

# MAKERS MOVE

— *a medium of exchange.*

Selected guests / 2.



## **Copenhagen, May 2013.**

In spring 2013 *Makers Move* invited the following persons to an exchange of jewellery and portable objects:

Inger Sjørsløv (Anthropologist)

Lars Kynde (Composer)

Lene Floris (Head of Museum, National Museum of Denmark)

Morten Skriver (Author and graphic artist)

Nicole Rehne (Conservator, Museum of Copenhagen)

Ursula Andkjær Olsen (Author and poet)

This publication is based on talks with these people. We would like to thank everyone who contributed.

# The stories of objects

Objects can be shortcuts and mental companions to events in life. They can evoke memories and they can function as anchors for a decision or a wish. The role of the object changes, it is passed on from generation to generation, it is bought and sold, discarded and found, it reflects a life lived which can be retold with the object. It reminds us of people we live with or people we have lost. We need objects to aid our thoughts and memories. Objects help make the world tangible.

These are stories based on objects that *Makers Move* has asked a series of persons to bring to a talk with us. *Makers Move* studies the significance of objects, and based on the invited persons' background in science, art and philosophy we aim to illustrate and examine the space that exists between objects and people. We do this to gain insight into why we are preoccupied with jewellery and portable objects and carry them with us as partners at different points in life.

Objects can be honest traces of life, they can be passed on through generations and go against aesthetic and value-based criteria, because they reflect our own story. They can cause us to share the past and the present with other generations and thereby help us get closer to each other.

Perhaps we are always looking for something in the objects we 'bricolage' with? Perhaps we keep certain objects in order to reinvent clues to our identity?

# MAKERS MOVE

## in conversation with

### **Inger Sjørsløv**

Inger Sjørsløv (b. 1948) is Master of Science and Associate Professor in Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen.

**Inger Sjørsløv's ethnographic focus is South America, especially Brazil; her thematic focus is religion, rituals, native peoples, museology and political culture. With a background in museums and NGOs her research interests are wide-ranging. She is currently researching the material culture and significance of objects in a project on the importance of homes in Denmark. Her interest in material culture also includes art and aesthetics, and it is thus connected to her general interest in form and the concept of performance.**

As a basis for her choice of object we encouraged Inger to consider Lévi-Strauss' dictum, 'Material things are goods to think with – and they are good to think with as well'. Before our first meeting with Inger she wrote this to us about her choice:

*'The piece of jewellery I have chosen is a silver ring. I inherited it from my mother when she died, but she gave it to me long before she died.*

*She bought it as a present for me, but at the time I didn't think it suited me,*

*so I was allowed to choose another and she kept this one for herself. She found it very beautiful and always wore it. I often wear it now. I have never thought about selling it, so I don't consider it a commodity. It is a gift, but of course it represents a commercial value, and I know that it was not inexpensive, even though it has no precious stones and it is not made of gold. My mother was not wealthy. The one we found for me instead cost a lot less. That suited me fine.*

*I cannot think about this piece of*



*jewellery as a commodity, but in my profession as an anthropologist and in my work with the significance of material objects I do look at things as commodities that create relations between people through exchange and, in a wider sense, create society. Lévi-Strauss had a theory that the exchange of gifts was a fundamental society-creating act and that the woman was a kind of primordial gift, the most basic object of exchange, because it was through the exchange of child-bearing women that alliances between people and thus societies were made. Since then other great thinkers have considered the significance of the commodity something that alienates people from each other, but that is a different story.*

*In my profession I work with things and their materiality as objects that connect subjects and sometimes almost become subjects themselves. The physical materiality carries emotions, memories, dreams, wishes, obligations and ideas of past and future. This is very much true of a piece of jewellery.*

*A piece of jewellery is in a number of ways a special kind of object. A piece of jewellery is often a gift and thus a thing that connects one person to another, a kind of alliance between the giver and the receiver. A piece of*

*jewellery is carried close to the body and can thus be an extension of the body itself, a part of that person's identity. That is almost what happened with my mother and the ring. A piece of jewellery is a thing that you cannot wear out – or only very slowly – not at all like clothes or other things that we surround ourselves with in modern society. Jewellery signals permanence. Maybe a time that extends beyond death. A piece of jewellery often has great sentimental value. It can represent the person who used to wear or own it, and you can feel like you are carrying a piece of that person with you. In that way, jewellery is a thing that it is good to think about others with.'*







# MAKERS MOVE

## in conversation with

### **Lars Kynde**

Lars Kynde (b. 1980) Composer.

**Lars Kynde trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and now lives in the Netherlands where he explores the relation between music and visual art. By building his own instruments as installation-like, sculptural machines with three-dimensional scores he is looking for new ways to construct and understand musical structures. Inspired by historical performance practice combined with modern technology and pure imagination his work proposes an alternative basis for music in the future.**

For our talk Lars brought a star aniseed from an old love letter. The letter was from a girl he used to be very much in love with, and even though it has been seven years since he received the letter it still smells of anise.

*'I find it incredibly beautiful that the scent remains; you don't think about it the moment you smell it, but when you take it out years later the smell is still there. It is a special feeling to open an old letter and find that it smells of anise. She was a very sensual person, and we talked a lot about sensory perceptions.'*

*In his job as a composer Lars uses he senses and intellect. He wants people to read and listen to his work at the same time so the one sense affects how you experience the other. One of Lars' works is about the merging of the sense of taste and the sense of hearing.*

*'In Japan I talked to a cook, and we started talking about the correlation between taste and sound. The piece is about combining the taste experience with the listening experience. I asked the cook to create seven small dishes where a mouthful of each would develop in the course of one minute. The dishes were presented to a percussion player, who then interpreted the taste.*

*Then the audience was presented first with the taste and then the sound, or the other way around, and finally the taste and the sound at the same time.*

*Coinciding impressions can be inspiring, like when beautiful, random sounds coincide with what you are thinking the moment you hear them. And if there are convergences and yet differences, then a resonance can arise which may inspire and capture you. There can be a certain connection between the internal and the external, but it should not become too avant-garde.*

*The best learning occurs at the borderline of what you can understand.*





*If you read the score while listening to it, you can read the experience; I think that is unique – I wish to convey this to the audience. There are two factors that complement each other – score and hearing. I am fascinated by the fact that you have to work to understand and hear the pieces.*

*You listen to it over and over again,*

*but you hear something new because you simultaneously see what you hear. If there is something you like, you can examine what it is you like – I am less fascinated with the sound aspect of music; it is the more time-related, that there is a development in time, and when something is precise, your senses are affected in a way that is hard to describe’*

# MAKERS MOVE

in conversation with

## **Lene Floris**

Lene Floris (b. 1950) Ethnologist and Head of Museum, National Museum of Denmark.

**Lene Floris has a diverse, professional museum background in both research and communication. Her research has over the years focused on ethnographic subjects, building culture and research in communication. In addition, she has focused on communication of specific culture-historical subjects in the form of popular science books and articles, exhibitions and the establishment of new exhibition spaces.**

Lene has chosen to bring a brooch to our talk. The brooch depicts a ballet dancer who dances en pointe.

*'The brooch used to belong to my mother; I got it some 20 years ago and I have used it a lot since. I get positive vibrations and reactions when I wear it. It is light and delicate, but it also suggests that life is a balancing act and that everything is not a bed of roses – but you nevertheless have to lie in it. I got my mother to retell the story of the brooch. She got it for her confirmation on 1 October 1950 in Roskilde. It was a present from her mother's school friend, Gudrun Jørgensen, from Copenhagen. Gudrun and my grandmother, Hertha, had had the author of the books about "Tude Marie" (cry baby, ed.) as their teacher. My grandmother often told me this.*

*If I had a saying, it would only consist of one word, and that word should be movement – in every sense of the word. Movement and balance. To me the brooch repre-*

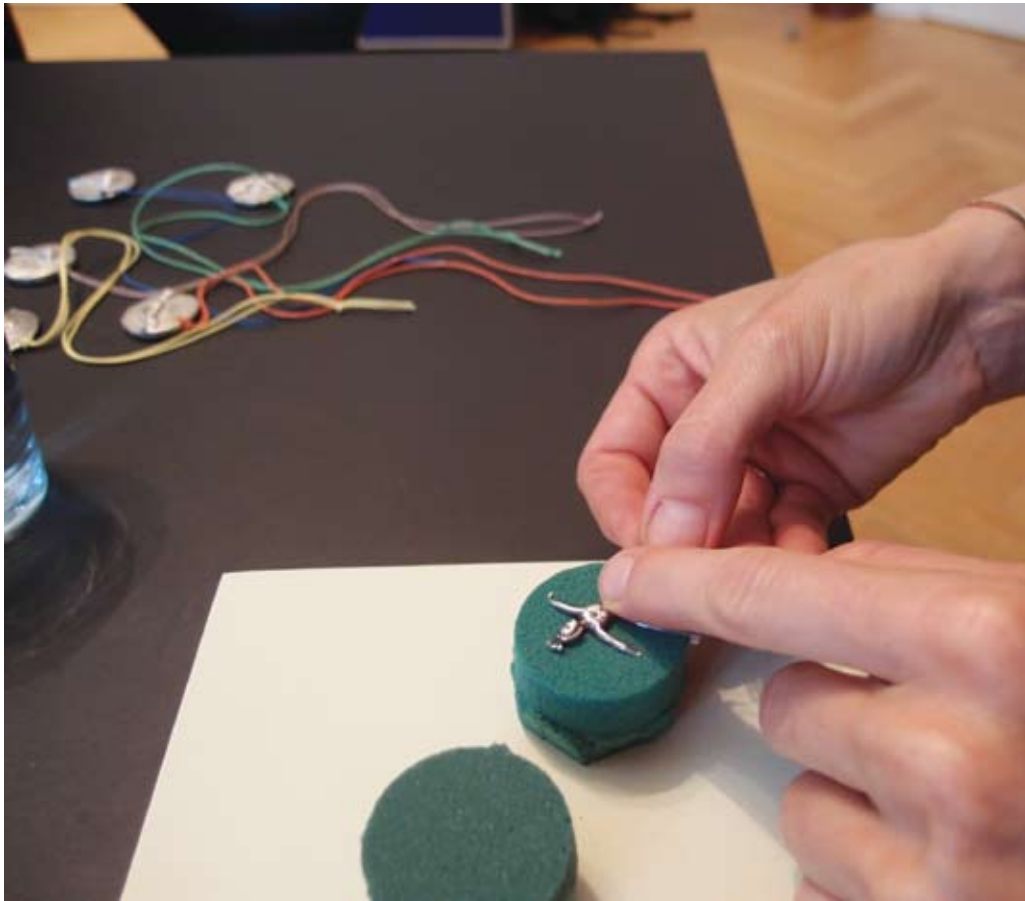
*sents balance and movement, and I sometimes wear it at meetings and negotiations where I have to balance something or other.*

*I once heard about how Madeleine Albright used brooches to send out signals in certain meeting situations, and when I heard that, I thought – but I do that too. Few people around me know that is how I feel about brooches.'*



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# MAKERS MOVE

in conversation with

## Morten Skriver

Morten Skriver (b. 1954) Author and Visual Artist.

**Morten Skriver is a visual artist with a special interest in the borderland between art, science and religion. He has written books, articles and essays and directed several documentaries. Morten has also taught in different contexts, among other things as an associate professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.**





Morten has chosen to bring a clothes peg;

*'A peg from my clothes line – and I have brought a more recent peg, this is what they look like if you buy one today. Mine is an older version, and you can see how much finer it is, they have made a small, discrete carving for the spring.*

*It is from my parents' summer house, and the funny thing is that I just put it in my pocket and then completely forgot about it until you asked me to bring something. I put it in my pocket one day – well, it is 5-10 years ago now – at the end of the summer when I had been watching my mother hang up some clothes; she was about 90 years at the time, and it struck me how weathered everything was.*

*It is a place by the seaside where the family has come for many years – and the peg just encapsulated the entire story about everyday life there. I connect it with my mother and my first responsibility. I was three years old and my own little three-year-old is right there where a series of pegs is a good job and one you can manage.*

*And then it reminds me of the whole act of hanging up clothes to dry,*

*which I still love, the very act of handling the textiles, being outside in the fresh air and the motoric aspect of it – you stretch. There is something about the mechanics of the peg – it is extremely simple and extremely useful, it won't break, and it can be inside or outside, it is the kind of cultural object we overlook today.*

*I like handling the peg and I also find it a beautiful object in all its functional simplicity.'*



# MAKERS MOVE

in conversation with  
**Nicole Rehne**

Nicole Rehne (b. 1967) Conservator.

**Nicole Rehne trained at the Danish Design School (Unika/product design) from 1991-1996 and later as a conservator at the School of Conservation, the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts from 2001-2004. She has worked as a conservator at Museion from 2005-2010 and since 2010 at the Museum of Copenhagen.**

*'I first trained at the design school; I have always loved materials – and the fact that function determines form. But I also felt that there were too many things in the world, so I returned to something I wanted to be as a child; I became a conservator. And I love it.*

*But then I thought – why preserve all the old rubbish? Until I realised that the reason for preserving things is that they are carriers of stories; and if there is a story, they are interesting, but if there is no story, they are unimportant.*

*It is important for me that what is preserved is the story, and that the imprints of people's lives that we can use – as objects to aid our stories – are preserved. That is what is exciting – then there is a red threat in it.'*

For our talk Nicole brought two different, yet connected objects. One object was a dried flower from a hillside, and the other was some blessed rice and seed pods from a ceremony at the convent. They come from a trip to Nepal, which she visited to seek answers to the questions, what is consciousness, and do everyone experience the world in the same way. As a child Nicole asked her mother if all people are in fact the same inside. But she never got an answer.

Nicole has two sons who in different ways have aroused her interest in how we humans experience the world differently, and how we are all unique when we enter the world. Her eldest son had a natural calm that moved her. He was well-balanced. Her youngest son was frail and restless and he insisted on having his close relations close by all the time. His need for love and honesty in his surroundings is great.

*'My first son inspired me to look for knowledge about consciousness, because he at an early age picked up very precise information about people who have passed away and whom he could know nothing about. My other son inspired me to look for someone who has experience with love and consciousness entangled, in one way or the other, and thus I have come across Buddhism several times.*

*I went to Nepal for three weeks and imagined that I would spend the time in a quiet retreat. But then there was a ceremony that lasted for nine days with hoots, cracks and buzzing and a lot of action – I chose to participate in it. I experienced clarity and kindness and an uncomplicated way of being in the world. At the ceremony rice and seeds were thrown into the air, and the atmosphere was great.*

*When everyone had left I sat down on a mountain side by the convent, 3,500 metres above sea level, and enjoyed the quietude after all that noise and energy.*

*I picked this little flower and it became a souvenir and carrier of memories of all the things that had happened. It reminded me of the atmosphere, the energy – the entire experience really. The rice and the seed pods are part of the rituals, and I have difficulties relating to the significance of the rituals, but the flower is not part of the rituals. It is the bloom of the experience.'*



# MAKERS MOVE

## in conversation with

### Ursula Andkjær Olsen

Ursula Andkjær Olsen (b. 1970) Author.

Ursula Andkjær Olsen trained as an author at Forfatterskolen (school of creative writing) from 1997-1999 and later became Master of Arts in music science and philosophy in 2002. She made her debut in 2000 with *Lulus sange og taler* and has since then published six books, the latest being *Det 3. årtusindes hjerte* in 2012. In 2010 Ursula published the long poem *Have og helvede*. The poem is not structured as a normal book, but instead embroidered and illustrated with collages made by the poet's sister, Julie Andkjær Olsen. The following year she published *Samlet, Poesi 2000-2012*, which contained Ursula Andkjær Olsen's six previous collections of poems as well as texts which had not previously been published in a book.

We met Ursula in her kitchen in Østerbro for a talk about keeping things and, not least, how we do so. Ursula gave an example of a small 'thingy' which was first kept – and later preserved. She put it this way, *'I have chosen to be con-*

*nected to this one – I have ritualised my relation to it. It is a hook, a tiny anchor, a hook everything depends on – that must be what makes it important.'*

First it is necessary to have kept something.

Then one may realise that something was kept.

Then one may realise that it must be significant, seeing as it was kept.

Finally, one may realise that everything depends on the fact that this something was kept.

First it is necessary to have remembered something.

Then one may realise that something was remembered.

Then one may realise that it must be significant, seeing as it was remembered.

Finally, one may realise that everything depends on the fact that this something was remembered.

There is a period of time between the time when this something was first kept/remembered and the time when its importance was realised. In which time goes in all directions.

*(From Ursula's webpage)*



Alt afhænger af den,  
ellers havde jeg vel ikke  
gæmt den

