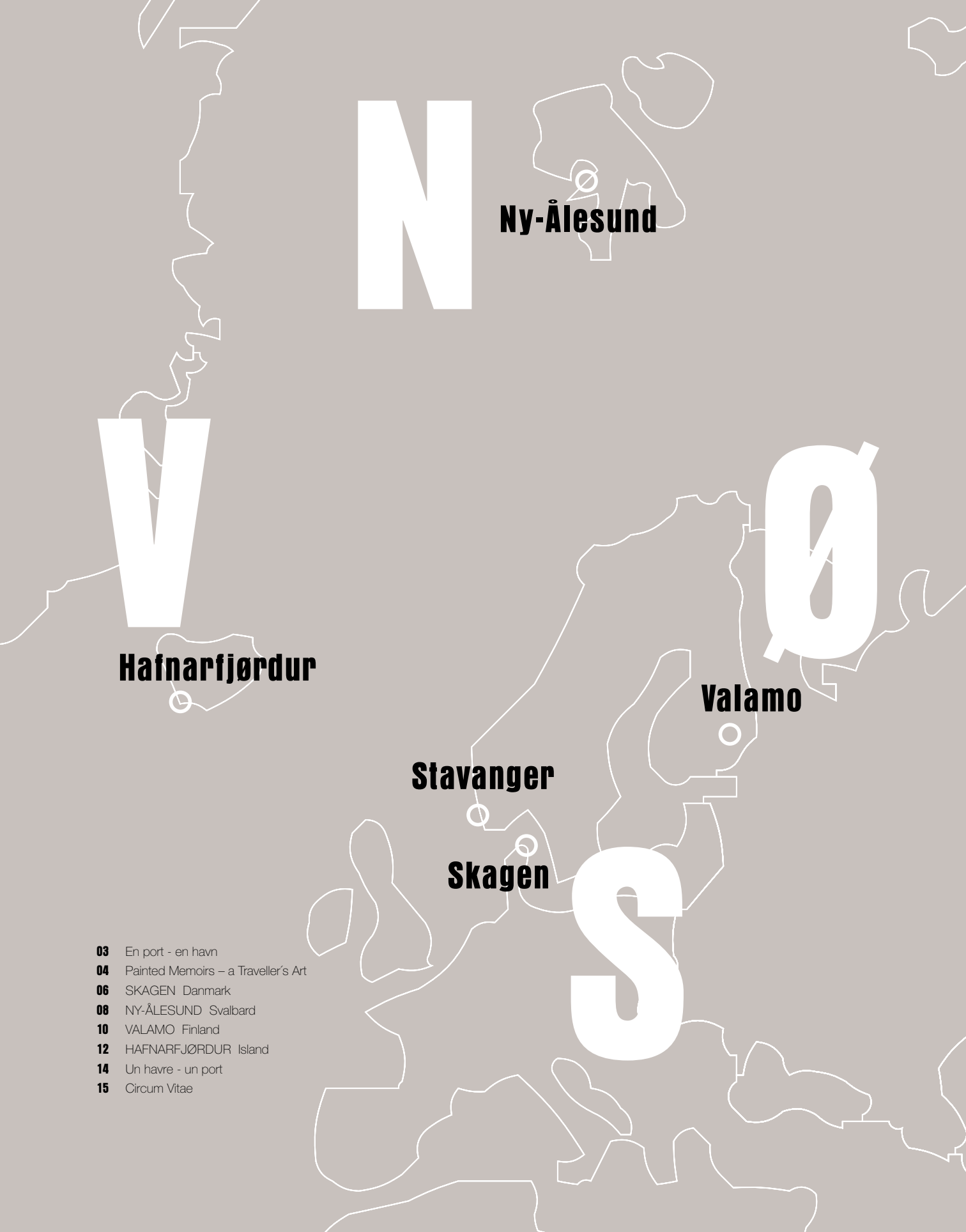


**MED  
KOFFERT  
ÅPEN PORT**

**Tove Sundt-Hansen / Stavanger 2008**



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En port - en havn. En åpen havn.  
Hva betyr ordene Open Port for meg?  
Tidevannet kommer og går. Jeg reiser bort.  
Med ferdigspente lærreter, papir og maling.  
Sør, nord, øst og vest.  
– Vende tilbake og dele.

Reisene går til Skagen, Svalbard, Finland og Island.  
Med undring, entusiasme, åpenhet og vilje til å lære  
tar jeg til meg informasjon, maler og tegner.  
Intuitivt og sanselig.  
Hendene og kroppen er mine kontaktpunkter.

Hvert bilde har et element av en observasjon.  
En sansing. En fornemmelse. En erfaring.  
Et stykke kunnskap.

Ethvert format har sin utfordring. Det er første gang jeg  
jobber med et lite format tilpasset min røde reisekoffert.  
Hjemme, mellom reisene, arbeider jeg med store formater.  
De store bildene har ingen umiddelbar  
referanse til de små.  
Det handler om ulike utforskningsnivåer.

Kunst, vitenskap, natur. Reisene handler om hva jeg  
kan lære, og hva jeg kan bringe med meg hjem.  
Min intensjon er å jobbe fra hjertet, med tro på at det  
skaper noe meningsfullt. Kunstens språk har evnen  
til å åpne dører og rom i et annet menneske.  
Kunst kan berøre, gi opplevelse, assosiasjoner  
og erkjennelse.

Kunsten er magisk.

### **SKAGEN Danmark**

Et skattekammer.  
Jeg blir betatt.  
Lyset, fargene, det myke skinnende havet.  
Det transparente driver meg.  
Lag på lag av lys forent med mørke.  
Uendelighet av sand og stein i gylne farger.  
Sommerblomster og et mildt drag i luften.

### **NY-ÅLESUND Svalbard**

Landskapet er overdøvende sterkt.  
Dimensjoner og farger jeg aldri før har opplevd.  
Hav og is.  
Foran meg flyter bruddstykker av blåis, mens  
breen er isende blågrønn.

Den siste rest av arktisk sommer før mørketid  
og vinter.

Himmelens spekter fra krystallklar tynn rosa til intenst  
lyseblått. En presisjon i fargene og en særegen stillhet.

Inspirerende og lærerikt å møte de ulike forskerne.  
Hva de gjør og hvordan de arbeider.  
Respekten for livet og landskapet.

### **VALAMO Finland**

I klosteret skapes ro i sinn og tanker.  
Munkenes liv, tidebønn og stillhet står i sterk kontrast  
til menneskemengder til og fra i åpningstidene.  
Jeg lærer om ikonmaleri og forgyllingsteknikker.

Landskapet er trær, og enda flere trær, i uendelige  
mengder.  
De står der, rett opp og ned og strekker seg.  
Skogen er mystisk med nyanser av grått, brunt, grønt  
og blått.  
Praktfulle jordtoner.

### **HAFNARFJÖRDUR Island**

Storm og kuling. Sikt på under ti meter.  
Det er til å bli sjøsyk av.  
Urkreftene er solid tilstede.  
Hver gang jeg skal utforske landskapet begynner det å snø.

Varme, kulde, vind, vann og stein.  
Samtidig så trolsk og vilt.  
Jeg sanser kontraster og møtepunktet mellom ulike  
virkeligheter.

Island er fritt og imøtekommende.  
Rått og raffinert.

## Painted Memoirs – a traveller’s Art

### Introduction

What we habitually see confirms us. We yearn to travel in order to break these habits and thus to see ourselves anew. To travel is to refresh and widen our experience of the world, of ourselves and, of our loved ones. The underlying theme to all travel is the urge for difference; to experience the rhapsody of change. That this is an urge more often disappointed than gratified only makes the experience of travelling more poignant. The French 19th century novelist Flaubert spent enervating years in genteel Normandy longing for the sensual splendours of Egypt, then, when he finally reached the pyramids, he promptly fell into maudlin nostalgia for rainy, bourgeois Rouen.

Yet art and travel have a similarity; both can provide a new window on the world, a new way of seeing. Maybe the artist has something to teach the traveller? Maybe the use of an artist's methods can lessen the disappointment and anti-climax so often felt by the traveller when away from home. Tove Sundt-Hansen has recently been investigating how best to experience and record “being there”. She has developed techniques - an artistic method - that enrich and document the state of “being a traveller”. The goal of this project being to return and share her findings.

### The Stimuli

The immediate stimulation for this project was Stavanger2008’s well-marketed European Capital of Culture motto as a self proclaimed “Open Port”. The motto itself has many connotations and references, not least that such an announcement and invitation to the world, includes a somewhat grand presumption that Stavanger has something worthwhile to show. When Stavanger declared itself an open port, Sundt-Hansen declared, “I’m leaving!”

### The Technique

Tove Sundt-Hansen then devised a compass oriented project that she describes as ostrich like. She travelled from Stavanger to the South (Denmark), then North (to Svalbard), then East (to Finland) and finally West (to Iceland) – and arrived at each destination with a small bag stuffed with art equipment. Once on the ground, the artist lifted her head out of the sand and viewed the full 360 degree experience of her new environment. Primarily, Sundt-Hansen becomes an inquisitive gatherer: she actively draws in and investigates the sensory stimuli available at each visited place. This process is a wholehearted search into the state of “being there”. A search using the senses as much the mind; it is a sponge-like gathering of stimuli.

From her four destinations, Tove Sundt-Hansen has

produced four series of abstract paintings. Each series has between six to nine smaller spontaneous works done ‘in situ’, followed by one large studio painting that both expands and encapsulates elements of the smaller studies.

### The Paintings

Simply stated, there are three basic tendencies in modern abstract art: **1.** The reduction of natural appearances to radically simplified forms (*Barbara Hepworth GB 1903-1975*) **2.** Constructions of art from non-representational forms (*Piet Mondrian NL 1872-1944*) **3.** Spontaneous free expression (*Jackson Pollock USA 1912-56 & Helen Frankenthaler USA b.1928*).

Tove Sundt-Hansen’s travel paintings all have a common compositional and colouristic basis; they are an appealing mixture of tendencies 1 and 3. This artist intuitively extracts from the light, lines, colours and textures of the natural environment that she visits. These extracts are then rendered with spontaneity and freedom: to express, in paint, the physical and psychological content of her visit.

Nordic painters have a traditional strength when painting Landscape, often combining an acute physical response to the subject and using varying degrees of Modernist abstraction (from August Strindberg to Per Kirkeby). Talking in her studio, Sundt-Hansen focuses upon her own physical responses to the various places she has visited. It is therefore a good idea to bear these physical impressions in mind when looking at the paintings: – Skagen’s southern light is soft, yet penetrating; she describes the physical borders between solid and transparent as indistinct, as if there was “silver in the air”. The sand, sea-life and plants all have a distinct sound, colour and rhythm. – Svalbard’s northern landscape is unavoidable. It is physically so immense and powerful that the artist uses the metaphor of “tonus” (Latin) – the degree of muscular tightening/relaxation when singing a note. The unpolluted air is clean and clear, leading to purity on both a macro and microscopic level.

– Finland is endless forest going east to the Russian border; rows of thin upright tree growth that are not claustrophobic. Rather the tree is the physical presence of life, hope and survival. Valamo is a religious cloister residence with a stillness that creates peace in one’s body and thoughts.

— Iceland’s volcanic greyness is a snow covered, wild and water dominated landscape. The harsh elements of water, extreme temperature, wind, stone, light and dark create a mystical and powerful cocktail of sensory experiences.

If we look specifically at the Skagen series, all the small works have intense colouration and the dominance of

primary colours produces energy. These vibrant colours represent both the energy of the artist in this landscape, and the vitality of nature itself. Energy is also mirrored by the dynamic application of paint; bold brushstrokes are emphasised by the dripping of colours across the canvas. Blues and yellows are abundant in the small paintings the immediacy of water, sand and brightly coloured wildlife permeates this abstract art. These small Skagen paintings are intuitive painterly responses to the immediate sensory responses of the vibrantly light landscapes. However the single large painting completed after the journey, back in her Stavanger studio, is a more considered work. *Front* is thus a merging and blending of the original intuitive smaller works. Darker elements emerge and glowing red and orange tones dominate this retrospective painting; it is more monumental and contemplative. *Front* contains reflection and contemplation rather than just immediate spontaneous intuition. In fact all the large retrospective studio paintings remind me of Wordsworth’s definition of poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: *it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity*. Sundt-Hansen recollects her travels in the tranquillity of her Stavanger studio.

In contrast to the dynamism of Skagen’s light and landscape, vertical and horizontal lines of composition dominate the Finland series of small paintings. As was seen in George Seurat’s Pointillism at the end of the nineteenth century, the landscape becomes immobile and tranquil when dominated by horizontal and vertical lines. The windows of the Helsinki airport bus amused Sundt-Hansen. Lines were imprinted in the glass; it was as if one was being transported to prison! Yet these lines continued throughout her stay - the endless forests and roads/paths of travel - all dissected the landscape. This landscape was a strong contrast to the decorative and golden flurries of the religious icon paintings at her cloister residency. What is surprising about the Finnish series is the emergence of so much dynamism and colour in the final large studio piece - *Akustisk*. It is as if, in retrospect, the total experience of this trip was dynamic and colour filled. The straight lines are dismissed, and sensual pink bursts of energy come forward to the surface of the painting. Is it the human presence of Valamo Cloister that eventually dominated the tree-lined landscape of Finland for Sundt-Hansen?

In all of the series, the small paintings have an element of automatism, similar to Surrealist automatic drawing techniques; they have uncontrolled irrational immediacy. In contrast to this, the large final paintings are the result of rumination in the studio. The small works thus melt into each other to form something new, like the components of a collage. The resulting final painting phrases itself as a surrogate for the actual experience of the traveller.

No travel experience can be re-captured; rather Sundt-Hansen creates a new world out of the chaos of a collection of memories. Indeed, each of the four large paintings is a memoir, of a kind. Of the final four memoirs – *Front*; *Tonus*; *Akustisk* and *Moment* – it is *Moment* from Iceland that is the most dissimilar of the paintings. The harsh and dark lines of the volcano landscape added to the swirling mists and blinding snowstorms, have all clearly imprinted themselves upon this abstract memoir. This is a sinister and mystical picture, contrasting beautifully with the positive energy and glowing colours of its three colleagues from Denmark, Svalbard and Finland.

### Conclusion – Accept oneself and move on

There are few works of art abstract or figurative, without an empirical core, a sense that the mind is working on raw material that exists in the world at large. Painting is specific engagement, not a general seduction. The advertising industry’s infinity of blue skies and uncluttered exotic beaches are shallow representations of a world we never experience; images as seductive as the thousands of digital photographs we collect on our computers and never print out. Tove Sundt-Hansen’s methods show that painting still has an unchallenged uniqueness and immediacy not normally associated with the traveller’s quest. The immediacy of her ‘in situ’ paintings can be criticized for their sketch-like appearance; thinly painted and lacking painterly content. But the nature of this project has dictated that the small paintings are indeed a collection of sketches. Subsequently they have been developed into a large studio memoir, and then exhibited as a complete documentation of the process.

The anti-climax experienced by travellers is often caused by the baggage that we take with us, i.e. ourselves. We travel with all the worries that exist in our everyday habit strewn lives. It is naive to think that we can rid ourselves of this psychological baggage simply because we swim in a thermal geyser, or hike into a Finnish forest. Sundt-Hansen has the following advice for travellers; never arrive with pre-conceived ideas of destination and one’s own reactions. One should be more an open-minded gatherer than a focused hunter. Rather than experiencing the foreign with focused sight, better to turn all 360 degrees and indulge one’s senses in simply ‘being there’.

In conversation about her travels, this artist promotes and embodies a balance of focused hunting and passive contemplation and acceptance. When travelling, she actively works to gather and accept stimuli; rather than immediately wishing to change or modify or prematurely interpret foreign experiences. Her method is an open gathering of authentic raw material, rather than a specific hunt. Sundt-Hansen is highly tuned into her own existence as a curious traveller, and she takes as little baggage as possible.



Front 115 x 145 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



Strå 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



Liten 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl

Omfavnet av Skagerrak og Kattegat. Kjent kunstnerfelleskap mot slutten av 1800-tallet. Klitgården Refugium – opprinnelig kongelig sommerresidens. I dag et arbeidssted for kunstnere og forskere. Herlig å kunne gå barbeint til atelieret.

Surrounded by the Skagerrak and Kattegat. Renowned artists' colony at the end of the 19th century. Klitgaarden Refugium was originally a royal summer residence. Today it is a workplace for artists and researchers. To be able to walk barefoot to the studio is wonderful.

*Embrassé par le Skagerrak et le Kattegat. Célèbre, fiévreuse communauté d'artistes pendant quelques années de fin du XIXe siècle. Klitgaarden Refugium, à l'origine résidence royale d'été, offre aujourd'hui un lieu de travail aux artistes et chercheurs. Quel plaisir de pouvoir se rendre pieds-nus à l'atelier.*



**SKAGEN Danmark**



Tonus 115x 145 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



Essens I 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



Essens II 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl

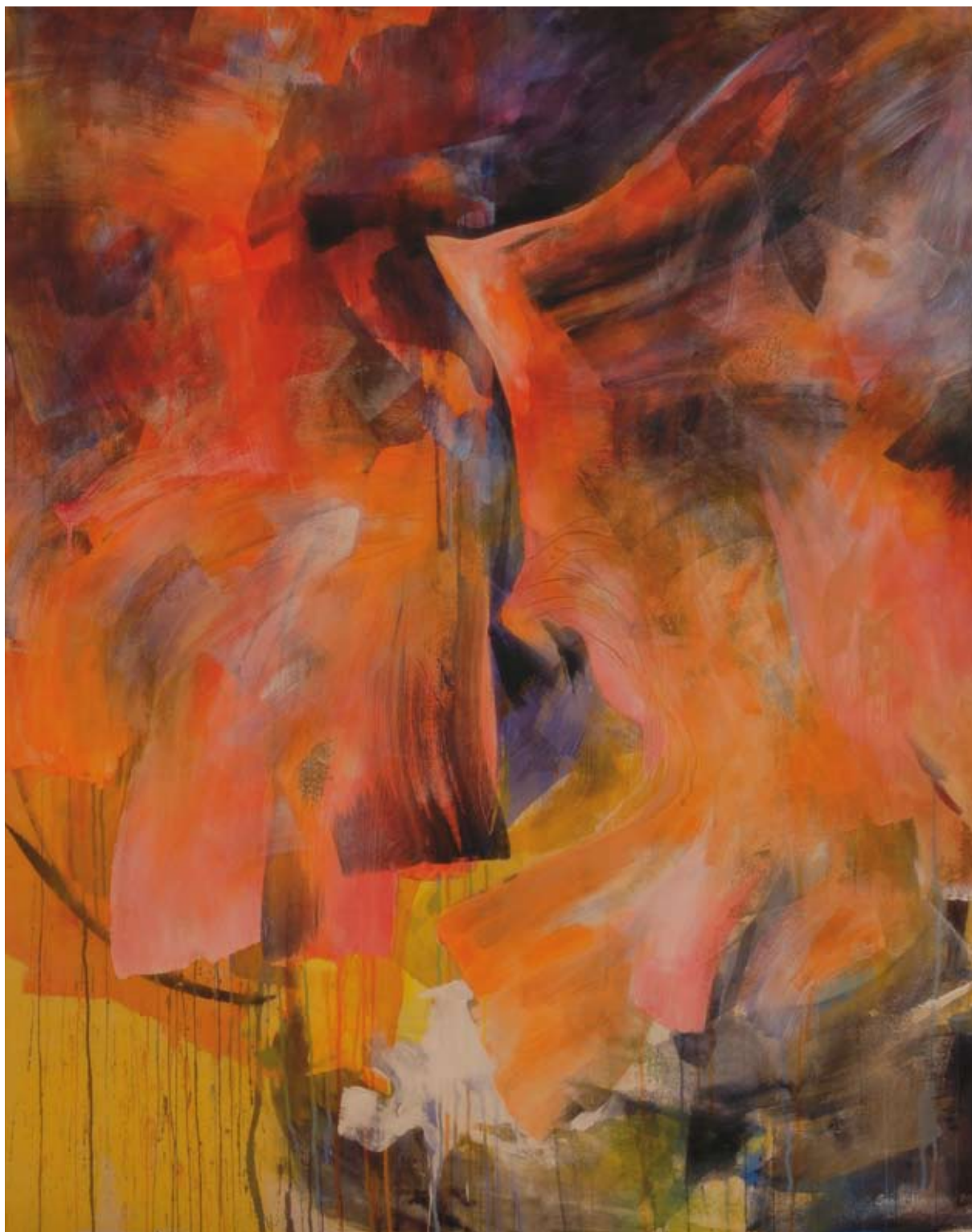
Europas nordligste bosetning. Et radiostille område. Plassert i Kongsfjorden på Spitsbergen med en distanse fra Nordpolen på 1231 km. Kings Bay AS eier og driver et moderne internasjonalt sentrum for arktisk forskning og miljøovervåkning. All ferdsel utenom bebyggelse krever at en bærer rifle, i tilfelle isbjørn.

The northernmost permanent settlement in Europe. An area without radio reception. Located in the Kongsfjord bay in Spitzbergen, 1231 km from the North Pole. Kings Bay AS owns and administers a modern international centre for Arctic research and monitoring the environment. All movements beyond the built-up area require taking a rifle in case of polar bears.

*Habitation la plus septentrionale de l'Europe. Région sans radoréception. Située dans le Kongsfjord au Spitzberg, à 1231 km du Pôle Nord. La société minière Kings Bay AS gère un centre international moderne de recherches arctiques et de surveillance de l'environnement. Pour tout passage au-delà de l'agglomération il faut être muni d'un fusil, en cas de rencontre imprévue avec un ours polaire.*



**NY-ÅLESUND Svalbard**



**Akustisk** 115 x 145 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



**Skog** 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



**Observasjon** 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl

Det viktigste senteret for ortodoks kultur i Finland. Et lite og aktivt kirkesamfunn drevet av munkar. Frivillige arbeidere er velkomne. Mangesidig opplæring og kurstilbud. Egen konservatorisk avdeling for ikoner. Over 160 000 besøkende på årsbasis. Klokkene 22.00 går lyset på området, stillheten kan synke inn.

Finlands most important centre of Orthodox culture. A small active religious community served by monks. Volunteers are welcome. A varied selection of training and courses offered. A separate department for the conservation of icons. More than 160,000 visitors annually. Lights are turned off at ten pm and stillness sinks in.

*Centre principal de la civilisation orthodoxe en Finlande. Une communauté religieuse modeste mais active administrée par des moines. Les bénévoles sont les bienvenus. On propose une sélection variée de formation et de cours, et le centre comprend une section spéciale pour la conservation des icônes. Dans l'année, on reçoit plus de 160 000 visiteurs. A 22h00, les lumières sont éteintes et l'on peut se laisser envahir par le silence.*



**VALAMO Finland**



**Moment** 120 x 145 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



**Situasjon** 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl



**Konsept** 36 x 46 cm. Teknikk: Akryl

**Hafnarfjörður, en forstad til Reykjavik som i år feirer 100 år. Plassert i lavabeltet. Kjent for tilstedeværelse av alver og andre mystiske vesener. Hafnarborg, et etablert kunst- og kultursenter. Uendelige variasjoner innen svømming og bad, ute eller inne med temperatur 35 grader pluss. Nydelig fersk fisk.**

Hafnarfjörður, a suburb of Reykjavik which this year celebrates 100 years since its foundation. Located in the lava belt. Known as an area inhabited by the elves and other supernatural beings. Hafnarborg is an established center of culture and the arts. Endless opportunities for bathing and swimming outdoors and indoors with temperatures above 35 degrees C. Superb fresh fish.

*Hafnarfjörður, une banlieue de Reykjavik qui fête cette année son centenaire. Situé dans la zone de lave, l'endroit est connu pour abriter elfes et autres génies mystiques. Hafnarborg est un centre bien réputé d'art et de culture. Un nombre infini de possibilités de natation et de bains, à l'intérieur ou en plein air, où la température de l'eau dépasse facilement 35. Un superbe poisson frais.*



**HAFNARFJÖRDUR Island**

Un havre - un port. Un port ouvert.  
Que signifient pour moi les mots Open Port?  
La marée monte et descend.  
Je m'en vais, emportant mes toiles tout montées,  
mes papiers, mes couleurs.  
Sud, nord, est et ouest.  
– Revenir et partager.

Mes voyages m'amènent à Skagen, au Svalbard, en  
Finlande et en Islande.  
Pleine d'étonnement, d'enthousiasme, d'ouverture d'esprit  
et de zèle, j'absorbe les informations, je peins et dessine.  
Par l'intuition et par les sens.  
Mes points de contact sont les mains et le corps.

Chaque tableau contient un élément d'observation.  
Une perception. Une sensation. Une expérience.  
Un brin de connaissance.

Tout format pose des défis. C'est la première fois que je  
travaille en petit format ajusté à ma petite valise rouge.  
Entre les voyages je travaille chez moi dans le grand  
format. Les grandes toiles n'ont pas de référence  
immédiate aux petites.  
Il s'agit de niveaux de recherche différents.

L'art, la science, la nature. L'essence de mes voyages,  
c'est ce que je suis capable d'apprendre et de ramener  
chez moi. Mon intention est travailler à partir du coeur,  
pensant qu'il en sortira quelque chose d'expressif.  
Le langage de l'art a la faculté d'ouvrir des portes et des  
espaces chez autrui.  
L'art est capable de toucher, d'apporter de l'entendement,  
des expériences, des associations.

L'art est magique.

## SKAGEN Danemark

Un trésor.  
Je suis ravie.  
La lumière, le doux brasillage de la mer.  
Je suis poussée par les transparences.  
Couche sur couche de lumière mêlée d'obscurité.  
Une infinité de sable et de galets dorés.  
Fleurs d'été et un petit vent doux.

## NY-ÅLESUND Svalbard

La dominance de ce paysage est écrasant.  
Des dimensions et des couleurs jamais vues.  
Océan et glace.  
Devant moi, je vois flotter de grands fragments de glace  
bleue, alors que le glacier est d'un vert froid tirant sur le bleu.

Les dernières traces de l'été arctique avant l'arrivée de  
l'hiver et de la nuit polaire.

Les couleurs du ciel s'étendent du rose cristallin léger  
au bleu clair intense.  
Des couleurs précises, un silence unique.

La rencontre avec les chercheurs est suggestive et  
éducative. Ce qu'ils font, comment ils travaillent.  
Le respect de la vie et du paysage.

## VALAMO Finlande

Au cloître, le calme s'empare de l'esprit et de la pensée.  
La vie des moines, les heures canoniales, le silence  
forment un contraste intense aux foules qui affluent aux  
heures d'ouverture.  
J'apprends les secrets de la peinture d'icônes et des  
techniques de la dorure.

Le paysage, ce sont des arbres et encore des arbres,  
s'étendant à l'infini, s'élançant, tout droits.  
La forêt est mystique, aux nuances grises, brunes, vertes  
et bleues.  
Des couleurs de terre magnifiques.

## HAFNARFJÖRDUR Islande

Coups de vent, tempêtes. Visibilité ne dépassant pas  
dix mètres.  
C'est à vous donner le mal de mer.  
Chaque fois que je me destine à explorer le paysage,  
il se met à neiger.

Chaleur, froideur, vent, eau et roche, si magique,  
si sauvage.  
Je sens les contrastes, le lieu où se rencontrent  
des réalités incomparables.  
L'Islande, libre et bienveillante.  
Crue et raffinée.

## Tove Sundt-Hansen

Studerte ved Kunstakademiet i Oslo.  
Oppdrag varierer mellom maleri, tegning, portretter, illustrasjon, scenografi og teaterkostymer.

### Utdannelse

Statens Kunstakademi, Oslo 1980 – 1985

### Separate utstillinger 2003-2008

Galleri Amare, Stavanger 2008  
Skiens Kunstforening 2006  
Oljedirektoratet, Stavanger 2006 / 2003

### Kollektive utstillinger

Tungenes Fyr, Randaberg 2005

### Oppdrag

Rosa Lyseblå Teater, DKS og Rikskonsertene 2007  
Hupsjh! Teater, Gladmatfestivalen i Stavanger 2005  
Et ord er et ord Lærebok, Møller Kompetansesenter 2003

Fullstendig oversikt på [sundthansen.no](http://sundthansen.no)

### Takk til:

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Alle kjente og kjære som har støttet meg i prosessen: MED KOFFERT

Foto: Guro Waksvik  
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Trykk: Spesialtrykk

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**Tove Sundt-Hansen / Stavanger 2008**