



MARIAWETTERGREN
GALERIE



MARGRETHE ODGAARD
Dear Miaojin

MARGRETHE ODGAARD

DEAR MIAOJIN

Exhibition at Galerie Maria Wettergren, Paris
01 March - 18 May, 2024



Dear Miaojin,

I am reaching out to you with admiration and gratitude. After reading your epistolary novel, *Last Words from Montmartre*, an insatiable urge to extend empathy and support for your journey enveloped me.

Your commitment to art, desire, and love, as revealed in your book, stands as a testament to the profound courage artists can summon in the face of pain. Through your letters, I experienced a deep connection as you courageously explored your emotions and thoughts, holding them up to the light for examination, regardless of the pain they caused.

Your intellectual prowess as a writer is unmistakable, prompting me to reflect on the deliberate choices you make to connect with your readers. As a colour designer, I couldn't help but notice the scarcity of visual images and colours in your letters, amplifying their significance within the text. Amidst your anguish, the colour references transform into sensory images that resonate with readers and give us something to hold onto in the constant stream of emotional reflections.

Colours possess the unique ability to reach into our minds and souls, forging connections with our experiences and memories, and establishing a profound relationship between object and observer. I am intrigued by the interplay between colours and written text and wonder, how effectively colours engage with our soul and thoughts compared to the written words?

In response, I've crafted a series of letters designed to evoke sensations in both mind and senses. Colours serve as my language to communicate with you, and while the content may be enigmatic, it invites you to extract something meaningful, akin to savoring the flavor of individual words in a poem, even if the full meaning remains elusive.

I sincerely hope you will find pleasure in them.

Best regards,
Margrethe

29 February 2024

In her exhibition, *Dear Miaojin*, the Danish artist Margrethe Odgaard presents us with her sensorial and poetic exploration of the relationship between colour and literature. Inspired by the passion and vulnerability in Qiu Miaojin's novel, *Last Words From Montmartre*, unfolding through a series of 20 letters between Tokyo and Paris, Odgaard has conceived the exhibition as a fictive, epistolary dialogue with the late Taiwanese writer, presenting a series of textile works entitled *Letter One, Two, Three*, etc.

Intrigued by the interplay between colours and written text, Odgaard wonders how effectively colours engage with our soul and thoughts compared to the written words. In response, the artist has crafted a series of textile works, designed to evoke sensations in both mind and senses. Delicately unfolded like ample letters with visible folds, the works are articulated through two different types of textiles and techniques: Lean egg tempera hand-painted on cotton canvas and reactive dye on silk organza. Through the coloured textile surfaces, the former opaque and

dense with flat colour fields, the latter soft and ephemeral with transparent colour graduations, Odgaard subtly explores the poetic colour references and atmospheric phrases found throughout the pages, such as... *"Their golden, chestnutbrown hair dampened by the rain, glittered in the sunset..."* Or... *"I had arrived at the edge of a sea of fire."* In a moving letter to the late writer, Odgaard further unveils her poetic enterprise: *"Colours serve as my language to communicate with you, and while the content may be enigmatic, it invites you to extract something meaningful, akin to savouring the flavour of individual words in a poem, even if the full meaning remains elusive."*

Born in 1978 on the Thyholm peninsula in Denmark, Margrethe Odgaard lives and works in Elsinore, north of Copenhagen. Odgaard obtained a master's degree in textile art from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, design section in 2005, and pursued additional studies at the Rhode Island School of Design. Odgaard's main focus is on colour research and perception, and the artist works with colour as a complete sensory experience, concentrating on its interaction with light, materials and space, thus aiming to better understand the way we experience and connect emotionally with the world around us.

Margrethe Odgaard's works are represented in numerous museum collections, such as the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum (United States); Designmuseum Danmark (Denmark); Röhsska Design Museum (Sweden); Designmuseo Helsinki (Finland) and Trapholt Museum of Modern Art (Denmark). Several solo exhibitions have been dedicated to her including the Willumsens Museum (Denmark); Röhsska Museum (Sweden); Designmuseo Helsinki (Finland) and Munkeruphus (Denmark). The artist has received various prestigious awards, including two Wallpaper Awards (Best Use of Color, 2020 and Green Product of the Year, Re-wool for Kvadrat, 2019); Designer of the Year / Design Awards of Danish Interior Magazines, 2019; Ole Haslunds Arts Foundation Prize, 2018; Torsten & Wanja Söderberg Prize 2016, Albertsen Foundation's Honorary Award, 2022; The Art, Design, Architecture Prize 2023 from Einar Hansen's Foundation, and the 2024 Prize of Honor from The Anne Marie Telmányi and Carl Nielsens Foundation.



Margrethe Odgaard's studio view.



Dear Miaojin,

I write to convey my sincere appreciation for your generous contribution to the world of literature. Your commitment to art, desire, and love, as revealed in your epistolary novel, *Last Words from Montmartre*, stands as a testament to the profound courage artists can summon in the face of pain.

Through your letters, I experienced a deep connection as you courageously explore your emotions and thoughts, holding them up to the light for examination, regardless of the pain they caused. Your intellectual prowess as a writer is unmistakable, prompting me to reflect on the deliberate choices you make to connect with your readers.

As a colour designer, I couldn't help but notice the scarcity of visual images and colours in your letters, amplifying their significance within the text. Amidst your anguish, the colour references transform into sensory images that resonate with readers and give us something to hold onto in the constant stream of emotional reflections.

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I sincerely hope you find pleasure in them.

Best regards,

Margrethe

29 February 2024

Letter One (Red lips and big sparkly eyes)

2024

Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton

42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)

Unique piece





Letter One (Red lips and big sparkly eyes), 2024 (detail)



Letter Two (The sky exploded with fire-works)
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece

“ *The experience of colour is not static but rather a fleeting result of the meeting between material and light, or a sensory illusion that we might try to maintain, as one captures the beauty of a butterfly by pinning it down.* ”

Margrethe Odgaard





Letter Three (My flesh ground to powder, my bones to fragments)
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece



*Letter Four (A fish leaping gracefully toward a million shimmering leaves,
swimming against the current toward the light)*
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece

Letter Four (A fish leaping gracefully toward a million shimmering leaves, swimming against the current toward the light), 2024 (detail)



Letter Five (My desire is like a pure crystal)
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece

“ *Colours possess the unique ability to reach into our minds and souls, forging connections with our experiences and memories, and establishing a profound relationship between object and observer.* ”

Margrethe Odgaard





Letter Six (The world outside was pitch-black with faint starlight)
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece



*Letter Seven (Their golden, chestnutbrown hair dampened by the rain,
glittered in the sunset)*
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece



“
*Colour is light and light is energy. When light is
in the air and it meets a surface... The way it's
read by the eye creates an emotion.*
”

Margrethe Odgaard



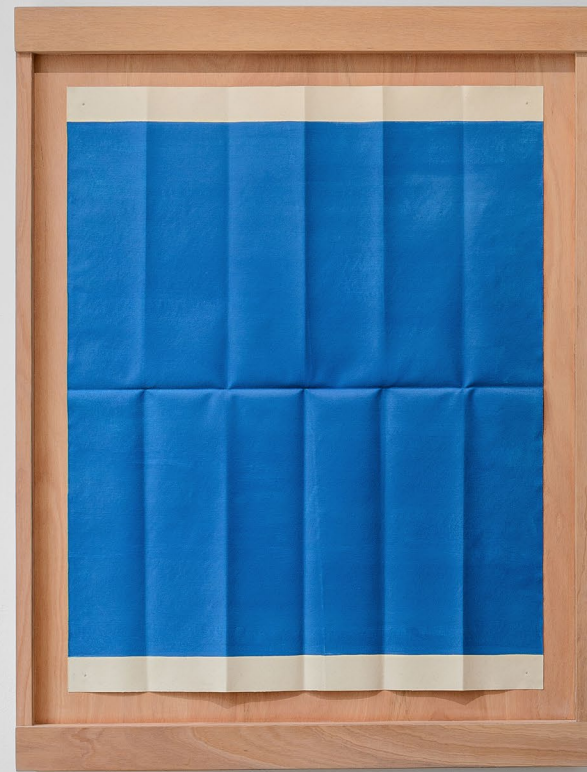
Letter Eight (The fresh, soft beauty of Montmartre in the morning)

2024

Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton

42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)

Unique piece



Letter Three (I have offered you a vital internal blueprint)



Letter Eight (The truth, soft beauty of Microscopic in the morning)





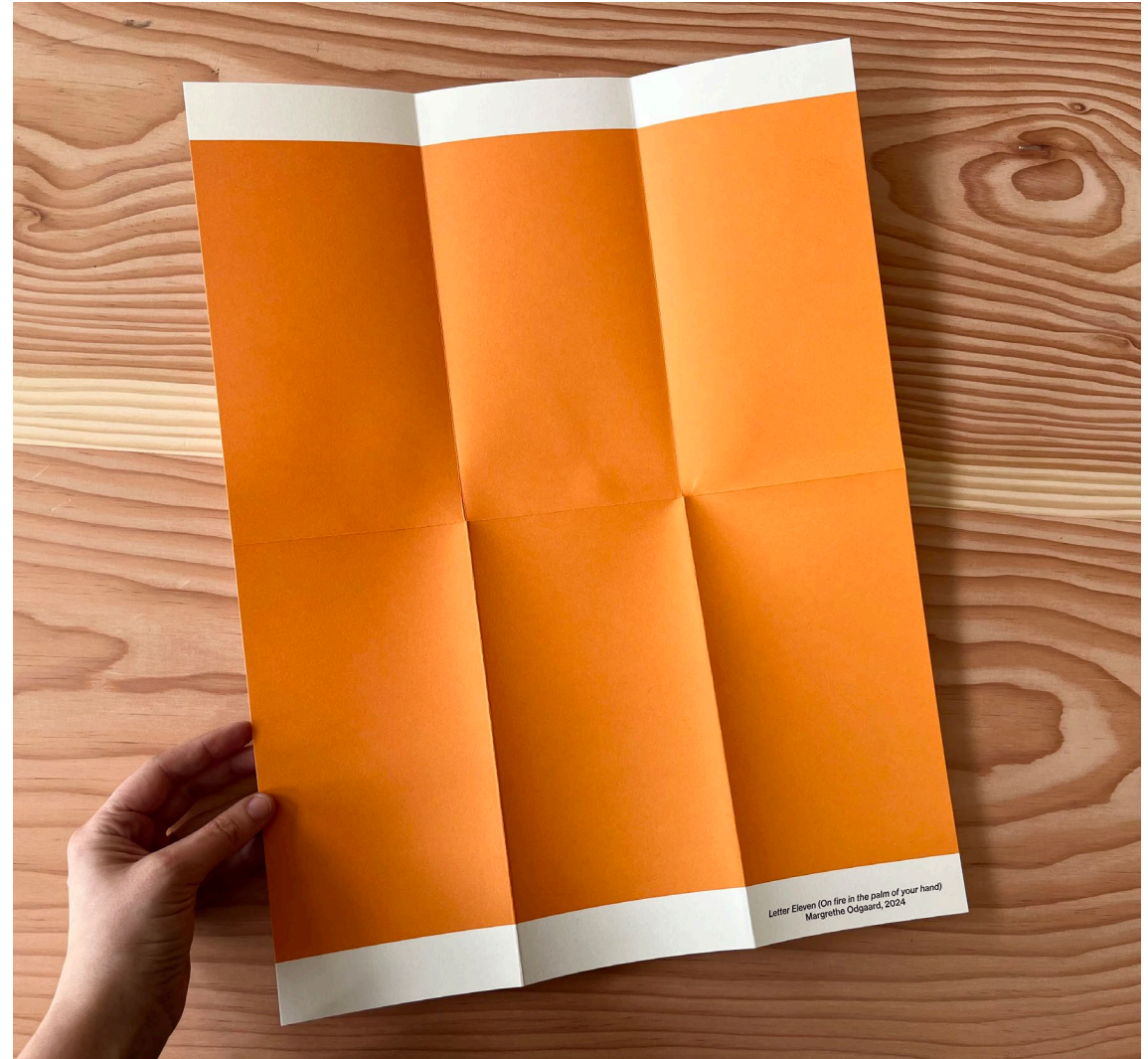
Letter Nine (I had promised you an earth burial)
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece



Letter Ten (The clean white jade of love)
2024
Reactive dye on silk organza, lean egg tempera on cotton
42 x 53 cm / 60 x 75 cm (framed)
Unique piece







Letter Eleven (On fire in the palm of your hand)
Included in the folded exhibition catalogue
2024
Pantone on cotton paper
37 x 48 cm
Limited edition of 300

Letter Eleven (On fire in the palm of your hand)
Margrethe Odgaard, 2024



Letter Twelve (The sky is already growing light over Montmartre)

2024

Lean egg tempera on cotton

86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)

Unique piece

Letter Thirteen (I have offered you a vivid internal blueprint)
2024
Lean egg tempera on cotton
86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)
Unique piece





Margrethe Odgaard, *Dear Miaojin*, Galerie Maria Wettergren, Paris, France, 2024 (exhibition view)



Letter Fourteen (We carried the pink-eyed male rabbit)
2024
Lean egg tempera on cotton
86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)
Unique piece

Letter Fifteen (I had arrived at the edge of a sea of fire)

2024

Lean egg tempera on cotton

86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)

Unique piece





Letter Fifteen (I had arrived at the edge of a sea of fire), 2024 (detail)

Margrethe Odgaard's studio view





Letter Sixteen (I long to lie down quietly by the banks of a blue lake and die)

2024

Lean egg tempera on cotton

86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)

Unique piece





Letter Seventeen (Before I left Paris, I bought an entirely new outfit)
2024
Lean egg tempera on cotton
86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)
Unique piece



Letter Eighteen (The black so elegant, the yellow so eye-catching)
2024
Lean egg tempera on cotton
86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)
Unique piece

*Letter Nineteen (Good night, my Zöe with the wild hair standing on end
against the violet)*

2024

Lean egg tempera on cotton

86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)

Unique piece





Letter Nineteen (Good night, my Zee with the wild hair standing on end against the wind)



Letter Fourteen (We carried the pink-eyed male rabbit)

Margrethe Odgaard, *Dear Miaojin*, Galerie Maria Wettergren, Paris, France, 2024 (exhibition view)



Letter Twenty (My life in Paris is entering a blooming thicket)

2024

Lean egg tempera on cotton

86 x 107 cm / 102 x 136 cm (framed)

Unique piece



Dear Maqin,

I am reaching out to you with admiration and gratitude. After reading your visionary novel, *Last Words* from *Memento*, an innate urge to understand empathy and support your commitment to art, design, and love, as revealed in your book, stands as a testament to the profound courage artists can summon in the face of pain. Through your letters, I experienced a deep connection as you courageously explored your emotions and thoughts, holding them up to the light for examination, regardless of the pain they caused.

Your intellectual prowess as a writer is unmistakable, prompting me to reflect on the deliberate choices you make to connect with your readers. As a colour designer, I couldn't help but notice the scarcity of visual images and colours in your letters, simplifying their significance within the text. Amidst your analogies, the colour references transform into sensory images that resonate with readers and give us something to hold onto in the constant stream of emotional reflections.

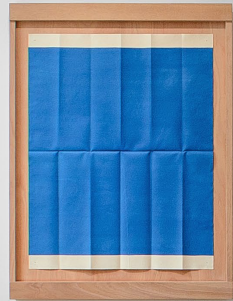
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I sincerely hope you will find pleasure in them.

Best regards,
Margrethe

29 February 2024



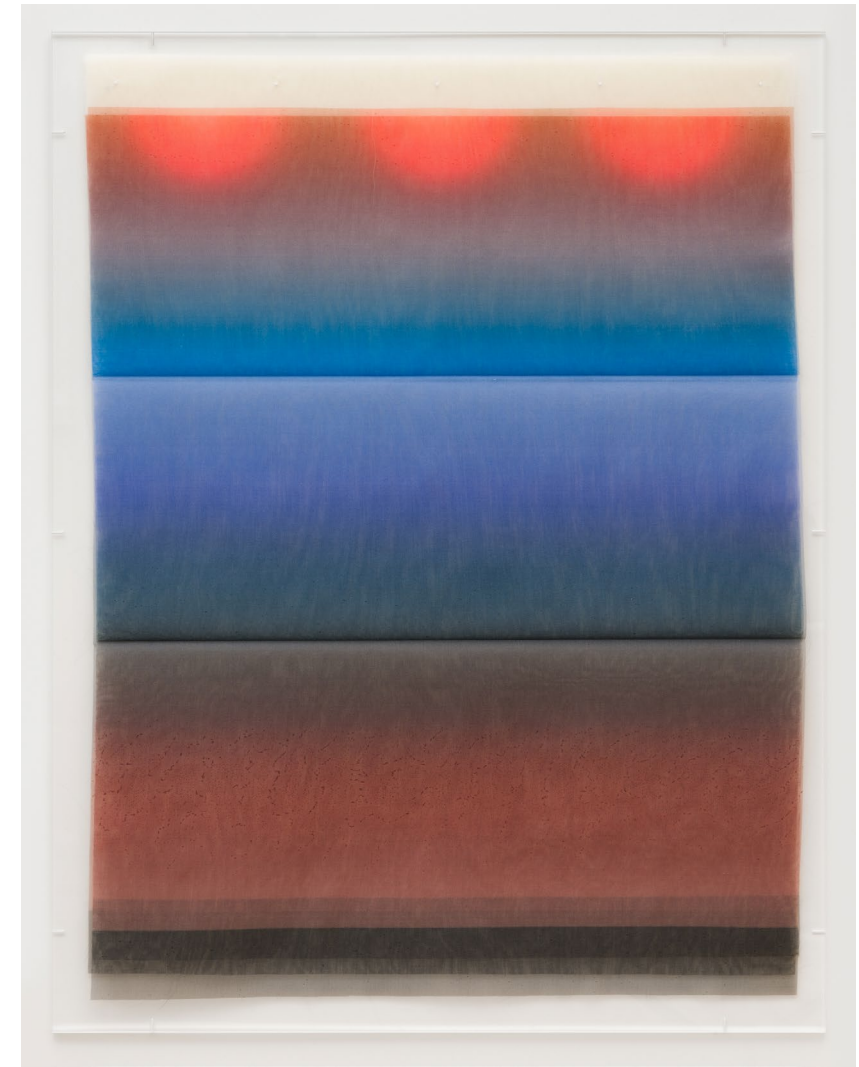
Letter Two (The sky expanded with the words)

Letter Three (The sky expanded with the words)

**MARGRETHE ODGAARD
SELECTED EXHIBITIONS & WORKS**

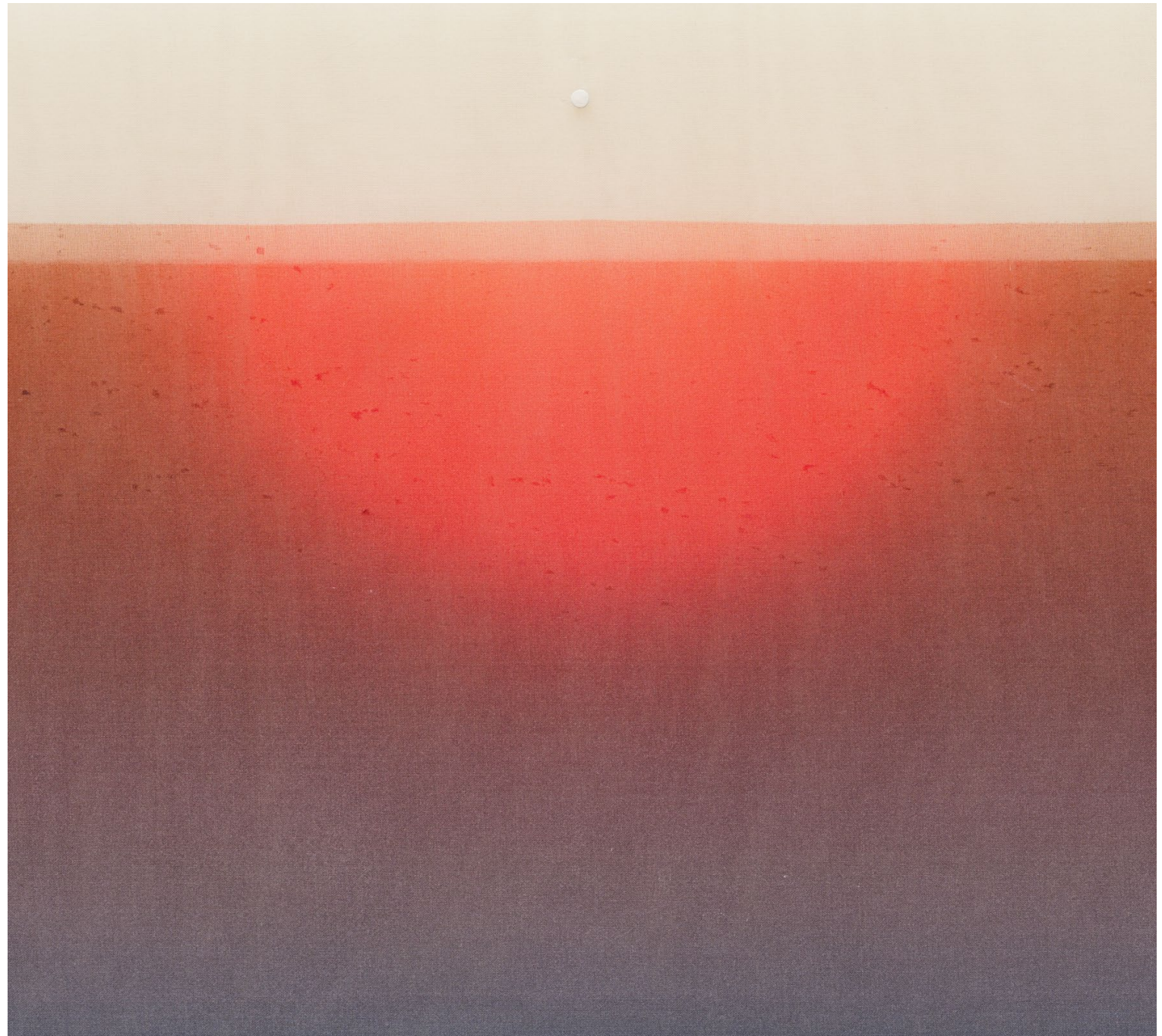


E-Field.e
2023
100% silk organza, acrylic glass
97 x 127 x 4,5 cm
Unique piece



E-Field.f
2023
100% silk organza, acrylic glass
97 x 127 x 4,5 cm
Unique piece

In Margrethe Odgaard's textile sculptures, *E-Field*, colours are materialized via the passage of light through fine layers of silk organza sheets. The colour fields of silk are layered and pinned at the top, allowing for the sides to move freely. Our interpretation of colour lives in close connection with an everchanging interplay between the material and the reflection/absorption of light on its ethereal surface. Odgaard's *E-Field* sculptures are simply silk and colour, and yet, they appear almost electric. The artist does not ignore the laws of physics when creating these sensorial works. In his formulation of electromagnetism from the 1860's, the Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell described light as a propagating wave of electric and magnetic fields. Indeed, the vibrancy in *E-Field* comes from light travelling through the sheer layers of fine silk, creating an optical moiré effect that serves to emphasize the 'feeling' of colour sparkling on its surface. In the words of Jessica Hemmings, professor of craft at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, "*Odgaard's approach works to broaden the concept of colour to knowledge and intention and away from attitudes of colour as something feminine and superficial. This requires the cultivation of curiosity that uses time to re-examine the familiar.*"





E.Filed.e (detail)



Untitled (780 G)
2020
100% silk organza
40 x 105 cm
Limited edition of 13

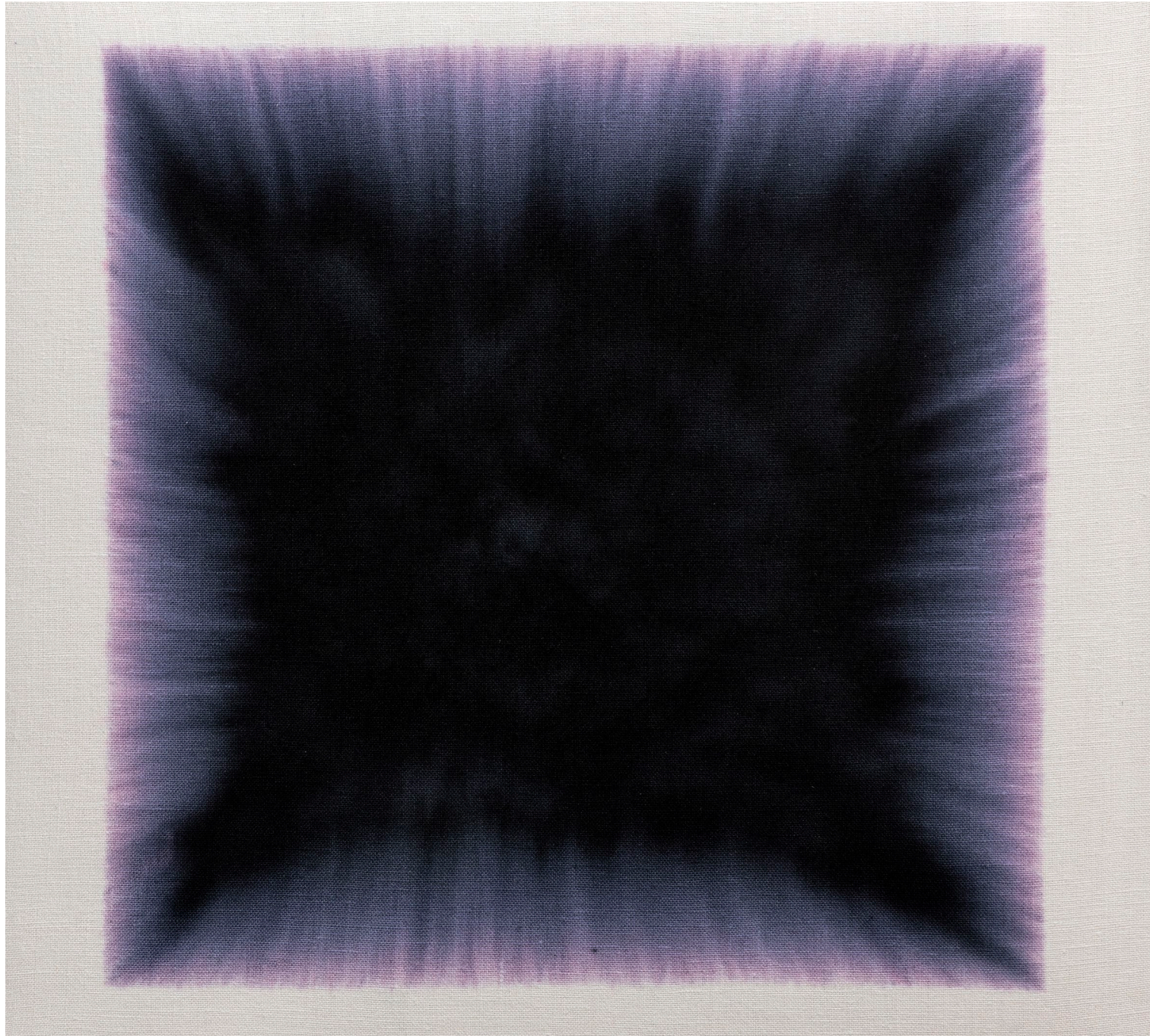


Untitled (780 G) (detail)

In the work series *Untitled (780G)* Odgaard uses layers of transparent silk organza in different colours to build a rich and complex colour in the surface. In this way Odgaard visualizes that the colour is not just something that is applied to a surface, but also arises by virtue of the materials and colours. When the work is observed from various positions, it changes character. Seen from above the colour is intense and solid. Seen from the side it suddenly seems light and diffusely fragile.



Think, Dream, Imagine Colour (solo), 2020, J. F. Willumsens Museum
Frederikssund, Denmark (exhibition view)



Black Squares

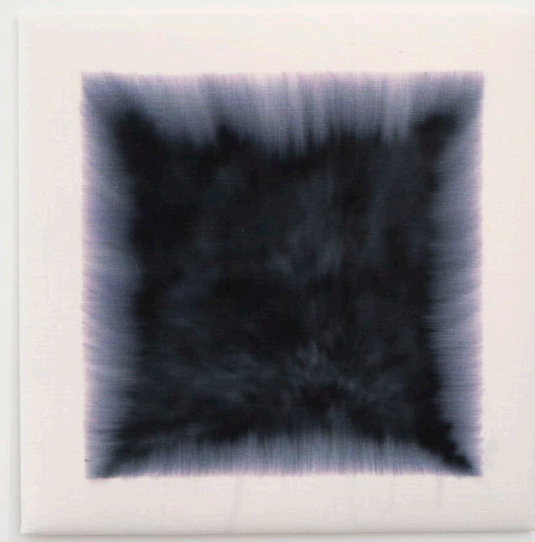
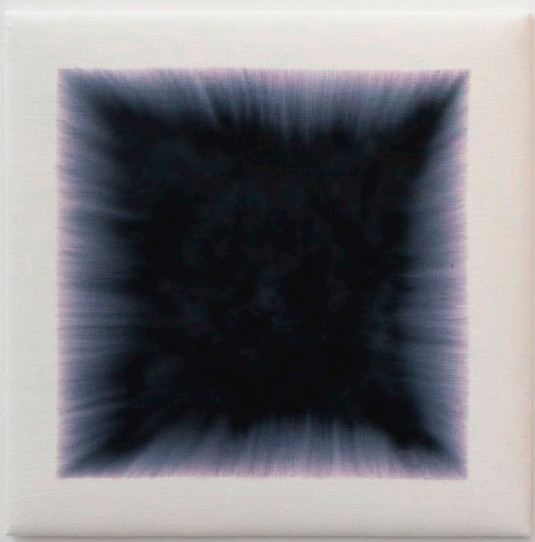
2019

100% linen, black reactive dyestuff

90 x 90 cm

Limited edition of 3

Malevich's painting '*Black Square*' from 1915 is often referred to as the zero point of painting. Instead of looking at the black colour as a reset black hole, '*Black Squares (Tiefschwarz) 1-3*' seeks to show new depths and shades of the black colour. By letting go of absolute control in the dying process and letting the materials take over part of the process, the colour steps out of the black empty nothingness and into a world full of drama and poetry.



Black Squares (Tiefenschwarz)
MO BST 19





Shades of Light
2020

Based on a hands-on sensory approach to colour, *Shades of Light* was a 3-year research project focusing on developing colours that come into their own in the delicate intensity of Nordic light.



Fold Unfold Fly

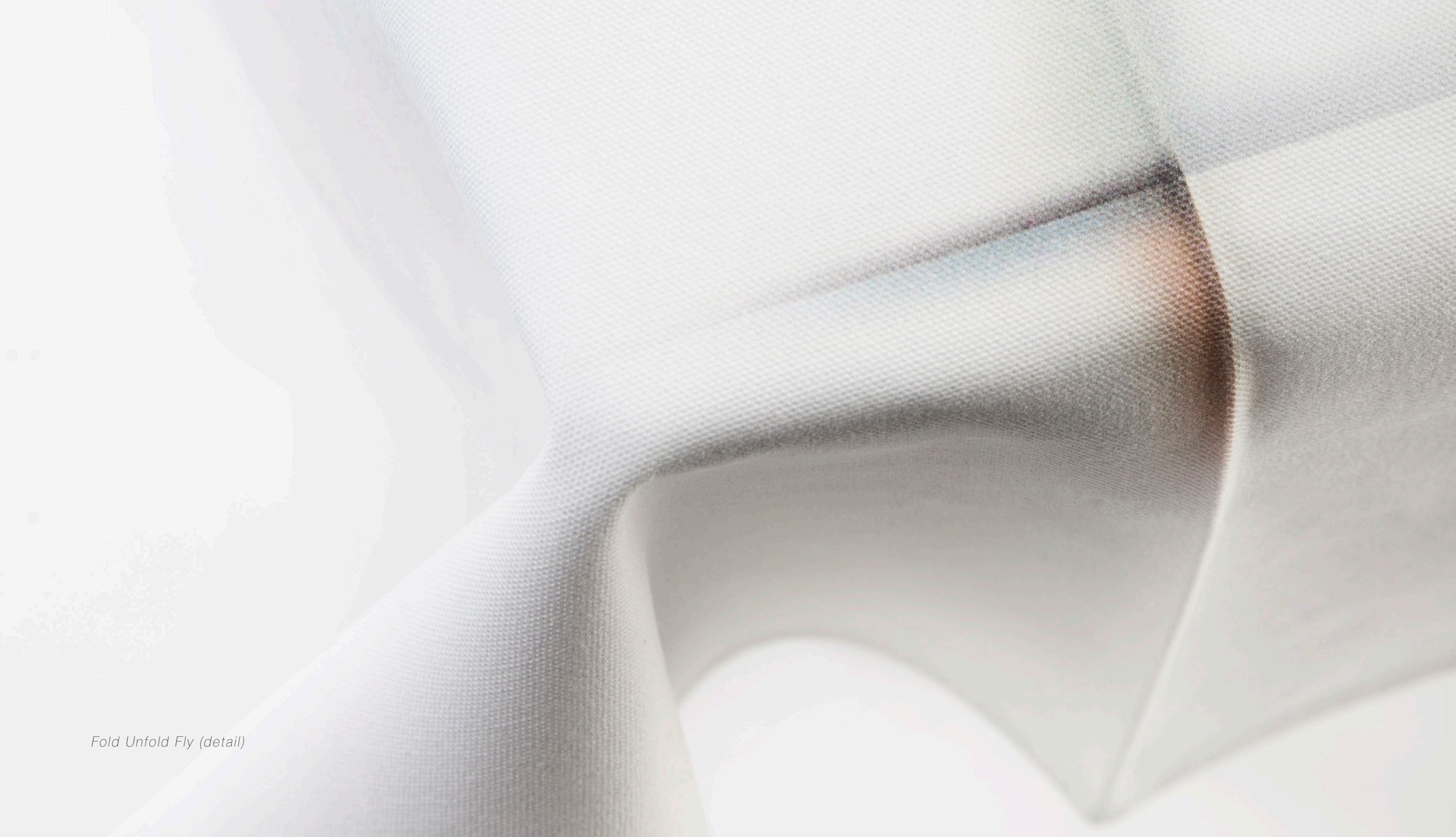
2015

Digital textile pigment print on
100% Halb panama cotton canvas

140 x 240 cm

Limited edition of 6

The idea behind *Fold Unfold Fly* is to look at a tablecloth as an object with a function, rather than just a decorative piece of cloth. Most of the time, a tablecloth is kept folded in a closet, waiting for the occasion to dress the table, and as a consequence the folds become an inevitable part of the visual appearance when unfolded on the table. Instead of ignoring the folds as a practical necessity, *Fold Unfold Fly* makes a point out of them. With a printed pattern of colours bleeding in the folds, the shadows of the folds merge into the pattern to form a subtle and poetic surface, in which the folds have become part of the pattern.



Fold Unfold Fly (detail)

Panorama Series

2019

100% Trevira CS

130 x 200 x 12 cm

In her solo exhibition at Munkeruphus, her first solo exhibition at a Danish art institution, Odgaard challenges the neatness and conventions of applied art in everyday objects.

The *Panorama Series* showcases a series of curtain compositions made from a fabric that Margrethe Odgaard designed for Kvadrat. Variations in colour combinations are used to accentuate the composition, adding different sensory energies to the room.

Odgaard invites the viewer to stand in front of each curtain composition for at least two minutes, referring to studies that suggest, that our mind register and analyse the first minute of observation followed by a more sensory and intuitive perception the next minute.





Never Odd or Even (solo), 2019, Munkeruphus Museum, Dronningmølle, Denmark, (exhibition view)

Colour Diaries

The nature of Iceland is characterised by sand and lava fields, mountains and glaciers, with crisp and moist air in blue and grey tones due to the semi-arctic climate. This colour diary was made in the autumn of 2017. Walking around in the streets of cities like Reykjavik and Akureyri, Odgaard painted colour combinations found in objects and architecture. Odgaard: *"The colours of the architectural landscape were somehow disturbing to my eyes. Dominated by tones of muted and cold dullness, the overall impression was continuously interrupted by outbreaks of bright and saturated colours, appearing almost violent but also energizing in midst of the subdued palette of grey and black. The most attractive element of the colour scheme was the sense of the unpredictable, very similar to a sudden explosion of uncontrolled energy from the volcanic underground."*

Iro, the Japanese word for colour, also signifies lover and the feeling or mood of a thing. Colours can reflect our delicate feelings, and Japan has a rich tradition of using colours as a language of attraction. This colour diary was made during a two-week study tour in Japan in the autumn of 2015. Biking around in Tokyo and Kyoto, Odgaard painted the colour combinations in architecture and objects, which she instinctively found appealing or intriguing.

An infinite variation of rich tones of rose, cinnamon, and sienna glow from the walls of the Marrakech Médina. These ever-present pink and ochre tints come from the simplest of materials, the Red Earth. And it seems that the contrasts and vibrancy of the nature has shaped the colour identity of Morocco: The intense blue sky, the sharpness of the light, the reddish earth and the green date palms. This colour diary was made in the autumn of 2016. Walking around in the streets of Marrakech and Ourika Valley in the Atlas Mountains, Odgaard painted the colour combinations in architecture and objects, which she instinctively found appealing or intriguing.



Colour Diaries 2015-17

Paper, letterpressed cardboard, crayons and tush pens
12 x 18 x 1 cm each
Unique pieces



CURRICULUM VITAE

Margrethe Odgaard, b. 1978, Denmark

EDUCATION

- 2005 Masters in Textile, Denmark's Design School
(Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design)
- 2004 Rhode Island School of Design, Exchange program, USA

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025-26 (upcoming) Museum for Paper Art, Blokhus, Denmark
- 2024 *Dear Miiaojin*, Gallery Maria Wettgren, Paris, France
- 2020 *Think, Dream, Imagine Colour*, J. F. Willumsens Museum,
Frederikssund, Denmark
- 2019 *Never Odd or Even*, Munkeuphus Museum, Dronningmølle, Denmark
- 2017 *Margrethe Odgaard*, Designmuseo Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
- 2016-17 *Margrethe Odgaard*, Röhsska Design Museum, Gothenburg, Sweden
- 2014 *Drink Dine Danish Design*, Designmuseum Denmark,
Copenhagen, Denmark

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023-24 *Printed Positions*, Textile Museum Borås, Borås, Sweden
- 2023-24 *Musik i Kunsten*, The National Gallery of the Faroe Islands,
Tórshavn, Faroe Islands
- 2022-23 *Tradition is Contemporary*, The National Crafts Museum, New Delhi, India
- 2021 *Autonomous Design*, MAK Center for Art and Architecture,
Los Angeles, USA
- 2018 *Halstrøm-Odgaard-Depping-Jørgensen*, A. Petersen,
Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2017 The Biennial for Craft and Design, Copenhagen Denmark

MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

- Designmuseum Denmark (DK)
- Röhsska Design Museum (SE)
- Designmuseo Helsinki (FI)
- Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum (US)
- Museum of Modern Art Trapholt (DK)

PUBLICATIONS

- 2020 *Shades of Light*, A. Petersen Collection & Craft
- 2019 *Colour Diaries*, A. Petersen Collection & Craft

SELECTED AWARDS

- 2024 Anne Marie Telmányi født Carl-Nielsens Foundation Honorary Prize
- 2023 The Art, Design, and Architecture Prize 2023 awarded by
Einar Hansen's Foundation
- 2022 Albertsen Foundation Honorary Prize
- 2020 Winner of a Wallpaper Award, Best Use of Colour
- 2019 Winner of a Wallpaper Award, Green Product of the year,
Re-wool for Kvadrat
Awarded 'Designer of the Year', Design Awards of
Danish Interior Magazines
- 2018 Ole Haslunds Arts Foundation Prize
Awarded by The Danish Arts Foundation, HODP group exhibition,
A. Petersen Crafts & Collection
- 2017 Winner of a German Design Award, Vivlio shelving system for Skagerak
- 2016 Winner of a Red Dot Award, Vivlio Shelving system for Skagerak
Torsten & Wanja Söderberg Prize
- 2015 The Danish Arts Foundations 3-Year working grant

SELECTED CLIENTS

Kvadrat, Velux, Montana, Muuto, HAY, IKEA (SE), Apple (US), FDB Fritz Hansen, Danish Association of Architects (DK), Epal (IS), Calyah (SE)

EMPLOYMENTS

2007-13 Colour and Textile designer, EPICE S.A.R.L, Paris, France
2005-2007 Printing Assistant, Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, USA

OTHER

2013-2014- Founder, Margrethe Odgaard Studio
2014- Founder and partner, design duo INCLUDED MIDDLE together with Chris L. Halstrøm,
2020-23 Founder and partner, Applied Colour Tools ApS
2017-21 Council member, Danish Design Council
2019 Curator for The Danish Agency of Culture of a new dining service to the Danish Embassey in Tokyo
2013-17 Board Member, Charlottenborg Foundation

PHOTO CREDITS

Artwork photos: *Dear Miaojin, Untitled (780 G), E-Field, Panorama Series*

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Exhibition Views: *Dear Miaojin, 2024*, Galerie Maria Wettergren, Paris, France

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Artist portrait 1:

©Lærke Posselt

Artist in Studio Photo:

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Exhibition Views: *Think, Dream, Imagine Colour, 2020*, J. F. Willumsens Museum Frederikssund, Denmark

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Artwork photos: *Black Squares, Colour Diary*

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Artwork photos: *Fold Unfold Fly*

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With courtesy of the artist & Galerie Maria Wettergren



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