

Humans Through More Than 100 Years (*The Collection of Horsens Art Museum*)

For over a century, artists have explored, challenged, and reinvented ways of depicting the human form, from naturalistic representations to expressionistic experiments, and modern and conceptual interpretations. With this exhibition, Horsens Art Museum aims to show how the depiction and perception of humanity has changed in tandem with societal development and new movements within visual art. The display features paintings, collages, and sculptures that, in their own ways, invite the viewer to reflect on the portrayal of the body and the diverse stories behind each work. Here, you can encounter works where the body and face are used as mirrors of the times, as well as the artist's personal emotions and identities. The exhibition invites reflection on what it means to be human – seen through the lens of art. Who are we, how do we see ourselves, and perhaps most importantly, how do we see each other?



Portrait of Peter Bonde, 1983 by Erik A. Frandsen

Everything was at stake in the early 1980s. Nothing was sacred, and for a young, up-and-coming artist like Erik A. Frandsen (born 1957), it was natural to dive into a genre that was heavily rooted in tradition: portrait painting. Portraits of kings, aristocrats, the bourgeoisie, and artists' self-portraits had long dominated art history. In this work, Erik A. Frandsen chose to portray his contemporary artist colleague Peter Bonde. In addition to Peter Bonde, Erik A. Frandsen also painted portraits of Claus Carstensen, Lars Nørgård, and Christian Lemmerz in a series of paintings.

The artist is solidly planted in a large red armchair. The portrait-like quality is easy to overlook, but what is noteworthy is the Coca-Cola bottle placed within the image. In traditional portraiture, the subjects were often depicted with an object that indicated their social status or profession. Here, in modern times, the Coke bottle is included simply because Peter Bonde was rarely seen without one in his hand, and Erik A. Frandsen has humorously and personally associated the brand with him. The painting style is characteristic of the "wild painting" of the time: intensely expressive, with large arm movements and a simple material choice of canvas, spray paint, and cheap paint from the local hardware store. The focus was on the here and now, rather than on creating works meant to withstand the test of time in terms of material selection.

Family, 1996 by Cathrine Raben Davidsen

The large painting *Family* is far from the idyllic family portrait as we usually know them. Cathrine Raben Davidsen (b. 1972) has chosen to draw inspiration from her own childhood. The portrait depicts a grim family scene, where illness and loss dominate both the subject matter and the atmosphere. In the left corner, Cathrine Raben Davidsen is portrayed as a child, holding her father's hand. The father is lying in a bed with one hand placed on his heart. It becomes immediately clear to the viewer that the father is ill. A distinctive feature of the handshake between father and daughter is that the father's hand is almost transparent. The father is being overtaken by death, and behind him, his coffin stands ready and waiting for him. The mood is unsettling and bleak. The figures in the right corner appear to be a mix of animals and humans. Their bodies are abnormal and exude sexual references, as seen in the man with the exposed penis and the young artist herself, who is attempting to hide her sex behind her hand.

The painting is one of Cathrine Raben Davidsen's early works. The artist lost her father in 1985 when she was 13 years old. The work depicts a young Cathrine Raben Davidsen letting go of her father. Through this painting, the artist explores themes of identity, transitional phases, life, and death, with a sick father whose life is slipping away from his body. The piece thus represents a pivotal moment in the artist's upbringing, where she was confronted with death and loss while simultaneously navigating a coming-of-age period, transitioning from childhood and seeking her identity as a teenager.

In her artistic work, Cathrine Raben Davidsen often returns to the turquoise color, as seen in the painting *The Dark Night IV*. In *Family*, the turquoise color is also important. For Cathrine Raben Davidsen, the turquoise color is a means of self-expression, as it is a chakra color. Chakra means "energy wheel" and is used, among other things, in meditation. There are seven chakra colors, each connected to one of the seven primary energy centers in the body. The turquoise chakra color is associated with the throat area and strengthens spiritual communication. In this way, the painting represents a spiritual farewell to the artist's father.

Pop, 2022 by PhoebeNewYork

"Being a rebel is about going further into the fear and not looking back," said Libby Schoettle (b. 1973), the artist behind PhoebeNewYork, in the summer of 2021 in connection with her solo exhibition *My Paper World* at the Horsens Art Museum.

The presentation not only addressed her work with street art but also showcased the artistic journey that Libby Schoettle has undertaken over the last 21 years of her artistic career—a journey that has taken her from an introverted, searching artistic existence to the birth of Phoebe, her extroverted alter ego, who actively uses her voice to express her opinions in public spaces and highlight some of the injustices occurring in the world.

In connection with the exhibition, the Horsens Art Museum acquired a series of photographs and collages for its collection. The latest acquisition is the 2022 collage *Pop*. This collage highlights PhoebeNewYork's collagebased practice, where old fashion magazines are sourced and transformed into contemporary collages that reference both fashion, art history, and femininity.

The artist behind PhoebeNewYork: Libby Schoettle is a New York-based artist originally from Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. She attended Gettysburg College, Philadelphia University, and graduated with honors from Hunger College. She currently lives and works in New York City.

Standing Woman, 1950 by Ib Braase

Ib Braase (1923-2009) was a prominent sculptor in the Danish art scene. His continuous, nuanced explorations of the possibilities of sculpture have made him an important player in the expansion of the concept of sculpture that took place in the 20th century. The broadening of the understanding of what the term sculpture encompasses was not a definitive break with earlier sculpture traditions, but a necessity to make sculpture relevant as contemporary art.

Ib Braase's oeuvre bears witness to a personal development from the closed, traditional statue of the early 1950s toward the open sculpture that occupies and incorporates the surrounding space. The sculpture *Standing Woman* in this collection display is a reflection of Ib Braase's early work with sculpture. Braase worked toward a conception of sculpture as a place: *"A place where one can spiritually be,"* as he put it. What is particularly interesting is how Braase artistically demonstrates an unbroken continuity that spans from the Danish late modern interest in form and volume, which Braase particularly experienced through his role as an assistant to the Danish sculptor Astrid Noack, to an expanded understanding of sculpture that incorporates an awareness of architecture, space, and the body.

The Newborn, 1891 by J.F. Willumsen

Jens Ferdinand Willumsen (1863-1958) was one of the pioneers behind the modern breakthrough in Danish art around the turn of the 20th century. He was primarily a painter, but also worked with graphics, ceramics, photography, and sculpture. A ceramic sculpture is represented in the Horsens Art Museum's collection with the sculpture *The Newborn* from 1891. The sculpture is a portrait of J.F. Willumsen's son, Jan Bjørn, who was born on January 20, 1891. The portrait depicts a model of the newborn child in a fetal position, which is a clear invitation to the artist's well-known sculpting style and his enduring focus on the intimate relationship that often comes to the fore in his works.



Fettbaby, 1985 by Christian Lemmerz

"At the Horsens Art Museum, Fettbaby is displayed in a glass case, because otherwise, one could not be near it due to the stench. And just as it attracted me back then, it also attracts the attention of the audience now. The baby's human dimension is evident, but the head is oversized and the arms and legs are very short, while the body is shapeless. It is far from a pretty baby, and that is precisely the point: Newborn babies are essentially ugly, but when they are our own, we perceive them as pure revelations of beauty. But Christian Lemmerz has created an ugly, slimy baby as a comment on how they look, even though we can only see it when presented with someone else's child. It's not a major critique of society, but rather a small, humorous glimpse into reality, typical of the 1980s' ironic distance to everything. The irony was clear in the art, while the social critique was more implicit."

These were the words of museum director Claus Hagedorn-Olsen in an interview with Kristelig Dagblad in 2015, under the headline Social Criticism with a Wink.

Fettbaby is now considered one of Christian Lemmerz's early major works. The baby, about one meter tall, is made with a core of plaster and wood, covered in margarine. According to Christian Lemmerz's (1959) own material lexicon, *Das Zeug* from 1986, fat is a building material, and "you get fat, babies are mostly fat." Christian Lemmerz had decided in his lexicon that well-fed babies are fat, and that obesity is an attribute of babies. In this way, the material and content complement each other. *Fettbaby* is also a tribute to the German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), who was a major artistic role model for Lemmerz. The sculpture's material directly references Beuys's mythologizing and highly symbolic use of fat, though Lemmerz ironically distances himself from this with *Fettbaby*.

At Horsens Art Museum, *Fettbaby* is presented in a case, in which the work has been preserved since 1987. When the work was first shown at an exhibition in Copenhagen, the sculpture was simply placed on the floor.

Fettbaby stands today as a symbol of where Christian Lemmerz's artistic practice originates from and points to the great diversity hidden within the artist's universe, in terms of materials as well as themes.

In connection with the collection display, it is possible to experience works by the following artists: Christian Lemmerz, PhoebeNewYork, Cathrine Raben Davidsen, Pernille Koldbech Fich, Erik A. Frandsen, Carl Forup, Ib Braase, Cilius Andersen, J. F. Willumsen, Erik Hoppe, Einar Utzon-Frank, Adam Fischer, Immanuel Ibsen, and Mogens Zieler.