

HC BERG

Visual art is one of those ways of articulating and means of opening up understanding. Berg's works display the possibilities of art for taking part in this chain of shaping, dismantling and constructing. The reality of everyday reality and of the perceptions, routines and habits that arise out of it are presented for reassessment. In Berg's works the transparency of thoughts and mental images has been given tactile form. The immateriality of thoughts has found tangibility: surfaces for thoughts to solidify and grow. At the same time, they radiate visual gaiety and lightness. In the viewing situation the impressions produced by these works stimulate attentiveness and challenge us to see.

—Leevi Haapala

HC Berg is a young Finnish artist who has been steadily growing in international renown over the last ten years. With observation and perception as his subject matter, Berg employs a variety of media from metals to glass to acrylics to create works that possess unlimited optical dexterity. His art challenges customary ways of seeing and viewing, with the interaction of material and light offering surprises and insights.

Berg was the recipient of Finland's Young Artist of the Year award in 2007, and his works have been exhibited in galleries, museums, and art fairs worldwide. Berg's artworks have been collected by all major museums in Finland, including Kiasma, EMMA, Helsinki City Art Museum, Oulu City art Museum, Tampere City Art Museum, Wäinö Aaltonen Art Museum in Turku, Ars Nova Museum in Turku, as well as by foundations, institutions and private collections around the world.

HC Berg has been taking part in exhibitions and Art fairs in the United Arab Emirates, at Dubai Art fair 2008, 2009 and in 2009 in the Abu Dhabi Art fair. He has also participated in the Calligraphic Biennial 2008 in The emirate of Sharjah. Among the important collections in the region who has collected works of HC Berg is important to mention Her Highness Sheikha Paula Al – Sabah of Kuwait who has acquired work of HC Berg to her private collection.

Acts of Creation

Being against emptiness

"Now if you consider the vase from the point of view I first proposed as an object meant to represent the existence of the emptiness at the center of the real that is called *das Ding*, this emptiness... presents itself as a nihil, as nothing. And that is why the potter, just like you to whom I am speaking, creates the vase with his hand around this emptiness, creates it, just like the mythical creator, *ex nihilo*, starting with the hole."¹

Jacques Lacan

Hans-Christian Berg can be said to create works of art around emptiness. This may sound paradoxical in a time that is abundant with things, stories, and meanings. When writing "around emptiness," I do not say out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, and thereby equate Berg with the creator-gods. The artist's activities are more adequately depicted in Plato's trilogy *Timaios*, by the demiurge that plans and moulds already existing chaos material with the purpose of good. Contemporary artists are surrounded by our own time and the cultural, historical, and social codes of meaning that uphold its reality. In the case of Berg, the traditions of the arts and the recurring techniques are at the very least doubly coded in his practice through the traditions of sculpture and design that are so close to him. He compares the working process to an empty dish with rims that have gathered ingredients, which he draws from in his works.²

Berg reminds us of the starting points of his processes; these are the stage provided for the presentation of the work, the architecture of space, and light that is also an essential factor in understanding the essence of his works. And if we go back once more from the conditions of the presentation to the creative act, Berg tells about his physical relation "to his materials as one of diving in with his whole body."³ Thus it would be a misunderstanding to say that he creates art from emptiness. There must be something to dive into. The materials of his works vary from glass to aluminium, from acrylic to steel and epoxy resin. His techniques extend from moulding to carving, from welding to assembling, cooperation and chains of subcontractors.

What then do I refer to when talking about emptiness? Let me direct it straight to the point: to the desire at the core of the creative act. It is not only about the need to create, or if you may, about the original impulse underlying it, but about the desire that is manifested as a creative act and a work of art, the Thing at the center of the work. In psychoanalytical theory, the Thing (*la Chose* in French, *das Ding* in German) refers to the original object of love, to the body of mother as an impossible object of desire. This Thing can also be interpreted more generally as a craving to attain the original, to existence before acquiring language. When communicating through language or pictures, we can only point toward the Thing before it disappears. Beauty forms a bulwark against the horror of the Thing.⁴ In my reading of Berg's works, emptiness as the Thing surrounds itself with many horizons of meaning: origins, bodies and gazes that in turn create and mould identity, space, and so also the changeable positions and vantage points around the works.

In relation to art the discussion about emptiness refers to the existential question concerning creation. The creative act takes place as being against emptiness, being towards death.⁵ It would seem that the creative act is about – nothing less than – birth and death, where the birth of the subject in a sense repeats the loss occurring in the world of meanings. With Berg, the merging of materials and techniques leaves emptiness elementarily waiting for the chain of significations.

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Emptiness presents itself on the level of the materials, in the arrangement of the volumes, and in the providing of meaning: in the Lightcell works, in the cellular pattern formed by the round openings of interlocking straws; in the steel sculpture *Thoughtrise in Vacuum* as a series of ones and zeroes, as well as in the skulls of mirror glass that reflect the beholder's finite horizon of being. Berg's presentations varying the subject of emptiness appear to us as a netlike structure shifting light, as a metaphor of data transfer and a symbol of death as the final nominator – empty, the Thing, impossible – and yet when transformed into art, as something that still is possible to pursue.

Receiving the perceived

What in fact was the original act? In Jewish and Christian creation stories, the creative act is assumed to be a series of divine statements. In Genesis, things are presented on a cosmic scale. The first to be created was light. "God said: 'Let there be light!' And there was light. God saw how good the light was." (Genesis 1:3) Later, in form of the Logos hymn (John 1:1), the priority of the word and the creative strength of the statements are unparalleled in the history of metaphysics. The providing of meaning takes place in both verbal and visual form. What if the creative act had been a gaze, with which God had spoken His primary language? The gaze that God directed towards the emptiness and brought it to life. Or the eye with which Adam gazed at Eve when he woke up after the afternoon nap that cost him his rib.⁶ In her readings on this is creation account, professor of rhetoric and film Kaja Silverman gives the gaze an approving role as the upholder of the existing.⁷ And as she sums it up: "It is – – primarily by looking that we speak our language of desire."⁸

Berg's works can be seen divided into two categories. On the one hand, they examine the conditions of perception and especially of seeing. In his series Perception Instruments, this is evident in the functioning of the perception instruments placed in front of the works' concave mirror surfaces. On the other hand, some of his works clearly strive more towards effectiveness, such as the works that belong to the Visual Vortex series with their optic illusions reaching out into the space, equally based on kinaesthetic perception. The division can also be conceptualized according to how these works function in a viewing situation through sensuous and bodily feelings, and then again in the linguistic signification process.

Silverman writes about the child's difficulty to choose between being and meaning.⁹ Here, being is perceived as something original, as life before learning a language, and then again meaning is seen as verbal communication. Yearning for a horizon of meaning, the child reveals its humanity and chooses meaning. At the same time, the child continues to yearn for something that will signify a lack related to being, the desire-to-be (*manque-à-être*). The difference now compared to the choices of our childhood is that once we have stepped over the threshold we no longer can achieve innocence.¹⁰ And as Lacan notes: "The reflection seems to be the threshold of the visible world."¹¹ At best we can imagine the threshold on which we dwelled before daring to step over it. In Berg's works, the various mirrors and light refracting surfaces can be seen to function as this type of thresholds toward a revaluation of seeing and making it perceptible.¹²

I tend to think of the relation between Berg's works and the viewer as some kind of activating recollection practices. Viewing the works is not so much about the formation of the narcissistic ego during childhood, as it is about the way of approaching the realm of seeing through contemporary art, art that also in a more general sense strives to challenge our common ways of perception. Works of art and talking about them build chains between signifiers, chains that return images lost from our consciousness at the same time revising them. Berg's works can be interpreted from the vantage point of psychoanalytical theories on the gaze, or approached through the visual pleasure

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they provide – the manner in which they make the viewing situation vibrate. In my own readings these two divisions finally merge with one another.¹³

The gaze as an effort to control – and as a creative act

"We are beings that are looked upon in the spectacle of the world." ¹⁴

Jacques Lacan

In his works, Berg uses different types of pictorial filters in the dialogue he engages his viewers in. Various visual forms of expression utilising the eye can be seen to function similarly to the screen (*écran*) defined by Lacan as cultural codes that act as transmitters between the exterior gaze and the eye that is the object of that gaze.¹⁵ The work *Eye of Light* (1999-2001), awakens us to contemplate the values we relate to seeing as well as the question concerning the direction of the gaze. In a dark space the work seems to shut out the light coming from outside and becomes a source of light itself. The work's giant eye does not receive light or see because of light, but pulsates or radiates light in its surrounding from behind a blind, metallic point, through a programmed lighting device and glass rods. For Lacan, the concept of the gaze is connected to maleficence – the thought of the gaze from outside as the "evil eye."¹⁶ A certain kind of greed is related to it, which strives to take the object of the gaze into control.

Lacan presents the idea that every age is governed by a certain kind of gaze.¹⁷ The manner of presentation of a work of art and its fixation to the traditions of its time neutralise the effect of the evil eye, as it were, the ability of the picture to look back. The gaze of our own time can be thought of as being controlled by the electronic media. However, it cannot be reduced to just one type of gaze, but entails many interlocked customs (including attempts to control and supervise) that define the gaze.

The *Eye of Light* work is specifically about a cultural gaze coming from the outside and the direction of light. The work's mighty glass rod eye, with its large scale and technology that produces showers of light, provides a reference to the destructive power of the gaze. The eye hanging in the air by a heavy metal chain, borrows a body from the viewer. The light that in pulses emanates from the lens of the metallic tribal pattern imprints reflections on the viewer's retina. The flaming strength of the work almost three meters in diameter can be seen to refer to the all-seeing, even destructive eye of God. The work's cubical supporting structure in turn replaces the triangle signifying God's gaze and liberates it for the generation of more earthly significations.¹⁸ The work may be thought of as representing the individual's subjective eye in a disturbed viewing situation. The spectator projects part of the meaning in what he sees. Part of the vision is blinded by the surrounding visual culture, and therefore subordinate to the influence of the gaze.

Contrary to how it may appear at first glance, the human body is surprisingly often present in Berg's works. His works can be called anthropomorphic with the body or its parts functioning as their point of origin either as such or in an altered form. In his early works, skulls and the naked body were a common motif. The sculptures were made of translucent fibreglass or silvered glass. In his glass sculptures stylized phalluses and breasts as motifs are raised on the level of distraction. Some of the works are associated with the world of science fiction movies. Berg comments on the swollen mirror brains of the *Mind* sculptures as being "muscular and inflated brains."¹⁹ The grasping hands in *Closing Space* look like parts from a cyber-body. They hold in their grip the grey reflecting cerebral mass as if it had a consciousness of its own.

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Berg's anthropomorphic works appeal to the bodily senses of the viewer and rouse different types of feelings – irritation, hate, desire – and thereby cause bodily emotions to leak into the showroom. They appeal to the individual's desire to recognise his own body in the forms or the measures of the work. As Lacan notes in his famous maxim: "Man's desire is the desire of the Other."²⁰ It comes across in relation to the Other, the Other's desire, or is reflected through the Other.

From the body of desire to the body of light

"The question about light. First of all, I would like to say that there never is no light – the same way you can go into an anechoic chamber that takes away all sound and you find that there never really is silence because you hear yourself. With light it is much the same - we have that contact to the light within, a contact that we often forget about until we have a lucid dream. Asking ourselves where the light in the lucid dream comes from gets us near to these thoughts about the power of light. This power has, first of all, power in its physical presence. I like to bring light to the place that is much like that in the dream – where you feel it to be some thing itself, not something with which you illuminate other things, but a celebration of the thingness of light, the material presence, the revelation of light itself."²¹

James Turrell

In western thinking, light has formed an analogous relationship with both goodness and truth. Thirdly in art, traditionally in the realm of beauty, light manifests being. Freud placed the subject's certainty in dreams and in handling the unconscious elements appearing in them. Lacan quotes Freud when he says: "Here, in the field of a dream, you are at home."²² The American light artist James Turrell – in accordance with the quote above – catches light at its brightest precisely in the dream and this is how he wants to present it in his works. He strives to build idealistic places for viewing the light phenomena in his chamber consecrated to seeing.²³ Also the other half of Berg's work can be called retinal – an art of the eye from which dreaminess and unconscious investments of the human drives are not far. With his works he aspires to awaken the eye from the habits that trouble it and thereby to discover blind spots and the outlying realms of vision.

Light and the question of transparency are central motifs for Berg and he recurrently returns to them. His retinal works pose questions about light, its refraction and colours – the abilities of different materials to transmit light. He recounts having found Turrell's text on immateriality when planning the Young Artist of the Year exhibition.²⁴ In the Sliced Vision / Split Man series of works (2007) Berg combines anthropomorphic and retinal elements. He continues his study of the human shape, but now presents it in the form of an optical illusion. It seems there has been a shift from the body of desire²⁵ to the "body of light" (the latter is the artist's name for this new sculptural form). The sculptures have been assembled from several acrylic figures into overlapping constellations. The colouring and luminosity of the forms depend not only on the chosen colour, the number of layers, or the illumination of the work, but also on the viewer's position in relation to the work. It appears as if the lightweight figures radiating with different colours would float, disintegrate, and collide in accordance with the spectator's movements and the entry angle of light rays. Berg reveals he is en route towards works that function "purely" through coloration.²⁶

Neither observation nor reminiscing is a mechanical activity. Before the observations made of a work reach consciousness, the actions of the unconscious have already influenced it. The layered structure of forms brings to mind Sigmund Freud's optic model, which he used to visualise the relation between perception and consciousness. In his Interpretation of Dreams (1900), Freud presents an optic analogy of the functional mechanism of the "mental apparatus" by referring to the consecutive lenses of a telescope.²⁷ The consecutive permeable layers make light refract layer by

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layer. The segmented sculptural forms of Sliced Vision / Split Man can be seen as flame-rimmed forms created by light impulses remaining on the retina before falling asleep. Viewed from a certain angle these forms refract the colours of the spectrum and their edges obtain a fractal shape.

The unconscious demonstrated by consecutive lenses is not an anatomical or spatial place, but a special spectrum displayed by the device that is situated between perception and consciousness. However, it is not my purpose to study electromagnetic radiation and different wavelengths defined by physics, which is what we see as colours. Before perception reaches consciousness, it has met with various engrams, their preconscious associative arrangement and mechanisms of unconscious activities, such as rejection. According to Silverman, through the optic analogy and the notion of delay it entails Freud challenges the notion of objective seeing (the notion of delay, Freud argues, is incorporated in the passage of sensory stimulation into the psyche before the observation becomes a part of conscious reality).²⁸ A similar deconstructive observation is related to the conception of dream work. The observations made during the daytime melt into a complex networks of

relations, which the unconscious utilizes when resistance dwindles.

In his deliberations of the unconscious and the structure of repetition, Lacan comments on Freud's optic model and reminds us that we should not forget about the interval between the light-reflecting layers – analogical to the interval between observation and cognition – as it presents itself as the place of the Other where the subject is formed. In this manner the unconscious constitutes the discourse of the Other (discourse de l'Autre). Lacan for his part does not envision a great difference between observation and cognition, but emphasizes instead the simultaneity and synchrony related to the temporality of the traces of perception (Wahrnehmungszeichen).²⁹ In this respect, consciousness can be regarded as an organ of perception. When considered thus, the works of Sliced Vision / Split Man illustrate the concept of the birth of perception and mental presentation in a sensible form. And the name of the work tells about the foundational division of the psyche into being and meaning during the prehistory of the psyche.

Visual Vortex – writing on the cornea

"Light may travel in a straight line, but it is refracted, diffused, it floods, it fills – the eye is a sort of bowl – it flows over, too, it necessitates, around the ocular bowl, a whole series of organs, mechanisms, defences."³⁰

Jacques Lacan

Berg has worked on different phases of the Visual Vortex series since 2004. The illusions created by the works have become ever more multidimensional with changing colours and patterns and, in the most recent works presented in this exhibition, also by way of changing texts. However, the basic structure of the sculptural installation has remained the same. They consist of large boxes assembled of acrylic sheets and attached to the wall. The boxes contain large reflecting concave mirror that span their entire width. The surface of the works is composed of a clear or coloured transparent sheet on which different words or patterns have been engraved. Seen from afar the works seem strictly geometrical, but the effect they have is just the opposite. The light gathered and returned by the works and the image created by them does not focus on one vanishing point, but follows the movements of the viewer and creates a vortex between her/him and the work – hence the name of the series.

Berg compares the effect of the Visual Vortex sculptures to childhood experiences in the amusement park, where part of the regularities we learn in daily life no longer seem to apply.³¹ We have to struggle against gravity in devices that hurl us in different directions. We surpass our limits in high

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places or in the form of strange animals or scary forms. We are enchanted by hallucinations in mirrors that contort the perfection of our bodily image and shape it into curiously recognisable and simultaneously most ridiculous forms.³²

Each work is a type of an eye in which the mirror as a substitute for the retina functions like a bright carpet (tapetum lucidum) familiar to us from the eyes of animals. The colours pulsate like a spectrum in the background's glowing carpet. We recognise that same luminous effect in the glowing eyes of nocturnal animals such as cats, bats, or crocodiles, when light hits them in the dark. The incoming ray of light reflects once more from the shining retina to the lens and strengthens the nocturnal vision. But the image is not sharp due to the scattering of the light ray. In the human eye that demands visual acuity this phenomenon is absent. Gradually, the notion of light as an element of the creative act has metamorphosed into a notion of glowing coloration. In the works of Visual Vortex series from 2006–2007 Berg has applied the technique of colour sliding to their concave mirrors. The colour scale ranges from blue-red to yellow-orange. The large, one-eyed works function as optic devices and experiments that trick the eye. The background mirrors of the works gather the rays of light directed at them and in a sense shoot them towards the viewer. They magnify the patterns – graphic representations or words – engraved on the acrylic sheets between the mirror and the viewer thus enhancing

the illusion these patterns generate.

As a totality these effects have guaranteed that in discussing the Visual Vortex works it has been impossible to avoid references to organs: talk about the eye, optics and vision as facets that stand in for the chains of association and meanings opened up by the works.

The dual position created by the viewing situation brings to mind Lacan's story about the sardine can drifting at sea that is revealed to him when a ray of light strikes it. Sitting in a boat he feels he has been seen: "It was looking at me at the level of the point of light, the point at which everything that looks at me is situated."³³ The first works in Berg's sculptural series were colourless and functioned through topographical signs – curves or advancing circles of amoeba-like shapes – engraved on the cornea of the works. These were followed by the introduction of bright colours – yellow, red, and blue – functioning as the works' corneas. The graphic signs were now carved in the middle of these 'corneas' as types of lenses. In the next run of works the colours faded, broke, and blended. They began to shine like phosphorus and became more subtle. The protective patterns and cartographical signs were joined by symbols such as the yin-yang -sign. The graphic sign in *Microcosmos* (2006) unmistakably resembles an egg cell surrounded by sperm.³⁴

To this spectrum of colours and patterns in the exhibited works also linguistic signifiers have been added: words and entire clauses. Part of the engraved texts are quotes from the literary sources appearing in the names of the works; part are an "accumulation" that has wandered through the artist's mind changing during the journey into a new entity.³⁵ At first sight I only picked out single words in English from the works, such as "empiricism" and "Buddhism". In the names of the works you can see the sources of inspiration for the quotes, such as the Japanese author D.T.Suzuki³⁶ in addition to Turrell whom I have already mentioned. Studying the sentences requires tolerance to withstand disturbance: the concave mirror stretches the engraved words and turns them into a twisted mirror image in the background. After a while I can already distinguish a whole sentence that creates a vortex in the middle of the work: "All verbal descriptions of reality are inaccurate & incomplete."³⁷ As an artist, Berg does not try to limit the phenomenology of experience through his use of language. He leaves the formation of meaning on a personal level for the viewers to pursue.

In what way can we as viewers partake in the creation of a work of art? In short: with the gazes that we grant to the works; with those glances and lingering looks with which we encounter the works,

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awaken them for a moment from their sleep, and believe in them. In granting them our attention, we at the same time awaken in ourselves selected memories of specific glances that have roused us and made us come alive again. Occasional wonders of creation: here and now – on earth.

Leevi Haapala

1 Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*. Trans. Dennis Porter. Norton, New York, 1992, 121.

2 Discussion with Berg 14.12.2006.

3 Interview with Berg in the cultural program *Ratatask* 11.12.2006 on FST (Finlands Svenska Television; Finland's Swedish Television).

4 Researcher Merja Hintsala writes: "In its glory, beauty hides the horror of the Thing, cleaning or taming it, if you may, at the same time awakening desire and thus making it possible for the Thing to approach." Hintsala, *Mahdottoman rajoilla. Derrida ja psykoanalyysi. (On the border of the impossible. Derrida and psychoanalysis)*. The *Paradeigma* series. Tutkijaliitto, Helsinki 1998, 262.

5 Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan uses the French term *être-pour-la-mort*, in English being-for-death, and philosopher Martin Heidegger uses *Being-towards-death*. Jacques Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis", *Écrits, A Selection*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. With a foreword by Malcolm Bowie. Routledge Classics, London and New York 2001, 75, 116. This translation first published in English by Tavistock Publications, United Kingdom 1977. Originally published in French by Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1966. Lacan paraphrases Heidegger's work *Sein und Zeit*. Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time* (1927). Translated by Joan Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1953. Being towards death is discussed in chapters § 51–§ 53.

6 1 Moses 2:7 ref. a: "In the Hebraic language the word for earth *adama* and the word for human *adam* are phonetically close to each other." 1. Moses 3:20 ref. b: "The name Eve, in Hebrew *Hawwa*, resembles the verb *haja* 'live'. A literal translation »the mother of all living«." The Bible, according to the Finnish translation taken into use year 1992, WSOY Porvoo, Helsinki, Juva 1992, 10, 12.

7 Kaja Silverman, *World Spectators*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 2000, 19–22.

8 Kaja Silverman, *World Spectators*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 2000, 101.

9 Kaja Silverman simplifies Lacan's thought to a choice between being and meaning. Kaja Silverman, *World Spectators*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 2000, 36. Jacques Lacan (1964/1973) 1998, 204–205. "The Subject and the Other: Alienation", *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Translation into English Alan Sheridan 1977, introduction David Macey 1994. Vintage, London 1998. First published in French *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XI, 'Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse'*, Éditions du Seuil 1973.

10 More about the relation between the psychoanalytical forming of the self and the area of seeing Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*. Routledge, London 1996.

11 Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the 'I' as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience", *Écrits: A Selection*, translated by Alan Sheridan. New York, Norton, (1937/1949) 1977/2001, 3.

12 Equally the borders between being and meaning dissolved when bathing in *Solaris*, the round, transparent sauna built from acrylic, designed by Berg and industrial designer Mika Ihanus. Bathing there in the summer of 2005 by the sea in Tammissaari, the evening sun refracted the spectrum between the bathers and the scenery. The humid air, the bathers in the steam, and the light refracting material opened a literal horizon of meaning. The transparency of meaning, reflection, and illusion shook hands with bodily presence. The skin tingling from the heat, the cool sea water, and the smell of smoke opened being towards the world once again as significant. At *The Young Artist of the Year* exhibition in Tampere, the sauna will be erected in the museum area.

13 Thanks to my colleagues Anna-Kaisa Rastenbergh, Harri Kalha, Kati Lintonen, Patrik Nyberg, Riitta Ojanperä, and Tiina Purhonen for the constructive feedback they gave me on this text at the research seminar of Harri Kalha in January 2007 at the Helsinki University, Department of Art History.

14 Jacques Lacan, "The Split Between the Eye And the Gaze", *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-*

analysis (1964/1973) 1998, 75.

15 Jacques Lacan, "The Line and Light", *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964/1973) 1998, 101, 103. The concept *écran* can be translated in many ways, such as filter, screen, membrane, partition, silver screen, or safety net. It functions as a semipermeable element between the gaze of the world and the eye of an individual viewer. It filters part of the danger of the gaze, and on the other hand it works as an image or a discourse that is culturally defined. Lacan writes: "The screen is here the locus of mediation."

Jacques Lacan (1964/1973) 1998, 107. For Kaja Silverman the concept of the screen is essential in resolving the relation between the sensual body of the subject and his conception of himself such as it appears in visual presentation. The subject leans its visual identity against the external image. For the subject, it is not important how he sees or how he assumes to see, but how the cultural gaze sees him. We cannot choose how we are seen and we simply cannot change the filter for a new one. We can only try on a

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collective level to change the predominant screen. Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*. Routledge, London 1996, 18, 19.

16 "The evil eye is the fascinum, it is that which has the effect of arresting movement and, literally, of killing life." Jacques Lacan. "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*." *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964/1973) 1998, 118. Translation into English Alan Sheridan 1977, introduction David Macey 1994. Vintage, London 1998. First published in French *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XI, 'Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse'*, Éditions du Seuil 1973.

17 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964/1973) 1998, 113. Lacan takes up historical examples, such as icons and Byzantine mosaics that are viewed by the creator-God and from which He views; next he mentions communal works such as the battle of Lepanto in the Doges' palace frescoes in Venice, where the gaze of the orderer looks from the painting at the townspeople waiting for an audience with the duke; as the third example he mentions the gaze of modernism, which is defined by, paraphrasing André Malraux, "the incomparable monster", namely the gaze of the painter, which proclaims itself as the only gaze.

18 As a source of light it compares with the symbol of freemasons and illuminati, the eye that spreads its rays, which is presented figuratively on the top of a pyramid. The eye metaphor and the tribal patterned metallic lens can equally be compared to the black eye of Sauron that controls Mordor in J.R.R. Tolkien's story *The Lord of the Ring*. In the movie version Two Towers the flaming eye at the top of the tower dominates the entire desolate landscape. The power of Sauron's eye can also be seen in the crystal ball of the wizard Gandalf – in the other eye – through which one can see into the future.

19 Interview with Berg in the cultural program *Ratatask* 11.12.2006 on FST (Finlands Svenska Television; Finland's Swedish Television).

20 "But we must also add that man's desire is the *désir de l'Autre* (the desire of the Other) in which provides what grammarians call the 'subjective determination', namely that it is qua Other that he desires (which is what provides the true compass of human passion)." Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious", *Écrits, A Selection*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. With a foreword by Malcom Bowie. Routledge Classics, London and New York 2001, 345.

21 Artist James Turrell interviewed by architect Esa Laaksonen, Blacksburg, Virginia 23.3.1996. <http://home.sprynet.com/~mindweb/page44.htm>. Link 4.1.2007.

22 Jacques Lacan "Of the Network of Signifiers", *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964/1973) 1998, 44. "Here, in the field of a dream, you are at home."

23 Turrell's most renowned positional chamber of light where you can observe the movements of the celestial bodies, is found in an extinguished volcano crater in the Arizona desert; it is called *Roten Crater*, started in

1972. Seen from above it is like a giant eye.

24 The following text is found in a work included in the *Visual Vortex* series, named after Turrell: "I use light / as a material / to work the medium / of perception, / basically the work / really has no / object / because perception / is the object. / And there is / no image / because perception / is the object. / And there is / no image / because / I am not interested / in associative thought." Each line is written under the other. Berg's e-mail 11.1.2007.

25 With the body of desire I refer to the sculpture *Isä taivaassa* (Father in Heaven), 2006, with its fully plastic, naked female form made of epoxy resin. Its name refers to a high subject and simultaneously the sensuousness of the body and the emphasising of the erogenous parts reveal the fantasy lingering in the mind of the artist. The work was shown at the *Intimate* exhibition in the visual arts week in Mänttä, Finland, in the summer of 2006.

26 Berg compares the methods of the *Sliced Vision / Split Man* works to the colour related experience of James Turrell's light installations. At the center of Turrell's positional work the viewer is presented with an all-embracing colour bath. By these works, adjusted to the architecture of the space, the questions on dimensions and the source of light lose their meaning. Berg mentions that another object of his inspiration is the triumphal arch shaped skyscraper found in the district of *la Défence* in Paris. Architect Johann Otto von Spreckel's *La Grande Arche de La Défense* (1982–1990) shines at night in the shifting colours of the rainbow. Discussion with the artist 14.12.2006.

27 To this overall machine belongs as systems perception, preconsciousness, consciousness, and the unconscious. The travelling of the light through the lens of the device forms an analogy to the actions of the unconscious. Other metaphors used by Freud in relation to the structure of the psyche are multiple microscope and camera. Sigmund Freud, *Unien tulkinta*. (*Die Traumdeutung*, 1900) Translated by Erkki Puranen, Gummerus, Jyväskylä 1968/1992. Freud (1900) 1968/1992, 447–451.

28 Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*. Routledge, London 1996, 181.

29 Jacques Lacan "Of the Network of Signifiers", *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964/1973) 1998, 45–46. In his readings of Freud, Lacan stresses that the certainty found in dreams is not reliant on random associations, but was based on the search for causative relations, which could equally be diachronous.

30 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964/1973) 1998, 94.

31 Interview with Berg in the cultural program *Ratatask* 11.12.2006 on FST (Finlands Svenska Television; Finland's Swedish Television).

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32 In my earlier writings on Berg's *Visual Vortex* series I propose that the distorting mirror effects of the works produce a certain "right identification", when it is compared to the phase in early childhood, where the child does not yet have a total concept of its bodily image or its motoric skills entirely under control. This way it compares to the "wrong identification" (*méconnaissance*) of Lacan's mirror phase, where the child at an age of 6–18 months sees itself in the mirror as being whole and complete, and tries to pursue the image provided by that external image, which does not correspond to the reality of the psyche. Leevi Haapala, *Kanssakäymisiä. Osallistuvan taiteentutkimuksen askelia. Taidehistoriallisia tutkimuksia* 32, *Taidehistorian seura*, 2005, 57–74. (Leevi Haapala, *Teleplasty – an Anachronistic Vortex Between the Artwork and Viewer, Mutuality of Vision in the Sculptures of Hans-Christian Berg*. *Social intercourses. Steps of participative art research. Research in art history* 32, *Society of Art History*, 2005, 57–74.)

33 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964/1973) 1998, 95. At the same time he stresses the significance of the social situation in the viewing experience. The fisherman Little Jean also present in the boat, laughed at the sardine can that they could see it but it could not see them. Lacan as a young intellectual for his part was very much aware of his own presence in the boat among the fisherman's nets and situated his outside experience to the light flashing off the sardine can, which manifested that he was

under observation.

34 Berg presented the work beside the naked female body of the Father in heaven sculpture (2006), which made it impossible to avoid an association to the moment of fertilisation. However, the vortex awoken by the Microcosmos work (2006) was so strong that the pictorial motif could only be seen later from a freeze-shot of the work.

35 Discussion with Berg 14.12.2006.

36 Writer and translator Daisetz (generally or transliteration of name also Daisetsu) Teitaro Suzuki (1870–1966) became renown for his relaying of the Japanese culture and Zen Buddhism to the west. One of his classics is Zen and Japanese Culture, Pantheon Books, New York, 1959.

37 The text is written on the surface of the work: "All verbal descriptions of reality are inaccurate & incomplete." The work brings to mind the American modern art pioneer Bruce Nauman's neon light work Human Nature/Life Death/Knows Doesn't Know, 1983, where the words light up by turns and thus present the same life related relativity through the changing of foundational counterpoints.