



THE TASMANIAN PRINCESS
DEN TASMANSKE PRINSESSE

BODIL ROSENBERG

DÆMONERNES LAND

Før 1856 hed Tasmanien Van Diemen's Land. Øen tog navneforandring for at vaske fortidens rædsler af sig.

Koloniseringen af Australien begyndte med straffefanger, og slavelejrene i Van Diemen's Land var de mest umenneskelige af dem alle. Pisk, hængninger og tortur var dagens orden. Mange fanger flygtede fra kolonien, ud i vildnisset.

Dér boede i forvejen Tasmaniens indfødte befolkning, næppe mere end en 5.000 mennesker i alt, fordelt på en halv snes stammer, eller "lande".

Rettigheder havde de ingen af for de var ikke kristne og kunne derfor ikke sværge på Biblen. Deres land blev erklæret for mennesketomt, "terra nullius", eftersom de ikke dyrkede eller indhegnede deres jord, de var jægere og samlere.

Som alle andre mennesker levede tasmanierne i en besjælet verden. De var omgivet af ånder. De kristne betragtede tasmaniernes ånder som dæmoner, som djævl, som Djævelens værk.

De indfødte tasmaniere blev udryddet på en menneskealder. Som dæmoner har deres ånder og efterkommere siden hjem-søgt Van Diemen's Land.

VAN DEMONS LAND

Before 1856 Tasmania was called Van Diemen's Land. The name was changed to wash off the horrors of the past.

The colonisation of Australia began as a penal enterprise, and the slave camps in Van Diemen's Land were the most inhuman of all. Flogging, hanging and torture was the name of the day. Many convicts fled the colony, out into the wilderness.

Here Tasmania's aboriginals lived, hardly more than 5.000 souls in all, distributed over some ten tribes, "countries".

They had no rights. Not being Christians, they could not swear on the Bible. Their land was declared void of humans, "terra nullius" since they didn't till the earth or fence their land. They were hunters and gatherers.

As does everybody else, the Tasmanians lived in a spiritual world. They were surrounded by spirits that the Christians saw as demons, as devils, as the work of the Devil.

The aboriginal Tasmanians were exterminated within a lifetime. Their spirits and descendants have since visited Van Demons Land

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STADENS MUSEUM FOR KUNST · GALLOPPERIET · CHRISTIANIA

FORORD / FOREWORD

Bent Petersen, Editor

Bodil Rosenberg er Maler – Kunstmaler – med stort K og stort M. Det har altid været maleriet i sig selv, der har optaget hende – farven og dens påføring og struktur, fladerne. De genkendelige elementer, der har sneget sig ind undervejs, har kun haft betydning som bærere af farven og har blot understreget maleriets abstrakte karakter. De landskaber, man som beskuer har set i billederne, har man selv medbragt og projiceret ind i dem.

I den foreliggende serie malerier er det figurative element imidlertid blevet mere fremtrædende, fordi de tager udgangspunkt i en historisk beretning, dog uden at gå på kompromis med de maleriske kvaliteter. Der er stadig tale om malerier med abstraktionen som udgangspunkt og grundelement.

Mens landets medier flyder over med beretninger om det royale bryllup, har Bodil Rosenberg fordybet sig i beretningen om den tasmanske prinsesse Truganini, datter af høvdingen for Lyluequonny-folket. Som den sidste indfødte tasmancier døde hun i 1876. Det tog kun kolonisterne en menneskealder at udrydde den oprindelige befolkning, og det er blevet kaldt "verdens grundigste og hurtigst gennemførte folkemord".

Selv om nogle af malerierne har et skitseagtigt præg, der harmonerer med inspirationen fra de australske klippemalerier med deres stilerede figurer, er Bodil Rosenbergs malerier altid gennearbejdede med farven pålagt i flere lag. Hvert enkelt maleri i serien udtrykker en stemning med et eget toneleje og egen farveholdning, der gør dem meget forskellige. Der er satset markant på hvert enkelt billede.

Bodil Rosenberg is a Painter—an Artist—with a capital P and a capital A. She has always been preoccupied with the painting itself—the colour and its application and structure, the surfaces. The recognisable elements that appear serve as vehicles of colour only, and emphasize the abstract nature of the painting. The landscapes that the spectator actually sees in the paintings, are the viewer's very own projections on to the paintings themselves.

In the present series of paintings the figurative element has become more prominent, because they have a historical account as their starting point, without compromising, however, the artistic qualities. The paintings still have abstraction as their background and basic element.

While the media abound with accounts of the royal wedding, Bodil Rosenberg has immersed herself in the story of the Tasmanian princess Truganini, daughter of the chief of the Lyluequonny tribe. She was the last aboriginal Tasmanian when she died in 1876. Within a lifetime the colonists had exterminated the indigenous population. It has been labeled "the world's most thorough and fastest executed genocide".

Although a few of them have a sketch quality about them, well attuned to the inspiration from Australian rock paintings and their formalized figures, Bodil Rosenberg's paintings are always thoroughly prepared, with the colour applied in several layers. Each painting in this series expresses a mood with its own register and colour tone, making them very different. Every single painting has been given prominent attention.

PÅ HAVETS BUND

Truganini fortæller:

"Engang var jeg ovre på regeringens tømmerplads sammen med Paraweena som jeg skulle giftes med.

To tømmerhuggere tilbød at ro os hjem igen, men da vi var halvvejs ovre, holdt de mig fast og smed Paraweena overbord.

Han greb fat i rælingen for at komme om bord igen, men en af tømmerhuggerne kappede hans hænder over med en økse.

Så voldtog de mig."

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA

Truganini remembers:

"Once I went over to Birch's Bay where the government cut timber, together with Paraweena whom I was to marry.

Two loggers offered to row us back again, but halfway over they held me and threw Paraweena over board.

He grabbed the rail to get on board again, but one of the loggers chopped his hands off at the wrist with a hand-axe.

Then they raped me."



OKKER

Overalt i verden har menneskene brugt okker som den første farve ved siden af sort og hvid. Tasmanierne gik nøgne rundt, men pyntede sig med okker og trækul.

Okker forekommer mange steder og i mange nuancer fra grå-gult over orange og rødt til brunligt. Tasmanierne rejste langt for at skaffe kvalitets-okker. Bedst var minen i Toolumbunner.

OCHRE

All over the world man has used ochre as the first colour after black and white. So did the Tasmanians. They walked around naked, but adorned themselves with ochre and charcoal.

Ochre is found all over the world and in many nuances ranging from greyish yellow to orange to red to brownish. The Tasmanians travelled far to obtain quality ochre. Best was the mine in Toolumbunner.



ÆDEL OG VILD

De første opdagelsesrejsende begræd deres eget civiliserede liv, så fjernt fra naturens skønhed og harmoni. De beskrev tasmannierne med sympati og respekt, som "ædle vilde".

Typisk er billedet af den tasmanske kriger i årvågen hvilestilling, stående på ét ben, med det andet i en slags storkestilling, støttet til sit lange spyd. Og så holder han sin forhud mellem pege- og tommelfinger. Det hører med til posituren.

Tanken om "naturens muntre søn" gav sig også udslag i den tids børneopdragelse. Kong Frederik d. 6. var næppe den eneste europæiske prins der i sin barndom måtte gå barfodet rundt fordi opdragerne ville have ham "tilbage til naturen".

NOBLE AND SAVAGE

The first explorers lamented their own civilized life, so estranged from the beauty and harmony of Nature. They left sympathetic and respectful accounts of the Tasmanians as "noble savages".

Prototypical is the image of the Tasmanian warrior in alert resting pose, standing on one leg with the other one in a kind of stork position, supported by his long spear. He holds his foreskin between thumb and index finger. It is part of the pose.

The idea of the "merry son of nature" also influenced child rearing. The Danish king Frederik VI was hardly the only European prince who in his childhood was made to walk around barefooted because his educators wanted him "back to nature".



KLAPJAGT

I 1830 blev der gennemført en gigantisk og bekostelig klapjagt tværs over Tasmanien for at rense de besatte dele af øen for indfødte.

Alle koloniens mænd, frie såvel som fanger, 2200 mand i alt, gik i en klapperkæde i tre uger og fangede i alt en gammel mand og en dreng, resten af de indfødte undslap. Fem-seks af klapperne døde ved diverse uheld undervejs.

Men "Black Line", som kæden blev kaldt, umuliggjorde de indfødtes samfund i de berørte områder. De var for altid fordrevet.

BLACK LINE

In 1830 a gigantic and expensive chain hunt was conducted across Tasmania to cleanse the colonized parts of the island of natives.

All male colonists, both free settlers and convicts, 2200 hands in all, walked in a line of beaters for three weeks, eventually catching one old man and a boy. The rest of the aboriginals escaped. Five or six colonists died from accidents during the hunt.

But the Black Line, as the chain formation came to be known, made the aboriginal way of life impossible. They were exiled forever.



GENOPSTANDELSER

Ganske som de kristne, troede tasmanierne at mennesket har en sjæl der lever videre efter døden og genopstår i et nyt legeme.

Med Truganini som ambassadør vandrede George Robinson rundt på Tasmanien, samlede de overlevende indfødte sammen og ledte dem til eksil og udslettelse på en øde ø.

Der omvendte han dem til kristendommen: være påklædt, bo i huse, dyrke jorden, bruge penge, læse avis, gå i kirke, tro på Jesus og især Djævelen ...

Nogle tasmaniere drog den konklusion at når de døde, ville deres sjæl tage til Paradis, dvs England, og genopstå dér.

RESURRECTIONS

Just like the Christians, the Tasmanians believed that man has a soul that lives on after death and is resurrected in a new body.

With Truganini as his ambassador, George Robinson walked round Tasmania, collected the surviving indigenes and led them into exile and extinction on a desolate island.

There he converted them to Christianity: wearing clothes, living in houses, tilling the land, using money, learning to read, going to church, believing in Jesus and above all the Devil ...

Some Tasmanians concluded that after death their souls would go to Paradise, i.e. England, to be resurrected there



TURISTER I RESERVATET

De sidste overlevende tasmaniere blev overflyttet fra Flinders Island til nogle usunde barakker syd for hovedstaden i 1847, og de blev hurtigt en lokal turistattraktion. Hobarts nysgerrige tog på søndagstur til reservatet, og der kunne tasmanierne og kolonisterne så betragte hinanden.

SIGHTSEEING ON THE RESERVATION

The last surviving Tasmanians were removed from Flinders Island to some condemned barracks south of Hobart in 1847 and quickly became a local tourist attraction. The curious made a Sunday excursion to the reservation, where Tasmanians and colonists could ponder on each other.



DEM OG OS

Videnskaben har været meget optaget af indfødte befolkningers kranier og knogler. Man anså urbefolkningerne for tilbagestående, og mente at det kunne aflæses af deres skelet.

Man håbede at kunne forstå hvordan menneskeheden havde udviklet sig frem til sit ypperste, dvs videnskabsmanden selv: den kristne europæiske veluddannede velhavende modne mand.

Allermest tilbagestående mentes tasmanierne at være. Enhver videnskabelig knoglesamling med respekt for sig selv måtte have tasmanske knogler, allerhelst et kranie. William Lanneys hovede står stadig på en hylde på universitetet i Edinburgh.

Samtidig fandt man også kranier og rester af endnu mere forhistoriske mennesker når man gravede efter kul og mineraler, fx neanderthalerne og andre formodede "missing links" mellem os og aberne.

THEM AND US

Science has been quite preoccupied with skulls and bones of aboriginal peoples. Aboriginals were considered "backward" and it was thought that their backwardness could be inferred from their skeletons.

Scientists hoped to understand how humanity had reached its pinnacle, i.e. the scientist himself: the Christian European well-educated wealthy mature male.

Most backwards of all were the Tasmanians, so it was thought, and any respectable scientific bone collection really had to have Tasmanian bones, preferably a skull. William Lanney's head still sits on its shelf at the University of Edinburgh.

Skulls and bones of even more prehistoric humans, Neanderthals and other presumed "missing links" to the apes, were found at the same time in pits and quarries in Europe



PÅ MUSEUM

På sit dødsleje bad Truganini så mindeligt om ikke at blive skændet, sådan som det var sket for den sidste tasmanske mand, William Lanney. Hans lig blev skåret i stykker i flere omgange af trofæhungrige forskere.

Truganinis bøn blev ikke hørt. Også hun blev flået, og hendes afkogte skelet udstillet på museet i hovedstaden. Det blev først taget ned i 1947, efter at nazisternes forsøg på at udslette jøder og sigøjnere i Europa havde sat fokus på begrebet folkemord.

Bestræbelsen på at få hende behørigt begravet var et vigtigt symbolsk fokus for de tasmanske efterkommeres kamp for retigheder og anerkendelse fra 1960erne og frem.

Truganinis skelet blev kremeret i 1976, 100-året efter hendes død. Men først i 2002 blev hendes sidste rester begravet. Det var håret og noget af hendes hud der havde ligget i en britisk samling.

ON EXHIBIT

On her death bed Truganini pleaded that her corpse not be desecrated, as the last Tasmanian man, William Lanney, had been. His body was cut to pieces by scientist trophy hunters.

Truganini's plead was not heeded. She too was skinned and her boiled skeleton was later exhibited at the museum in Hobart. It wasn't taken down until 1947, when the Nazi attempt to eradicate Jews and Gypsies in Europe had brought the concept of genocide home.

The endeavour to have her remains properly buried was an important symbolic focus of the struggle for rights and recognition waged by the Tasmanians' descendants from the sixties on.

Truganini's skeleton was cremated in 1976, the centenary of her death. But not until 2002, were her last remains buried, when her hair and portions of her skin were returned from a British collection.



JEG SKAL KOMME EFTER DIG

Truganini var den "sidste" oprindelige tasmanier. Med hende forsvandt også sproget og kulturen.

Alligevel er der efterkommere.

Tasmanske kvinder og børn blev røvet af kolonisterne, og i dag angiver en 3% af Tasmaniens befolkning at have rødder i urbefolkningen.

Gennem de sidste 30-40 år har de med held krævet rettigheder og kompensation.

I'LL BE COMING AFTER YOU

Truganini was the "last" real Tasmanian. With her the language and culture disappeared, too.

Yet there are descendants.

Tasmanian women and children were abducted by the colonists, and today some 3% of Tasmania's population declare themselves to be of aboriginal descent.

During the last 30 years or so, they have successfully demanded rights and compensations.



MEMER / MEMES

Memer er stumper af "betydning". Det kan være et citat, en måde at klæde sig på, nogle linjer af en sang, et logo, et synspunkt, en stump af en teori, en ceremoni, en figur i et maleri, en hændelse i en beretning, eller en hel fortælling. Fx historien om prinsesse Truganini og det tasmanske folkemord.

Memer har en uafhængig eksistens, de har deres egen dagsorden og handler på egen hånd. De bevæger sig rundt fra hjerne til hjerne, hvor de formerer sig og spreder sig fra. Et mem kan gå i stykker, så kun en del af det kopieres videre, og det kan mutere, så det nye mem er lidt (nogle gange meget) anderledes end sit ophav.

Vi er vant til at betragte vore synspunkter og interesseområder som noget vi selv har valgt, noget vi har kontrollen over, men set fra memernes synsvinkel er vi blot beholdere, overlevelsesmaskiner. Vi huser "vores" memer som en slags parasitter, nogle af dem gavnlige, andre skadelige. De tager bolig i os og sætter os til at sprede sig. Vi har ikke vores meninger, vores meninger har os.

En samling af meget forskellige memer, store som små, har indgået et samarbejde om at bruge disse malerier, dette udstillingssted og denne måned til at mangfoldiggøre sig gennem.

Memteorien om hvordan kulturtræk videreføres, blev skåret over genteoriens læst af zoologen Richard Dawkins i 1976, og den har selv vist sig at være et livskraftigt mem.

Memes are pieces of "meaning". It might be a quotation, a way to dress, some verses of a song, a logo, a point of view, a fragment of a theory, a ceremony, a figure in a painting, a episode in a story or the whole story, like the one about princess Truganini and the Tasmanian genocide.

Memes lead an independent existence, they have their own private agenda and act on their own. They move around from brain to brain, where they replicate, and spread from which they spread. A meme can break up, so that only part of it is copied, and it can mutate, so that the new meme is a bit (occasionally a lot) different from its parent.

Usually we consider our points of view and fields of interest to be something we have chosen ourselves, something we are in command of, but from the perspective of the memes we are just vessels, survival machines. We harbour "our" memes as a sort of parasite, some benign, some malicious. They take up residence in us and employ us as agents of their proliferation. We do not have our opinions, our opinions have us.

Some very diverse memes, large and small, have joined to exploit these paintings, this locality and this month, to replicate.

The meme theory of cultural transmission was tailored to the pattern of the gene theory by the zoologist Richard Dawkins in 1976. The meme theory itself has proved a vigorous meme.

BODIL ROSENBERG, f 1950

www.bodilrosenberg.dk

Udstillinger / Exhibitions

Kunstnernes Efterårsudstilling, Den Frie, Kbh. 1985
Århus Musikhus. 1985
Kvindegalleriet, Kbh. 1983/84/85
Galleri Nørregade, Kbh. 1986
Skovgården, Værløse. Separat. 1987
Københavns Universitet, "Kunst på KUA". 1987
Udstillingsstedet Kongo, Kbh. Separat. 1988
Overgaden, Kulturministeriets Udstillingshus, Kbh. 1988
Albertslund Bibliotek 1989
Overgaden, Kulturministeriets Udstillingshus, Kbh. Frank Rubins collage-samling. 1989
Galleri Marius, Kbh. Separat. 1990
Vejle Kunstmuseum. Frank Rubins collagesamling. 1990
Gallerie Gl. Strand, Kbh. 1990
Karg, Oldenburg am Bremen 1991
Stadsbiblioteket i Lyngby. Separat. 1992
Gladsaxe Hovedbibliotek. Separat. 1992
Galleri Kobolt, Kbh. 1993
Galerie Gerly, Kbh. 1994
Galerie Gerly, Kbh. Separat. 1995
Pakhuset, Nyk. Sj. 1996
Galerie Gerly, Kbh. Separat 1997
Senoji Varena, Litauen. 1998
Galerie Bram, Hobro. 1999
Aalborg Kunstpavillon, Aalborg. 2001
Galerie Pi, Kbh. Separat. 2002
Hafnarborg Museum, Reykjavik. 2002
Galopperiet, Stadens Museum for Kunst, Christiania. Separat. 2004

Legater / Grants

Kulturministeriets udstillingsstøtte. 1988 - 89
Gl. Dok, Statens Værksteder for Kunst og Håndværk. 1988
Theodor von Irgens-Bergh kunstnerlegat. 1989 - 92 - 02
Kunsthändler Richard Wilstrups legat. 1989
Weimanns Legat. 1989
KIKU, Komiteen for internationale kunstudst. 1991
Kunstmaler H.C. Koefoeds Legat. 1998
Kulturministeriets "Østpulje". 1998

Solgt til / Collections

Hafnarborg Museum, Reykjavik.
Vejle Kunstmuseum
Gentofte Kunstbibliotek
Gladsaxe Kunstbibliotek
Værløse Kommune.
Københavns Universitet, Amager
Optræningsinstituttet ved Rigshospitalet, København
Gladsaxe Kommune
Udenrigsministeriet

Medlemskaber / Member of

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DRONNING UDEN FOLK

Som ung fortryllede Truganini alle og enhver, sort som hvid.

Hun var med til at samle sine overlevende landsmænd sammen på en øde ø. Der fik de allesammen europæiske fyrstetitler, og Truganini selv blev Prinsesse.

Man siger at hun fortrød sin deltagelse i indfangningen af stammerne. Og senere deltog hun også i et oprør mod de kristne på det australske fastland.

På sine gamle dage blev hun kaldt Dronning, men hun var en dronning uden folk.

QUEEN WITHOUT A PEOPLE

As a young woman Truganini enchanted each and everyone, black and white alike.

She participated in the exiling of all surviving aboriginals to a desolate island. There they were all given European princely titles and Truganini became a Princess.

She regretted, so they say, her part in the conciliation of the tribes. And later she joined a rebellion against the Christians on the Australian mainland.

In her old days she was called Queen but she was a queen without a people.

