agreement between the spectator and the work so that a dialogue can come into being. The installation's elements may thus consist of recognizable common signs as sounding board for the succeeding

couplings which engender the personal experience. In this way, *Front* is an open work of art which first speaks to the sense of recognition and thereafter to the sense of surprise and to wonder.

Light is pouring through cobalt-blue windows and it bathes a scenery in an almost sacred atmosphere. The originally transparent glass panes have been smashed into thousands of pieces and the glass shards are lying in a mess on



the floor and the window sill. But among the banal traces of violence, there are silver-plated objects from everyday life, the family's articles of necessity fetishized in a way analogous to the ritual of silver-plating the baby's first shoes as an everlasting memory. Some of these silver-plated ready-mades have been utilized in other connections, but for *Front*, the number of them has been increased in order to uncover and encircle notions such as childhood, remembrance and significance with a greater degree of nuance.

Hanging on a wall in the passage between the installation's two rooms, there is a light-box with a large photograph of two boys, a typical family photo of the artist as a child and his brother. This element can be seen in

Fig. 36

connection with what has become, in present-day art, a widespread interest in autobiographical material as being the jumping off point for reflection about identity and historical anchoring. This condition between banal recognition and a joyful seduction through the installation's material sensuality to which the spectator is exposed bears comparison with that kind of pictorial formation activated in the reader by a poem.



The activation of the daydream is a governing motive in Gaston Bachelard's *La poétique de l'espace* (1957), wherein the French philosopher points out how poetry can rewrite the house and its unique space into premises for one's own remembrance and into places where in childhood we had our daydreams. Finn Naur Petersen's installation possesses the capacity of getting through to the spectator's non-articulated levels of consciousness. In such a way, *Front*, with its both secretive and objective, concrete pictorial language can be a pocket of time for the daydream's necessary escapism from that information- and surveillance-society which is so often designated as being the very condition of our times.

Fig. 37



Fig. 38



Fig. 39

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1: *Kissing the Island*. Photogravure. 20.2 x 29.7 cm. Edition of five. 1996-97

Fig. 2: *Front*. Window section. Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik. 1997

Fig. 3: *Front*. Air grating. Silver. Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik. 1997

Fig. 4,5,8,33,34 and 35: *Front*. Various silver objects of differing sizes. Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik. 1997

Fig. 6,7 and 12: *Front*. Installationsviews. Tinted glass, crushed glass and various silver objects. Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik. 1997

Fig. 9: *Terra Nullus*. Photograph, silver objects and Plexiglass. Station 96, Gothenburg Municipal Library, Sweden. 1996

Fig. 10 and 11: *Paradise II*. Brass and silver. Diameter 75 cm. Frederiksberg Gardens, Copenhagen. 1994

Fig. 13 - 22: *Children/Growth*. Photogravure, jigsaw puzzle. 25 x 37 cm. Edition of three. 1997

Fig. 23 - 28: *Kissing the Island*. Photogravure. 41.7 x 59.2 cm. Edition of five. 1996-97

Fig. 29: *Icon. Cloud*. Concrete-glass, wood, gold leaf. 43 x 58 cm. National Library in Aarhus. 1996

Fig. 30: *Anemones for China*. Various anemone seeds in Chinese flowerpots. Beijing, China. 1997

Fig. 31 and 32: *Paradise I*. Stuffed zebra, lead-paned glass, wood. 200 x 100 x 300 cm. Marienlyst Castle. 1993

Fig. 36 and 37: *Clair obscur*. Stuffed deer, mahogany, shoes, glass, lighting, iron, plaster and pigment-powder colored walls. Various dimensions. The Danish House in Paris, France. 1993

Fig. 38 and 39: *Icon*. Adornment project of glass, gold leaf, sheet crystal, steel, wax. National Library in Aarhus. 1995. Commissioned by the Danish National Endowment for the Arts.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Finn Naur Petersen. Born 1954 in Copenhagen, Denmark. He is working mainly with installations and graphics. Since 1993 he has been employed as an associate professor at the Graphic Institute of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.