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Among the reach offer of topics encompassed in the fifth paper issue of ARTEMORBIDA, we can boast the participation of JOHN RAUSTEIN.

Here is a short interview to give you a taste of what you will find in our magazine.



Ph. credit Gustavberg Konsthall

Does the concept of atmosphere, I have used as a critical concept to introduce your work, appeal to you?

Yes, absolutely! I love the idea of entering a kind of atmosphere, enter into something else: another state of mind, remembering something. My art is all around the perceiver, everywhere; you are immersed into it.

What is the role of the senses in perceiving your works?

It is about visual tactility. I want the viewers to know how it feels to touch the work and its surface without touching it. By recalling the experience, we know precisely how materials feel. Textile surrounds us; it is a part of our everyday life, from the start to the end of life. Even if we do not notice it, we can feel it, and we know it. It is a very common experience that everybody has. This is what I do want to be remembered: something that you did not realise you forgot.

Speaking about memories, what is the most effective sense in triggering your memories?

I think the smell is the most important. The smell is like setting me back in time. Immediately! I'm at my grandmother's kitchen, and I'm in my grandfather's workshop. I can feel the tablecloth's embroideries in my fingers in my grandmother's house when I smell.



Ph. credit John Raustein

How would you describe the smell of your artworks?

The cotton has a distinct scent when you open a new roll, for example. It's essential for me that all the materials I use didn't have a life before. I want to create my stories with new materials. What I'm interested in is to recreate the feeling of smell and visualise it in the material.

Your work is autobiographic and based on communication and the viewer response to it. What do you want to convey?

It is not so crucial for you, as a viewer, to perceive the same story that I want to tell. The important thing is that my work tells you something.

It's inspiring for me to personally communicate with the viewers; have little meetings and conversations add new layers to the artwork. I really enjoy it. And especially when my work can open up a really personal conversation, triggering stories and memories.

The concept of time is fundamental in your work. How do you formally visualise time and labour?

Usually, it's a repetition of small pieces sewn together. That's the most effective visualisation of time. When I sew together five squares composed of five-by-five cm small pieces and repeat this module, it becomes enormous. When I lift it, then the time becomes really visible! Everybody understands that cutting and stitching is involved. And when it's like ten times ten meters, well, it's really effective!

There is a tremendous amount of labour involved in textiles that is not visible; it is not appreciated. This kind of work is invisible in our lives; we don't have time to do it. If we are artists, then we have time.



Ph. credit John Raustein

Your work expresses time through trilogies. What are the next steps?

I'm currently working on my third trilogy. Part one will display in Lofoten. And then the second one at Nitja art center in Lillestrøm, outside Oslo. And the third one; well, I'm not allowed to tell yet. It's a secret. It will be in the autumn of next year.

In your Instagram profile, I can see many orange shapes. Are those going to be part of your third trilogy?

Yes, that's part one. It will be exhibited in Lofoten at Nordnorsk kunstnersenter . In November this year, it will be on Saturday, the 6th of November.

It is beautiful up North; I hadn't been there before, last summer it was my first time, and I was totally in love. The bright colours are really unique. This work is more about the colours. It's about the sense of colours and what colours do with your memories.

Well, John, thank you so much for this journey into textiles and the smell of colours.