

ART as a voice in the climate debate

Artist Rikke Darling

We all know climate changes are happening. We are intellectually aware of climate change's potential devastating impact on our planet and yet simultaneously we distance ourselves from feeling this danger. Most people have an apathetic response to the climate change and we fail to transform our behaviour in believe that somehow, individually, we are impervious. Art has always had a place in the public debate. Art is a language that speaks to our emotions, and coming to the climate debate awakening of emotions are important for individuals to feel responsible to change personal habits.

Nature fascinates many artists. And that is also the focal point for the Danish visual artist Rikke Darling. She believe that everything is connected in a complex system that we as human beings never will be able to understand and she is very concerned about the on-going climatic change. The catastrophes ranging from floods and hurricanes to coming food crises as consequence of global warming are obvious signs of an ecological system that is out of balance, caused by man-made impacts on the environment.

Artists are often referred to as more sensitive of what is going on around them. With the power of premonition, many committed artists have reacted with their artworks to changes in society and environment, drawing attention to problems that are often not being acknowledged by the general public. Rikke Darling believes that artists play an important role in alerting, educating and informing society, by means of aesthetics.

An artwork can contain a lot more than just a beautiful surface. It can convey important messages. Sometimes more direct than others. Paul Klee once remarked that painting makes the invisible visible. But it depends upon the individual background and openness of a viewer to how much is understood from the contained messages. Rikke Darling likes sometimes to communicate more narrative about issues. She is mainly an abstract painter, but time-to-time she adds more figurative objects to be able to communicate more clearly. It can be insects, humans or flowers. One figurative object can contain many stories. It can be a symbol of cooperation (ex bees or ants) or reflect human emotions like greed.

Insects like cockroaches for example, can be agents in spreading hepatitis, dysentery, and many species of parasitic larvae can be really dangerous and damaging, as transmitters of diseases or because of their venoms. Peasants see insects mainly as pests that destroy their harvests and we forget that they also have a valuable function in the ecological system. In response mankind has decided to make use of chemicals, highly poisonous insecticides and pesticides, which not only kill the insects, but also damages the health of humans who come into direct contact with it, or through the residues of chemicals contained within our daily food.

Humans often believe that they can manipulate nature. That we can change small parts of nature to our benefits - and can foresee all the consequences. But even though we have come very far scientifically, we still know very little. Everything is connected in all scales and nothing can be left out. The connections in nature are in so many levels. Is extremely complex and just small manipulations can create an avalanche. Any good thing has a bad side and too much "good" can be bad. Everything is connected in all scales and nothing can be left out.

Looking for the principle of balance in nature, or life generally, Rikke Darling explores the light and the dark sides of processes by acknowledging the dangers, risks and abysses. For the love of nature, for the love of the whole Earth, she truly believes in the importance of artist's expressions in the climate debate.

Rikke Darling sees her art as an expression of her philosophy. In her art she seeks for the unknown mysteries in life, considering all life forms as basically the same, coming from the same ground material. She has a fascination of the patterns in life. Fractals exhibit a repeating pattern that displays at every scale. Evolving symmetry is building the world - the replication is exactly the same at every scale as a self-similar pattern.

Rikke Darling invites the viewer for a journey through inner and outer spaces. There is a demanding appeal in this: to observe the inner and outer worlds more diligently and to bring them into balance again. The macrocosm is reflected by the microcosm, structures outside relate to structures inside. Life forms consist of structures that life itself is structuring.

We need to remember, that human beings are not just a part of nature - We are nature, and with all our superior abilities to manipulate nature, we have to be careful not to tip the balance.



Web Construction (Mixed Media on canvas 140x250 cm.)

"It makes its web more and more complex. New layers are added. Wires stretched. A system for control. Many get trapped. It is not the size that matters. It is the power within. An inner poison gives the kiss of death. It is ready to strike the goal in a perfect timing. Paralyzed. Waiting for their faith".



Taking Control (Mixed Media on canvas 140x250 cm.)

At a distance. Vague you can hear it rumbles... higher. A premonition. It is a warning. It is a swarm coming in and taking control. They are so many with the same need. The need for more. Sucking in the juice out of life. Leaves nothing behind. Death