LISTASAFN REYKJAVÍKUR – HAFNARHÚS

bjartur vindasamur
dagur og sindrandi ljósið
endurkastast af hafinu
og fjöllunum

sirius

martraðir hrjáðu mig áður
en ég lagði upp í þessa
ferð og um borð tók
angist mín að vaxa...

20/09-02/11 2003 vögguvísur/lullabies

snæbjörnsdóttir/wilson





INNGANGUR

Kynning á innlendu listafólki er einn mikilvægasti þátturinn í starfsemi opinberra listasafna. Það er því ánægjulegt að geta boðið Bryndísi Snæbjörnsdóttur að halda sýningu í Listasafni Reykjavíkur. Bryndís hefur búið og starfað í Skotlandi um árabil, en hefur á sama tíma leitað mikið til norðurslóða hvað varðar inntak verka sinna.

Síðustu ár hefur hún unnið að listsköpun sinni með Mark Wilson, og saman hafa þau unnið verk þar sem byggt er á samkennd einstaklingsins við umhverfi sitt, menningu og sögu. Þau hafa m.a. dvalið á Grænlandi, Íslandi og Ástralíu við vinnu sína.

Að þessu sinni hafa þau skapað innsetningu sem fjallar um tengsl langana og minninga, um hvað gerist á mörkum vitundar og svefns. Titillinn „Vögguvísur" gefur okkur áheit um það samband drauma og þess óþekkta, sem þannig verður krufið til mergjar með nýstárlegum hætti.

Eiríkur Þorláksson
forstöðumaður



INTRODUCTION

The presentation of native artists is one of the most important aspects in the function of public art museums. It is therefore a great pleasure to be able to invite Bryndis Snaebjornsdottir to exhibit at the Reykjavik Art Museum. Bryndis has lived and worked in Scotland for a number of years, but has at the same time sought inspiration to northern regions for her art work.

During the past few years she has been working on her art in collaboration with Mark Wilson, and together they have created works based on the relationship of the individual with his environment, culture and history. Among other places, they have spent time in Greenland, Iceland and Australia to pursue their art.

For this occasion they have created an installation focusing on the connection between desires and memories, on what happens on the borders of consciousness and sleep. "Lullabies" relates to us the relationship between dreams and the environment of the unfamiliar, achieving this by the most unexpected ways.

Eiríkur Thorláksson
Director



VÖGGUVÍSUR

Þótt við gerum ekki annað í fyrstu en að horfa á eitthvað þá líður ekki á löngu þangað til að við áttum okkur á því að við erum í raun að leita einhvers – að við erum í rauninni að leita leiða til að upplifa það sem okkur er sýnt.

Hugsanlega er viss þversögn í því falin að við eigum það til að láta það kunnuglegasta standa utan við okkur, en það er einmitt vegna þess að við þekkjum það svo vel að við þurfum enga staðfestingu á eiginleikum þess. Það er ekki fyrr en við virðum fyrir okkur hið óþekkta sem við þurfum að grípa til innri krafta til að öðlast skilning – og við búum til samlíkingar til að lýsa því sem við eigum engin orð yfir. Oft eru þær síðan teknar inn í tungumál okkar og við gleymum alveg að þetta eru samlíkingar.

Listamenn eiga erfitt með þessar samlíkingar. Við reynum að finna eða skapa myndlíkingar til að geta vísað í hluti án þess að nefna þá. En um leið og við finnum myndlíkinguna þá mislíkar okkur áhrif hennar, því þegar samlíkingin er fundin þá glatar hluturinn dulúð sinni og hættir að vera þess virði að leitað sé að honum.

Listamenn tala of um leitina sem ferli, það er ferlið sem máli skiptir, hluturinn er einfaldlega þetta – hlutur sem hefur orðið til í gegn um ferli verksins. En hvernig getur maður leitað í fullri alvöru án þess að reyna að finna eða taka sér fyrir hendur verk án þess að vonast eftir einhverri niðurstöðu? Maður gæti fengið aðferðir mannfræðingsins að láni: halda fjarlægð, hylja uppgötvunina. Eða þá að maður gæti reynt að viðhalda sakleysinu sem er svo nauðsynlegt til að halda sér í núinu, til að halda sér við rödd nútímans – með augnablikið í fyrirrúmi en ekki hlutinn.

Það sem leitað er eftir þarf ekki endilega að vera það sem leitað er að, það er að segja ekki hinn óþekkti hlutur heldur innra rýmið sem verður aðeins aðgengilegt við það að leita og við það að takast á við hið óþekkta. Í The Space of Literature segir Maurice Blanchot að sköpun verksins eigi að vera leið að innblæstrinum frekar en að innblásturinn eigi að vera leið að verkinu. Okkur er því ráðlagt að leita ekki til þess að finna heldur til þess að eiga möguleikann á því að finna eitthvað, jafnvel óhjákvæmleika þess að finna eitthvað, sem hvata til þess að leita.

Juan Cruz, september 2003
Juan Cruz er listamaður og fyrirlesari við Goldsmiths College University of London

LULLABIES

Though we may start by looking at something, we soon have to realise that we are looking for something – that we are in fact searching for a way of experiencing that which is presented to us.

Paradoxically, we tend to allow those things that are most familiar to remain outside of us, precisely because we know them so well that we need no reassurance of their identity. It's when regarding things that are unfamiliar that we need to find the inner resources that might allow us to make some sense of them – we construct metaphors to describe something for which we have no words. Often these metaphors are adopted into our language, and we forget that they're metaphors.

Artists have a difficult time in relation to the metaphorical. We attempt to find or construct metaphors, because we want to refer to things without naming them. But as soon as we do find them we resent their efficacy, because once the metaphor has been found the object loses its mystery and ceases to be worth searching for.

Artists often talk about the search in terms of the process – it's the process that's important, the object is simply that, an object that has resulted from the process of the work. But how can one genuinely search without trying to find, or engage in a process without hoping for a result? One might borrow the strategies of the anthropologist: keeping one's distance; shrouding the discovery. Or one might try to maintain the innocence necessary to stay within the present tense; to remain within the voice of the present tense – focused in the moment and not on the object.

What is sought may not be the material object of the search, the unfamiliar object, but the internal space that is accessed through the act of searching and the engagement with the unknown. In "The Space of Literature" Maurice Blanchot talks of "[making] of the work a road toward inspiration and not of inspiration a road toward the work". We are advised then not to seek in order to find, but to use the possibility of finding, even the inevitability of finding, as an impetus towards searching.

Juan Cruz, September 2003
Juan Cruz is an artist and lecturer at Goldsmiths College University of London

SNÆBJÖRNSDÓTTIR/WILSON

Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir og Mark Wilson hafa unnið saman að öllum verkum sínum síðan 2001, og fyrir ákveðnar sýningar bæði á Íslandi og í Bretlandi tveimur árum lengur. Verk þeirra eiga sér rætur á norðurhveli og taka á sögulegum málum, menningu og umhverfi einstaklingsins og tilfinningu hans fyrir því að tilheyra eða standa utan við. Nýjustu verk þeirra nota samband manna og ákveðinna dýra sem stökkpall til að kasta fram spurningum um menningarlega og einstaklingsbundna staðsetningu í óstöðugu sambandi náttúru og menningar. Verk þeirra eru byggð á innsetningum og ferli, og notast við ljósmynda- og kvikmyndatækni.
Árið 2001 fóru listamennirnir saman á NIFCA styrk til Grænlands þar sem þau eyddu tveimur mánuðum í að ferðast um og safna efni og upplýsingum fyrir verkerfni sem einblínir á stöðu grænlenska sleðahundsins á mörkum „heimilis" og þess „villta".

Á gestavinnustofu við Victorian College of the Arts í Melbourne í Ástralíu nýlega notuðu þau „pokaúlfinn" (sem talinn er vera útdauður) sem miðdepil vídeó innsetningar. Verkið er enn í vinnslu.



In 2001 the artists went together on a NIFCA residency to Greenland, where they spent two months travelling and gathering material and information for a project which focuses on the position of the Greenland sled dog within a perceived polarity between 'domesticity' and 'wilderness'.

Most recently during a residency at the VCA in Melbourne, they used the believed-to-be extinct thylacine, or 'marsupial wolf', as a focus for a video-based installation work. This work is still in progress.

SNÆBJÖRNSDÓTTIR/WILSON

Bryndis Snaebjornsdottir and Mark Wilson have been collaborating on all projects since 2001, having done so for selected shows in Iceland and the UK in the two years preceding. Their work, characteristically rooted in the north, explores issues of history, culture and the environment in relation to the individual and his/her sense of belonging or detachment. The most recent projects use the relationship between humans and selected animals as a springboard to posit questions on cultural and individual location in an uncertain nature/culture relationship. Their work is installation and process-based, utilising photography and video.



Þýðing og yfirlestur/Translation and editing: Helga Soffía Einarsdóttir

had nightmares before I came on this journey and on the boat over my anxiety started to grow I feel a sense of distance although the flora and topography is very familiar to me
the weather was mild as the boat came ashore but as I start the walk uphill I feel the wind grow steadily - each step forward I take the wind brings me back half a step
at the top of the hill I can hardly stand upright - the bay below beautiful in turquoise is the first stop
after seeking shelter from the wind and eating sandwiches at the back of the youth hostel we start the search for the ruins
we have to find the right route to cross over this terrain - the paths keep on coming and going – ending suddenly
it starts to rain and after a couple of hours my boots are soaking wet some time later my goretex
acket starts leaking at the seams around the neck I feel my thermal soaking in the water and being heated by my body
suddenly the rain stops and the wind grows again - it's time to call it a day and put up the tent
the tent is borrowed and we've bought some spare pegs in case
now trying to put it up in this beautiful place overlooking the water we discover that it's broken and cannot withstand strong wind
here we're surrounded by hills and mountains and far away from any settlement so we have to find a way to make use of this tent
what if some animals attacked the tent in the middle of the night?
in the end we select a new sheltered spot and stick the rods down deep into the ground put pegs in every hole or hoop we
ee and place stones all around the edge I am exhausted when I tuck myself into the
leeping bag early in the evening - I don't sleep very well - keep on listening for strange and unfamiliar sounds
during the night I dream a strange dream where I'm living inside a zoo and before going home I have to feed a ferocious-looking animal with blond platted hair and wade through a water corridor with tree stumps and more animals before reaching
he door into my house the following morning it's dry apart from my shoes which are still soaking wet
time to put clothes on have breakfast and prepare for the next part of our journey
we haven't gone very far when the rain sets in and this time I'm wet through quickly - around the middle of the day the mist comes in and the landscape ahead can no longer be seen
I can feel how my energy's disappearing and every step becomes heavy and difficult
we're walking on a slope in bouldery terrain with low birch and heather disguising stones and holes we have no hot water and my body is cold all over - I feel the journey was a mistake - what is it all about?
'm going to die – I'm shouting and crying at the same time
vater and sensible words bring me back I have to find strength to reach the pass which will take me over to the lowland and a place to put up the tent
finally a sheltered spot for the tent and once inside I pull off every single piece of wet clothing and pile it in the corner of the tent
I take out the sleeping bag from a bin liner inside my totally soaked rucksack and wrap it around me –
takes a while to get warmth back into my body
warm water and food the day ahead is promising
I keep on looking up into the sky to see if the sun will manage to break through and push the mist away
my knee is aching by now but with the help of two walking sticks I pick my way through some stunning landscape
ng up the valley and the fog also seems to rest more thickly above the sea - what does this mean? I desperately want to know to be able to project
should I risk bargaining with the gods?
in the meantime I think it better to lay out all clothes over stones and bushes in order to get them as dry as possible before starting the hike
y been caught in the rain they turn out to be fishermen that we'd seen on the boat coming over here
I assume that from now on the walk will be relatively easy - it turns out to be full of surprises – big boulders to step over which are half hidden beneath tangling vegetation
I climb higher and higher up the hill to try and avoid this terrain the
each is either too steep or too bouldery to walk on anyway - I feel the tiredness overcome me once again and my feet are rattling inside my boots
finally there is a river which seems impossible to cross – it's a big river with a forceful current I come to it quite high up the mountain and I consider throwing the rucksack over and then making a big jump from one cliff to the other
I lack courage…what if the sack rolls
ack into the river and is caught by the stream - it's too forceful for an attempt at wading it - what if I hurt my knee again when landing on the rock across the river?
better walk back down to the beach follow the river and try to wade it at its mouth - it's just as forceful there as it has
een further up but there is a series of big boulders and I manage to cross without so much as getting my feet wet
r major obstacle a steep cliff which cuts down directly into the sea - I'd seen it from far away and was hoping that there might be a path low down by the water's edge
after few failed attempts to find a passage round a climb up the steep side of the rock is inevitable
a nerve-wrecking experience and once on top of the cliff the same tangling vegetation can be seen ahead somehow after the river and the cliff every-
ning else is just a question of endurance it's already late in the evening and we catch a glimpse of the
ass – there's something bright green already there can it be another tent at the same place we intend to stop - it's zipped up - no one seems to be around
does this mean that we have to reach the other side of the pass tonight?
can you possibly camp in this no-man's land next to another tent?
the steps up the pass are heavy and half way up we find a shallow valley which shields us from those strangers in the tent
waking up the following morning is magical – everything is covered in a thick mist and only occasionally can I catch
limpses of the surrounding mountains
out somewhere in the mist instructions echo over the fjord from loudspeakers - possibly a cruiser is anchored somewhere close by
before packing up it is too tempting not to take a bath in the nearby river…cold and refreshing
the walk up the pass is easy but slow as every start of day has been - I look back at the green tent and detect a green spiky-haired person
once at the top of the pass I can see the most amazing view ahead – a beautiful colour of blue fills the fjord with one floating glittering iceberg - the sun
lays magic with shape and form
the walk becomes easier as a path is found and I wonder on thoughtlessly without having to concern myself too much with direction or route gradually clothes are removed and packed away down to t-shirt and
horts
the midge spray is dragged out of the sack and applied frequently as a swarm of midges seems to follow constantly
nd a good place for lunch the water is too tempting again not to take a swim and the remainder of the food disappears quickly
at the isthmus with the lake in the middle – a landmark on the map
the rest of the road is easy walking but long much longer than I'd anticipated -
f it wasn't for the fresh air and the cold breeze the sandy beaches and cliffs could be mistaken for the Mediterranean
there are people out in their yachts and boats and on land picnicking and picking berries
derelict huts - can that be? there's a Danish flag raised at a
erandah - no-one to be seen apart from strangers looking through windows equally as puzzled as us
a group of people ask in Danish where we've come from - surprise in their faces when told place and distance - I wish they had been packing up
o go on board their boat - would they have given us a lift?
the landscape is deceptive - one more bay to get around and then the climb up the mountain which will take
s to our destination
better take my time and go slowly - I'm tired but I need energy - crowberries are a good source