

About my work:

Lately I have worked almost exclusively with white paper in different objects, paper cuts, installations and performances. A large part of my work is made from A4 sheets of paper. It is probably the most common and consumed media used for carrying information today. This is why we rarely notice the actual materiality of the A4 paper. By taking away all the information and starting from scratch using the blank white A4 paper sheet for my creations, I feel I have found a material that we are all able to relate to, and at the same time the A4 paper sheet is neutral and open to fill with different meaning. The thin white paper gives the paper sculptures a frailty that underlines the tragic and romantic theme of my works.

The paper cut sculptures explore the probable and magical transformation of the flat sheet of paper into figures that expand into the space surrounding them. The negative and absent 2 dimensional space left by the cut, points out the contrast to the 3 dimensional reality it creates, even though the figures still stick to their origin without the possibility of escaping. In that sense there is also an aspect of something tragic in many of the cuts.

Recently I have worked with the notion of complexity in the piece 'White Diary'. It presents a human head with a sketchbook in the centre. Out from the pages of the book grows a complex thought-process as an imaginative landscape filled with details and fairytale stories. This maze mapping of the brain shows at the same time confusion and a feeling of getting lost in the detail, which in turn disables any rational overview for a while. Not until the sculpture is seen at a distance and its entirety drawn in can you create order in the chaos.

Some of the paper works are coloured and framed. Others are larger installations such as one to one copies of stairs and ladders made out of thin white paper. These works derive from earlier pieces such as 'Bridge' and 'Still Life'. They deal with dreams and the impossible. But the stairs and ladders represent a more fragile and almost sublime form. The trashy style in earlier works has developed into a more precise aesthetics. These

works exist in the gap between the recognizable everyday object and the fragile and spherical condition and material in which they appear. The whiteness, the ideal pure copy of something real as well as the vertical direction coherent in most of my paper works, could also indicate the aspect of something platonic or religious.

Another returning theme in my work is the reinterpretation of classical fairytales associated with a more general interest in memory in connection to childhood. This theme is also present in 'Crossing', 'Castle', and 'Jukebox' which are examples of playful performances that exist in the lost land of childhood - between dream and reality. It is in this meeting or confrontation of these two conditions, in a kind of utopian embodiment, that these works become alive, often in a tragicomic way.

A continual figure in my earlier performances and later drawings is 'The Dying Swan', who can be described as a hybrid between 'The Ugly Duckling' and a human figure. 'The Dying Swan' reveals different layers of identity, and often he strives at being somebody or somewhere else or tries to achieve the impossible. He is, however, always confronted with reality and failure. In his interaction and power play with the audience his physical presence often creates an intense and uncomfortable atmosphere. In the drawings 'The Dying Swan' creates his own universe, where he seems to be trapped in impossible situations and circles, dealing with death, rebirth, self-creation, and self-destruction.

Peter Callesen