

The Sculpture Project



FROM THE DEPTHS OF MEMORY

For many years, The Sculpture Project has had the opportunity to create unique sculptures in collaboration with some of Sweden's most recognised artists. All of the artworks are based on an exciting combination of sand-cast recycled aluminium with its distinctive surface texture, industrial craftsmanship and artistic curiosity. The works are manufactured by experienced craftsmen at the Byarums Bruk foundry in Småland, Sweden. The fruit of this year's collaboration is "Dreaming", a work by sculptor Lena Lervik.

Infants are magical. They embody the hope of a brighter future. A dream of something different. Nobody has the ability to invoke such feelings of tenderness as these tiny creatures. No wonder we feel such love for them. When we cradle an infant in our arms, we experience an intense feeling of presence. The sculptor Lena Lervik expressed it like this: "When you have a newborn infant in front of you, all you can do is feel love and wonder at such a miracle. These moments remain imprinted in both the infant's and our own psyche like a computer chip in the soul – a total, languageless presence between mother and child."

This intimate connection is embodied in the sculpture by Lena Lervik which Byarums Bruk has produced out of recycled aluminium. The sculpture is reminiscent of those fragments that archaeologists – if they're very lucky – find embedded deep in the soil. In this case, what we see is part of a face, a very special portrait. The sculpture depicts the head of an infant, reproduced from memory. A mother's memory of her sleeping, dreaming baby. The infant's name is Alexander, who is now in his 40s. Back then, in 1973, he was eight months old. He is one of Lena's four children, represented here as "Dreaming Alexander".

Lena Lervik has worked with images of pregnancy and motherhood throughout her entire career as a sculptor. A deep bond between mother and baby is established right from the womb. All manner of feelings, both happy and complex, are exchanged between them. As Lena Lervik once expressed in an interview: "We've all experienced moments of emotional fusion between mother and child. It is perhaps the most profound feeling of completeness that we can ever experience. Every human being has these memories. Even if only for a brief second, we've all known this absolute love."

The mother nurtures the child through her own body: life first takes shape in the womb, the umbilical cord is a lifeline for the foetus, and the mother's milk sustains the child after birth.

This morning I read a newspaper article on how infants perceive their surroundings, the importance of touch, and how infants learn to identify their mother's smell from a very early stage. Touch

and smell are the first senses to develop, followed by hearing and vision. Of course, sight is crucial to our perception of an artwork. But when perceiving a sculpture, touch plays an equally crucial role. Even if we're not allowed to touch it, we can imagine feeling it with our hands and fingers. Our memory and perception of touch are fine-tuned from the moment we are born.

Lena Lervik's sculptures are tactile. They exert a tangible presence. They affect the space in which they exist. Sculptures have a unique ability in this regard. This makes sculptures increasingly important as our living environments and public spaces become smaller in size and cities ever more dense. We humans sometimes require breathing space and an opportunity to reflect and feel unconditional presence in the moment. Sculptures can be seen as a response to this need.

Art critic Joanna Persman has described the central themes in Lervik's art in the following way: "The ancient myths of the mother



Dreaming **Lena Lervik**

goddess are embodied in Lena Lervik's sculptures. Since the mid-1970s, she has consistently worked with Christian iconography in the form of the Madonna figure, and the ancient Nordic myths surrounding fertility goddesses. The cult of the mother is central to her work."

As we have seen, Lena Lervik's art is inhabited by ancient symbols that humankind has carried forward through the millennia. The seven wreaths of corn ears refer to Sophia, who in Eastern Orthodox Christianity represents the holy wisdom of God gained through humility. From an ear of corn, new ears sprout after the corn has rested (like Demeter) for six months in the dark, moist earth. The milk symbolises life's abundance. The spiral symbolises waxing and waning, the sun and the moon. The vessel symbolises the water of life, the fish Christ. The dove is a symbol of peace. The beehive with its hexagons is a tantric symbol of love and the act of embracing.

Lena Lervik depicts fertility goddesses and biblical women

whose roles and attributes have been interpreted and reinterpreted through the generations; women who were strong, wise, afflicted, victimised, nurturing and comforting. Women who both give life and protect it.

Her sculptures bring stillness to their vicinity. Because of this quality, they are frequently found in churches, one of the few places today where we can experience peace and quiet. At the time of writing, in 2020, people worldwide have been forced to radically change their way of life. We are confined to living apart, alone, or in restricted groups. This gives rise to a new mental state. An absorption in the present moment resulting in a new receptiveness to life and art.

Today Lena is 80 years old. The fact that she has had a studio in Skinnarviksberget for over 40 years is, like most things in life, a product of chance. And it was by an even more remarkable chance that she became an artist and sculptor. At the age of 20, she had

just finished a job as an au pair in Paris. The host family had been demanding, and she was tired and bored. Where to next? She decided to visit the Riviera. At the railway station in Geneva, she bumped into a friend who was applying for the Ecole des Beaux Arts. She invited Lena to accompany her. The staff at the art school in Geneva assumed that Lena was also there to apply for admission. She filled out the application forms and was instructed to take part in the entry exams. On the first day, each applicant was given a piece of clay to transform into a sculpture. Lena's first experience of clay was a revelation. She had found her material. She was accepted onto the course.

The lessons were challenging and the teachers were strict. The students had to arrive at 8 am every morning, and the lessons continued until 6 pm. Any latecomers and absentees were expelled. "But we learned a lot," Lena says. "I completed two academic years in just one year. Then my money ran out and I had to return to Sweden."

Determined to continue her art studies, she applied for the sculpture course at the Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. Her teacher there, Pallo Pernevi, advised her to spend her time learning as much as possible about different materials and techniques and attending life drawing and sculpture classes. But after that, he advised, she should apply for the Konstakademien (Royal Academy of Fine Arts). He thought the teaching there would suit her better.

She got into Konstakademien the second time she applied. The sculpture studies there spanned an enormous breadth. Her teachers included professors Asmund Arle, Arne Jones and K. G. (Karl Göte) Bejemark – three eminent sculptors with many works installed in public places. But Lena came up against a problem. Could she find the time to complete her studies? She had married and given birth to three children in a short space of time. Her husband, a businessman, was often away for work. She had to stay home and tend to the children.

Then her father passed away. Daily life was challenging, and she confessed to K. G. Bejemark that she was considering giving up her dream of becoming an artist. He offered an alternative: "If you study part time for two years, you'll have completed one academic year." And that is what she did. She paid for childcare in kind by giving the nanny sculpture lessons.

Bejemark was something of a guardian angel during this period.

She now had a new husband, fellow sculptor Thomas Qvarsebo, and out of the blue, Bejemark suggested that the young couple take over his listed house and studio in the Söder area of Stockholm, and registered the change of proprietorship with the Stockholm municipal authorities. Ever since then, she has been sculpting in Bejemark's beautiful old studio.

This is where her four children grew up, while she gave life to sculptures of mothers, women, Madonnas and children. Her CV lists several pages of public commissions and locations





where her sculptures are exhibited. And her portraits of female figures and Madonnas grace many churches. Ever since becoming a sculptor in the 1960s, Lena Lervik has been creating mother figures, fertility goddesses, earth mothers, children and modern mothers. Clay is an important part of her artistic process. It is a strongly physical material, but in order to give clay a soul, it is necessary to have a deep empathy with the subject portrayed. Lervik's long life experience as a woman is clearly visible in her sculptures. She has distilled its very essence.

And what about Alexander – what became of that little being with an air of such calm? Who knows what's going on in his little head? Does that hint of a smile on his lips suggest a happy dream? By a strange coincidence, I happen to know more about Alexander than about his mother. He was one of my students at Beckmans College of Design in the mid-1990s. Like his mother, he tended to delve beneath the surface in his various design projects. He portrayed the

20th century design history that I taught his class by creating a series of stools. Each stool embodied the design and dreams that prevailed during each period.

Today he is a renowned and successful designer, one of those talented innovators that make the world a more interesting, beautiful and magical place. Hanging on my wardrobe door is a small, white, three-dimensional pendant which he created using CAD/CAM scanning technology. It is based on a scan of his own brain, with all its crevices and beautiful bone-like structures. But the thoughts and dreams inside it are as mysterious and inaccessible as those of the slumbering baby Alexander. And that's a wonderful thing. Without mystery, life would be devoid of magic, and we observers would lose our curiosity and sense of wonder.

Text: Kerstin Wickman, Professor Emeritus in Design and Craft History.





Dreaming

Limited edition of 55 sculptures
Sand cast recycled aluminum / Oiled oak

Width 27 cm
Height 39 cm
Depth 17 cm
Weight 3,6 kg



SOLO EXHIBITIONS SELECTION

2021	The Sculpture Project
2020	Väsby Konsthall, Upplands Väsby
2018	Galleri Cupido, Stockholm
2017	Katarina Kyrka, Stockholm
2016	Galleri Eva Solvang, Stockholm
2015	Katarina Kyrka, Stockholm
2014	Mariestads Domkyrka, Mariestad
2012	St Nicolai Kyrka, Nyköping
2012	Hälsinglands Museum, Hudiksvall
2012	S:ta Annahallen, Trosa
2011	Lunds Domkyrka, Lund
2011	Hedvig Eleonora Kyrka, Stockholm
2011	Galleri Eva Solvang, Stockholm
2011	Sigtunastiftelsen, Sigtuna
2011	Sollentuna Kyrka, Sollentuna
2010	S:ta Helena Kyrka, Skövde
2009	Strängnäs Domkyrka, Strängnäs
2009	Katarina Kyrka, Stockholm
2009	Väsby Konsthall, Upplands Väsby
2008	Galleri Se, Falun
2008	Galleri Hjälmareststrand, Stora Mellösa
2007	Retrospektiv Edsvikens Konsthall, Sollentuna

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS SELECTION

2019	Maria, Terracotta, Varnhems Klosterkyrka, Varnhem
2017	Förklädd Gud, Brons, Åkers Park, Åkersberga
2015	Viriditas, Brons, Psyk. Sjukhusentré, Kristinehamn
2015	Skyddsmantelmadonna, Brons, Lunds Domkyrka, Lund
2014	Önskemadonna, Stengods, Flemmingsberg K:a, Flemmingsberg
2013	Ömhetens Madonna, Terracotta, St:a Helena K:a, Skövde
2012	Barnbarnen, Brons, Västergård Vårdhus, Huddinge
2010	Barnbarnen, Brons, Jakobsberg Korttidsboende, Jakobsberg
2010	Simeons Möte, Terracotta, Solna Församling, Solna
2009	Genom din Sjal, Terracotta, Stora Mellösa K:a, Stora Mellösa
2009	Kvinnan U:p 12, Brons, Domkyrkan, Strängnäs
2008	Maria, Terracotta, Bildö Kyrka, Bildö
2008	Astrid, Brons, Jakobs Kyrkogård, Stockholm
2004	Såsom en stil susning, Terracotta, Statens Konstråd, Stockholm
2003	Röde Börje, Brons, Framtidsdalen, Borlänge
2003	En berättelse om något vi glömt. Marievik Stockholm
2000	Maria o Josef Storkyrkan Stockholm
1999	Matilda Sofia Sparbanken Norrtälje
1993	Folkrörelsemonumentet, Brons, Värnamo

Lena Lervik has also participated in several group exhibitions, for example Skulpturförbundet's joint exhibitions over the last 30 years.

ABOUT

The Sculpture Project is an initiative founded on curiosity about the relationship between art and traditionally crafted products, as well as a love of new cultural trends. This project will lead to the casting of unique artworks by some of the most fascinating creative individuals in Scandinavia. The artwork will be manufactured in limited editions by experienced craftsmen at Byarums Bruk in Småland.

/ Joel & Kenneth, project founders

“Ever since 1947 we have stuck to the same principle: only to use recycled aluminium in our products and to make the moulds from a mix of natural sand from lake Vättern, clay, soot and water. This is a mix that is entirely free from chemical additives and forms a closed system so it can be used over and over again,” explains the manifesto of Byarums Bruk. Also worth mentioning: “And for the last decade we have worked closely with some of the top designers and artists in Sweden.”

Sand casting is the common factor in everything that Byarums Bruk produces. It is a technique that

requires the finest craftsmanship. The casting works is thus preserving an old craft tradition and using it to create objects for the present day and for our future. This is not the only benefit. Production is environmentally sound, since every stage builds on the principle of reuse and recycling. The raw material is, as mentioned, recycled aluminium. The casting sand is used over and over again for new moulds. Some of the grains of sand undoubtedly date back to 1947, when the sand depot was filled for the first time. The finished objects are highly durable and remain just as beautiful year after year, decade

after decade. Byarums Bruk is one of a few companies that live up to the concept of sustainable design.

The technique requires a sharp mind, extreme care and skillful hands. Just as an experienced baker tests the dough with fingertips to check if it has risen fully, the casting workers rub the sand between their fingers to check whether the moisture content is right, depending on what they plan to cast and the prevailing weather. Production at Byarums Bruk is in other words reliant on a level of craftsmanship that is becoming increasingly prized today. Deep experience – developed through

years of practice and often passed from generation to generation – is essential to achieve quality in production based on craft skills.

“Making quality products with an environmentally friendly production makes me and my staff very happy and proud,” comments Joel Enhörning, owner of the casting works. “We are lucky to still be able to practice this wonderful craft and supply these unique products to our customers. It also feels right to keep on manufacturing in Byarum in Småland.”

THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2013

Ann Wolff is one of our most brilliant international artists and uses glass as her primary medium. Despite her success around the world she has remained surprisingly unknown in Sweden in recent decades. As a young glass artist with the former Kosta Boda AB – when her surname was Wårff – the situation was quite different. Her art glass gained a lot of publicity then and she was frequently in the spotlight. In 2011 Ann was awarded the European Culture Prize in Strasbourg, for her art, for having worked in several European countries, and for her contributions to the international success of European culture.



Aluna, 2013 **Ann Wolff**



THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2014

Britt-Ingrid Persson, usually known as BIP, has many years' experience of working in a number of materials, such as clay, concrete, latex foam and bronze, using at least as many techniques. But aluminium was something completely new. Her ability to communicate thoughts and clearly illustrate universal problems has been clearly demonstrated in 30 or more works of public art and a long series of exhibitions. BIP's artistic creations are always characterised by simplicity, abstraction and focus.



Plexus, 2014 **BIP**

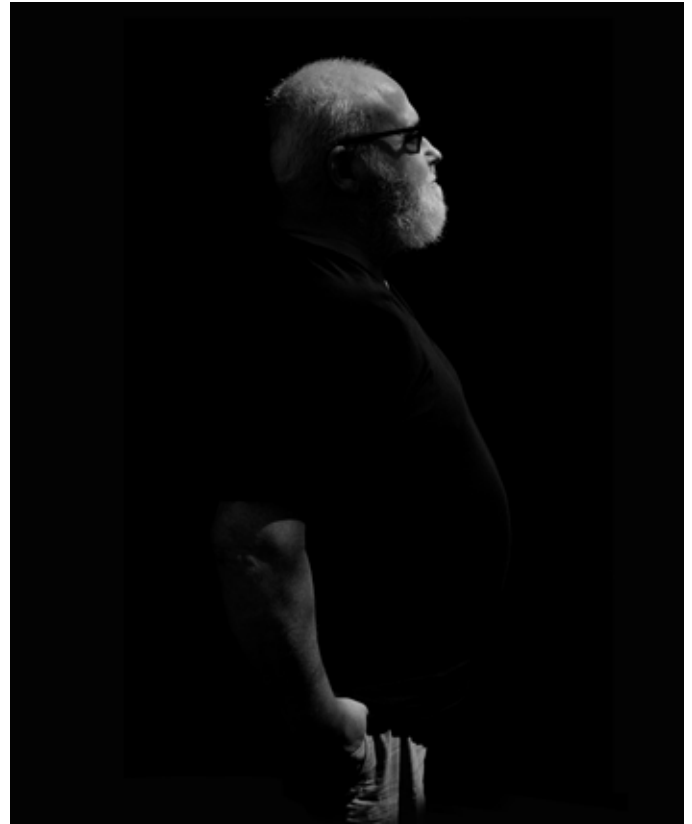


THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2015

Kjell Engman was the third artist, after Ann Wolff and Britt-Ingrid "BIP" Persson, to be commissioned to create a limited edition sculpture in aluminium for The Sculpture Project initiative. Or more correctly in collaboration between The Sculpture Project and Byarums Bruk, since the final casting process took place at the foundry. His many years of experience in creating public sculptures in a range of materials also proved an asset. He is commissioned regularly, both at home and abroad, and has exhibited all over the world.



DO-RE-MI, 2015 **Kjell Engman**

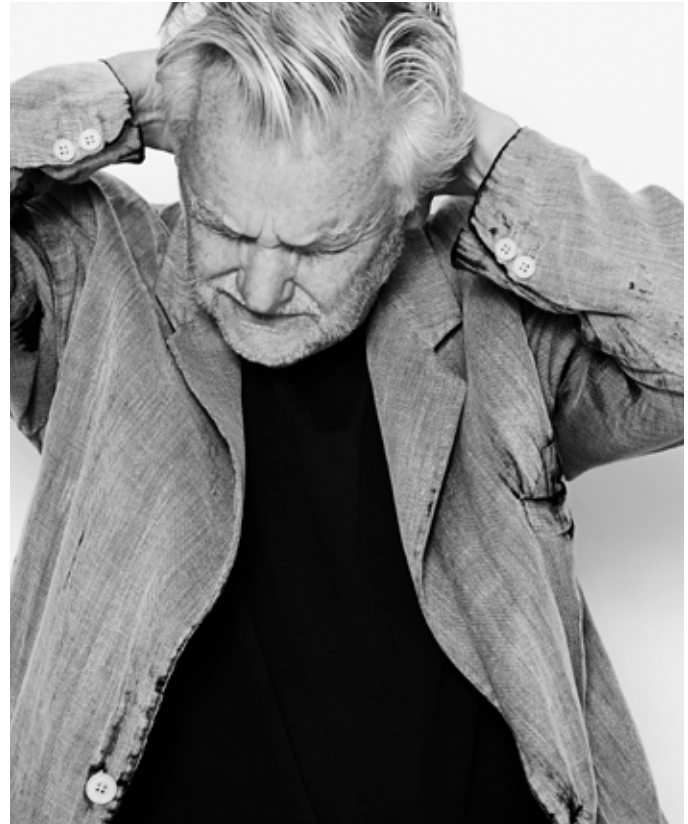


THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2017

Nils Gunnar Zander, the artist for 2017, has worked with a variety of materials and has a unique ability to breathe life into these materials. In 2015 he had a magnificent painting exhibition at Prince Eugen's Waldemarsudde entitled "Tystnadens revir. 25 år från andra sidan" ("The Territory of Silence. 25 Years from the Other Side"), and in October 2006 he exhibited a beautiful and fascinating collection of primarily older works in clay and lead at Galleri L2 in Stockholm's Old Town.



Urania, 2017 **Nils Gunnar Zander**

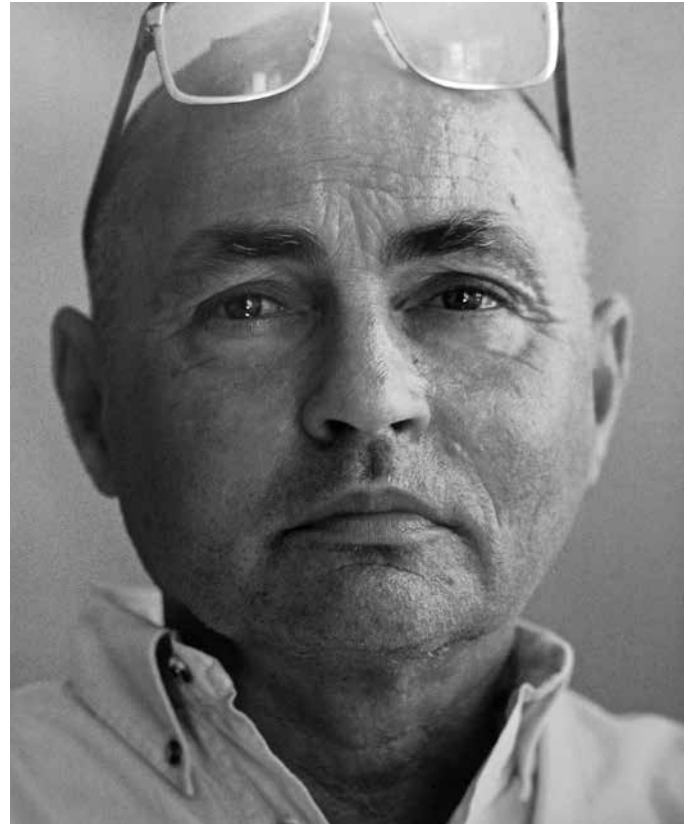


2018 – A TRIBUTE TO ERIK HÖGLUND (1932–1998)

Erik Höglund was a true artist and a source of inspiration for many of today's painters and sculptors. Since passing away 20 years ago, his work continues to amaze, and amuse. The mold for the artwork Tribute was a gift from Erik to the Ståhl family, in the beginning of the 1980s. This project was made possible thanks to the kind cooperation of the Höglund family.



Tribute, 2018



PROJECT OWNER **BYARUMS BRUK**

WEBSITE **WWW.BYARUMSBRUK.SE**

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION **GRANDPUBLIC**

INSTALLATION CONCEPT AND PHOTOGRAPHY **GRANDPUBLIC**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF LENA **ANDY LIFFNER AND THOMAS QVARSEBO**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF ERIK **PER-GÖRAN HAMBRAEUS**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF NILS GUNNAR **CHRISTOPHER HUNT**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF KJELL **SANNA SJÖSWÄRD**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF BIP **HERZELL**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF ANN **PETER JÖNSSON**

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