



Signe's Cabinet of Curiosities

Master Report
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Contents

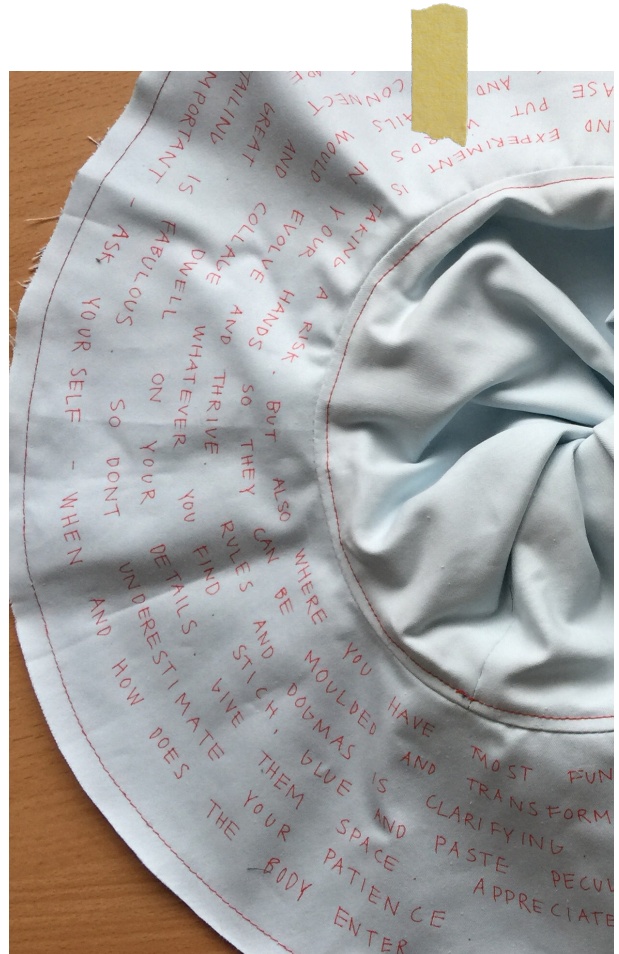
Manifest	3
How it all started	4
Introduction and Motivation	5
Defining the Concept of Treasures and Where to Find Them?	6
Insights from the Theory of Phenomenology	9
Design Context	10
Methods, Design and Form Considerations	13
Impact – About Keeping, Preserving and Treasuring	22
Result	25
References	27
Appendix 1	28
Appendix 2	31

Manifest

Starting my graduate project, I stumbled over my manifest from the first year of my Master and I think it is a significant way to start this program...

A grand experiment is taking a risk. But also where you have the most fun. Written words always tend to get you started. So please put words in your hands so they can be moulded and transformed. This could create a possibility to build a universe. Where shapes and details would evolve and thrive. Rules and dogmas are clarifying. And also remember to breathe. If possible collect, connect and collage whatever you find. Stich, glue and paste peculiar elements together. Let your hands lead and trust them. Remember awkward colours are great. Dwell on your details. Give them space. Appreciate the strength of the word beautiful. And don't forget to shave your legs. Small scale repetitions in detailing are fabulous. So don't underestimate your patience.

At last, and this might be quite important - ask yourself - when and how does the body enter the picture?



Manifest Hat

How it All Started... November 2019

I have figured out that frustrations can actually be walked away... something I hadn't been able to quite believe. But as this story will shed light on, walking without a certain direction can actually both shake of frustration and show you a path.

It was a freezing afternoon in late November and I was for sure feeling blue. I was so frustrated over the fact that I still hadn't been able to determinate what my graduate project should focus on.

I decided to test the above mentioned theory... so I started walking... More likely wandering obviously with Phil Collins emotional echo in my ears. After nine replays of "In The Air Tonight", I found my self starring directly into the smooth black granite surface of The Black Diamond also known as The Royal Danish Library. I have never particularly liked that building. I find it quite uninviting actually and the slanting façade makes it sort of intrusive at the same time. But I was freezing so I went in.

Standing in the somewhat dreadful foyer I noticed a poster with the title "Abramovic Method for Treasures". I have always had a thing for Marina Abramovic and her intimate, insistent and soul-stirring performances so my curiosity was aroused. I went to the counter and ask for more information. A polite lady with salt and pepper hair looked at her watch and said "You are just on time the performance is about to begin". She asked for my phone and locked it away in a little box, then she handed me a key and pair of headphones with an attached iPod devise. I was told to go to the second floor and use the key to lock my shoes into another box.

With the headphones on and Marina Abramovic's alluring voice in my ears I entered a dimed-lit room. The wall-to-wall carpets under my feet made the room almost inviting. Wooden chairs and beds where bolted to the walls and framed the squared room. Centred in the room a huge round glass cage took up space. The dimed light made it just possible for the eyes to explore the contents of the glass cage. Abramovic's voice introduced "Abramovic' Method for Treasures". I was about to explore Abramovic's subjective selection of treasures from the Library both visually and through sound.

I laid down on one of the wooden beds. The sound devise took me on a journey through history by presenting readings from the realms of literature, science and philosophy. I guess my blue mood that particularly day, made it obvious that I wasn't up for listening to one and a half hour of Gregory of Tours seventh-century - History of the Franks. So I chose a treasure more appetizing for my mood - Love letters between Suzanne Brøgger and Philippe Baude...

One and half hour later a bell rang and it was time to leave both the physical room and the enticing and intimate love correspondence. I am not quite sure if I dosed off somewhere in the middle of a heated declaration of love and lust... But I felt different when I left that room. I was not quite sure if it was Abramovic's doings or Susanne Brøggers words but there was something highly poignant about the experience.

Putting my shoes back on I asked myself... What is this thing about treasures?

Introduction and Motivation

Experiencing Marina Abramovic's exhibition stirred something inside of me. First of all, there was this idea of subjective selecting treasures. Secondly there was something about creating an experience that enhanced the extraordinary and memorable about these treasures. Even though the books were displayed behind glass the writings came to life in the room and the experience of the treasures felt present and intimate. Abramovic's exhibition was enticing because you as a participator both got to appreciate the books as national treasures as well as to understand the magic and importance of the content of these objects. As Abramovic states: "*Books are the recorded memory of our civilization. These objects possess a special energy, a part of that energy comes from what is inside them*" (Abramovic 2017:19).

Leaving the library, I started to wonder how to define a treasure? Can an object as Marina Abramovic states possess a special energy also if it is not necessarily a book? Asking myself these questions it dawned on me that there is something quite mysterious about treasures. Especially the personal ones. What would I categorize as my own personal and private treasures? What would other people define as their most precious treasures? It surprised me that I had no clue what people around me would choose, even with people I knew well, I would still be in doubt. Treasures can be private. I had a desire to investigate this mysterious, secretive and sort of intimate atmosphere around the concept of treasures: What is their story, do they visualize a special memory, are they magic or just aesthetic?

This project explores the overall concept of treasures and their stories. Based on perspectives of phenomenology the project seeks to explore how I can work with textile expressions as a media for creating sensuous impression and a haptic experience for the viewer. For me textiles work as a confidential conversation partner in the process of creating narratives within surface and shape. Textiles allure me because of their intimate character. Precisely this intimate character of the textiles as a media works well with this mysterious, secretive and sort of private atmosphere around the concept of treasures.

Based on the overall conceptualization of Abramovic's Method for Treasures this project also looks into how we present objects of cultural heritage in museums and the concept of cabinets of curiosities. This thematic point of view contributes with perspectives on how objects are understood and categorized.

For me the feeling of living in the world of today everything is very much focused on the new, its all about getting the latest edition, the newest collection, its all about adding or replacing. I have a feeling of wanting to cherish the things that are irreplaceable. The project can be seen as a homage to the concept of keeping, preserving and treasuring. The point is to capture and preserve atmospheres related to a selection of treasures and interpret them into tactile expressions and gather them in my own version of a cabinet of curiosities.

In relation to the introduction and motivation I have defined the following problem formulation:
This project takes shape as a study of the concept of treasures. With a starting point in a selection of personal treasures this project will explore how treasures, their stories and the atmosphere around them can be interpreted into textile and tactile silhouettes that attempts to create a haptic experience for the viewer.

Defining the Concept of Treasures and Where to Find Them?

What is a Treasure?

The etymological understanding of treasure as a noun is: “very valuable things, usually in form of a store of precious metals or gems. From c. 1200 recorded as a general sense of “anything valued”. As a transitive verb something to “keep carefully”(Lexico 2019).

When I think about the word treasure my immediate thought is that a treasure is something highly appreciated, something that after it is found or come in possession - never should be lost. In the beginning of the project I wanted to clarify why exactly I find treasures so alluring. From the beginning of my research I found my self in this utterly mysterious atmosphere that was quite compelling and spell binding. It is as if the concept of treasures holds a sense of something magical and secretive. My hunt for treasures has led me on different paths; I have dwelled on my own personal treasures and visited museums that hold collections of national and cultural treasures. Finally, I have imposed people in my broad circle of acquaintances and given them the task of describing their own favorite treasure. These steps have all been part of my method for understanding treasures.

The personal treasures I have studied have all had one thing in common – they have a story to tell, not necessarily a long and complicated story but doubtlessly a unique and extraordinary one. What makes a personal treasure a treasure can be anything from its aesthetic value, the magic power it holds, the memory it recalls or the significance of from whom or how it came into possession.

Where are Treasures Kept?

In the beginning of my hunt for treasures I visited one of Copenhagen’s biggest treasure chests - the National Museum of Denmark. This is a place for treasures of all sorts, times and parts of the world. The museum also holds the Royal Cabinet of Treasures. King Frederik the third of Denmark was an eager collector of spectacular curiosities and he collected objects from all over the world. Rare antiquities, stuffed animals, coins and medals, or for instance a fairy-tale-like miniature castle made of ivory (The National Museum of Denmark 2019).

The Royal Cabinet of Treasures is just one example of the renaissance cabinets of curiosities also known as a *Kunstkammer* or *Wunderkammer*. The cabinets of curiosities can be understood as precursors to the museums as we know them today (Mordhorst 2009:18). In contrary to how museums today exhibit objects the cabinets of curiosities had a more chaotic appearance. The exhibited objects were not categorized within a modern terminology or defined by subject area. Objects in the early cabinets of curiosities was first of all collected and exhibited because of the interesting stories they could tell or the value of the materials they were made of (Dupré 2018:19). One of the most significant cabinets and actually the forerunner to the The Royal Cabinet is Museum Wormianum created by the Doctor Ole Worm in the early years of the 17th century. Like many other cabinets of curiosities Museum Wormianum were a wide-ranging collection of stuffed animals, a shoe carved in cherrystone, a cup made of rhino horn, dried plants and minerals (Mordhorst 2009:31). Many of these objects has later been seen as odd or peculiar and for that reason been discarded as worthless and fake within the scientific field.

What was special about Ole Worm was that he in his analysis of the objects almost exclusively focused on the materials the objects were made of.

It can be argued that this hands-on approach to examine the objects also promoted a general idea of knowledge acquisition based on a more sensory experience of the objects (Dupré 2018:19). He experimented with the objects; he pulverized them and even tasted them (Benarroch 2009). What also makes the cabinets of curiosities different from museums today is that the owner had full control of what would be presented as the wonders of the world. In that sense cabinets of curiosities can also be understood as a micro cosmos or a museum of personal memories.

Treasures travel through time

In connection to my findings about personal treasures an overall assumption is that there can be countless of different reasons why a specific object qualifies as a treasure. In relation to museums and what we qualify as a national treasure time plays a central part. As mentioned many of the objects in Museum Wormianum was discarded as worthless later in time. These objects have undergone a change through time from valuable materials to sources of history, to something trivial, common or fake. What really matters are the interpretation of the object (Mordhorst 2009:32). Maybe one day much later in time the object would actually end up in a museum exhibited as something rare or as a subjective selected treasure in someone's home.



Marina Abramovic' Method for Treasures
in the Royal Danish Library





Reconstruction of Museum Wormianum and my own reseach from museums

Insights from the Theory of Phenomenology

In relation to my graduate project the phenomenological approach serves to give perspectives on how to understand the concept of a haptic experience. The following chapter will outline some of the core points of the theory.

Phenomenology and the Haptic

Edmund Husserl founded the Phenomenology as a philosophical movement. The philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty expanded Husserl's studies. Merleau-Ponty's approach to phenomenology can be used as a way of understanding how aesthetics affects and are experienced, he also used the phrase : "*how the world touches us*" (Paterson 2007:43).

In relation to Merleau-Ponty's approach to phenomenology it is relevant to get an understanding of the idea of the haptic in relation to aesthetic experiences. In the book *Senses of Touch* Mark Paterson concludes: "*It is through haptic experience that we feel engaged in the world, and through affect that the world and its objects touch us*" (Paterson 2007:64). A haptic experience can be perceived as an expression of how it feels when you are being touched and affected by tactile properties in a palpable way (Paterson 2007:43). The sense of touch is essential for the haptic experience of the world and what is in it, the optic view creates the gateway of understanding the things around us. It can be argued that we perceive the world through touch, for instance in understanding what a warm tone would look like. The sense of touch creates an explanatory link to understand a visual experience. In this way the optic, the sense of touch and the haptic is deeply entwined.

Design Context

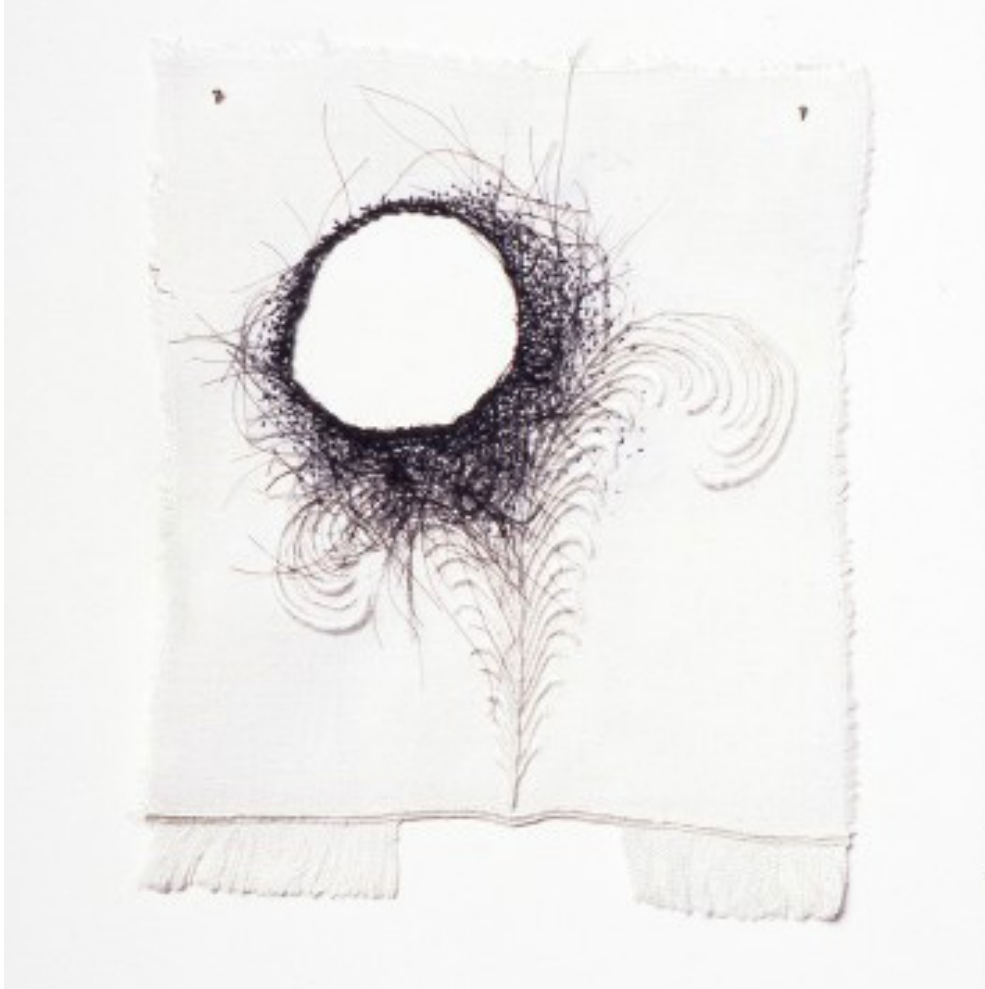
Based on my fundamental notion of wanting to create a graduation project that experiments with textile surfaces and tactile expressions I have looked to the artist Anne Wilson. She creates haptic and tangible experiences through textile art pieces. As an example she uses old table linen as a canvas, she alters the surface by stitching it open with human hair. From long distance the works could resemble a piece of paper with burn holes, but moving closer the artworks evoke a feeling of being both repellent and alluring at the same time. Even though her works don't show explicit representations of the body, the combination of the holes and the hair creates a feeling of something very bodily, familiar and intimate.

Wilson doesn't invite the viewer to physically touch the works, the touch and the haptic experience is still doubtlessly present. The holes and the hand stitching gives the works a sense of touch, they appeal to our tactile imagination and this underlines the sensitivity and intimacy (Ferris 2001:39). The way the textiles are treated as material becomes the visual narrative.

I have used her works to understand the phenomenological perspectives within the field of textile expressions. Her way of working with altering already existing materials such as old cloths have furthermore inspired me to work with surface experiments. Another example of artists who have inspired me are the masters of covering – the artist duo Christo and Jeanne-Claude. They are famous for their extraordinary wrapping of enormous landmarks like the Reichstag in Berlin and the French bridge Pont-Neuf.

A fashion designer that has captivated me is Rei Kawakubo. Her ability to shape creations that actually both work on a body and also as sculptures is spectacular. It is remarkable the way she is working in scale and use the power of the materials by layering and patching them together. I also admire her ability to balance her shapes and silhouettes, even though her creations often are quite large in scale they always manage to not look clumsy and brassy. Her way of playing with historical references both from Asia and Western culture gives another dimensions to her designs.

In connection to the historical references I have also looked at the costume design in the TV-series "Gentleman Jack". The TV-series is based on the diaries of the landowner and diarist Anne Lister. The story is set in 1832 in Yorkshire and the grandiose silhouettes with voluminous sleeves huge skirts and endless fabric layering speaks to my aesthetics. The historical references in the costume designs have an affinity with treasures, since a part of the value of the treasures is that they often have a sense of presence of history.



Anne Wilson, Mendings no. 1 1995



Top: Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons Art of the In-Between exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Bottom: Screenshots from "Gentleman Jack"

Methods, Design and Form Considerations

The Beginning of the Project

Beyond researching on cabinets of curiosities and visiting museums I narrowed down the initial atmospheric words I connected with treasures; Something secret, something hidden, buried, mysterious, magic and reminiscent.

Since I tend to make headway with words I gave myself another assignment – to select my own treasures based on my intuitive notion and the following statement: A personal treasure is something highly appreciated and something that after it is found never should be lost again.

For each treasure I selected, I made the same exercise; Photographed it meticulously and then I used exactly one hour, and the restriction of one page to tell its story, how it looked and felt. And then I drew a portrait of it.

My treasures are:

- A gigantic porcelain Ming vase with metal staples
- A blue sapphire ring
- An imposing and energetic red and yellow clock
- A chestnut from my grand father's pocket
- A light pink dress with mended holes always covered in plastic because of the sweaty reek inherited from my grandmom.

In Appendix 1 you will find the full stories about the treasures.

To gain more insights on perceptions on treasures and inspired by an ethnographical approach I asked ten people to let me into the story about one of their own treasures. Each of them both people I knew and didn't knew received a box with a letter of instructions, a camera and a couple of sheets of paper (Appendix 2). Almost like finding my own treasure they were asked to describe, the origin and story behind the treasure, then draw it and photograph it.

I received some very diverse stories about treasures. Just to mention some of them:

A plastic figure of a mammoth found in the pocket of a second-hand coat, the last gift from a dying father, a path-in-life changing sewing machine and a magical and enchanted seashell with the power to make you pregnant. What struck me with all of them was this feeling of through words and drawings to understand why they were caring for their treasures.

The treasure stories have worked as a part of my preliminary research to understand the variety of what people treasure. After some time, I got all the analogue film processed. Seeing the photos of the treasures brought them even more to life. It was as if the photos visualized each person's affection for their treasure, arranging it, photographing it from every angle and in the treasure's natural habitat. The gathered collection of photographs had an overall story to tell I knew that I had to implement it in the project in some way.



My own personal selected treasures



Early collages and silhouette experiments

Parallel with receiving the treasure stories I worked with my own selection of treasures interpreted them into smaller collages together with the initial words connected to the concept of treasures. I worked with photos of my treasures and elements that visualized or contained an atmosphere of something hidden, covered and secretive.

These collages worked as a gathered visual starting point. In this way the collages were the basis for the first experiments on a small dummy where I tried to interpret both the physical characteristics of my treasures and the initial words connected to treasures. Working with a small dummy was a fast and easy way to test both shapes and materials. After photo documenting each round I started sketching in collages with the photo material.

The 2D collages eventually became the sketches I started to interpret into full size toiles. Working with a mix of collaging and a bit of drawing gave me a quite broad room for interpretation when I started working on the full size dummy. I experimented with different fabrics that could simulate a desired texture and volume and I tried to be quite open about letting the fabrics lead.

Grandiose Dimensions

What is quite peculiar with the majority of my own selected treasures is that they are quite large – There is something quite grandiose about them; even though the vase is 60 cm tall and made of porcelain it has travelled from owner to owner across the world in the last 50 years. The size of the red clock (55 cm tall) seems almost out of proportions in an imposing way. In the case with the sapphire ring; even though it is somewhat small it still feels quite bombastic because of the size of the stone, it is demanding your attention when it sits on your finger.

The overall form considerations have been to create expressions that underlines this feeling of something grandiose, bombastic and imposing but even though the majority of my own treasures also have an element of something secretive and hidden about them this worked well together with the general characteristics of the treasure as being something secretive, hidden and covered up.

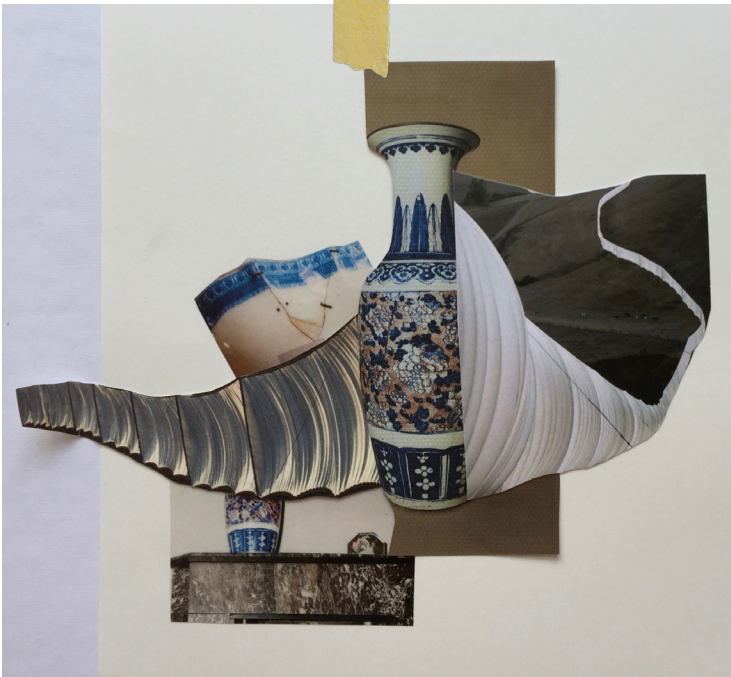
The Ming vase was for instance covered with an old cloth and piles of papers when it made it self visible for my friend's granddad. The sapphire ring had found a perfect crack on Vesterbrogade when I lost it the first time. The chestnut hid in my granddads pocket until I stole it, and my grandmas dress are spending most of the time in a plastic bag in my closet.

To emphasize this sort of secretive atmosphere, the silhouettes needed to visualize this feeling of something hidden and covered up but still alluring. Experiencing the collection my aim is that it should be almost like being on a sort of treasure hunt in my cabinet of curiosities.

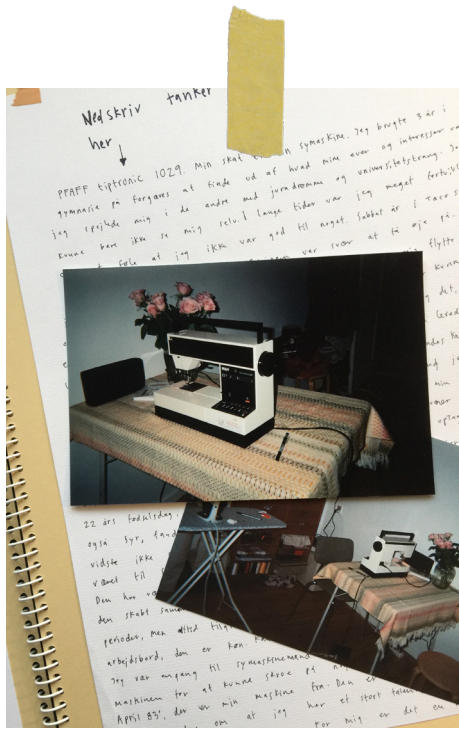
In other words, the silhouettes needed to visualize a delicate balance between the concealing and revealing.

My shaping techniques have been to work with big pieces of different types of fabrics and gathered them in layers. Both opaque and semi transparent qualities. By layering the different qualities of fabric I have created an expression that automatically creates cracks and smaller cavities in the surfaces and shapes. Gathering of large amounts of fabrics also helped underlining my treasures grandiose and bombastic characteristics. Volume has been implemented both in the body, sleeves and length of the silhouettes. As earlier mentioned I have been squinting at historical silhouettes from from "Gentleman

Jack” especially the voluminous sleeves and endless layering of fabrics. The majority of the silhouettes in “Gentleman Jack” are focused around a slim waistline and a bare neck and chest area this works as a contrast to the gigantic skirts and bulky sleeves. In my opinion it brings some balance to the silhouettes as a whole.



Preliminary Collage Experiements



Top: Photos of and writings about the 10 peoples collected treasures
Middle and Bottom: Developing of form collages

Materials and Surface Experiments

In the process of refining my toiles I similarly worked with in cooperating and experimenting with surface techniques. I played with projecting these experiments onto shapes on the dummy, this was an easy way of scaling different techniques up and down.

With a starting point in my own treasures I worked on translating the surfaces of my treasures into something textile, for instance the flower motif on the vase, the wrinkled feeling of the chestnut, the different mending techniques used both on the vase and dress.

The stories and visual appearance of the selected treasures has likewise worked as a foundation for deciding the colour scale of the collection. The colours of the treasures weren't an obvious match but in connection with Ole Worm's cabinet of curiosities and its rather chaotic appearance It made sense to try to make these rather different colours work together.

I have worked with mixing technical materials with puffy and crisp effects and more classic textures such as a light transparent silk organza. The variety of the materials has the ability to hang different from each other, some of them creating more floating and soft shapes and some adding more stiffness to the silhouettes.

A characteristic in Ole Worm's cabinet of curiosities was that it contained objects of all sorts of different materials. Inspired by that I have worked with combining materials from very different places and times, crisp silk, organdie, polyester, my grandma's old cloths and bobbin lace. The silk has a touch of something elegant, the bobbin lace and old cloth are small glimpses of history and handcraft, and the synthetic materials like plastic sequins a nylon fabrics indicate something more contemporary.

About Patching and the Reverse Side

As previous stated the layering of the materials work to create visible cavities and natural cracks in the silhouettes. I have worked with constructing different ornamentations inside these cavities also by working on the reverse side of the semi transparent materials. This approach also points towards the general curiosity in regards to how treasures are displayed in museums or cabinets of curiosities for instance behind glass or in showcases.

The tactile expressions play a central role in creating the overall haptic and alluring experience. For instance, the abstract flowers I have made inspired by the flower motif on the Ming vase. I have worked with placing them both on the reverse site and the right side of semi transparent fabric. Their fluffy light look creates a temptation to touch. You can almost feel how it would be to caress.

Another example is my technique to patch up sheets of old tablecloth and bobbin lace. Inspired by the pink crochet dress and the stapled-repaired Ming vase.

I collected all the old textiles and bobbin lace I had inherited from my grandmother. Working with them was like being in a time capsule. They are a physical proof of a time where you found the patience to create with your hands. Many of them had signs of usage; stains and tears, just like the pink dress.

I cut them into smaller pieces and worked with them as elements, pasting them together in new ways as small collages. To imitate the sort of lazy mending technique used on the pink dress I stitched the textile collages loosely and random together on a piece of transparent organdie. Again I worked with layers of semi transparent fabric to cover the textile collages. Once again the tension and duality between the

concealing and revealing was maintained. The laying effect challenges the perception of the textile surface. Viewing the surface from a distance it almost resembles parts of the stapled-repaired Ming vase.

This idea about patching old and new fabrics together has been recurrent in the process of creating the textiles for the silhouettes. The analogue photo material I received in the beginning of my process was also incorporated as small printed patches in a textile. Curious enough the colours and compositions of the very different treasures could work together.

These different takes on patching and mending is likewise relating to the idea of wanting to see the project as homage to the concept of keeping, preserving and treasuring. All the final silhouettes are characterized by neat craftsmanship – the work of my hands. Almost every silhouette has a surface created by hand, from every little patch to every embroidered stitch and cut and sown flowers.



Color scale and a selection of the fabrics from the project



Experiments with details and ornamentations, working with interpreting the flower motif and mending techniques



Top: Toile Development
Bottom: Early lineup sketching

Impact – About Keeping, Preserving and Treasuring

Initially my intention with creating my own cabinet of curiosities was that it would generate a reflection on the viewers. I had the hope that the project would start a wonder, a need to contemplate on the viewers own personal treasures – what would they pick as their treasures? I wanted the project to be an experience similar to what I had felt when I visited Marina Abramovic’s exhibition.

In a world where consumption and mass production is rapidly eating up the planets resources, I think it is quite relevant to start a reflection on the objects we treasure most. Why are they special to us, why would we never let go of them, why do we keep them safe, and why would we do our best to glue them or stitch them back together if they would brake? Treasures are unique because of the story and memory they hold – You can’t just replace them with something new. As stated in the introduction my project can be seen as homage to the concept of keeping, preserving and treasuring both in the overall concept and in some of my methods used in the design process.

As a part of the KADK initiative to help realising the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, it can be argued that the project can be connected to goal number 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production. UN states that: “Sustainable consumption and production aims at “doing more and better with less”, this also means that there is a need to educate consumers on more sustainable consumption” (UN 2019). My project is not directly about educating the consumer, what I rather want to do is to create a bit of reflection. By reflecting on the treasures that really matters to us we would maybe also start a reflection on all the objects we just consume. These thoughts were quite clear to me when I started working on my project, but one thing I remembered was that I was a bit unsure if this very personal approach was a bit too much?

And then came Covid-19.

Covid-19 and Haptic Experiences

I have chosen not to bring it up earlier in the report since the consequences of the lockdown haven’t affected my design process in any crucial way. Hours and days of this project I have experimented with things in my hands - I haven’t been dependent on special technical machinery. Also I must admit I thrive with being sort of isolated for a period of time. Locked up in my own box surrounded by my treasures.

In one part of the process I had to re-saddle though – I knew I would need helping hands if I should be able to create all of my detailing and ornamentations. My plan was to arrange that my friends should come by in groups and help me with cutting fabric flowers and embroider. I had imagined photo documenting all the different hands working together at once. Covid-19 made that idea impossible. Instead I packed boxes with small kits and instructions and delivered them all over town. I got the help I needed from a distance.



Isolated at home with my treasures

In the perspective of Covid-19 one might say that this project could have a greater impact on the viewer. All of us have in the latest months been isolated from sensing the world around us. Scientists have for instance talked about the concept of skin hunger. It could be argued that our need for haptic experiences now is much more needed. Maybe our senses actually are intensified? One thing I know I have missed is the ability to touch everything around me. In the light of Covid-19 It suddenly felt extremely wrong to have a need to touch and physically investigate surfaces or structures in the public space.

In connection to the exam I had the initial idea to build a museum like scenography and incorporate my five treasures in it, since this is not possible I aim to create a short film that will showcase them.

Before we knew we would be able to do a physical exam, I was contemplating how the experience of my project would be if everything was viewed through a screen. The ability to palpate with the eyes and explore my surfaces and detailing simply wouldn't be possible through a screen. The optic view creates sightlines for the haptic experience and by that an illusion of being able to touch. As a viewer you should feel the need to touch, examine and explore, but you should also have the possibility to do so, a screen would remove that instantly. A haptic experience calls for some kind of interaction.

The haptic element has been present from the beginning of my project to the end. During the process - through the deeply private interaction between material and the hands that touches it. And in the final result as something visual communicative in the interaction between a viewer and the final silhouettes. This also explains why the use of hand stitching has been so central. The hand stitching emphasizes physical engagement it gives the surfaces the sense of touch. It appeals to our tactile imagination and underlines in a very literal way the idea about keeping, preserving and treasuring.

As university professor Anna-Mari Raunio concludes in her article *Clothed landscapes of memories*: “*Craft-based design has every possibility of being sensitive and open to emotional negotiations. Though memories and experiences are not a matter of design the products are subtle in terms of deeply touching the emotional level of human life*” (Raunio 2007 :71) Seen from a phenomenological perspective it is the manual touch of the hand – the craftsmanship that build the base for understanding my project.



My friends working on flowers at home

Result

The final result of my project will be a collection of six silhouettes. What they all have in common is volume and grandiose dimensions and different detailing or ornamentation. In some of the creations the detailing work to create shape, in others it works to create a special surface.

Two techniques have been common in the process of crating volume firstly gathering fabric to create a ruffle effect and secondly working with a balloon shape. The balloon shape has helped to give volume from the lower edge of the silhouettes. In the process of evolving the silhouettes I considered implementing other techniques to create volume, but in terms of all the different ornamentations and details I decided to focus only on a few techniques. Furthermore, the variety of fabrics in the collection makes the gathering techniques hang different; for instance, the floating silk organza makes the shapes soft and you are able to sense the body underneath. The stiff materials creates a more sculptural expression.

The majority of the silhouettes are dresses and the inspiration from the early 19th century makes them rather feminine. There is no getting around it my design aesthetics is quite feminine; to balance this I have implemented pants in two of the outfits to give the silhouettes a more laidback attitude.

Another shared feature in the silhouettes are sort of loose hanging fabric elements that cover up parts of the silhouettes, either just by hanging or by being tied and wrapped around the body. The idea with this element is again to visualize the delicate balance between the concealing and revealing and making the silhouettes both sort of secretive but still alluring.

As mentioned earlier, the starting point for the colour scale was my treasures and early collages. In my manifest I state that I have a thing for compiling sort of awkward colours. Often it's a chance to take, and also there is a big difference from seeing it on a small collage to a full size silhouette.

When I contemplate over the almost final collection it is for sure an odd combination of materials, colours and detailing from different times and origin. However, in the light of the frame for the project and the general characteristics of cabinets of curiosities it works. My collection is my cabinet of curiosities, a micro cosmos, a museum of personal memories. In a sort of chaotic and uncategorized way it visualizes and embody stories about and atmospheres connected to treasures.

I look forward to let you experience Signe's Cabinet of Curiosities.



Snapshots from the process of creating textiles, ornamentation and silhouettes

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Appendix 1:

Writings About My Own Treasures

Vasen – den rejsende

Hvor kommer vasen fra? Ming dynastiet i Kina var svaret. Spørgsmålet blev stillet af min venindes farfar engang i 1970'erne da han var på forretningsrejse i Indien. Den indiske forretningsmand, der havde svaret på hans spørgsmål, havde efter sigende bragt den fra Kina til Indien. Min venindes farfar og den indiske forretningsmand sad på et kontor i Mumbai og havde netop indgået en større forretningsaftale. Min venindes farfar blev betaget af blomstermotiverne i de blå og sarte røde farver. Den indiske forretningsmand spurgte om han kunne tilbyde vasen som en slags tegn på den netop indgåede forretningsaftale. Forretningsmandens kone ikke kunne se det skønne i vasen og den var derfor havnet i en krog på hans kontor balancerende med et bjerg af uordnede papirer på toppen. Min venindes farfar tøvede, for hvordan skulle han transportere en 60 cm høj porcelænsvase hele vejen fra Indien til Silkeborg?

Ingen ved helt hvordan det lykkedes, men hans søn, min venindes far, huskede tydeligt hvordan den havde prydet barndomshjemmet og hvor strenge ordrer der havde været på at holde sig på behørig afstand af vasen når der blev leget fangeleg i stuerne.

En aften i 2011 stod jeg i min venindes fars kælder i Valby. Her var vasen havnet efter bedsteforældrenes død. Gemt af vejen i et hjørne under en trappe afsats og halvt dækket af et hvidt klæde. Som min venindes farfar i sin tid havde gjort pegede jeg på vasen og spurgte hvor den kom fra. Da klædet blev revet væk så jeg vasen i dens fulde figur, og som min venindes farfar blev jeg betaget af dens farver og sirlige blomster motiv. Jeg kunne ikke styre min begejstring, og her gik det op for min venindes far at han havde fundet vasens næste hjem.

Af respekt for vasens lange rejse havde han ikke kunne nænne at skille sig af med den. Der er noget fantastisk ved så store og skrøbelige ting der bliver bevaret fordi nogen beslutter sig for at passe på dem. Vasen har været heldig det er som om den har formået at gøre sig lige akkurat synlig for de rigtige, der kunne se det fantastiske ved den.

Utallige sammenlignede revner og små manglende flige af porcelæn bevidner dens lange rejse fra Kina til Indien, Indien til Silkeborg, Silkeborg til Valby, Valby til Vesterbro. De sammenlignede revner fortæller historien om alle de hænder der gennem tiden har taget sig af den og sikre sig at den dag i dag stadig står i sin fulde figur.

Karakteristika: Smuk form, revner med forskellige typer lim og metal dimser, farverne, blomster motivet, rejsen den har været på og kraften til at gøre sig synlig for den rigtige ejermand gennem tiden.

Uret – den insisterende

Hvis Ronald Macdonald havde et ur som rekvisit havde det sikkert set sådan ud. Det kunne også godt optræde i et tableau af Wes Anderson. Det var mien første tanker da jeg stødte på det i en lagerhal i udkanten af Odense. Damen der solgte det mente det stammede fra Prag, men nærmere kunne hun ikke komme det.

Når jeg kigger på det får jeg altid fornemmelsen af det ikke passer ind i nogen tid – og det alene er jo underfundigt da det bogstavelig talt viser tiden. Vigtig er det dog, at det aldrig har vist andet tidspunkt end 15.30. Selv efter utallige forsøg har det aldrig ville gå. Jeg tænker at det faktisk føler sig alt for særligt til blot at være en markør for tiden.

Det er bombastisk på en insisterende måde med sin perfekte røde farve og solgule kant. Den organiske form, størrelsen og de skævt påklitrede bronze stave gør det underligt barnligt, naivt og klodset. Alligevel formår det at finde sin plads lige meget hvor man sætter det. Det er som om det ikke rigtig passer ind i denne verden, som om nogen har tænkt lad og prøv at lave et kamin hylde ur til en kæmpe.

Karakteristika: Runde organiske buede form – farverne – det blanke – to lag, stå fod, bombastisk på en insisterende måde, barnligt, naivt og klodset.

Ringen – den magiske

Ringen er for mig et symbol på min overgang fra barn til voksen. Den er et minde om min excentriske og skøre møster. Hun forærede mig den da jeg blev 18. Jeg husker faktisk ikke som sådan hvor den oprindeligt kommer fra. Men en ting er sikkert den er magisk, det er som om den rummer en særlig energi, uden den føler jeg mig total nøgen og usikker. Den er mit skjold min amulet mod alt ondt.

Den er også et symbol på kærlighed. For år tilbage kørte galt på cykel på Vesterbrogade i myldretiden og slog ringen så hårdt mod styret at stenen sprang ud af fatningen. Jeg gik i total panik imens cyklister susede forbi mig, jeg prøvede at granske samtlige sprækker i asfalten for at spotte stenen. Grædende ringede jeg til ham jeg var brændende forelsket i og han tilbød at komme så hurtigt han kunne.

Efter en times granskning af cykelstien og vejbane, råbte min forelskelse så højt han kunne. Han pegede og jeg så noget der glimtede, der lå den, min skat. Forpuppet og halvt begravet i en grus-fyldt revne. Hvor heldig har man lov at være.

Og sådan er det med denne ring selvom mit distraete sind indimellem er kommet til at efterlade den mystiske steder, så dukker den altid op, glimtende og blank fanger den mit øje med sit smukke blå lys. Den er egentlig ganske upraktisk med sin store sten, hvis jeg har mistet sul på kroppen kan stenen ikke holde sig på toppen af fingerens overside. Hele ringen drejer sig en halv omgang, hvilket er mæg irriterende men også en insisterende påmindelse om at huske at spise nok og dermed passe godt på sig selv.

Karakteristika: lille men pompøs og bombastisk kræver din opmærksomhed, skinnende, glimtende med sit blå lys og uendelig at kigge ind i, dens måde på magisk vis altid at dukke op igen selvom den er forsvundet eller har forpuppet sig utallige gange. En insisterende skat.

Kjolen - den lugtende

Kjolen fandt jeg gemt godt af vejen i en plastik pose i min mormors skab. Når jeg holder den i mine hænder, får jeg altid en følelse af at berøre et levn fra fortiden. Den er vidne om et sirligt håndværk, om tålmodighed. Skrøbeligheden i de sirligt hækede masker og farven får kjolen til at virke sårbar og sart. Den er forsøgt repareret utallige gange, oftest med forkert farve tråd i al hast på en måde som man i virkeligheden slet ikke kan være bekendt.

Den får mig til at føle mig så yndig. Der er noget fantastisk ved at bære sådan et levn fra fortiden, for-

nøjelsen er dog altid kort. Varmen fra kroppen i kontakt med kjolen vækker den mest frygtlige lugt til live – lugten af gammel hengemt sved ulmer i de sirligt hækede masker. Jeg forstiller mig min mormor har været iklædt den til utallige afdansningsbal i Slagelse forsamlingshus og den derfor har måtte lide en lugtende skæbne. Selvom fornøjelsen ved at have den på er kort, kan jeg alligevel ikke give slip, så nu hænger den ligeså i en gennemsigtig plastik pose bagerst i mit skab og jeg kan love dig den kommer aldrig til at flytte ud.

Karakteristika: Håndarbejdet, tålmodigheden, hullerne, de hastige reparationer, lugten, indkapslet i plastik.

Kastanjen – den gemte

I en lille brun krukke i min vindueskarm ligger en enkelt kastanje gemt. Sådant har kastanjens liv været lige fra begyndelsen – altså gemt. Først født i sin tætsluttende pikkede skål. Måske den så lige kortvarigt har været ud og sige goddag til verden før min farfar - sikkert i midten af 1990'erne har knyttet sin store kraftige næve om den. Så længe jeg kan huske samlede han på lomme kastanjer. Han havde altid flere kastanjer i både sine bukse- og jakkelommer.

Som barn roede jeg dybt i en af hans lommer og stjal en enkelt lille kastanje. Der er sikkert en lov mod at stjæle andre menneskers lommekastanjer – men mon ikke man bliver benådet hvis man blot var et uskyldigt barn. Min tyvekost var faktisk slet ikke af nævneværdig værdi - hvis man måler efter dens kvalifikation som kandidat til opgaven som den perfekte lomme kastanje. Den er mere nupret og ujævn end glat og blank. Alligevel rummer den mindet om min farfar. At lukke hånden om kastanjen og mærke den blive varm, sender mig tilbage til følelsen af min farfars store kraftige og varme næve lukke sig om min lille barnehånd.

Karakteristika: Et erobret trofæ, begravet og gemt i lomme og krukke, varm og den knudrede og nuprede overflade.

Appendix 2:

Letter of instructions

Kære

Måske kender vi slet ikke hinanden. Måske ville du vinke til mig hvis du så mig på gaden. Måske ville vi stoppe op og tale længe. Det eneste der er sikkert er at du på den ene eller anden led har gjort indtryk på mig. Og nu har jeg brug for din hjælp. Som en del af processen med af at forme mit afgangsprøveprojekt på Kunstakademiets Designskole har jeg begivet mig ud på en skattejagt og jeg håber så inderligt du vil med. Dette eksperiment undersøge hvordan man definere en skat. Jeg jagter derfor de skatte der har værdi for dig. Måske er din skat magisk, fortryllende og hemmelig, måske er den æstetisk, eller også giver den bare dagligdagslivet lidt ekstra værdi. Måske rummer den en helt særlig historie eller minde, du aldrig nogensinde vil give slip på. Måske er den fra fortiden måske er den fra nu. Eksperimentet har et krav og det er, at du vælger en skat der tager form som et objekt.

Muligvis kan du allerede nu mærke, hvad du skatter højest. Muligvis kræver det et roligt øjeblik, hvor du tænker dig om og lader tankerne flyve eller lader øjnene hvile på det, der er omkring dig. Det eneste der er sikkert er, at din skat rummer en særlig energi og den håber jeg, du har lyst til at dele med mig. Min drøm er at give din skat en visuel stemme.

Hvis du vil hjælpe mig skal du følge nedenstående trin:

- 1. Denne kasse indeholder et kamera og hvis du hiver i den lille hvide snor til højre for kameraet finder du to ark hvidt papir og et stykke foldet millimeter papir.*
- 2. Udvælg din skat.*
- 3. Find papiret frem og fat nu et skrive redskab efter eget ønske. Nedskriv nu dine tanker om din skat, hvorfor er det din skat? Hvor kommer den fra, hvad er dens historie, og hvilke følelser vækker den?*
- 4. Nu vil jeg gerne bede dig tage din skat i hånden eller berør den på anden vis. Beskriv nu formen, overfladen og farven.*
- 5. Tegn din skat i skatteboksen så godt du kan.*
- 6. Læg nu dit skriveredskab og papiret fra dig.*
- 7. Find det sammenfoldede millimeter papir frem fra kassen. Placer din skat på millimeter papiret.*
- 8. Åben den lille hvide pose til højre i kassen.*
- 9. Brug kameraet til at tage det antal billeder du vil mene yder din skat retfærdighed. Tag gerne også et par billeder med blitz for bedste resultat. Hvis skatten er for stor til papiret så brug gerne en hvid væg som baggrund – hvis det findes.*
- 10. Fotografér også skattens findested (opholdssted).*
- 11. Pak nu kassens indhold sammen og forsegl kassen med de medfølgende klistermærker.*
- 12. Bestil din skatteafhentning på flg. Telefonnummer: 53501624*

Tak fordi du vil lukke mig ind i din intime verden og dele det du skatter højest.