

Liv Mette Larsen Concrete Factory Slemmestad Fabrikker



Themselves Productive: New Paintings by Liv Mette Larsen

by Paul D'Agostino

The more you become acquainted with the foundational forms and material underpinnings of Liv Mette Larsen's works, the more you come to realize the generally uninterrupted extent to which they are all procedurally interlinked, conceptually interconnected, holistically and harmoniously cross-informed. The nature of this realization is perhaps ultimately the most abstract product of Larsen's hand-pedaled factory-like process that is itself generative, manually fabricational, iteratively productive.

One should not mistake any of the above as a suggestion that this now Brooklyn-based painter—Norwegian born, then eventually NYC-bound by way of a period of teaching and artistic activity in Germany—presents her viewers with compositions full of visual convolution, nor that her pictorial processes and products register as even remotely mechanical. On the contrary, Larsen's essentially representational-driven forms are dimensionally simplified distillations of at times complex, at times relatively basic structures that stand as variably recognizable markers of place—localized neighborhood skylines, for instance, or readily distinguishable factories, as is the case in her recent *Concrete Factory / Slemmestad Fabrikker* series. Working from photographs or observation, Larsen breaks up, breaks down and flattens her chosen structures' aspects and facets into a series of characteristic shapes, then carries them into so many lightly, almost happily handled compositional arrangements that serve as her platform to explore the chromatic richness and occasional quirks of her long-standing materials of choice—egg tempera on linen treated with rabbit skin glue.

Larsen's largely earth-tone colors run a full yet quiescent range. She's not shy at all about employing purples, yellows, oranges and greens to depict objects that might actually be just grey, in other words, but not even the brightest reaches of her palette shout or cry out. Rather, her colors murmur and hum like the low din of machinery, or like a



Above: *Concrete Factory XXIX*, 2016, egg tempera on linen, 24x17 inches (61x43 cm)

Cover: *Concrete Factory Extended IX*, 2016, egg tempera on linen, 40x60 inches (101x152 cm)

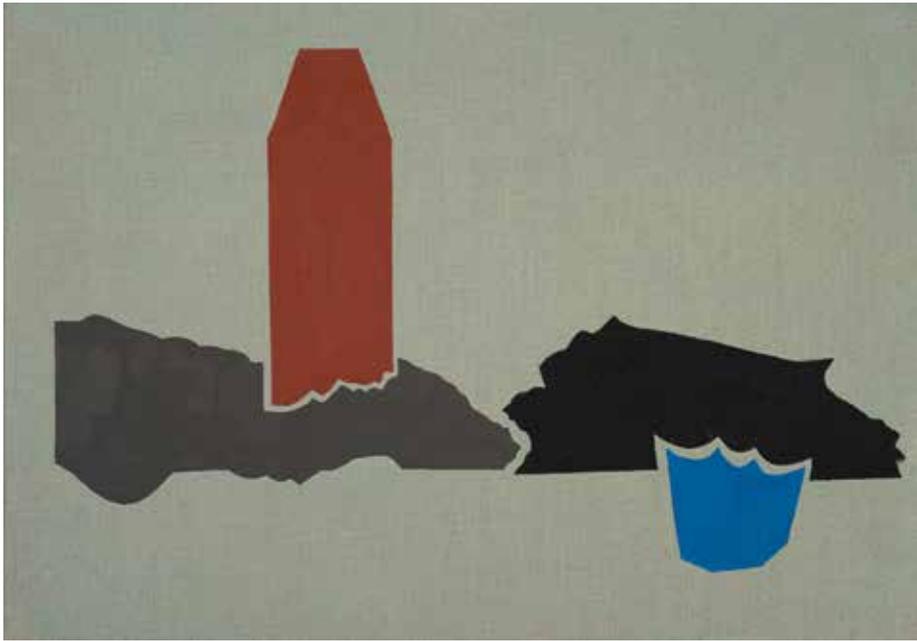
calm flow of traffic along an urban block, maintaining nonetheless all the chromatic lushness and toothsome textures of the powdered pigments and egg mediums she uses to mix them into life. Backgrounds are sometimes the areas where Larsen allows colors to visually intermingle and bleed through one another, especially in her larger works. Consequently, her montages of middle- and foregrounded forms, often filled in with more uniformly viscous admixtures, begin to come across as depth-creating, footprint-stamping, colorful shadow puppet-like characters—a troupe of implicitly post-industrial, meta-structural actors playing stop-motion roles of form-holders, chroma-bearers and spatial dwellers on some outdoor stage on a forsaken, extra-urban stretch of land, on a fall or spring afternoon in which mild temperatures and overcast skies cooperate to make the setting that much simpler to enthuse.

In Larsen's creative landscape, some of the forms, colors, compositions and 'characters' she develops will then reemerge in kindred bodies of work. Shapes appear in different proportions in other paintings and collages; collages take color cues from paintings and watercolors; watercolors and collages inform compositional and chromatic choices in paintings. And of course, Larsen keeps an ever-sharp eye on how subtle shifts or surprises in one productive mode might lead her to insights in another. All this from regarding very closely and formally dismantling a building or two, then turning constituent parts into inputs for serialized processes made manifest in interconnectedly generative ways. A landmark *fabrikk* in Norway, as it were, becomes a manufacturer and remanufacturer of itself. And Larsen's creative factory just keeps on humming. The characters in her plays keep doing their happy thing.

Paul D'Agostino, Ph.D. is an artist, writer, curator and professor living in Bushwick, Brooklyn, NY

Concrete Factory Extended II, 2016, egg tempera
on linen, 40x60 inches (101x152 cm)





Above: Concrete Factory XV, 2015, egg tempera on linen, 17x24 inches (43x61 cm)

Right: Concrete Factory Extended III, 2016, egg tempera on linen, 40x60 inches (101x152 cm)





Above: Concrete Factory XXXI, 2016, egg tempera on linen, 17x24 inches (43x61 cm)
Right: Concrete Factory Extended VI, 2016, egg tempera on linen, 40x60 inches (101x152 cm)



Bilder av et industriminnesmerke

Stedsnavnet **Slemmestad** kommer fra Slim, en bekk som nå heter Bøbekken, et ord for slam og dynn, etter kalksteinsom ligger i jordsmonnet. Bekken renner ut i fjorden, sørvest for Oslo, ikke langt fra der Liv Mette vokste opp. Christiania Portland Cementfabrik, nedlagt i 1989 etter hundreoggett års drift, ligger ved fjorden.

Bygningene vitner om arbeid, om stor produksjon og slit. Fabrikken var den første sementfabrikken i Norge, med stor betydning for arbeiderbevegelsen. Området som gjenstår, den ene pipa har fått stå, er et landemerke.

Liv Mette som er oppvokst i **Asker**, et landbruksområde, viser bilder av sementindustri, noe vi forbinder med støv, gråhet. Hun var ved den nedlagte fabrikken på den lyseste dagen, St. Hans-natta som feires med bål. Fargene er satte, mettede, våkne.

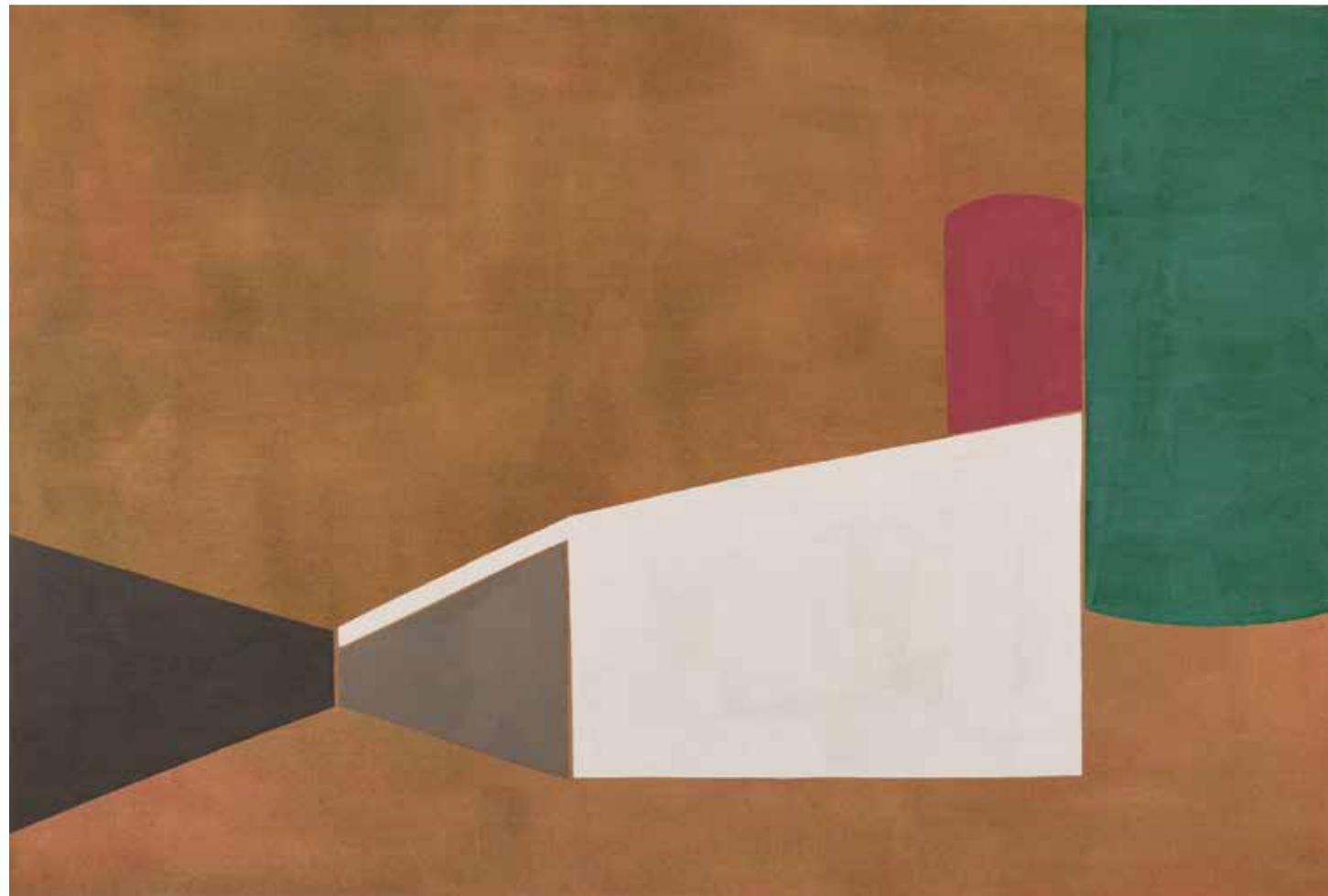
Nå bor hun i **Bushwick**, bildene hang på atelieret hennes, da jeg besøkte henne der, mens USA fremdeles ga følelsen av å være et stort og gjestfritt land. *Concrete Factory* på veggene, umulig å få oversikt, det ser ut som det utenfor vinduene. Bylandskap, hustak, veggflater, profiler.

Liv Mette detaljerer, fokuserer på deler av en større helhet, et utsnitt, skjærer vekk, skjærer fra, hun avbilder et **eksakt ekstrakt**. Linjene er klare, enkle, stødige. Det handler om å være der, tilstede på stedet, tenker jeg, og om det å huske hvor en har vært. Maleriene hennes er gjengitt virkelighet.

En digital avbildning av et maleri mangler maleriets aura. Når jeg ser fargene i piksel, er det som om temperaturen i eggtemperaen har sunket. Jeg vil huske det jeg så i Liv Mettes atelier, **rustødt**.

Tone Avenstroup, norsk lyriker bosatt i Berlin

Concrete Factory Extended VII, 2016, egg tempera
on linen, 40x60 inches (101x152 cm)



Images of an Industrial Memorial

The place name **Slemmestad**, comes from Slim, a creek now known as Bøbekken, a word for mud and mire, from limestone that lies in the soil. The creek runs out into the fjord, southwest of Oslo, not far from where Liv Mette grew up. Christiania Portland Cementfabrik, closed in 1989 after 101 years of operation, is located by the fjord.

The buildings testify to grinding labor and toil, to large-scale production and drudgery. The first cement plant in Norway, it was of great significance for the labor movement. The remains of the plant, one pipe still standing, is a landmark.

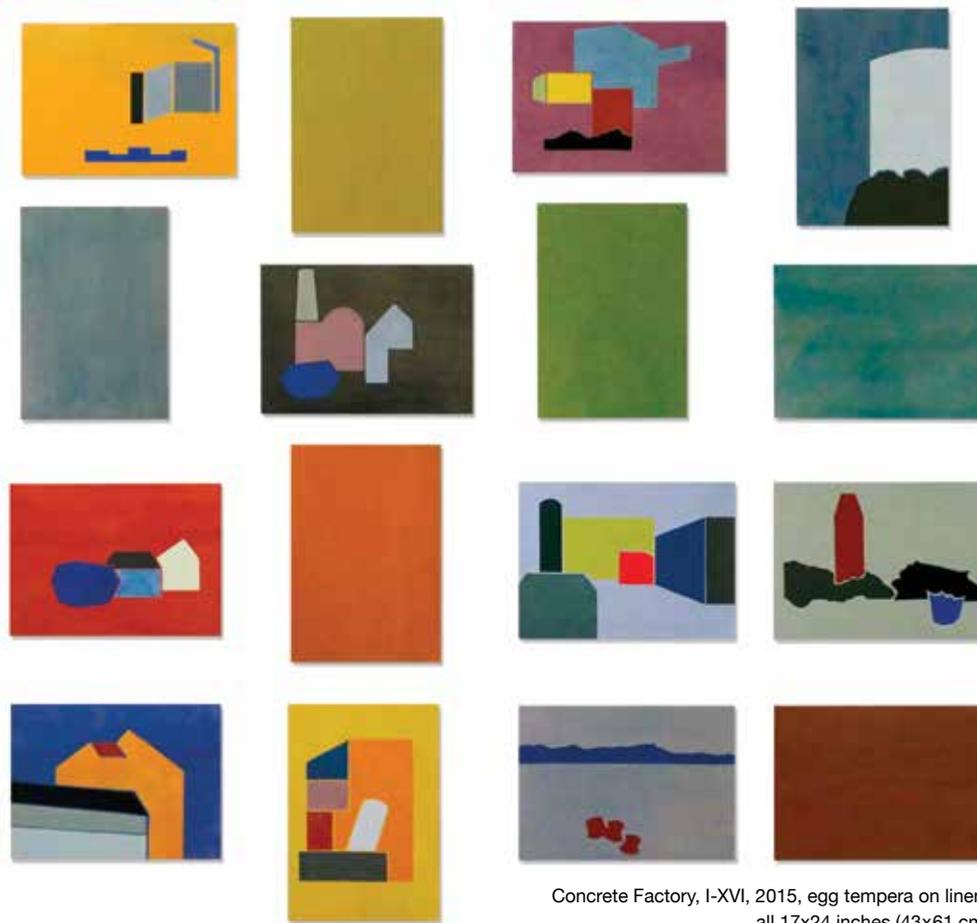
Liv Mette, partly from **Asker**, a former farming region, shows paintings from the concrete industry, which we associate with dust and grayness. She was at the disused plant, on the brightest night, which marks the solstice, the St. John's eve, celebrated with bonfires. The colors of her paintings are sober, saturated, awake.

Now she lives in **Bushwick**. The paintings were hanging in her studio when I visited her there, at that time, still a big and hospitable country. The *Concrete Factory* installed on the walls, it is almost impossible to get an overview, just like the surroundings seen from her windows. An industrial cityscape, rooftops, facades and profiles of buildings.

Liv Mette focuses on details, parts of larger wholes, cutting out a segment, she depicts an **exact extract**. The lines are clear, simple and sure. It is about being present in a place, I think, about remembering where one has been. Her paintings recalls reality, from surroundings close to her.

Digital reproductions lack a painting's aura. When I see her colors pixelated, it is as if the temperature in the egg tempera has dropped. I remember what I saw in Liv Mette's studio, **a warm rusty red**.

Tone Avenstrup, Norwegian poet, lives in Berlin



Concrete Factory, I-XVI, 2015, egg tempera on linen,
all 17x24 inches (43x61 cm)



Concrete Factory VI, 2016, egg tempera on linen, 17x24 inches (43x61 cm)



Concrete Factory I, 2016, egg tempera on linen, 17x24 inches (43x61 cm)

LIV METTE LARSEN was born 1952 in Oslo, Norway.

1971-72 Westerdahls Reklametegneskole, Oslo, Norway. **1973-77** KHiO, Arts and Crafts School, Oslo, Norway.

1978-84 HdK/UdK, Masterclass by Prof.Fussmann, Berlin, Germany. **1984** Cofounder of Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany.

GRANTS

1992 Senate's of Cultural Affairs Department, Berlin, Germany. **1994/96/97/2006** Vederlagsfondet, Norway.

2013 BKH, Norway. **2014** Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York, USA. BKH, Norway. **2016/17** BKH Exhibition Grant, Norway.

SELECTED SOLO-AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2017 Concrete Factory Slemmestad Fabrikker, Trafo Kunsthall, Norway (C)* **2016** Innblikk Utblikk NYC, w/ E.Faye, Bærum Kunstforening, Norway. Insight/outside, w/ M.Gagnier, The Painting Center, New York. Out of the Ordinary, w/ P.DeLuccia, Spectre Arts, Durham N.C. USA. **2015** Urban Juxtapositions, w/ C.Salmanson, Slag Gallery, Brooklyn/NY. **2014** Urban Formalities, w/ P.DeLuccia, William Holman Gallery, New York (C). **2013** Slippery When Wet, w/ G.Skaggs, SUGAR, Brooklyn/NY. Bushwick Skyline, BOS, Brooklyn/NY. **2012** Rose Burlingham Gallery w/ M.Magee, New York. **2011** 360° scrap metal pieces, w/N.Fecht, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. Scrap Metal-New York Paintings, Helac Fine Art, New York. **2010** Berliner Blau, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany (C). **2008** Renaissance Walking, Galeria Fruela, Madrid, Spain. Plaza, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **2007** Berliner Vertikale, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany (C). Kunst aus Norwegen, w/Per Berntsen, Kulturforum Schwerin, Germany. **2006** Schriftportraits, Literaturhaus, Salzburg, Austria. **2005** rød, gul, blå, w/B.Geving, Asker Kunstforening, Norway (C). Grosse Vertikale, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **2003** über eine zeit. . . , w/T.Avenstroup, Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Germany (E)** **2002** Fragmentierungen, Kunstsammlung Neubrandenburg, Germany(C). **2001** In Residence, w/T.Avenstroup, Kunstneres Hus, Oslo, Norway(C). Asker, w/B.Geving, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **2000** an auf. . . , w/H.E.Wiegand, Vestfold Kunstnersenter, Norway and Galerie U Kamene, Cheb, Czechia (C). Schriftportraits, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany (C). **1999** an auf. . . , w/H.E. Wiegand, Städtische Galerie Lüdenscheid, Germany (C). Galerie Kai Hilgemann w/ S.Windelen, Berlin, Germany. Schriftportraits, Galerie Annmarie Taeger, Frankfurt, Germany. Portretter, Galleri LNM, Oslo, Norway. **1998** Goethe-Institut w/ A.Redder, Oslo, Norway. **1997** Royal Norwegian Embassy, Berlin, Germany. **1996** Galerie Westernhagen, Cologne, Germany (Also in **1990/89/87/86**). Galleri Heer, Oslo, Norway. Galleri Færggaard w/ H.E.Wiegand, Møn, Denmark. **1995** Marburger Kunstverein, Germany (C). Møre og Romsdal Kunstnersenter, Molde, Norway. **1994** Innblikk-Einblick-Utblick-Ausblick, Galleri Heer, Oslo, Norway (C). Kunsthistorisches Institut, Bonn, Germany. **1990** Aalesund Kunstforening, Ålesund, Norway. **1989** Vær og vind, w/ H.E. Wiegand, Goethe-Institut, Oslo, Norway. **1986** Quere Wege II, w/ Y.Yo, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany. Galerie Scanart, Berlin, Germany. **1985** Standbild, w/ H.E. Wiegand, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (E). Malerei, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (E). **1982** AV-Geschoss w/ A.Hillen, Berlin, Germany.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017 Sideshow Nation, Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn/NY (Also in **2016/15/14/13**). **2016** NOMENColorATURE, Studio10 and Centotto, Brooklyn/NY. Cow Girl Show, Brik Gallery, Hudson, NY, USA. Construction Site, McKenzie Fine Art, New York. Hazan Projects, New York. Winterdrawing Show, William Holman Gallery, New York. **2015** Hazan Projects, New York. Bushwick/Berlin, BOS, Brooklyn/NY. Resurface, MX Gallery, New York. Situation 74, Bleibtreu Galerie, Berlin, Germany. **2014** Bushwick Open:Twenty-Three Artists from In and Around, BOS, Brooklyn/NY. Works on



Concrete Factory IX, 2015, egg tempera on linen, 17x24 inches (43x61 cm)

Paper, William Holman Gallery, New York. Berlin Gallery Weekend, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. Silhouettes, Elizabeth Art Foundation, New York. **2012** MIC:CHECK, Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn/NY. Lineup, Round 3 and Lineup, Round 4, SUGAR, Brooklyn/NY. New Address, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. Arco Madrid, Spain with Galerie Kai Hilgemann (Also in **2009/2011**). **2010** Schaulager II, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. Pinta New York with Galerie Kai Hilgemann. Artists Books, Tegnerforbundet, Oslo, Norway. **2008** Art Santander, Spain and Art Lisboa, Portugal with Galeria Fruela. **2007** paper works, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **2006/07** Art Cologne, Germany with Galerie Kai Hilgemann. **2005** Fünf aus Norwegen, Stiftung Landdrostei, Pinneberg, Germany. animal farm, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **2004** .no, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. 9. Kunstinstallation, Ernst &Young, Frankfurt/ Main, Germany. Quaternio III, Galerie am Turm, Berlin, Germany. Printed matter, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **2003** Neue Räume, w/ P.Berntsen and D.Medalla, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. Quaternio III, Galleri Uffizi, Bærum, Norway. Situation 12, Galerie Bleibtreu, Berlin, Germany. **2002** Quaternio III, Centro Cultural de Sao Francisco, Joao Pessoa, Brazil. Situation 4, Galerie Bleibtreu, Berlin, Germany. Kein Strich zuviel, Kunstmuseum Lüdenscheid, Germany (C). **2001** Linien, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **2000/01** Art Frankfurt, Germany with Galerie Kai Hilgemann. **1999** Nordischer Klang, Schloß Griebenow, Greifswald, Germany. Wasser Wind Wale, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. Art at the turn of the century, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany. **1998** Gesellschaft für Gegenwartskunst, Augsburg, Germany (C). **1996** Museum Lodz, Museum Krakow, Poland (C).10 Jahre, Galerie Westernhagen, Köln, Germany. Henning Bilderschau Berlin, Germany (C). **1995** Museum Radom, Poland (C). **1994** Positionen figurativer Malerei der Gegenwart, Galerie Schlehne, Hannover, Germany. Städtische Galerie Lüdenscheid, Germany. **1988** Abschlusausstellung Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany. **1987** WISSARTH, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (C). Berlin bleibt Nilreb, Galerie Westernhagen, Cologne, Germany. Circustante Aria, Galerie Wissarth Berlin, Germany. **1986** Luitpoldbad, Bad Kissingen, Germany (C). Neue Bahnen-Altes Kreuz, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (E). **1985** Der Rote Kanal, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (E). die, die heute von heute sind. . . , FB1 UdK, Ackerstraße, Berlin, Germany (C). **1984** Sofienberggaten, w/E.Grøttum and Notorische Reflexe, Oslo, Norway. Martin Luther, Galleri Hammerlund, Oslo, Norway. Europäische Malerei der Gegenwart, Trier, Germany (C). Opening show Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany. **1983** Osloer Straße, 4 Norwegian Students, HdK/UdK, Berlin, Germany (E). **1982** UKS, Oslo, Norway. Karl-Hofer-Symposium, Berlin, Germany (C).

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

2016 Fidelity Collection, Boston, USA. **2012** Caldic Collectie, Netherlands. **2011** Colección Ana Botella, Madrid, Spain. **2009** The Royal Norwegian Embassy, Berlin, Germany. Sørlandets Art Museum, Kristiansand, Norway. **2008** Colección Irene o Ignacio Munoz, Madrid, Spain. Colección Masaveu Herrero, Spain. **2007** Asker Kommune, Norway. **2005** Collection Ernst&Young, Frankfurt/Main, Germany. Sparebanken Møre Art Collection, Ålesund, Norway. **2004** Art Collection Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Frankfurt, Germany. **2003** The Royal Norwegian Embassy, Berlin, Germany. **2002** Sørlandets Art Museum, Kristiansand, Norway. Collection Ostseesparkasse Rostock, Germany. "Puzzle", Art commission, Robert-Jungk-High-School, Berlin, Germany. **2001** National Museum, Oslo, Norway. **1998** Gesellschaft für Gegenwartskunst, Augsburg, Germany. **1995** Marburger Kunstverein, Germany. Artothek Masserberg, Germany. Museum Lüdenscheid, Germany. **1994** Norwegian Art Council, Norway. **1993** Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany. **1990** Aalesund Kunstforening, Norway.

*(C) Catalogue ** (E) Edition/Artist Book

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