

Exhibition "Lines - Gaps - Hare Wire" by Sine Semljé in Engen the 2nd of September 2004

Dear Sine Semljé,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the exhibition by Sine Semljé.

The title of the exhibition, namely "Lines – Gaps – Hare Wire", suggests something about the intention of the artist. It is a multi-layered title and I would like to prompt you with some thoughts to get involved into the exhibition.

**LINES**

There is a continuous quest for tracks inside the works of Sine Semljé, a constant balancing and weighing of contents, powers and dimensions. It is a search going into every spacial direction. Lines are like tracks, they are signs of movement as well as signs of pushing forward on the one hand, and signs of demarcation and standstill on the other hand. Coincidentally developed or consciously drawn, lines mean both beginning and end. Lines are an act of creating, a continuously redeveloping process of coming into being and melting out of it as well as of dividing and linking. Sine Semljé manages to capture a conglomeration of connection, conjunction and division by reducing it, but without simplifying the complex network of development and passing away and also of life and death. Like pattern sheets traced by the eyes, , there appear landscapes of existence on the walls.

While tracing these lines, associations are certainly developing in mind: of traces in snow, landscapes full of light and brightness or ornamental patterns. From the few essential lines (which can be understood quite literal) one can compose, shape and create the representational and the nonrepresentational, while Sine Semljé is revealing something of herself. Her skill of having the essential of space and time appear on these plates causes the question, whether reduction helps or not to understand better the essential. This is not a new realization, but it is often forgot.

The daily attack of the media on eyes and ears forces one to believe that one can never see or read quite enough to understand a message. Yet more to see and to hear would rise the supply of knowledge and realization. But we all know that this is not the way it really works. To avoid the dilemma, the claim has to be: back to the essential. This message is inherent in the works of Sine Semljé. But the images show also a tightrope walk between reduction and simplifying. Sine Semljé does not simplify. She reduces the lines up to the point at which the balance of the image structure is yet noticeable. It is a precisely balanced net of lines, in which nothing is too much, but not yet too little either. Above all, it seems to me that nothing is accidental here. The line is a floating beam between two spots for Sine Semljé.

A condition of floating, of being free, an expression of calm and being balanced, is developing here. And at this point, the images begin to have effect: as a signpost for self-reflection, maybe also as a signpost for self-determination.

Like Beuys once expressed it: "The line is the continuation of thoughts."

While watching the images of Sine Semljé, it occurred to me that the Polish poet Angelus Silesius wrote in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the following epigram:

Man, become essential;

For when the world passes by, the accident will vanish.

It is the essence that will last.

## **GAPS**

Gaps put the quest for traces in a nutshell. Pausing, stopping, becoming absorbed, wondering what exactly is underneath. Digging deeper, going underneath the surface, searching the ground. In spite of being created trivially, a gap is a sign for activity, it is the trace of an action, it is also an injury of the surface, an intentional destruction. However (much) balanced the linearly created structures in her images appear: Laid over the structures in a second level, but in the very same image, Sine Semljé questions them over and over again.

At such fixed points the eye stops seeking the space and hoping to find a new line because of needing something to hold on to. Thus, a motion, which is not only dependent on the line anymore, is created. It is a wandering between continuation and being fixed - how Beuys called it – because the look cannot be easily turned away from the perforation of the surface.

Sine Semljé creates a kind of rhythm of sight between motion and standing still as well as between dynamics and relaxation. Nevertheless, she does not lose the balance of the structure in the image. It is woven into a triple: First, the lines are balanced; second, the gaps are balanced; and third, lines and gaps melt together into a new floating beam again. Like watching a subtle mobile, which is still lightly shaking in the wind and the motion of which slowly dies down until its standstill, you also have to calm down while watching that. But yet, it is a questionable calmness. The gaps appear to be plunged too deep into the material, so that violence has been necessary to produce them and the thrust must have been planned. Everybody seems to know that while being under the influence of uncontrollable powers this mobile in her images easily gets chaotic again. Sine Semljé says it is very difficult to hold the balance. Thus, the images have a kind of contemplative character as well as there is something disturbing, sometimes even self-destructing or morbid to them up to that point at which the gap proves to be a black void.

Although the image world of Sine Semljé appears calm and composed to us and we'd like to dream away and meditate while watching, the images are not, however, a synopsis of an intact world. It seems more like a world with sensitive structures, which bruise very easily.

But giving her images just the character of an intact harmony would be too little. "Harmony and disharmony meet each other," says art scientist Monika Spiller about Sine Semljé's work.

Searching for harmony in her images would also mean restricting the look to one single image. But her lines and gaps do not end at the image border. Reducing stands also for changing the indifferent into something universally valid or, as mentioned before, into something essential. And so, her images turn out to be bright

illuminated showcases showing valid structures, like peepholes into the fine mesh of illusions, into which we are integrated and in which we are simultaneously captured.

## **HARE WIRE**

Behind the mesh of wire, there is a captivated hare. He does not even dream of what will happen soon. The wire is comprising his still intact world. Although captivated, he is feeling safe there. The wire gives insight into a different world, but at the same time it divides – and the hare is fine. Here, in all its coarseness, this fine mesh of lines and gaps materializes itself. The structure becomes visible, perceptible and easier to describe. Lightly pressed on, the structure can be deformed. It can be deformed in any way without losing the basic construction of the knotted and tied up wire lines.

The topic of Sine Semljé, namely the quest for a balanced structure, remains in the objects. But now, after its beginning in the gaps of the twodimensional image, the quest turns to the threedimensional space. The wire structure supports, shapes and stabilizes. Sine Semljé puts another material on it: transparent silk. The silk adapts oneself to the structure and, although wrapping it up, does not wholly cover it.

There appears an aesthetically formed object. But consider that the aesthetical shape of the silk material only develops because of the basic structure of the wire giving the precondition. With just two materials, wire and silk, a likeness of our life is arising. At first there is a structure and then there comes a draft of our life into being – smoothed, folded, wrapped, rolled, covering oneself. There is our life and our knowledge behind it, just like in the scrolls of the Jewish Thora, which reveals its contents only when being unrolled carefully. Apart from its religious meaning, the Thora (which stands for “instruction” or “advice”) is finally a collection of traditions. Tradition obviously has a dimension of time. It has been collected and deposited over an almost eternal period of time as well as this silk here over the basic wire structure. The “Y” stands for human life, in which good and bad finally disperse. It is a symbol from the Greek antiquity. But the “Y” also is close to the Christian cross. Symbolically, in this letter the knowledge and progress of the world assemble.

I offer a last note to this chapter: The trivial (=hare wire) gives the valuable (=silk) the necessary support.

## **WHITE**

Although not mentioned in the title of the exhibition, I would like to talk about the white colour. Because of having much talked about the reduction in the work of Sine Semljé, the reduction of the colour hardly is surprising. She has been working at that for several years. Considered from the perspective of art history, the meditative or monochromatic painting was a reaction against the colourspreading expressionism at first, reinforced by the growing influence of Far-eastern religions and philosophies. Especially the globalization of the zen buddhism gave free sight to European eyes into the meaning of the white colour.

Once, everybody was thinking that a painting isn't ready, until the white of the canvas is vanished. With the impressionists, this common opinion came to an end. After that, the monochromatic painting admitted the independence of the white colour. Thus, finally, the Minimal Art also had the following conviction: a reduced image can only be seen as a reduced image and as nothing more than that. Therefore, a white area is a white area. The dogma of the Minimal Art announced that the reduction of graphic means is equal with the reduction of interpretational background. But Sine Semljé does not agree with that. When setting up white areas, more linking than dividing through fine lines and compensating the weight of lines through the power of gaps, she creates an atmospheric continuum, which corresponds to the ideas of Lucio Fontana. The Italian called in his "Manifesto Blanco" in 1946 for a unity art combining sound, light and motion together.

Sine Semljé is showing in her exhibition that this unity succeeds. But there is also always a warning in her works of art. This warning reads as follows:

To combine harmoniously is one thing. But the fact that nothing is eternal, is still the other thing.

Thomas Warndorf

