

An abstract painting by Erik A. Frandsen. The composition is dominated by large, flat areas of color in shades of blue, purple, orange, and red. In the upper right, a glass lantern hangs from the ceiling. In the lower right, a person with dark hair, wearing a pink tank top and white shorts, is seen from behind, looking towards a window or doorway. On a table in front of them are various objects, including a white pitcher, a glass, and a small basket. The overall style is minimalist and expressive, with bold lines and a limited color palette.

ERIK A. FRANDSEN

in Horsens Art Museum's Collection

HORSENS KUNSTMUSEUM
2019

Erik A. Frandsen

Erik A. Frandsen was born in Randers in 1957 and played a leading role in the artistic breakthrough in Denmark in the years 1981 – 83. Today we associate Erik A. Frandsen as one of Denmark's most acknowledged artists who's oeuvre is highly multifaceted.

The works of Erik A. Frandsen is to be found on many Danish museums as well as in public spaces and private collections.

Through the years he has played, and still plays, a great and significant role in the history of Horsens Art Museum. Frandsen was among the first artists to exhibit at Horsens Art Museum after the museum was established as an independant museum; first in a joint group exhibition, 'Ler-etuder II' in 1985 and then in the solo exhibition 'Retrograd Amnesi/Ingen vej tilbage' in 1986. Since then a large handful of solo – and group exhibitions has followed.

With more than 300 works, Frandsen occupies a significant place in the Horsens Art Museum's collection, where we can follow his artistic development from the the early 1980s to the present day.



Arles- mon amour – no pasaran 2, 2015

Scagliola. Diameter 250 cm

Gift 20/08-2018 from Inge og Asker Larsens fond til støtte af almennyttige formål



Tegning, 1983

Painted particleboards. 122,0 x 125,0 cm
Gift 03/09-2001 from the artist

From 1976 -79 Erik A. Frandsen studied ceramics in Greece, sculpture in Carrera, Italy, and worked with graphics in France. When he moved back to Denmark in 1981 he co-founded the artistic community 'Værkstedet Værst'. As a part of 'De Unge Vilde' (The Wild Young) in the beginning of the 1980's, Frandsen was taking part in pushing the boundaries for the formal expression of art as well as the use of materials, particularly focussing on paintings. As an artist he has explored numerous mediums through his artistic career in an endless search for new opportunities. The exploration of various artistic mediums spans widely from painting and photography to graphics, sculpture, installation, mosaics, neon and steel reliefs. The artist's wide use of different mediums bears witness to a constant urge to explore new possibilities, and the content of the motive tells a similar story. Incorporating an artist like Erik A. Frandsen can be difficult but the collection at Horsens Art Museum can help put an insight into the artist's many-faceted universe.

The exhibition 'Erik A. Frandsen in the collection of Horsens Art Museum' is open until the 25th of August 2019. Further information on all of the works of Erik A. Frandsen in the collection can be found on Horsens Art Museum's website: www.horsenskunstmuseum.dk

Værkstedet Værst



Dødens Pølse, 1983

Acrylic on sheet canvas. 96,0 x 119,5 cm

Bought 22/4-2014

One of the earliest works of Erik A. Frandsen in the collection of Horsens Art Museum is 'Dødens Pølse' (freely translated 'The Sausage of Death') from 1983. The work has come into being at a time when painting, and especially painting with a great haste and humorous provocation, was popular. Part of the artistic maneuvers of the early Frandsen can also be implemented in a general understanding of the 1980's as the age of postmodernism. As one of the founders of 'Værkstedet Værst' Frandsen gained significant importance to the artistic group 'De Unge Vilde'. 'Værkstedet Værst' ran, with obvious inspiration from the artistic scene of the 1960's, an 'experimenting art school' in a partly burnt down tea repository nearby the current Forum in Copenhagen. As an atelier – and artistic community, exhibition space and experimental nest, the assembly of 'Værkstedet Værst' was a significant alternative to the 'young ferocity' that hatched at the Royal Danish Academy of Arts in the first half of the 1980's. Thus, as a starting point, Frandsen is a part of a joint movement and maybe more importantly; he has found a way out of it. Through the 80's and up to this day he keeps on challenging our expectations to the work of art; expectations to the themes an artwork is able to discuss; and not least to the materials and techniques that creates it.

Blockade Art

Erik A. Frandsen's role as a 'blockade artist' begins in Barcelona where he lived from 1987 – 89. Here he painted the oil paintings and came up with the idea of glueing some boxes onto the canvases. He stated that he, by coincidence, came across the boxes and saw, in his mind – as if it was a dream – that the boxes were to be implemented in the paintings. It was only when the works were exhibited that a reviewer put words into the meaning of the boxes as a blockage for our sight. One of these 'box paintings' is 'Imod Arkimedes' ('Against Archimedes'). On the vast red canvas are put three red painted plastic boxes and some tortuous steel wire. As viewers we are not given any motive: only a mask-like face with perfectly curved eyebrows and a worried or surprised look to its face and a couple of legs that dissappears behind one of the boxes. Not the title, per say, either leads us to find a greater story to the painting. It was merely one of many titles that were sent to Horsens Art Museum to be arbitrary allocated to each painting by the head of the museum, Claus Hagedorn-Olsen, for the exhibition 'Frandsen, bc' in 1988.



Imod Arkimedes, 1988

Oil, metal, plastic boxes on canvas. 200,0 x 163,0 cm.

Bought 19/03-1988

Graphical experiments

The exploration of graphics already began in the beginning of Erik A. Frandsen's artistic career and is a vital part of his work throughout the years. In the 1970's he went to Paris to work with the graphical expression where he, among other places, worked at Stanley William Hayters (1901 – 1988) graphical workshop; one of the most renowned graphical workshops in Europe, and the highly acknowledged litographic workshop Clot, Bramsen & Georges.

The expressive 'wild young' artists considered the process behind the creation of art as a vital part of the artistic production. The graphics allow for experimental with processes, since the end product is not foreseeable nor is it possible to edit once it has been printed.

Graphics furthermore challenges the idea of the original work of art as it suddenly becomes reusable and thereby enables a kind of mass production.

For an experimental artist like Erik A. Frandsen the graphics are an evident medium to explore. Just like his wide exploration of the painting and its boundaries, he explored all possibilities as well as pushing the boundaries for what we normally associate with the graphical work. Not the painting nor the graphics are separate practises in the artistic work of Erik A. Frandsen; they influence each other.

Particularly the graphics came to take place as a cornerstone in his further work with the painting.



Grundbilleder, 1988

Drypoint technique, sugar aquatint. 319 x 985 mm

Gift 21/04-1989 from Statens Museumsnævn

The Photography and the Intimacy



Anette og Laika, 1998

Alkyd on aluminium/colour photography. 200,0 x 145,0/136,0 x 105,0 cm
Gift 27/03-1998

In the late 90's Frandsen starts to experiment with photography with which he captures transient moments that might, at first sight, seem indifferent. But take a closer look and it will instantly become clear that every single photograph holds a special aesthetic and composition – aesthetics that bears a red line throughout Frandsen's artistic practise. Moreover he starts to experiment with copying the photograph in negative which turns the colours upside down as white becomes black and vice versa. The change of light and dark continues when Frandsen in 1998 begins working on a series of works based on snapshots of his own family life. He turns the camera towards the intimacy of the family, which is why his own family is often portrayed in his photographs as when we 'meet' Annette (wife) and Laika (daughter) in homelike environments. Whereas in the 80's Frandsen worked a great deal with the free and expressive expression, the 90's were pervaded with a particular focus on the intimate. This connects itself to parts of the reality and is why the homelike environments are often seen in not only the photograph but in his paintings and graphical works too.

The Floral Motive

A consistent motive in a large part of Frandsen's works of art is to be found in his floral motives. The floral motives are an extension of the exploration of the homelike and everyday scenarios as well as motives from the oeuvre of the 1990's.

An example of his work with the floral motive is to be seen on the first floor at Horsens Art Museum where three of his floral paintings hangs on a wall decorated by himself. The starting point is the reversed photographs, and the known appears to be oddly strange; partly due to the reversed colours and partly because of the painted wall that gathers the paintings into a colourstrong total installation in a room that is normally bright and almost clinical. But that is not the only clash we experience; a clash between the flower motives and the tradition they point to is also relevant to consider. The flowers are not graceful arrangements or ostentatious still life paintings where exotic plants or flowers swirl through precious objects. No, Frandsen has painted common florals and weeds arranged into everyday glasses and jars found in every home. There is something unpretentious in the choice of the flower motives; at a distance they seem to hold a kind of harmony and not least beauty but when looking closer, it becomes clear that the flowers are untraditional; thistles, dandelions and weeds in storage – and urine bottles.



Pinseliljer i agurkeglas, Tulipaner i syltetøjsglas, Mælkebøtte i drikkeglas, 2002
Alkyd on aluminium. Each piece 200,0 x 145,2 cm
Gift 30/08-2002 from Ny Carlsbergfondet