

Report

**Exhibition: Only she who can master the form, can play with it –
Theme: Vessel**

**Workshop: Creating Sustainable International Art Cooperation in
the Baltic Sea Region**



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1. Introduction

The Association for Applied Art (BAK-SH) represents the interests of applied artists in Schleswig-Holstein. We seek to provide a platform for our members to collaborate across trades and crafts, to inspire one other, and to jointly develop and implement innovative projects. At the same time, we think it ever more critical to share with our audience and the wider public the importance and aesthetic value of hand-made, high-quality craft production, particularly during times in which global mass manufacturing increasingly dominates markets. As such, applied art represents a counterweight to global commodity production.

The BAK-SH has been initiating exchange exhibitions and workshops since the early 2000's and many artists in the Nordic countries and lately also the Baltic countries have experienced meetings between artists from S-H and themselves.

In 2015 there was organized a Nordic-Baltic- S-H exhibition - "Nur wer die Form beherrscht kann mit ihr spielen/ Only she who can master the form can play with it " – and a seminar with the title "Creating Sustainable International Cooperation between Applied Artists in the Baltic Sea Region".

This report presents the exhibition and the seminar from 2015.

2. Exhibition

"Nur wer die Form beherrscht kann mit ihr spielen/ Only she who can master the form can play with it "is the title of a new series of exhibitions to take place every three years in the Ostholsteinmuseum in Eutin. The exhibitions invite members of the Association to work across trades and crafts (glass, wood, ceramics, metal, paper, textiles) on a common theme. Themes will differ for each exhibition, creating opportunities for participating artists to discover new creative paths.

For the inaugural exhibition in 2015, a jury selected 29 artists to present their work on the theme "vessel."

The jury consists of 5 members: Dr.Julia Hümme/Ostholstein Museum, Dr.Dorothee Bieske/Museumsberg Flensburg, Jürgen Feldhoff/Lübecker Nachrichten, Uli Stempel/ Board BAK-SH e.V., Cornelia Patz-Nahm/chairwoman BAK-SH e.V..

The show documents both differences and surprising similarities in the implementation of this theme by artists using a broad range of materials and approaches.

The exhibition got a very strong report and coverage of the press in way of print media, web media and television (10 articles and 1 TV-report).

The public appreciated the high-quality exhibition, shown by the convincing and positive feedback. (*Zitat: Gestern habe ich's endlich in die Ausstellung im OH-Museum geschafft: Die ist mal wieder sehr inspirierend, Ihr Katalog gut gemacht. Halten Sie mich bitte weiterhin auf dem Laufenden, Beste Grüße K.K.*)

Another proof for the acceptance of the national and international works of art is the sale of pieces out of the exhibition from our invited guest and local artists. There have been 3 guided tours through the exhibition by artists and the museum director Ms Dr.Hümme where we could get a direct impression and feedback of the visitors who asked a lot of questions about the process of working and the ideas behind.

And last but not least did the exhibition get a reliable and respectful recognition from the museum team for the high-grade exhibition and the well edited and designed catalogue.



All 14 invited foreign artists and many German artists were gathered for the opening of the exhibition and the seminar during the opening weekend. This is important for the development of the network of all artists.

3. Workshop "Creating Sustainable International Cooperation between Applied Artists in the Baltic Sea Region"

The workshop was initiated by Berufsverband Angewandte Kunst in Schleswig-Holstein and was conducted in the little town Osterby by Kiel 29th September. Dr. Imke Lode (Germany) and Dr. Sabine Glaubitz (France), both intercultural trainers, were the facilitators for the workshop and Cornelia Patzt Nahm (BAK SCh-H) and Martina Kaufmann (Norway) moderated the happening.

18 artists from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland and Sweden and 1 cultural curator participated in the workshop. The Ministry of Justice, Culture and Europe was represented by Ira Scheicher. Most of the artists were invited to the seminar because they were part of the exhibition project "Vessel", which was presented in section 2 of this report.

In advance we were asked to fill in a questionnaire about our background. Questions like "With artists from which countries have you participated in the past?" and "What

do you hope to achieve hen cooperation with international artists?” the to moderators got a fundament for their workshop.

The workshop started with presentations by Cornelia Patz-Nahm and Martina Kaufmann who gave a short survey of the project Connecting, which started in 2010 and in an edited form now continued with the exhibition „Vessel“ and the workshop.

Within the program of the day, we tried to answer questions like: “What are your questions that you bring to this workshop?” and “What do you want our workshop to accomplish?” “What is the best aspect / biggest challenge of working as an applied artist in your country?” We stated that there were some differences in conditions for artists between the 7 different countries around the Baltic Sea, but that there also were many parallel experiences. The lack of respect and understanding for applied arts and the uncertainty of earning your living by art production were felt common in all countries. And we also could see the positive growing tendency of cooperation between different partners (fine artists – applied artists, cross over media, more interested public). It seemed also that the press, besides of in Denmark and Germany, is less offensive concerning reviews of art exhibitions and culture in general. Potential for further sustainable cooperation were connected to terms as independency, cooperation and networking.

The facilitators introduced also the Cultural Triangle with different Potentials (Cultural Forms of Expressions, Intercultural Differences & Potentials – Cultural Dimensions and Intercultural experiences). We discussed how culture & the arts could be a motor of regional development. The opportunity to catch is that arts may gain respect and creative space to operate as motor for social and economic development, The critical point might be that art solely is instrumentalised as economic factor and political tool for power.

The all over report can be read in the attachment.



After lunch break the workshop got more practical and we all had to chose artworks on postcards which to us concerning concrete aspects of cultural cooperation and to explain to the others the background for our choice. Then we worked together country wise and tried to highlight what our own country could contribute with for a further cooperation and next steps. Already when we were talking we established a new communication platform on Facebook, which will connect us more efficiently than only mail contact. We were also talking about further meetings, perhaps in Sweden next time, to keep the “Connecting”-spirit going. The feeling of good communication and hope for some projects followed us through the evening and the opening of the exhibition next day.

4. Summary

Finally, we can consider that the very successful exhibition and workshop came to a very satisfying ending. The exhibited art works have been well exposed as parts of an interesting and inspiring collective ensemble and opened an overview of actual productions of applied art around the Baltic Sea to the visitors.

The workshop effectual included the already existing ”CONNECTING spirit” and presented with professional support a day of stimulating discussions with multifaceted arguments concerning the existing and future cooperation. One of the outcomes - and major topic - was the individual experience and experience working together, the gain of competence, self-assurance and flexibility of all participants by handling this kind of international projects.

And for the institution in charge of the workshop and the exhibition, BAK-SH e.V., the whole project illustrated how well the forefront invested energy, time and empathy - not talking about the money - paid off. It showed that initiating a step-by-step process could achieve planned results.

We hope that the identified positive push will stay viral in this group and beyond and act as a nucleus for further cooperation. Sincere thanks are given to all our participants and kindly supporters for their substantial contribution!

Cornelia Patz-Nahm
Kiel, 15.12.15
BAK SH

Martina Kaufmann
Oslo, 15.12.15
Cultural Curator