

Gallery 1
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KIRSTEN ORTWED **SCULPTURE**

Curator: Milada Slizinska

Kirsten Ortved was born in 1948 in Copenhagen. In the beginning of the 70s, Kirsten Ortved was educated at the Royal Danish Academy of Art in the classes of professors Arthur Kopcke and Gunnar Aagaard Andersen, the

former being a representative of conceptual art and the latter of formally systematic experimental art. Their common denominator - an absorption in the work's relations with surroundings - served to establish the point of origin for Kirsten Ortved's interest in the interplay between the art work and the spatial context.

The sculptures of Kirsten Ortved are statements not only of the structure and mass of the sculpture itself, but also of the surrounding space. Art Historian Mikkel Bogh has called Ortved's sculptural experiments and formulations "islands of experience", which deal with the double bound nature of the sculptural medium itself: On the one hand, the sculpture is local, physical, straightforward, and yet it is remote and secretive.

Ortved's approach to art, and to the paradoxical duality of her medium, is analytical and inquiring. Her production (which also includes paintings and wall objects) can be said to mark the passage between the nature and culture, that space and place which is no longer natural because it is constructed and manipulated, but does not yet belong to the social order, in that it is neither symbolic nor oriented towards action.

Almost ritualistic orders are played out against the incompleteness of the material, a meeting which leaves marks - cuts, notches, furrows - in the surface of the work, indicating the surrounding space. Or this meeting - between sculpture and space, raw material and order - finds expression in spread out structures with connected, sculptural objects, in which you sense a temporal course. Something has been consumed, taken away. The works' different plastic phases refer, among other things to a state of openness (as titles such as *Blind Date* (1996), *Risks Run* (1994) and *Einfluss* (1991) all suggest). Anything can happen in the workings of the potentiality and latency of the sculptural form.

In 1997 for the Venice Biennial, Kirsten Ortved has created a number of new works *Tones of Circumstances* especially for the Danish pavillon. From the moment of her first meeting with the place, the pavillon has become an integral part of the project. Those works are now presented in the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw.

Some remarks on the work *Tones of Circumstances*

presented in the Venice Biennale and now in the CCA Warsaw

Tons of Circumstances consists of casts, chains, and cast inlets. In all, there are twenty two figures and fourteen of these have roughly modelled surfaces with a more smoothly rendered plaster side. The two surfaces meet in a clearly marked line or seam, which frames and articulates the total form of every single element.

Placed directly on the floor, the sculpture should be open so that the eye may wander freely (even underneath the work) as well as take in the entirety of the installation.

The eight planes which have been elevated just above the floor were executed in plaster before then being cast in aluminium. The few marks on each surface were made for their "static movement" so that they could act as neutral fields setting off the formal vocabulary of the whole sculpture.

The chains have been used in two ways. They have been partly wrapped around the inlets, and partly placed so as to constitute form and mass. Sculpturally, the interesting thing about the use of chains is how they can act as line and at the same time define form. In addition wrapping the chains around the inlets becomes a form of modelling - an extra element in the sculptural vocabulary.

Perhaps, one should briefly explain what inlets are. They are rods and funnels attached to the wax version of the sculpture in order to lead the metal (aluminium) into the mould. In this way they are cast along with the sculpture itself. When this is cleaned the inlets are normally thrown away as refuse. However, I cut them off to use as elements of the sculpture.

Aluminium casting is a recognised process. To sandblast it afterwards is almost like penetrating the surface again. Because aluminium is a softer metal than, for example bronze, I discovered that I had changed it from a shiny surface to a matt grey, indefinable material.

Kirsten Ortwed

Kirsten Ortwed has recently received the Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen prize, which is among the largest and most important art prizes in Denmark. The prize was awarded on August 31st, 1998 at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen.

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