



Butler/Lindgård, Tits N Ass. Photo Joen Bergenrud.

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Butler/Lindgård *Tits N Ass*

BODY HAIR, JOYFUL BREASTS, and translucent period stains—Wanås Konst’s spring season kicked off with the exhibition *Tits N Ass* with Malmö-based design studio Butler/Lindgård. The exhibition was a feminist observation of which bodies are seen and occupy space in the public sphere and presented existing and new prints, textiles, and sketches by textile designers Hanna Butler and Karin Olu Lindgård. Even after the exhibition period ended, the artists’ colors and patterns continue to be seen in the newly-decorated lounge located in the Art Gallery. The exhibition was the third in Wanås Konst’s series featuring artists active in the region.

We meet the duo in a conversation about textiles, bodies, and creativity. The idea for the project *Tits N Ass* clicked already in 2015, with inspiration from their own experiences. They were both nursing mothers of three and felt that the acceptance of nursing in public spaces had diminished in comparison to a few years earlier.

“Suddenly, there were nursing rooms where mothers were expected to nurse, which in turn created the feeling that it was an infraction to nurse anywhere else. The whole thing culminated in Hanna being thrown out of a museum by security guards because she nursed there. *Tits N Ass* is about the representation of bodies in the public sphere—which bodies and bodily actions are shown, and which are hidden. From that set of questions, we have taken a sort of guerilla perspective regarding the representation of bodies, for example in the form of joyful breasts, body hair, translucent period stains or direct imprints of bodies in motion. It is honest, unstylized, unsexualized, and humorous,” as Butler/Lindgård describe.

The Butler/Lindgård collaboration first began when they met as students of textile design at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts’ School of Design in Copenhagen. They have a shared interest in the qualities of and possibilities provided by the material. Mass production however, has never appealed to the duo. As much as possible, they make their own products in their studio in Malmö.

“We find textile as a medium speaks to us in its tactility, materiality, and the possibility of increasing in scale. If you just have a little hubris, the medium of textiles is fantastic because you can create a work that is as big as you want. We’ve actively taken a position against trends and refuse to encourage purchases on

these grounds. We prefer long-term, sustainable choices and want those who buy our products to love and care for them for life.”

They collaborate closely through the entire design process, from the drawing table to the print shop to the finished piece. In the exhibition at Wanås Konst, the sketch and process materials are presented so that visitors can follow the entire path from idea to product.

“We joke around and laugh a lot during the design process, and we think this disarming joy can be felt in the resulting work. Initially, everything happens by hand, close to the materials. Sometimes we sketch on the same paper or finish a work the other of us started, like the collaborative drawing games we played as children. Sometimes, we make things difficult by playing with scale and materials. In the beginning of every project, we usually work against a deadline, trying to create as many sketches as possible in a short period of time. Quantity instead of quality is a good starting point if you appreciate spontaneous, warped expression, as we do. There’s no time for a critical gaze; it has to wait until later.”

For the exhibition, they used their own bodies as sketching tools. During a residency in Skofabriken, Wanås Konst’s studio in Knislinge, they worked with a method they call the “dance sketch.” In collaboration with choreographer Emma Ribbing, they improvised a phrase, a pattern of movements that in turn would create patterns on a surface. Once in place and with their bodies covered in paint, the duo continued to develop the short choreographed phrase until the expression gained the feeling of speed and motion. The result is abstract patterns on large pieces of paper, which can then be used in the studio and transformed into a foundation for future textile products.

“When we work with hand sketches, it is our brain’s interpretations of different bodies that can be seen in the patterns, but we wanted to find new ways of creating representations of bodies with textiles, ways that didn’t necessarily give the brain priority when it came to interpreting, but instead was about direct impressions of bodies.” – **Malin Gustavsson**

In conjunction with the exhibition, Wanås Konst Lounge is opening in the Art Gallery, a space that also functions as a place to get coffee outside the open hours of Wanås Konst Restaurant. The decor has been designed in dialogue with Butler/Lindgård, and their colors and patterns spill over on walls and furniture.

HANNA BUTLER (b 1978) and **KARIN OLU LINDGÅRD** (b 1982) are the founders of Malmö-based design studio Butler/Lindgård. Their textile design originated in everyday observations that combine the hand-made and exclusive with humor and visionary messages. In the spring of 2019, they presented the exhibition *Tits N Ass* at Wanås Konst Art Gallery—a feminist observation of which bodies and norms occupy public spaces. Butler and Lindgård were both trained at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts’ School of Design in Copenhagen. They have previously exhibited at such venues as the Röhsska Museum of Craft and Design in Gothenburg (2011), Landskrona konsthall (2016), and, in the last year, at Trelleborg Museum, Form Design Center in Malmö, Mint Gallery in London, and the Embassy of Sweden in Tokyo.

WHERE ARE YOU A LOCAL?

Hanna “I feel at home in Malmö, where my children were born and raised and where I became an adult. Above all, I feel at home in the neighborhoods I move around in on a daily basis: Kirseberg, around Värnhem, where we have our studio and our fantastic workshop. The workshop is, in some way, a second home, a sanctuary. I love the possibilities that exist there. I also feel at home in my collaboration with Karin, who, aside from my children, is the most important and most fun person in my life.”

Karin “After having watched Taiye Selasi’s TED Talk, I feel equally moved and confused. I love the idea of being able to create your own residence, depending more on feeling than geography! I would say that I feel at home in Malmö, where my immediate family lives, where I was born and raised and still live today. But not necessarily all of Malmö. I experience the city as a bit difficult to love, and actually only really feel at home in the area around Möllevångstorget where I live, along Östra Förstadsgatan where we have our studio and workshop, and in the magical backyard of Malmö konsthall.”

Treasures of Östra Göinge

Ask for the tourist folder at the entrance and don’t miss the exhibition about the stone industry and the world-famous black granite!



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