

SARA KORSHØJ CHRISTENSEN



LET'S BEGIN... WITH A BREAK

Detail: A-Zs – Unfinished struggles, resolutions and potential disasters,
2023, Twenty-six ceramic sculptures, painted MDF, approx. diameter 200 cm

Sara Korshøj Christensen
LET'S BEGIN... WITH A BREAK
OCTOBER 6 - NOVEMBER 5, 2023

Galleri K

Bjørn Farmanns gate 4, N-0271 Oslo, Norway
Besøksadresse: Bjørn Farmanns gate 2

THE SLEEP OF AGENDA MAY PRODUCE COMPLEXITIES

Seven steps into the show Let's Begin... With a Break

By Gaby Hartel

For Susie K.



1.

Beep ... Click ... Swipe ... and ... practice deep reading?
No time for that now.

Click ... Swipe ... Beep ... and ... intervene in urgent situations?
I'm not so sure.

Swipe ... Click ... Beep ...and ... come up with a much-needed solution?
Perhaps it doesn't work that way.

And why not, I wonder?

Because in a world more reliant than ever on digital participation the constant stream of urgent infos won't ever stop. It will go on, relentlessly producing the next set of issues, of clicks, and beeps and swipes. And thus rock us into a static mind space; lull us into believing that we are actually in the thick of it, taking part, decoding, understanding, intervening, having a say; that we are making a difference: in politics; in social life; in our respective private realms.

Click ... Swipe ...etc.

I sometimes wonder what would happen if we'd, instead, just go like this:
Pause ... pause ... and ... pause.



2.

If we just took a moment to interrupt the constant flow of information and by side-stepping the never-ending rhythm of click and click and click, would lift our eyes from our shiny screens and cast a glance around us.

Take a deep breath.

What we might find in front of us will most likely be the downright Ordinary. Little everyday things and exchanges – a chat with someone on the tram; a wink towards a grumpy child that's being told off by a parent; then again everyday perceptions - the dandelion glowing between two time-worn cobble stones which it has made its home; the rainbow-glitter of a shattered bottle's shards which is given a brief new life in the flickering morning light.

Sliding advertisements screens, too, catch our eyes, and neon signs and other urban messages which claim to hold the key to truths and hopes and dreams and wishes.

We are familiar with them.

They talk to us.

They want us to invest and to oblige, to follow them and like them.

Just as they did one hundred years ago, when the Surrealists decided to turn the everyday, its objects, language and its signage into a new artistic alphabet. And so, by slightly changing their familiar look, endow them with a double meaning, an extra-ordinary magic by which those artists hoped to change the automatized perception of their time (and ours?).



3.

So why not stop.

Look at the space which Christensen has created for your perusal.

Move around in it.

And, step by step begin to turn your head this way and that.

And stop again.

And start to marvel.



4.

What kind of space is this you're in? It has the feel of a walled garden, and yet it is indoors. A friendly hand with an outstretched index finger invites you to explore the premises and yet it also points quite imposingly into a precise direction. Then, too, you discover at close inspection that it bears the unsettling semblance to the barrel of a gun. Yes, you feel welcome to take a stroll and to explore and take your time in front of all those cheerful, bouncy and cartoonlike signs and plants and flowers, sun glasses, tassels, puzzles and rugs, clocks and curtains.

But once you realize that what looks as if a playful hand had drawn it on the walls and floors, is actually made from painted metal rods which have been bent and welded with quite some physical force, once you feel the immense amount of time that has been spent on tufting those lofty rugs, once you have realized all that you begin to suspect that you've been tricked into the realm of double talk. And that perhaps unknowingly, you slipped into the role of Alice in her Wonderland only to fall, like her, into a trap or through a rabbit-hole. You're obviously in a world where everything is other than it looks. And so, indeed, familiar signs start interacting with their titles and speaking to your perceptive mind in a language spiced with visual and verbal puns.



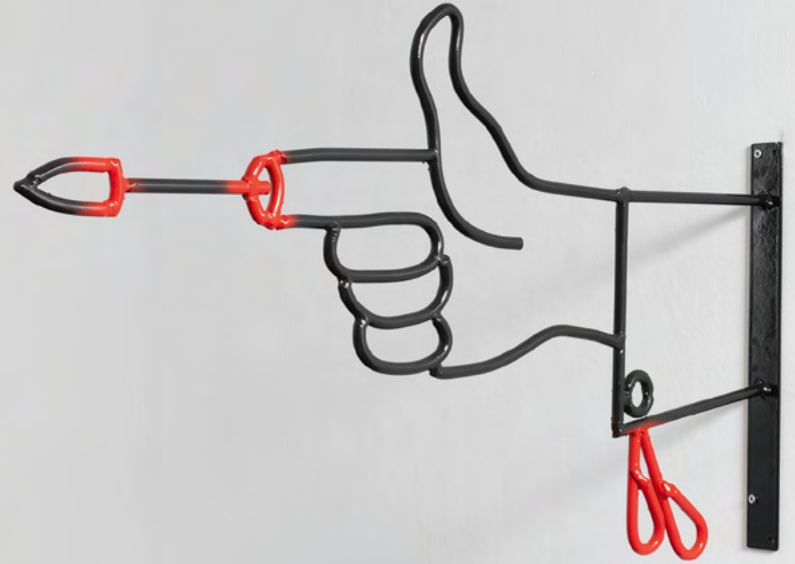
Going Metal - Carrot is sometimes confused with Carat I & II,
2023, Painted steel, 79 x 29 x 6 cm and 63 x 27 x 6 cm





9 to 6 - Carpet Diem, 2023, Loop pile tuft, 152 x 198 cm

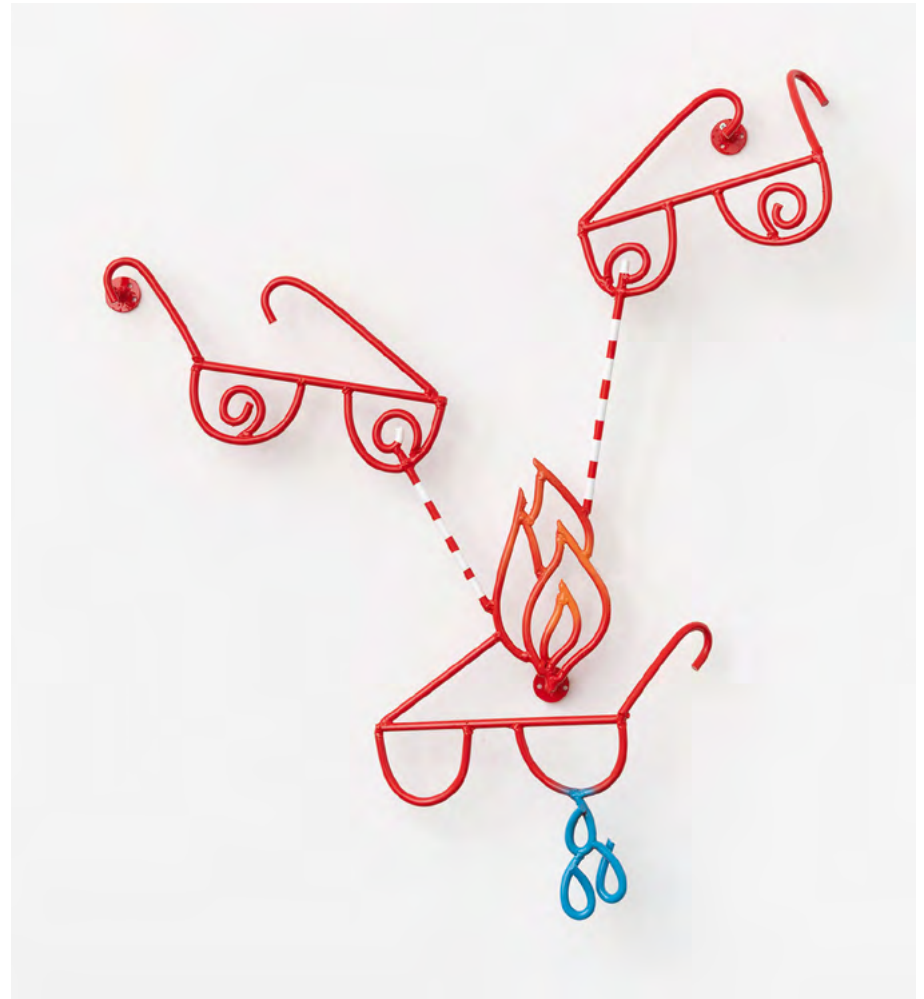
Going Metal - Point It, 2023, Painted steel, 48 x 4 x 81 cm





Mas Scared

Pass Time, 2023, Applique in molton, 300 x 300 cm



Going Metal - Don't give me those Eyes,
2023, Painted steel, 96 x 67 x 15 cm

Going Metal - It's too late to tell you, 2023, Painted steel, 135 x 70 x 22 cm





Hands Off, 2023, Applique in molton, 300 x 300 cm



Going Metal - Meetingpoint, 2023, Painted steel, 85 x 67 x 6 cm



Going Metal - Bærekraft III, 2023, Painted steel, 138 x 240 x 6 cm



Going Metal - Bærekraft II, 2023, Painted steel, 180 x 188 x 6 cm



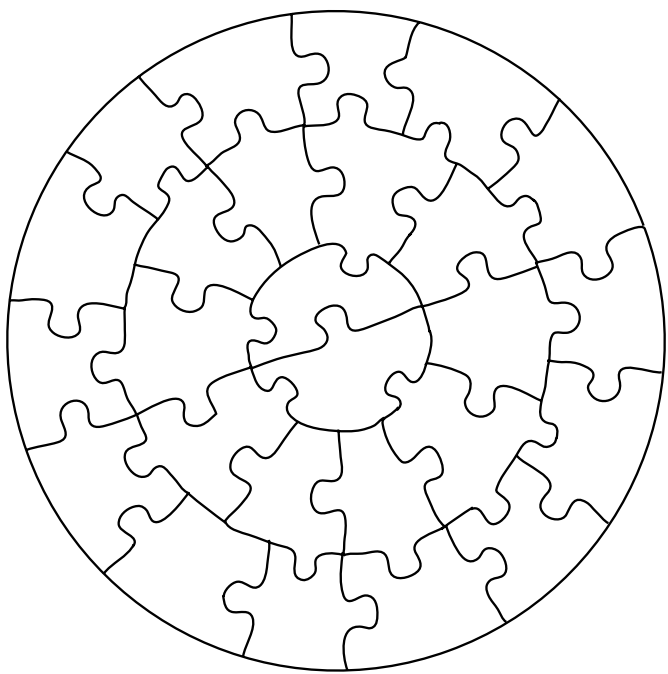
Going Metal - Bærekraft I, 2023, Painted steel, 152 x 188 x 6 cm

Plotting, 2023, Motors, tassels, batteri, MDF, variable size





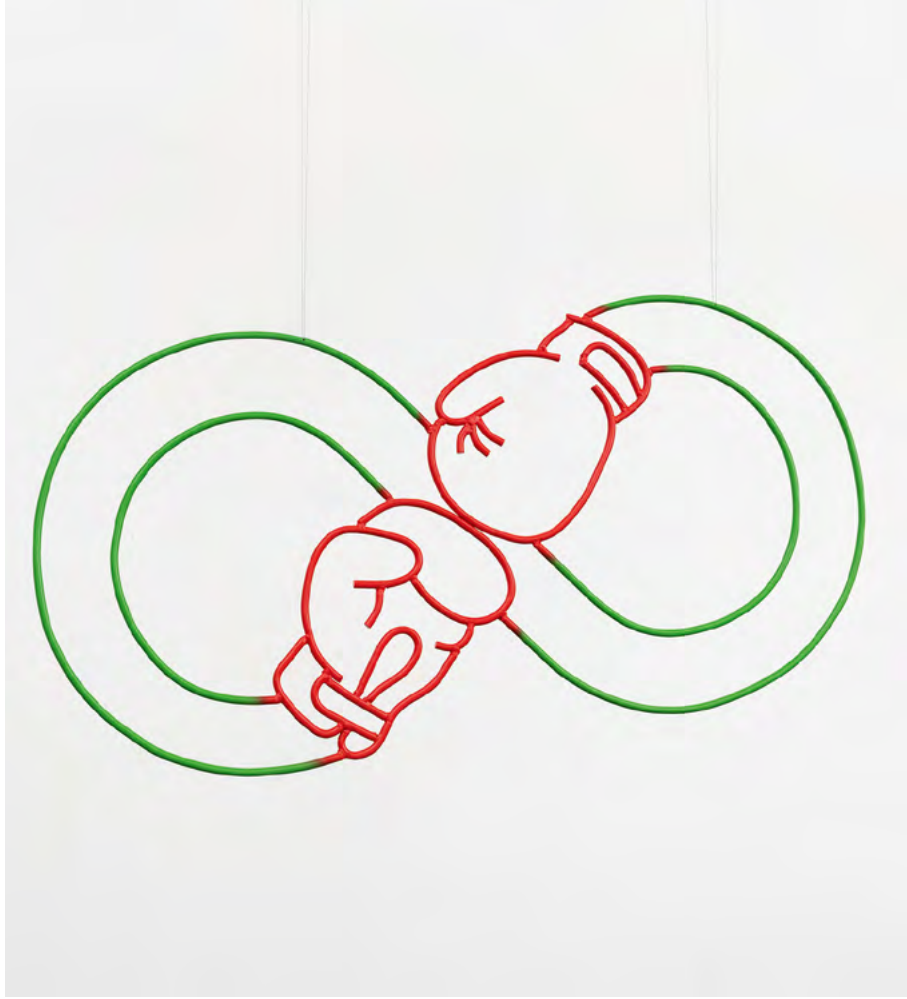
Going Metal - Cherish, 2023, Painted Steel, variable size



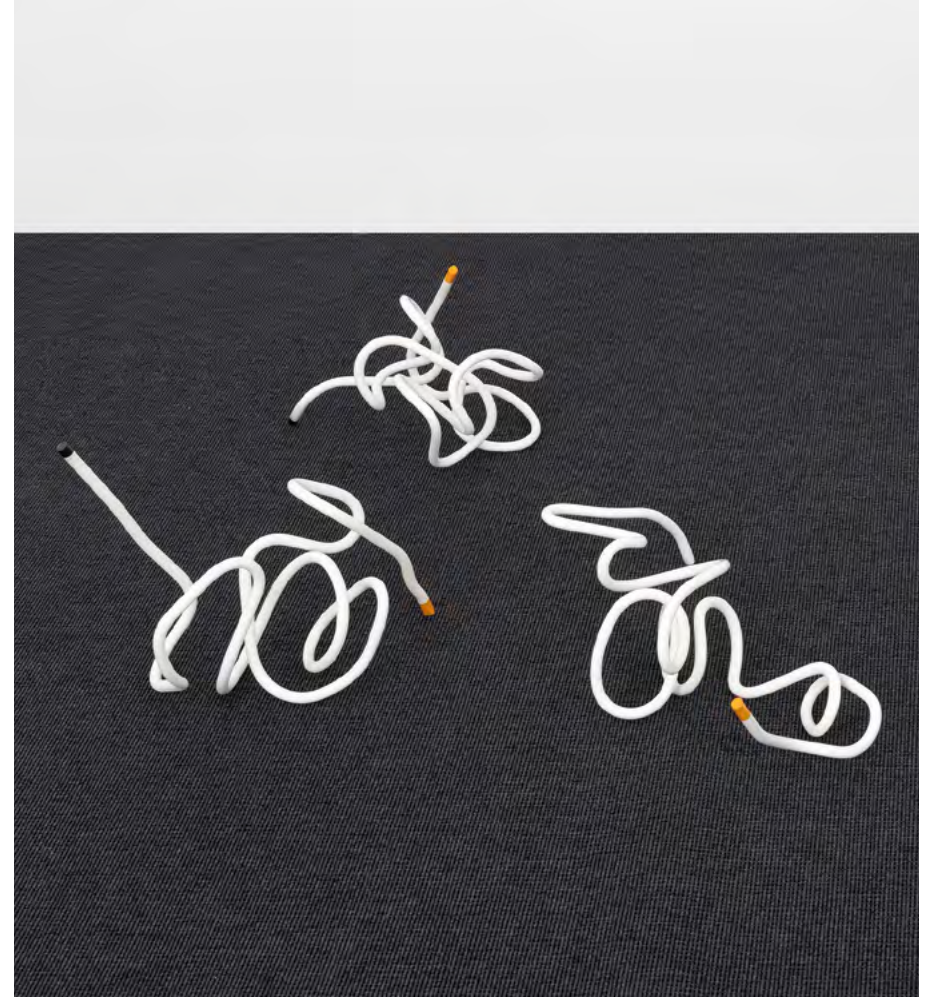
A-Zs – Unfinished struggles, resolutions and potential disasters,
2023, Twenty-six ceramic sculptures, painted MDF, approx. diameter 200 cm

Going Metal - Be Kind, 2023, Painted steel, clothesline, variable size





Going Metal - Boomerang.
2022, Painted steel, 60 x 117 x 1 cm



2000s I, II & III.
2022 / 2023, Painted steel, each bend of 200 cm metal rod, variable sizes

5.

Two carrots which at first glance look like ideal comics-illustrations, now have the nerve to critique nothing less than capitalism. Other sculptural objects, too, lure you towards them by their friendly familiarity, only to reveal an unsettling aggression at close inspection. As when you discover that the icon for “Meeting Point” with its cozily protected model family of three children, wife and husband has been de-familiarized into a house with its roof aflame, thereby indicating that the danger is coming, bang, from inside the comfort zone itself.

And so you encounter all sorts of what on the surface looks like funny creatures the likes of whom you may have seen before, but never quite like this: The headless superhuman muscle-man, for instance, who takes up an entire wall, from where he brainlessly swings a globe-like heavy weight between his legs. Going Metal - Bærekraft (Sustainability) I. He has two brothers Going Metal - Bærekraft (Sustainability) II and III, who handle globes of their own with the same stupidly superior air of irresponsible power. In their mindless, self-important arrogance they are oblivious to the partly scattered 26 puzzle-pieces right in front of them which would ideally have formed a complete map of the world. But now they are floating like ice sheets on the ground. On each one of them drifts a small figure made of unglazed clay. All 26 of them are oddly moving, as they gesticulate somewhat helplessly towards the space and you, as well as to each other. Their frozen postures are recognizable as letters of the Roman alphabet. What are they trying to say?

What is a magic garden without cats? So, yes, here too you come across one. But in a way again reminiscent of Alice’s literary magic world: her Cheshire cat exists just as a grin without a body. In our garden, though, she is complete and tufted into a rug, and that her tail morphs into the image of a snake is a tongue-in-cheek reference to a post-paradisiac setting. An image which goes well with the depiction here of tempting fruit, which hang from the ceiling and turn out to be boxing gloves rather than the lovely cherries, which you may have taken them for.

Something is definitely odd in Christensen’s artful world. Time, too, is out of joint, as a quick glance at the clock will tell. For rather than provide you with chronological orientation, you are confronted with twelve heavily eyelashed eyes which stare you down while the text is definitely less than comforting: Mas S cared.



6.

What is remarkable is the physical intensity with which the artist has created this Garden-Wonderland, as is the speed by which this intensity is transferred to the viewer. As always in her work, the ever present lightness is archived by a phase of long experimentation: of spending endless hours of testing tufting techniques, of choosing thread and colours, throw clay and bending and welding metal: As long as it takes to give the works their joyful touch without ever betraying their deeper, sometimes somber content.

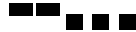
Those who seek to find an explicit message will look in vain –certainly not one which comes with a capital “M”. The artist simply points at the state of things as they are for her. She presents them rather than make them re-present something.



7.

Sara Korshøj Christensen's work exudes her joy of thinking deeply but sideways, her refusal to indulge in easy answers to the multiple pressing questions of our present time. Instead, it presents her playful mixed-media works and invites us to decipher the rigorously twisted meanings of quotidian images and political metaphors, and disturbing issues - such as domestic violence, ecologic crises, egomaniac ruthless leadership and our own consumerist self-indulgence. The Wonderworld of Let's Begin... With a Break does not provide easily clickable solutions, but it will offer, ideally, an experience of thought provoking clarity and a complexity which is fun to disentangle.

Go for it.
Immerse yourself in it.
And don't forget to take your time.
There is no rush.



Sara Korshøj Christensen (b. 1979) holds a Bachelor and a Master in Fine Arts from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO), with an exchange at Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in the Department of Object and Sculpture. Works in public space include commissions by KORO – Public Art Norway. Among others, Christensen's work can be found at the Arts Council Norway, The Ministry of Culture and Equality, and in the collections of the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo, Stavanger Art Museum, Akershus Fylkeskommune, The City of Oslo Art Collection and the West Norway Museum of Decorative Art in Bergen.

Photo: Øystein Thorvaldsen
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