

I first visited the Sex Tags apartment to look at some drawings. We talked for a while about how this project would unfold and the following day Peter sent me a few more to look at while writing. We then decided that perhaps it would be best if I came around again, and that I could write the piece while some new drawings were being made. So I put off the writing for a while. A week later I stopped by again, ready to begin. This time we were soon distracted. It developed into an external hard-drive/ bluetooth-driven share-a-thon, a real old-school copy-party. This was triggered by discussing a mix we had been listening to the week before. It was a mix that Stefan had made earlier that morning and highlights included Skatebård's "June Nights South of Siena" and the Nightcrawlers' incredible "Push the Feeling On", which fourteen years after its release obviously sounds a bit dated, but still massive and anthemic. Mixing it into some obscure, brutal Chicago-track it took on the air of some kind of heavenly revelation. This new context kept pushing it in a weird direction that I hadn't really considered before. The result was very different from the last time I played the track myself, when (messing about on Traktor while at work) I mixed it into Depeche Mode's "The Sinner in Me", the rejected Villalobos-remix, of course. You can, by the way, download Stefan's mix here: <http://sextags.com/news.htm>

So this time we didn't really talk about the project at all. The first time we discussed the strategic and theoretical concerns of the project quite a bit, of which more at some later point. That night it seemed evident that Stefan and I were slightly more interested in these questions than Peter. As I went home that first evening, I realised that it would be imperative that my first text begin with a thorough examination of the drawings themselves.

Upon hearing that I was an art historian an old farmer from my rural home in Eastern Norway once asked me about an old painting he had inherited. "It's real nice", he said, "it's got a frame and everything." In Flanders in the 17th century a painting would routinely sell for more than double the price if the frame was nice. This seems to indicate that their tolerance for advanced art theory was at least as sophisticated as ours.

A cowboy is looking into the horizon, shooting at a cactus while a snake is approaching his leg. How did his ass get shifted to the right like that? The line is sharp and clear. The drawings get their subject matter from a wide variety of sources, or maybe not that wide. Often Disney characters get into weird debates on critical theory in that murky cross area that exists between hip hop and relational aesthetics. Where Lil' Kim and Claire Bishop dress up and go shopping for the latest transla-

tions of Bataille. Occasionally new characters emerge, like The Happy Boy, a personal favorite of mine. There is a certain element of subterfuge at work in these drawings. The references to contemporary theory are always coloured by the way they're de-located into the minds of banal Disney characters. Less with the Hamletmaschine, more with the Toy Machine. The identity of a work of art always issues a challenge which expects to be met, I am unsure as to what Goofy really expects. Goofy, in fact, is particularly vulnerable and often defends himself by using unexpected religious signifiers. The consistent use of this wide variety of references, references which by now are far from exclusive, begs the question whether the collection of drawings, the archive which has been established, represents a coherent entity pervaded by a common spirit. There is no gray, and very little shading. Everything is either black or white. There is always a demarcation line, you just have to look for it. There is a clear division between inside and outside. Of course there is.

**Bergen, 16th January 2007,  
Erlend Hammer.**

*"There is always a demarcation line, you just have to look for it. There is a clear division between inside and outside. Of course there is."*

This is where we left off in Førde. The dichotomy between inside and outside is a central theme in Western philosophy and in the Art world. What cannot be seen is not necessarily thought not to exist; often, rather, we feel that it exists elsewhere, that it is hidden from us. Then we yearn for it, because we feel that it should be possible to reach it, to have access. So we have developed the metaphysics of presence, to have something to hope for, and the melancholy aesthetics of absence; as consolation while we wait. For the Venice biennale in 2003 Santiago Sierra closed off the entry to the Spanish pavilion, but people holding a valid Spanish passport could enter the space through a hidden backdoor. "Don't you know who I am?" was not a valid key to gain entrance.

Sognom Part 2 is based on the massive archive of drawings at Sex Tags HQ in Bergen. There are huge amounts of drawings and they relate to each other in many different ways. The drawings are the main thing. They create a fascinating world of interrelational polarities and threads run through them in all directions, thematically, stylistically etc. Paul Huf has written that seeing the

# THE THOUGHT FROM INSIDE

BY ERLEND HAMMER  
TAKEN FROM SEX TAGS' SOGNOM PART 2 PROJECT

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drawings is like going to a bar where no-faced hippies dance all night, where men with badly shaved vaginas don't stop talking and where people keep losing body parts. Paul and I probably go to very different bars. To me they are like the kind of dream where there is no centre and where your attention finds no rest. The drawings are like a thematic exploration of the formalist qualities of Jackson Pollock. In Pollocks paintings your eyes are constantly pulled in new directions and the same happens with the many characters here, the way they interact, the way they get into these weird narratives that mostly make no sense. Actually, that is really the wrong thing to say. The problem is not that the narratives make no sense, quite the opposite in fact; they make all kinds of sense. The problem is to choose which kind of sense you want to experience, and, not least, you need to find your own gateway into it all. As the end of American Psycho says: "This is not an exit."

**Bergen, 27th February 2007,  
Erlend Hammer.**

## DANSART (HAUGESUND) PRESS RELEASE

**Sex Tags "Sognom Part 2"**

**15.04 – 03.06 / Preview : 14.04 / 19.00- 21.00 /**

**D**ANSART (HAUGESUND) is pleased to announce this brand new piece by Bergen/ Amsterdam-based artist duo Sex Tags. At the centre of the piece, which is entitled *Sognom Part 2* is the relationship between drawings and text, art and theory, the irrational and logic. The interrelations of these complex sets of seemingly disparate concepts form the idea of a center, which is to say that there is an idea of the possibility of order and stability within the uncertain.

A black line drawn across a white background can depict an axis between the two points that mark the line's ends. In this case the line is a pragmatic one. It navigates along a narrative linearity where opposites exist merely so as to create a middle ground, the space between 'yes' and 'no.' It is a means towards consensus, towards a group's recognition of itself as such. This line builds community and gives preference to the unifying elements that lie inherent in all structures, whether they be primary or powerless.

The black line drawn across a white background can, however, also function as a border between two separate spaces. Here the line makes a different sort of demand, and in turn offers a different set of clues. It becomes a complex area of fluctuation, the topogra-

phy of which is navigated only by the brave, the ones who do not shy away from uncertainty, darkness and the unexpected. Here there is no such thing as a simple choice. Instead there is only the nervous trajectory of transgression. Instead of consensus, this line pulls the viewer towards a non-gravitational non-center marked by antagonism, the kind described by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau in their 1985 treatise *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

Whatever the case, whether defining social structures in the positive or the negative; the line is rational, bold and monumental. It draws us into its world and presents itself as something that can, or indeed must, be considered as relevant to experience. Sex Tags draw much of their inspiration from such sources, as can be seen in the way their lines are traced and balanced in the space between the social and the formalist. Their lines are not either/ or, but rather one part of an otherwise invisible grid. Seeing the grid in its completion demands that the spectator simultaneously follows the line and transgresses its borders.

Sex Tags (b. 1982 / 1983, Österreich) received their education from Fine Art Department at Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen and Mølla kunstskole, Moss. Throughout the course of the exhibition their works can also be seen in the exhibition *Abstraktionen* and "Wenn niemand eine Reise tut, darüber muß man zweigen" in Kunstverein Privaten Zimmer, Bergen.

For further information please visit our webpage: [www.sextags.com](http://www.sextags.com) or contact Erlend Hammer at <mailto:erlend@dansarthaugesund.no> or +47 917 46 702 / +47 55 58 41 61. DANSART (HAUGESUND) is open Tuesday-Friday: 12.00-17.00 / Saturday-Sunday: 12.00-16.00

*The day before closure of an experimental factory. Redundancy following the lure of infinite flexibility. Reoccupation, recuperation and aimless renovation. Reconfiguring the recent past.*

# THE THOUGHT FROM INSIDE

BY ERLEND HAMMER  
TAKEN FROM SEX TAGS' SOGNOM PART 2 PROJECT

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**E**leven Stages of Sex Tags'  
Timeless Stylistic Art  
Historical Cycle

General exhortations, homilies, treatises, advice, confessions, accounts, tell what happened urgings, intellectual exercises, instruction. (Pseudo-apings and echoing.)

Nothing to win, nowhere to go.

Those who write for all time are unreadable at any time.

Essence of art is to have fixed rules, regular routines.

Shattering as essence of art, renunciation, refusals.

As soon as we have a frame, anything does not go to whose advantage, no clear separations.

Mark it off, to keep it holy, not to be mistaken for ordinary.

Last vestige of brightness.

Pervasiveness, sensuousness, evanescence, suffusion, field of force.

Repetition as first idea of form, identical, interchangeability, serialization.

Point where figure a hindrance, then vanishes.

**Erlend Hammer, 2007.**