



# SIGNE EMDAL

## FANTASIA

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Exhibition at Galerie Maria Wettergren, Paris  
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Cover: *Silky Way*, 2023. Photo: Kristine Funch





Infinite numbers of threads,  
are weaving us together,  
in a timeless tapestry of lived life, lived spirits, lived dreams and lived family lines.

My future connective threads are the physical result of lived life in togetherness.  
My delicate structures come alive in good company.  
May it be humans, landscapes, horizons, sounds, feelings, animals, stories, music, plants or magical spirits.

This is how I mediate.

My creation of space.  
My creation of worlds to mediate inside of.  
For myself, or for others.

I mediate with the loom.

Past and future meet in the loom window.  
The loom is the heart where I store memories.

I love the magical unfolding of trust.  
When I trust a friend's love and my friend feels this trust,  
the love amplifies like raindrops on water and a beautiful flow begins,  
beyond anything I've tried earlier on.

It is always a new love.  
A new improvised unique energy-merge comes alive,  
based on love and trust.

This is how I mediate.  
I am grateful to own the sensibility to feel the landscape.  
This brings great power in speaking the words of nature, when entering plant age.

A special heartfelt thanks to all of my beautiful friends for your strong, committed and emotional contributions to my body of work. Thank you for your love and your trust in the magical unknown nature of my work. Some of you I have known for a long time, and some of you I just met this year during my many residencies. Some of you are very young, some of you are older than me.

You are all very special to me, giving me a new sense of the world, and you are embodying my practice with me, in this beautiful publication: FANTASIA, made by dear Galerie Maria Wettergren.

Much love to all of you – Signe

# CONNECTING HEAVEN AND EARTH

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By Maria Wettergren

Past midnight about a year ago, just before falling asleep, I got a sudden urge to write to Signe Emdal. I had been admiring her soft, hypersensitive sculptures for a while, without having had the chance to offer her a collaboration yet. With a growing feeling that my proposal couldn't wait another minute, I stood up in the middle of the night and sent her an email. My intuition was confirmed the next morning by a laughing Signe, who told me that she had just cancelled a Skype meeting scheduled at noon with another interested gallery upon reception of my email! After a deep and spiritual phone conversation, lasting several hours, we agreed to start what must be qualified as one of my most inspiring artist collaborations.

Emdal's first solo exhibition at the gallery, *Fantasia*, appears as a fluid stream of works

and places from Casa Balandra in Majorca to Rome, followed by Copenhagen and Skagen in Denmark. For the exhibition, the Danish artist has been working on a new family of textile sculptures, which she has delicately hand-woven in Icelandic wool, using her own fusion technique, *Touch*, based on a carpet knot technique and a special brushing, transforming the fibers into subtle layers of fur-like poetry.

Emdal's creative approach could be characterized as nomadic, *...searching for symbiotic energies in serene places to create works with an embracing ambience*, to paraphrase the artist. For the past seven months, the artist - accompanied by her travel vertical carpet loom, watercolors and a vintage analogue camera - has been moving to new locations where she has



explored ancient textile history, cultural history, site-specific colors and childhood memories, in the company of creative communities. Each place has generated one or several works: The Majorcan Ikat tradition was a great source of inspiration for Emdal's intense *Mother of Fire*, with its fiery, flaming pattern of blue and orange colors, whereas the Egyptian and Coptic textile heritages influenced *Lady Pharaoh* and *Murex 4ever*, with their strong purple nuances symbolic of cultural richness, exchange and wealth. Both Ikat weaving and Coptic textile tradition point towards the Silk Road, with its abundance of trade in textiles, precious items and knowledge, travelling through time and history. Combined, they have had a significant influence on Emdal's rainbow-like *Silky Way*. The enigmatic work, *Murex 4ever*, born from a marriage of Mediterranean culture and the windy, wild landscapes of North Jutland, leads the way to another Skagen work, the poetic *Piccolo Pellicano*. Like for the former work, Emdal is inspired by a little sea snail, not the Mediterranean *Murex* snail, which gave its precious purple color to centuries of art since the reign of the Phoenicians, but the Danish marine snail, *the Pelicans Foot*, emerging from the deep waters of the Northernmost point of Denmark, glistening under the sun on the beach of Skagen. Long after the snail has died, its presence lives on through its shell "...reminding us of eternity and the beauty we can leave behind."

Emdal characterizes herself as a *textile composer*, transforming emotions and ambiances into tangible textile structures,

and her works are indeed ethereal and poetic like music. Influenced by nature and textile traditions of the past, yet with a strong futuristic appearance, her *Touch* works evoke hybrid aesthetics and timeframes, offering widespread associations, such as animal furs, butterflies, ceremonial artifacts and luscious parures. Sensitive and sensual, the wool sculptures vibrate with the slightest air and seem almost alive, like creatures from outer space, or exotic species from the deep-sea - another great inspiration to the artist, besides science fiction and music.

Emdal's way of working may seem close to the meaning of the Greek word *phantasia*, usually translated to "imagination". However, in Greek thought the word retains a connection with the verb *phainomai*, "I appear", which refers both to the psychological capacity to receive, interpret, and even produce appearances, as well as to those appearances themselves. Signe (and what a felicitous name!) receives and interprets phenomena, while producing new enigmatic appearances. She is spiritually and intellectually nourished by culturally rich places, and she considers the *Fantasia* exhibition as a long line of connective past and future threads, where movement and changes of scenery have had a great impact on her and her artworks. These cultures are not only studied, they are digested and absorbed through an intimate, spiritual process, turned towards nature and the universe. In the words of the artist: "*I am inspired by ancient and indigenous cultural philosophies and their way of connecting sky and earth through handmade objects,*

*with more than just respect for mother earth. They saw her as the boss.*"

Graduating from the Kolding School of Design in 2007 with an MA in textile design, specialized in Jacquard knitting techniques and conceptual textile structures, Emdal has fifteen years of experience with both handwoven and digital textile art, ranging from fashion textiles to highly complex art tapestries. Although very different from her *Touch* sculptures, it is interesting to note that her early works reveal the same inspirational sources and working methods, i.e. art history, ancient textiles, cultural and philosophical studies, feminism, interdisciplinarity and spiritual processes. One of her first important works, *Astrid's Rose* is a Jacquard knitted tapestry made in 2015, when the artist was invited by the National Gallery of Denmark for the group show *Mix It Up* to create a tapestry interpreted from a work in their permanent collection. Emdal's choice was a painting by the Danish painter, Astrid Holm (1876-1937), entitled *Rose sets the Table* (1914), significant, both from an aesthetic and political point of view: By focusing on the roses and the vibrant colors in Holm's painting - red, yellow and pink - Emdal has created a tapestry in which the atmospheric colors of the painting are woven into the structure of the textile, becoming the main theme. Emdal uses the flower explosion in the tapestry as a way of expressing the theme of emancipation presented in the painting, which is also core to Astrid Holm's own biography. As a female painter and tapestry weaver, Astrid Holm fought for

female artists' rights and for the recognition of tapestry weaving as an art form. In Emdal's words: "*I want Astrid's Rose to bloom. I want her to hold her head up high, look ahead and unfold in all her gentleness and strength, shining. Long enough, she has been standing in the shadow of her male modernist colleagues. This brave and powerful cosmopolitan paintress.*"

In 2016, Emdal continued her erudite research and symbiotic dialogues with historic works in museum collections when she obtained a grant from The Danish Art Foundation to translate her Jacquard knitted





tapestries into digitally woven Jacquard tapestries at the Textiel Lab Tilburg in Holland. With her characteristic fondness of connecting past and future realms, the artist stays in a former medieval nunnery and created, in only five days, no less than four double-sided tapestries in linen and merino wool, inspired by ancient textile pieces from different museum collections: *Blue Angel* was drawn from a 3000-year-old indigo colored Japanese textile, whereas *Turkish Angel* was inspired by a Turkish Islamic miniature painting from around 1600. *White Rose* and *Indian Rose* were on the other hand influenced by an Indian textile work from around 1700, alongside medieval symbols.

Three years later, in 2019, Emdal was offered a solo exhibition at the Skagens Museum, dedicated to the famous Danish 19<sup>th</sup> century painter, Anna Ancher (1859-1935). Entitled *Anna's Roots*, the artist engaged in a deep dialogue with Anna Ancher via an installation of seven Jacquard knitted tapestries, interpreting the colors and ambiances from the painting *Appraising the Day's Work* (1883), painted jointly by Anna and Michael Ancher. Emdal's aim was to capture the substance of the Danish impressionist's work in an act of symbiotic creation. In the words of the artist... "My threads, colors and patterns are combined to create an essence of the knowledge we have concerning Anna Ancher and her close artistic collaborations with her husband Michael Ancher, connecting threads between the past and present."



Emdal's textile 'translation' of Ancher's painting is so vivid that some viewers feel as if the tapestries are animated with Ancher's spirit. Lisette Vind Ebbesen, the director of the museum, shares with us the following anecdote: "The other day, I heard someone standing in the room point to one of the tapestries and say: 'It looks like Anna Ancher' and I understand what she meant. You have a nice feeling that 7 new people have entered the room. 7 people whom you have never met before, but whom you still feel you know. I am impressed and very fascinated by the personality and intensity of the tapestries, colors and patterns. It is a

*very sensual experience, which leads one's thoughts to both images, people and spaces from the time of the Skagen painters, and thus binds past and present together in a very strong and fine way."*

The sensual, almost animistic feeling that the woven works embody a spiritual presence reaches an unprecedented level in Emdal's *Touch* works, developed from 2018 onwards, starting with *My Little Icelandic Pony*, and followed by *Mermaid*, *Khrysos*, *Tara 21* and *Rosa C*. The Icelandic wool seems to introduce a heightened attention to sensitivity and to textile as a



*subtle nuances. If humans cannot see them, feel them or value them, they can never learn to appreciate and collaborate with nature."*

In order to observe the subtle nuances, a certain distance needs to be maintained. The *Touch* sculptures are, despite their name, not to be touched, regardless of their irresistible tactility. If they are touched, they are altered in their perfect, frosty appearance, like a finger in candy floss.

This paradox creates a sublime frustration, which not only heightens the pleasure of pure contemplation, but also provokes a feeling of awe and protection for the delicate creations or *creatures* (characteristically, Emdal often names her works like persons or animals, referring to them as *she*). They are fantasies, chimeras, and mysterious appearances... Please do not touch. Let yourself be touched.



living material in Emdal's work, and from this point forward, she has primarily unfolded her research through the delicate Icelandic wool, a natural fiber, which according to the artist is able to live, if treated the right way. For Emdal, it is crucial to *"...let the fibers breathe and unfold in my hands, while guiding them slowly and protecting the wool, leaving space for the yarn to grow in its own pace. Just like mothers do..."*

Care and softness are important qualities to Emdal, who offers gentleness as an alternative to cold and fast progress. The artist is interested in cultivating what she calls *"...The superpower of sensitivity."* She continues: *"Without softness and gentleness, humans are nothing but boring mind-machines. Society has grown into habits of pushing hard to move forward, leaving no spaces, no room for love, no emotional appreciation...This has to change, and the first step is to learn how to even notice the*





# **FANTASIA**

## **EXHIBITED WORKS**

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*Infinity Root*, 2020-21  
Mohair, merino wool, cotton warp  
183 x 56 x 9 cm  
Unique piece

With *Infinity Root*, Signe Emdal developed her fusion technique, *Loop*, based on a manual translation of the electric tufting machine. In this process, ongoing rows of loops with six thin mohair threads are delicately woven together with wool in a classic rug construction. With its pendulous, whispery threads, *Infinity Root* reflects the artist's fascination with mechanisms of plant communication and collaboration strategies. The extraordinary intelligence of plant systems, designed to sustain life on earth for millions of years, is often invisible to the human eye. *Infinity Root* represents in the words of the artist, "...a poetic symbol of the root of all life."

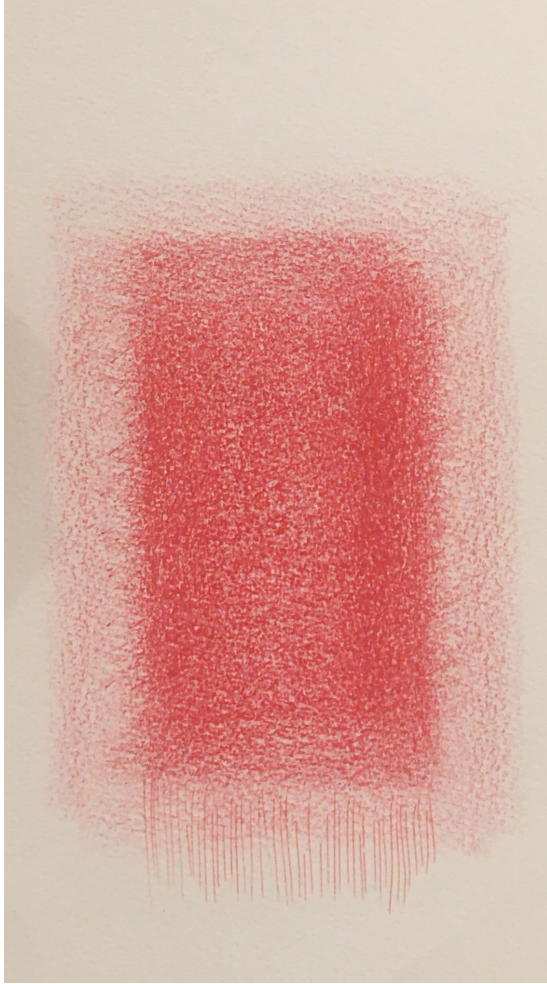


“ Our earth was formed 4.6 billion years ago. It was a red ball of fire - a hot mush of glowing and viscous magma. There were neither oceans nor continents. Energies, carbon and hydrogen formed the first organic substances. From these substances life developed and the earth cooled down slowly.

Today, our Earth is a blue planet, with oceans and continents. Our home together with millions of other species. For a peaceful and sustainable coexistence among all organisms, we need strong and vigorous roots. Let's cherish our roots and those of the world. For a better future, for us and nature. „

— Basil Thüring, geologist, co-director of Natural History Museum Basel









*Palladio*, 2021  
Mohair, merino wool, cotton warp, ash wood  
115,5 x 50,5 x 4 cm  
Unique piece

Signe Emdal created her enigmatic work *Palladio* for the *Homo Faber* exhibition, "Crafting a More Human Future", in Venice in 2022. Inspired by the lace-like octagonal pattern of the terrace of Andrea Palladio's Basilica San Giorgio Maggiore on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, the artist created a subtle, vibrating surface of infinite color transitions. Emdal wove it using her signature *Loop* technique, based on a manual translation of the electric tufting machine.





“ *She flows in incredible ways. Like water half frozen and metal half liquid – held together by the firm structure of interwoven threads. Like past and future. I am simultaneously transported to a 13th century European village, embedded in solidity and necessity, and to a spaceship, destination unknown. And I am between the sea and the beach. Right where water and sand have their wet, strange encounter. Where elements meet, exchange places and boundaries are repelled. Wilderness. A song tying me to the Earth and enticing me to open my eyes, lift my gaze towards the starry sky surrounding me and see in full the red planet.\** „

— Mickey Gjerris, bioethicist, theologian, lover of planets and trees







*Mother of Fire, 2023*

Icelandic wool, mohair, merino wool, cotton warp

73 x 71 x 27 cm

Unique piece

Signe Emdal created *Mother of Fire* in Majorca in the beginning of 2023, during an artist residency at Casa Balandra together with five other women artists from around the world. The artist considers the work as a blueprint of this experience, and a kind of visual diary. Emdal studied the local Ikat tradition and visited family-owned textile factories with 100-year-old looms while weaving the work onsite in the Balearic sunlight. In Majorca, the Ikat technique was named *Fabric of Flames*, interpreting the iconic pattern as flames, or fire, equally reflected in the principal colors of traditional Majorcan Ikat – white and blue with yellow and orange combinations – which are also found here in Emdal's work.

At night, Emdal would meet with the other artists in front of the fireplace to discuss the current blazing condition of the world and share cultural

meals, stories and music, while keeping the fire going. Traditionally, the fireplace is at the heart of a household, where communities and families gather, sometimes to make offerings and access spiritual worlds. In ancient Rome, the sacred eternal flame was kept alight at The Temple of Vesta, run by women fire keepers. Emdal is inspired by fire as a symbol of the source of all life. As poetically expressed by the artist, "*Your heart energy is your life force, your burning flame, your passion, your spirit, your special glimmer, your ethereal mystic gateway, and the reason for being alive. Like flames in a fireplace, your heart needs oxygen to glow, thrive and expand. The oxygen is community, unconditional love and being seen by others. Fire is not always controllable; it is messy and creates chaos. But fire inside your heart – as a metaphor – is not dangerous, it is beautiful and wild, and needs to be set free.*"







“ I’m trying to figure out what the title means  
Mother of Fire, I mean  
it’s kind of obvious, I guess  
that her name is Majorca  
  
sometimes I think I forget that  
it wasn’t us who invented fire  
just because we taught ourselves how to use it  
and to control it  
if control is the right word, maybe not  
  
I’m trying to figure out  
who’s mothering who  
and why I can’t decide if it looks like mountains  
or a cardiogram  
how everything that’s solid  
once was fluid  
and maybe one day will be again  
  
they look so radiant  
the yellow and the blue  
as they rub against each other  
and I’m trying to figure out  
how it is so  
I’m trying to figure out  
why we see things clearly  
only just before they are about to change  
and turn into something else „

— Gustav Valdemar Strange, writer, editor, bicycle messenger









*Silky Way*, 2023  
Icelandic wool, mohair, cotton warp  
65 x 183 x 28 cm  
Unique piece

The comet-like *Silky Way* was created in between Emdal's travel studies in Majorca, Paris and Rome, succeeding her studies of the Majorcan Ikat textile tradition, and during her investigations into Coptic Roman textiles ahead of her journey to Italy. Coptic textiles particularly flourished when the Roman Empire ruled Egypt and imported silk from China. Emdal is fascinated by the way that Coptic weavers made textile interpretations of the mythical ornaments, flowers and animals they saw on ceramic tiles and other objects. Both Ikat weaving and Coptic textiles point towards the Silk Road – the important trade route for silk and other valuable items, exchanged between Chinese and Roman emperors. The abundance of exchanges in the field of textiles, precious items and knowledge, travelling through time

and history, is a great source of inspiration for Emdal, and her sumptuous *Silky Way*.

With its purple heart, the work equally reveals the artist's fascination with the color, initiating a series of work in which purple is a fundamental element. Historically, purple is of great symbolic importance, adopted by the Romans as a symbol of imperial authority and status, and at times reserved exclusively for the emperor, as shown in the mosaic portrait of Justinian I in the Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna. A single gram of the prestigious purple dye was extracted from the glands of thousands of crushed sea snails; it was even more valuable than gold. In times when it was not restricted to just the emperor, people wore "copies" of the color in an attempt to appropriate this symbol of power.





“*Information reveals itself as I create with my hands, like threads that point back and forward in time in a shared abundant stream of colors. A Silky Way*”

— Signe Emdal



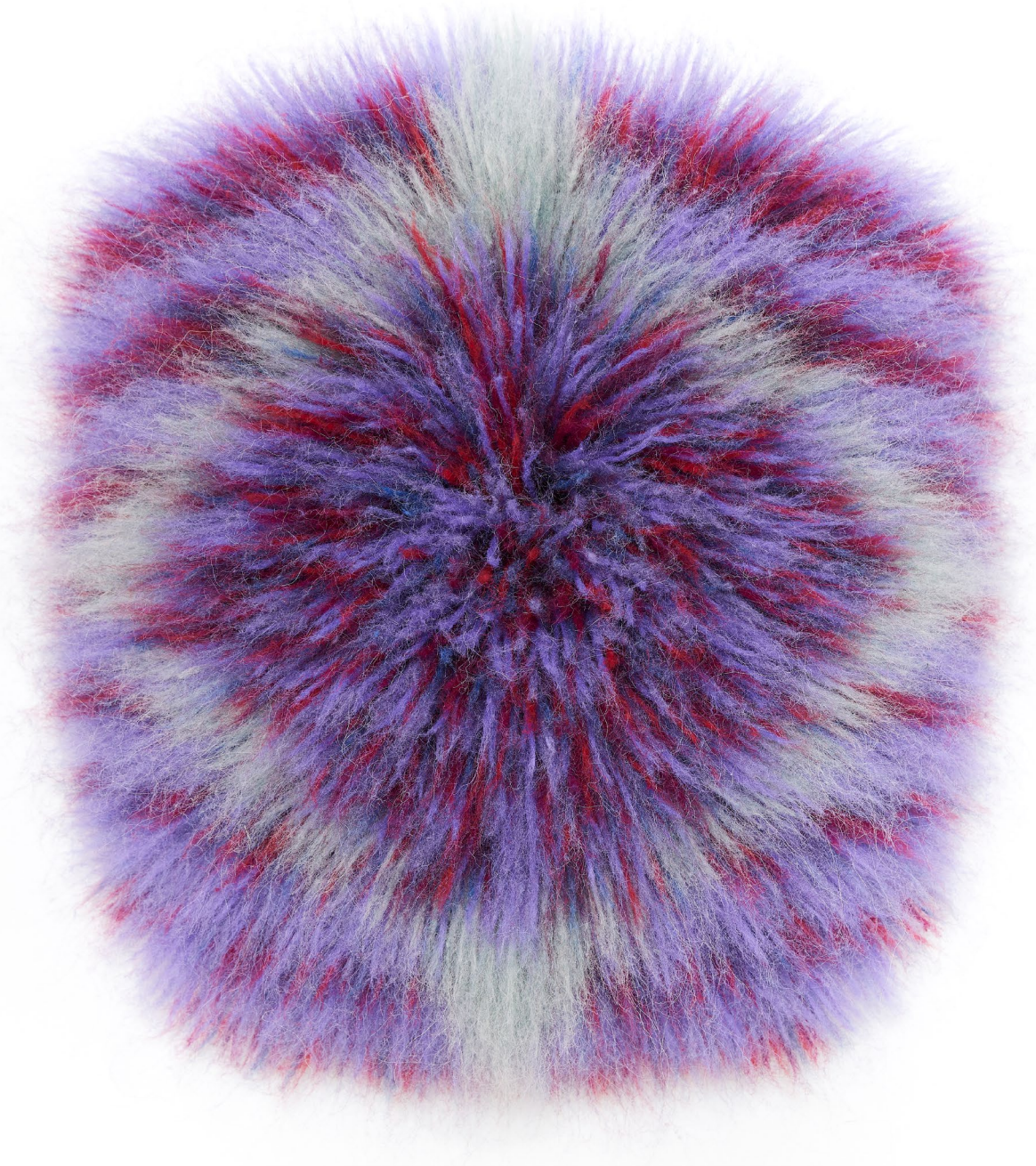


*Murex 4ever, 2023*

Icelandic wool, Italian mohair, merino wool, Shetland wool warp

56 x 50 x 21 cm

Unique piece



*Murex 4ever* is as much a tribute to the rich heritage of Mediterranean cultures as to the wild landscapes of Signe Emdal's native Denmark, reflecting the artist's enthusiasm for historical studies, as well as her great sensitivity to nature. At the Danish Institute of Science and Art in Rome, the artist explored the color purple, made from the *Murex* sea snail, including its origins and historical influence on the Mediterranean

cultures. Returning to Skagen, Denmark, from her residency in Rome, the artist was inspired by the windy landscapes, lights and colors of the North Sea coast. While weaving the work, she found herself surrounded by symbols of life and rebirth, such as a snakeskin shedding, and incorporated the never-ending cycle of life into her work, together with the Phoenician's purple, as a tribute to continuity and eternity.









*“ Al fondo del mare, appena fuori dalla Giudea, striscia una lumaca sulla pietraia.  
Improvvisamente si ritrova intrappolata in una rete intrecciata.*

*Un uomo abbronzato in una tunica logora sta nell’acqua salata fino alle ginocchia.  
Tira su la rete sopra le onde, la sua cattura merita appena uno sberleffo.*

*Rimuovono le ghiandole da ogni lumaca, deve essere schiacciate e lasciate in  
salamoia.*

*E poi riscaldate per dieci giorni sul fuoco, ma non devono mai bollire!*

*Versano il colorante in una grande anfora di terracotta e lo navigano verso Roma.  
La lana più pregiata diventa purpurea brillante.  
Sono stati utilizzati 200.000 gusci di lumaca per tingere la toga.*

*Nel giorno del trionfo, avvolgono il fero generale nella sua nuova toga,  
Nel carro da guerra attraversa la città, saluta, tutti acclamano.  
Dietro di lui, uno schiavo tiene la corona d’alloro sopra la sua testa, sussurrandogli  
all’orecchio:*

*‘Ricorda: sei solo un essere umano’\* „*

— Oscar Born, historian





*Piccolo Pellicano*, 2023

Icelandic wool, Italian mohair, merino wool, Shetland wool warp

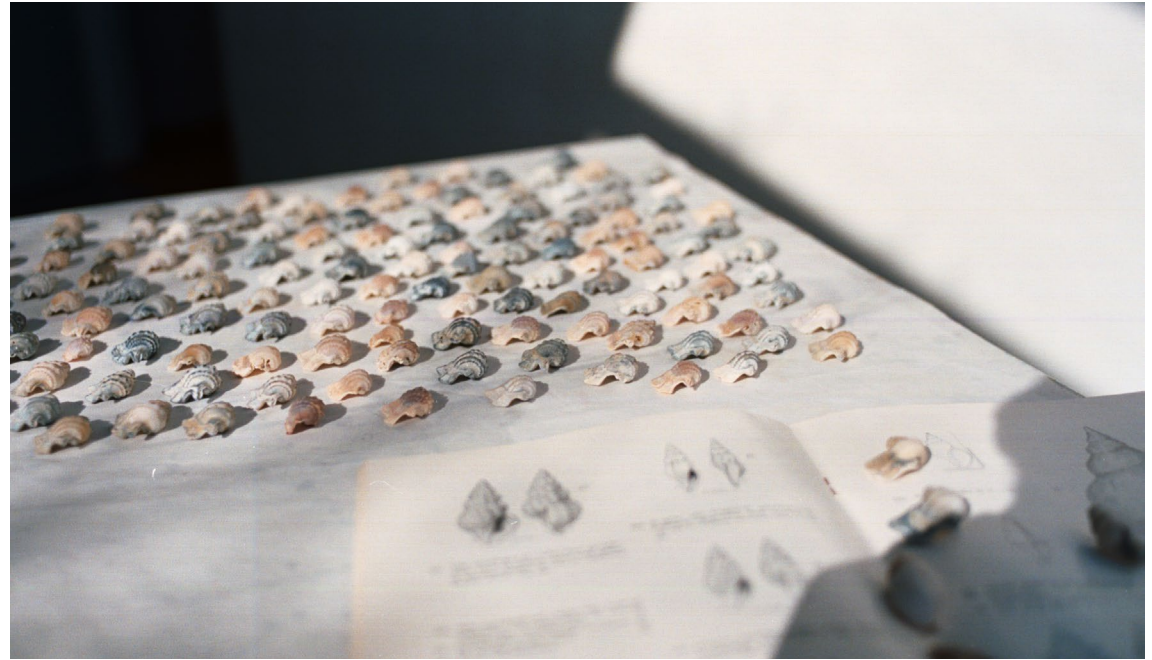
46 x 46 x 19 cm

Unique piece

*Piccolo Pellicano* was created during Signe Emdal's studio residence at Klitgården in Skagen, on the North Sea coast, in a magisterial landscape surrounded by the sounds of waves and birds. The work bears trace of the special light in Skagen, a strong bluish hue, which feels like a combination of the powerful Mediterranean light and the Scandinavian blue atmosphere. Inspired by the shells on the beach, emerging from the sea and glistening in the sun, Emdal named her work *Piccolo*

*Pellicano* as a tribute to the small Danish marine snail, *Aporrhais pespelecani*, commonly referred to as *Pelican's Foot*. This snail has a very resistant shell and lives buried deep in the sand, up to 100 meters into the seabed, digging long 'breathing tunnels' through the sand to the surface. Emdal is touched by the force and transcendent beauty of the little snail, which, long after its death, is still present through its shell, "...reminding us of eternity and the beauty we can leave behind."





*“Hands and memory carefully transforming mass to air.*

*A cloud of threads? A waving softscape of the Sea.*

*Changing blue tones and pellicano patterns to a misty landscape,  
on its journey to another form.*

*Present for now. „*

— Jane Willumsgaard, architectural artist





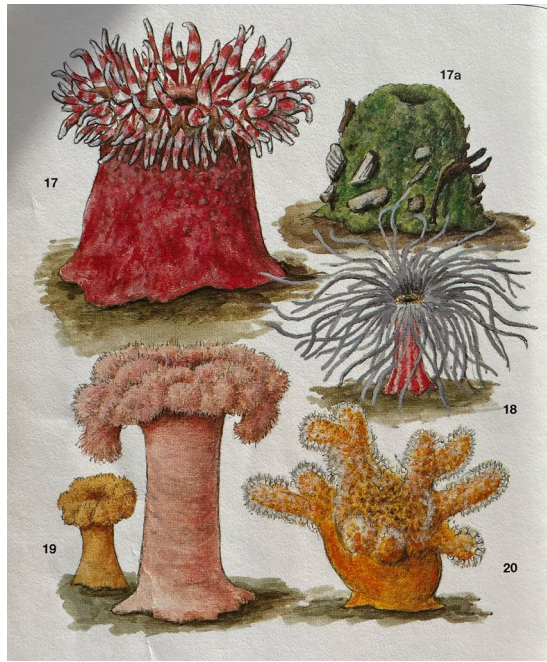






*Fantasia, 2023*  
Icelandic wool, merino wool, Italian mohair, Shetland wool, Swedish cotton warp  
213 x 90 x 26 cm  
Unique piece







FANTASIA

*“Alaska native textiles – Ravens tail  
Sky Woman – the Origin Story of the Haudenosaunee – First Nation people of  
Canada  
Trensaflossa – A Swedish heirloom weaving technique from Skåne  
Abundance  
The land of love (Fantasia)  
Ocean flowers and Danish corals from my childhood book  
Deep-sea creatures  
Open landscape  
Music with a certain deep feel of female power  
Spacious room to move and dance and work on the loom inside of the horizon  
High bright poetic light  
The hair of Mother Earth (Sweetgrass)  
Making love inside of the landscape  
Co-create a new reality  
Horizontal and vertical wavy stripes, the energy field  
Eagle symbolics  
My Blue Angel tapestry  
Heart presence is the barometer of the future (Lee Harris)  
Activation of the life forces inside of me „*

— Signe Emdal, 19th August 2023

# **ADDITIONAL TOUCH WORKS**

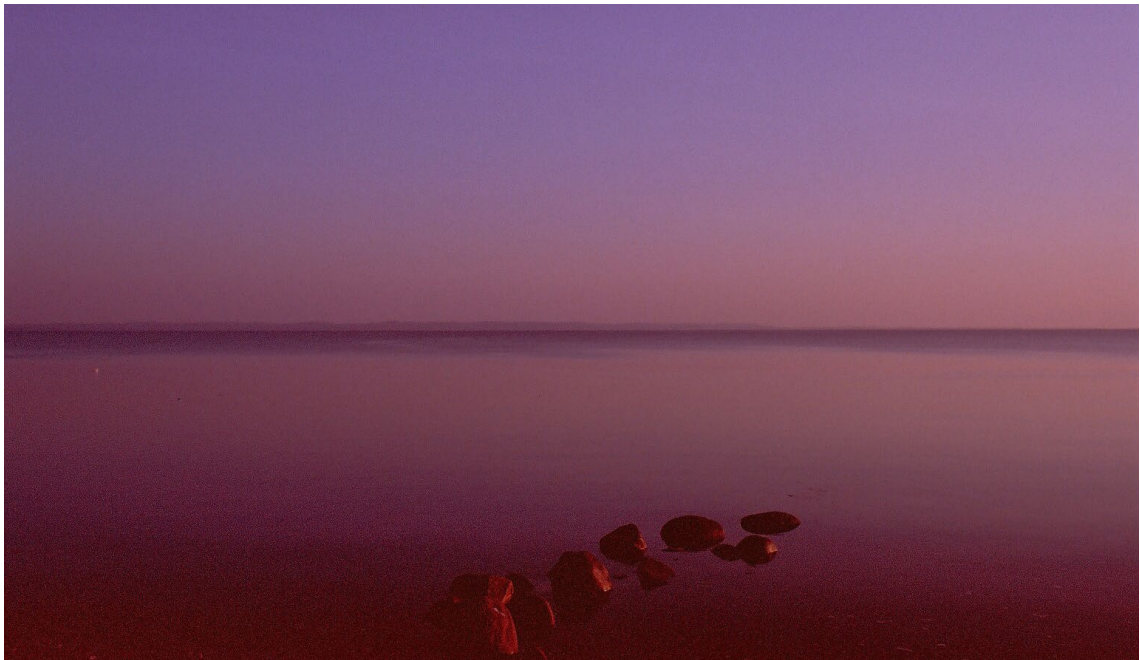
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*My Little Icelandic Pony*, 2018-19  
Icelandic wool, Swedish cotton warp  
45 x 70 x 23 cm  
Unique piece

It was for *My Little Icelandic Pony* that Signe Emdal invented her fusion technique *Touch*, based on a carpet knot technique with Icelandic wool followed by a special brushing, transforming the wool into subtle layers of soft, fluffy fibers. The sculpture and the *Touch* technique were created during Emdal's residency in Iceland in 2018, "...in total peace and quiet, together with the wild Icelandic sea and the horses, and falling in love...",

to paraphrase the artist. While weaving *My Little Icelandic Pony*, the artist listened to the Icelandic story-telling traditions, poetry and shepherds, looking out the window at the black mountains and stormy sea. The work reflects the energy layers of the human body and memory from physical interactions, revealing, "...our layers of invisible fur, wherein our living skin is the direct transition to a human's inner life – the heart."







“ *My little Icelandic pony, my little Icelandic pony  
'What is friendship all about?'*

*Din hud er som memory foam  
giver tålmodigt efter ved berøring  
hvilket ansvar det er  
at være en permanent impact*

*Min krop er som en luftmadras, oppustet, udspændt,  
insisterer stædigt på at genindtage sin oprindelige form  
ved berøring  
Kun ved punktering  
har nogen virkelig gjort en impact  
men heller ikke permanent*

*Jeg tænker på, om friendship is all about at blive rørt  
at gøre sig øm  
at lade sig bevæge  
ikke at undvige, ikke at gøre sig hård  
at gøre sig blød, at tage imod  
og lade sig strigle bagefter  
jeg tror du er en god friend*

*Du siger at  
'Friendship is magic'  
og jeg prøver at fatte det, så jeg kan nærme mig dig  
My little Icelandic pony\* „*

— Katrine Thorup, textile designer, friend

*Khrysos*, 2019-20  
Icelandic wool, cotton warp  
95 x 50 x 26 cm  
Unique piece



For *Khrysos*, meaning 'spirit of gold' in ancient Greek, Signe Emdal was inspired by the sensitive fragility of the Mimosa flower, for which just a single touch might destroy the flower. The artist expresses this sublime state of fragility through her fusion technique, *Touch*, with its vibrant layers of lightweight Icelandic wool. The project began during Emdal's residency at The National Workshops for Art in Copenhagen in 2019 and culminated in a 28 days-long

performance, entitled *Mimosa Memory*, for the 2020 annual spring exhibition at the Kunsthal Charlottenborg. The artist was invited with her loom to weave and complete her work at the museum, challenging the audience to keep a distance, be silent and to not touch the work. During the performance, the artist explored how it feels to work in a public space, while the public experienced the slow, silent birth of Emdal's delicate wool sculpture.



“*I see everything in you. Much more than the pixels convey.  
Your soft plump skin defies the hard edges of those miniature light-emitting diodes.  
Even as I sit here in the throes of an electric box, you reach out and embrace me.  
You are butterfly and larva simultaneously frozen in time, and still your fibres are  
kindling.  
Colored electrons are excited by your edges, yet their hue goes deeper than the  
digital permits.  
I want to touch you. Feel your movement. Explore every point of your surface.  
But for now, the pixels will have to do „*

— Ada Ada Ada, algorithmic artist





*Mermaid*, 2021-22  
Icelandic wool, Italian mohair, merino wool, Swedish cotton warp  
220 x 80 x 23 cm  
Unique piece





*“ Its vibrant smear of blue caught my eye. The texture enticed me to touch it. I hesitated, I couldn’t. Instead, my gaze meticulously traced every intricate detail of that gentle blue with nuances of light and shadow.*

*I can sense the graceful breeze surrounding you, swaying, moving your gracious form in an ethereal dance. Your presence is a tranquil sanctuary, a reflection of your smooth matter.*

*Just as the heart of the ocean holds untold mysteries, your soul dwells in tranquil waters profound in a blend of fragility and strength. Like waves on the shore, gracefully you come, embraced by the whispers of the breeze.*

*Take me with you, dear mermaid „*

— Rita Trindade, author, curator

*Rosa C*, 2022  
Icelandic wool, mohair, merino wool, cotton warp  
93 x 62 x 27 cm  
Unique piece

Attracted by the aesthetic beauty of the rose, for her *Rosa C* sculpture, Signe Emdal was directly inspired by the hybrid French *Rosa X Centifolia*. It was only during the creative process that Emdal learned of its historical importance. Universally acknowledged as a symbol of beauty, many cultures have ancient traditions centered around the rose, some of which go back 40 million years, where it was first mentioned in Chinese and Sanskrit texts. Emdal is interested in the rose both as a simple icon of beauty and as a powerful

cultural symbol of healing, love, happiness and purity. In the process of weaving the work, the artist challenged herself to approach nature's 'random skill', going against our human instinct to think in patterns and systems, as she produced a random color distribution on the loom, employing both her *Touch* and *Loop* techniques. With *Rosa C*, Emdal aimed to embody the power of the rose, its explosive movement, its sensitivity and sensuality, and its healing properties, on both the eyes and on the soul.







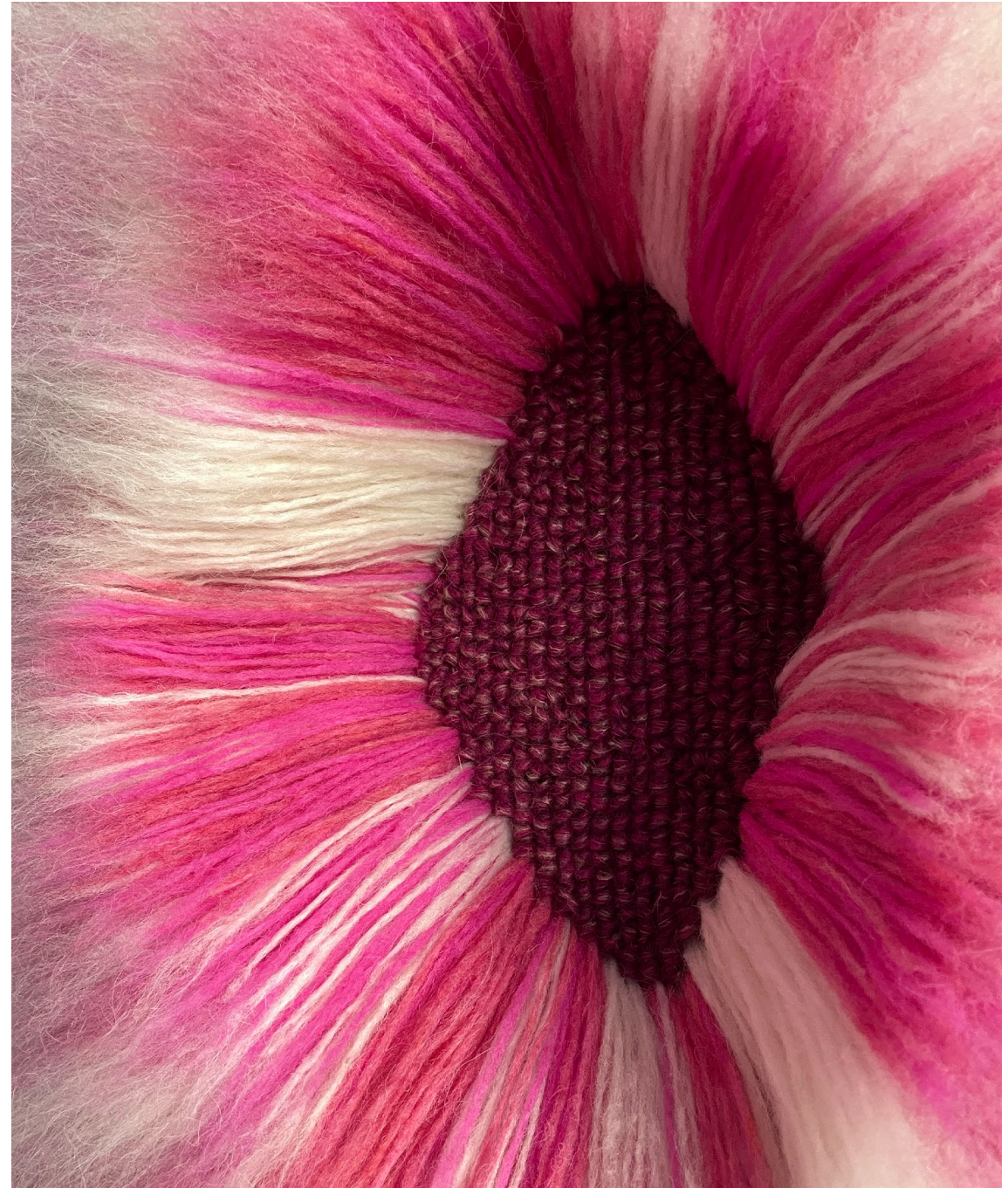
“  
*When created by the hand of God through man.  
Never will you stop blossoming, you ancient being.  
Your smell persuades our senses, your edges reach our spirit.  
Your feminine touch draws us to your soul.  
Moving, dwelling and losing ourselves.  
A solidified liquid, from sprouting to a beautiful decay.*

*Soft is your touch, if we dare to embrace.  
We surrender our soul to the core of her world.  
When you touch be soft as her skin.  
When you speak be true as her kindness.*

*You are a blooming space, flowering till the end of time.  
Opening up to our deepest desires.  
Your colors allure our wonders.  
Ever beyond physical understanding.*

*Your softness makes us aware of the human touch.  
That's the love story of Rosa C. „*

— Yannick Joosten [YCPHJ], M.Arch.





*Tara 21, 2022*  
Icelandic wool, Swedish cotton warp  
75 x 75 x 25 cm  
Unique piece

Signe Emdal created *Tara 21* with direct inspiration from the twenty-first Tara, the Hindu goddess of compassion and protection. With its vibrant textile layers, Emdal seeks to reveal the aspirations of today's younger generations, striving to build a new, more feminine world of subtle, sensitive and nuanced values, offering, "*...a magic portal to a life of compassionate togetherness, embracing the multitude of complex layers of life today with each of its individual timelines flowing organically towards each other.*"





Piano improvisation inspired by *Tara 21*  
— Victor Nemo Hensing, musician, poet, anthropologist



*Lady Pharaoh*, 2023

Icelandic wool, Italian mohair, merino wool, Shetland wool warp

91 x 55 x 18 cm

Unique piece

Exuberant and rich in meaning, *Lady Pharaoh* is a tribute to Egyptian textile art and traditions of the sacred art of weaving. Combining several weaving techniques, the sculpture is inspired by Egyptian textile offerings intended to protect the deceased in the afterlife, as well as by the traditional compositions of Coptic textiles. One of the oldest carpets in history was found in the tomb of Ramose and Hatnefer, the parents of Senenmut, steward and tutor of Queen Hatshepsut's daughter. Emdal considers *Lady Pharaoh* to be a sort of reinterpretation of the

passage of the spirit to the "other side", an important rite in ancient Egypt. The bright and imaginative color transitions are, in the words of the artist, "...an artistic transposition of a visual sensation that one may feel when passing to other dimensions..."

An equally pertinent and more recent source of inspiration for *Lady Pharaoh* is the Fauvist movement, characterized by its strong colors, freed from narration, as well as Henri Matisse's Arcadian painting, *Luxe, Calme et Volupté*.







*“As if emerged from a blazing chrysalis realm of lanate dream  
she dons her particolored mantle plaits mane and armour  
for passage attendant luminosity cascades from her  
honeycomb heart a rush of jewels spun from bloodbeats*

*Is she angel or monarch warrior-prophet or psychopomp  
winged shadow-weaver she mistresses between heaven  
and earth in mystic montage of moss magenta and gold  
brushed with subtle secrets braced for release into futurelife „*

— Jaclyn Piudik, poet



## CURRICULUM VITAE

Signe Emdal, b. 1979, Denmark

### EDUCATION

2002-2007 MA textile design, industrial knitted materials, Designskolen Kolding, Denmark. Specialized in digital knitted Jacquard fabrics with a STOLL–Anvh b, gage 12 vintage textile machinery.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2023 *FANTASIA* (solo exhibition), Galerie Maria Wettergren, Paris, France  
Design Miami/ Basel, with Galerie Maria Wettergren, Basel, Switzerland  
Tefaf New York, with Galerie Maria Wettergren, New York, USA  
Tefaf Maastricht, with Galerie Maria Wettergren, Maastricht, Netherlands

2022 Design Miami/, with Galerie Maria Wettergren, Miami, USA  
Pad London, with Galerie Maria Wettergren, London, UK  
Design Miami/ Basel, with Galerie Maria Wettergren, Basel, Switzerland  
Arden Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark  
*Homo Faber*, Cini Foundation, Venice, Italy  
*Frederiksgade 1*, with Danish Design Makers, Copenhagen, Denmark

2020 *Mimosa Memory*, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Denmark  
*Forårsudstillingen, Nomineret Til* (solo award), Charlottenborg, Denmark

2019 *Anna's Roots* (solo exhibition), Skagens Museum, Skagen, Denmark  
*Textilkunst I Danmark 2008-2018*, Book by Lisbeth Tolstrup, Denmark  
*Inner Garden Series & Touch Material*, Chart Design 2019, Denmark  
*Is This Colour?*, Round Tower, Copenhagen, Denmark

2018 Lake Como Design Fair, Como, Italy  
Textiel Lab Tilburg, Tilburg, The Netherlands

2017 *Hypnagogia* - Danish Design Makers, Stockholm Furniture Fair, Stockholm, Sweden

2016 *Inner Garden* - Iceland Design week, National Museum of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland  
*Inner Garden* - Danish Design Makers, Cologne, Germany  
*Inner Garden* (solo exhibition), I OBJECT gallery, Ghent, Belgium

2015 Textiel Lab Tilburg, Tilburg, The Netherlands  
*Astrid's Rose*, National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark

2012 *Warrior Tent*, Pictoplasma X Miss Lotion, Berlin, Germany

2011 *Winter Garten* (solo exhibition), Knitted silence experience, Direktorenhaus Berlin, Germany

2010 *A Tree Tale* (solo exhibition), Knitted Silence Experience, Bornholm, Denmark

2008 *Frankfurt Am Main* (solo exhibition), Deve Architects, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Forårsudstillingen Charlottenborg, Denmark

### GRANDS & AWARDS

2023 Martha and Paul René Gauguin Foundation, Award  
Statens Kunstfond, Working grant

2022 Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968  
Statens kunstfond, Working grant

2021 Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968  
Statens kunstfond, Working grant

2020 Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968  
Statens kunstfond, Working grant  
Statens kunstfonds projektstøtte, Design/Kunsthåndværk  
Nominated for the solo award, Forårsudstillingen, Charlottenborg

2019 Statens kunstfonds projektstøtte, Design/Kunsthåndværk  
Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968

2018 Statens kunstfonds projektstøtte, Design/Kunsthåndværk

2017 Statens kunstfonds projektstøtte, Design/Kunsthåndværk

2016 Statens kunstfonds projektstøtte, Design/Kunsthåndværk  
Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968

2015 Statens kunstfonds projektstøtte, Design/Kunsthåndværk  
Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968

2010 Statens Kunstfond, Working grant  
Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968

2009 Statens Kunstfond, Working grant

2008 Kunsthåndværker prisen 1879, Bronze medal of honor  
Nationalbankens Jubilæums Fond af 1968  
Otto Bruuns Fond, Working grant

2007 Gudrun og Erik Kauffeldts Fond, Graduation travel grant

### ARTIST RESIDENCIES

2023 Statens Værksteder For Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Danish Institute Rome, Rome, Italy  
Casa Balandra, Majorca, Spain

2022 Artscape, Toronto Islands, Canada  
Statens Værksteder For Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark

2021 Statens Værksteder For Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark

2020 Statens Værksteder For Kunst & Design, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Klitgården Refugium, Skagen, Denmark

2019 Travel & Talk, Detroit & Chicago, USA  
Statens Værksteder For Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Artscape, Toronto Islands, Canada

2018 Artscape, Toronto Islands, Canada  
Icelandic Textile Center, Blönduós, Iceland  
Twin Sun, Textiel Lab, Tilburg, Holland



## TEXT TRANSLATIONS

**\*(p. 34):** Det er simpelthen så utroligt, som det flyder. Det er som vand eller smeltet metal. Og samtidig er der den faste struktur af tråde vævet sammen. Som fortid og fremtid. Jeg føler mig på en gang hensat til en lille landsby i det 13. århundrede omgivet af nødvendighed og soliditet og så et rumskib. Og mellem hav og strand. Lige der hvor vand og sand mødes. Det der mystiske sted, hvor elementer deler plads og skifter og ophæver grænser. Det er altså ret vildt. En sang, der på en gang binder os til Jorden, elementerne og så får øjnene til at løfte sig mod stjernehimlen og se den røde planet.

—

**\*(p. 67):** On the bottom of the sea, just off Judea, a snail slowly makes its way across the rocks. No goal, no direction, simply straight ahead, suddenly it finds itself in a willow woven fyke.

A sunburned man in a worn-out tunic, salt water up to his knees.

He pulls the fyke above the waves, his catch is worth a shrug.

They carefully pick out a gland from every snail, they are to be ground and laid in salt.

Then, they are warmed for ten days over a fire, but they must not boil!

They fill the dye into a large terracotta amphora, and then sail it to Rome.

The most delicate sheep wool turns purple.  
200 000 snails went into coloring that toga.

On the day of the triumph, they wrap the proud general in his new toga.

Off through the city in his chariot, he waves, all cheer.  
Behind him a slave, holding the laurel wreath, whispering into his ear:

'Remember: You are only human'.

—

**\*(p. 97):** My little Icelandic pony, my little Icelandic pony  
"What is friendship all about?"

Your skin is like memory foam  
patiently giving in when touched  
what a responsibility it is  
to be a permanent impact

My skin is like an airbed, swollen, expanded,  
stubbornly insisting on regaining its original shape  
when touched

Only when punctuated  
has someone really made an impact  
but not permanent

I'm thinking about whether friendship is all about being touched

to make oneself tender  
to be moved  
not to dodge, not to harden up  
to be soft, to receive  
and to let oneself be groomed afterwards

I believe you are a good friend

You say that  
"Friendship is magic"  
and I try to comprehend it, so I can come closer  
My little Icelandic pony

## PHOTO CREDITS

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Portrait of the artist with her artwork *Fantasia*, 2023 © Kristine Funch

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*Warrior*, digital Jacquard knitted installation and poncho, Berlin, 2014, model: Ida Gravgaard © Signe Emdal

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down: Atelier process of *Astrid's Rose*, tapestry wall with a reproduction of *Rose dækker bord (Rose Laying the Table)*, 1914 by Astrid Holm, Copenhagen, 2015 © Signe Emdal

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Atelier process of *Astrid's Roots* exhibition, 2019 © Signe Emdal

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*Anna's Roots*, seven Jacquard knitted tapestries, installation view, Skagens Kunstmuseer, Denmark 2019 © Signe Emdal

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right: *Rose*, Råbjerg Mile Skagen, summer 2016 © Daniela Reiner

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*Infinity Root*, 2020-21 © Kristine Funch

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bottom: Analog film photo by the artist, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2020-2022 © Signe Emdal

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right: Watercolor sketch at residency in Toronto Island, Canada 2022 © Signe Emdal

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*Fantasia*, 2023 © Kristine Funch

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left: Sea anemone species from the book: "What do I find on the beach" © Politikens Forlag, Denmark, 1986

right: Watercolor sketch, *Fantasia*, Toronto Island, Canada, 2022 © Signe Emdal

down: Analog film photo by the artist, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2023 © Signe Emdal

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*Fantasia* creation process, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2023 © Signe Emdal

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*My Little Icelandic Pony*, 2019 © Kristine Funch

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up: Analog film photo by the artist during artist residency in Iceland, 2018 © Signe Emdal

down: Analog film photo by the artist, Veddinge Bakker, Denmark, 2008 © Signe Emdal

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down: *Mimosa Memory*, Performance, Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Denmark, 2020 © Theis Mortensen

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*Mermaid*, 2021-22 © Kristine Funch

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Analog film photo of *Mermaid* creation process, Statens Værksteder For Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark 2021 © Signe Emdal

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Analog film photo by the artist during her residency at Klitgården in Skagen, Denmark, 2020 © Signe Emdal

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right: Watercolor sketch, Copenhagen, Denmark 2022 © Signe Emdal

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*Tara 21*, 2022 © Kristine Funch

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left: Creation process of *Tara 21*, Statens Værksteder, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 2022 © Signe Emdal

right: Watercolor sketch at residency in Toronto Island, Canada 2022 © Signe Emdal

down: Analog film photo by the artist during her residency at Klitgården in Skagen, Denmark, 2020 © Signe Emdal

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Analog film photo by the artist, Denmark, 2008 © Signe Emdal

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*Lady Pharaoh* creation process, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 2023 © Signe Emdal

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Analog film photo by the artist, Christians Ø, Denmark, 2020 © Signe Emdal



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KLITGAARDEN REFUGIUM



**ARTSCAPE  
GIBRALTAR  
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