

Søren Martinsen



From his huge canvases of landscapes to his hilarious, tragicomical art docu-videos, Søren Martinussen's work is a surprising deconstruction and rebirth of traditional genres like the classic documentary film, the self-portrait, and the landscape painting.

"The tortuous and seductive surfaces of the landscapes with their shadowy psychological undertones have a monumental coherence and their shining hermetic beauty is sealed in by layer upon layer of finely dissolved and glazing oil. We see a landscape which suppresses threatening nature and the imminent danger inherent in the cessation of controlling restraint. Like a landscape on antidepressants"

- Birgitte Anderberg

Søren Martinsen uses a full palette of conceptual, stylistic and narrative instruments to analyze the social and physical reality of the individual in the complex landscape of the 21st. century. Letting the media be subordinated the message, his materials may vary from painting to video to installation art, but the nerve and the eagerness to tell a story and to engage and evoke an emotional response in the viewer is a constant.



Previous page: "Flommen", 2018. Oil on canvas, 200 x 320cm.

This page: Stills from the video "Se-lvp-ort-r-æt" ("Autoportrait")





*"We all exist in landscape – those are the human being's basic terms.
To describe and depict that landscape psychologically and existentially
are my basic conditions as an artist"*

- Søren Martinsen



Left:

"Høballe". (Hay Bale) 50 x 190 cm. 2017

"Fractured landscape", 200 x 420 cm,
22 canvases, 2012

Right:

"Orange Skull", 90 x 115 cm. oil on canvas, 2012

"Mod Lyset", 125 x 150 cm, oil on linen, 2009

"Deutschland", 170 x 200 cm, oil on linen 2009

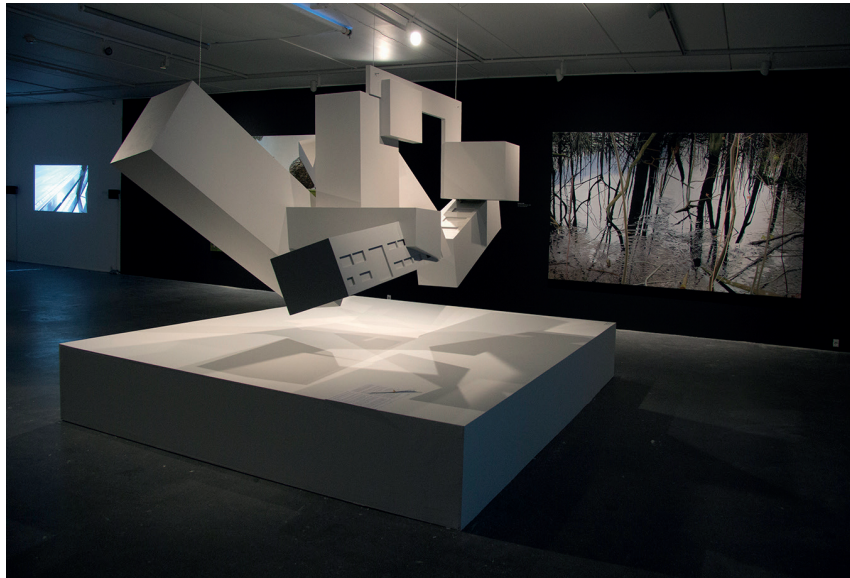


Søren Martinsen GIGANTERNE

GIGANTERNE // THE GIANTS, Sorø Kunstmuseum 2018

GIGANTERNE is my newest solo show (2018) in Sorø Kunstmuseum. In a semi-darkened room, a video installation plays a dialogue between two voices, one old and one young, belonging to respectively ancient and new buildings on the images. Around the room's black walls are huge paintings of lonely, atmospheric landscapes, fields, farmland, marsh. A large, complex sculpture mimicks the "architecture" of cheap concrete industry buildings in a freaked-out version, where the buildings grow on top of each other - forming a kind of satellite, hanging in the air in the center of the room.

The exhibition, while not site-specific in a strict sense, uses the Sorø, (DK) area as inspiration in all the presented works. Sorø is a pretty typical Danish town, but has a cherished, ancient history relating to the medieval church and cloister and also to the Sorø Academy



Installation shot "Humblebi" (bumble bee) 2018. Variable dimensions, MDF and paint, 2018.

which for hundreds of years has been a famous boarding school for the elite.

Contrasting with the sentimental beauty of the old Sorø, the present-day's ugly and soulless industrial architecture encircles the city. A kind of uneasy friction is set up in the exhibition between the classic and the contemporary landscapes surrounding Sorø and the old and new culture and architecture of the town.



"Halmballer", 200 x 320, oil on canvas, 2018.

"Kanoudlejningen", 200 x 320 cm., oil on canvas, 2018.



Left: "Dissolve", 320 x 200cm. Oil on canvas, 2018
 "Ladegårdsallén", 320 x 200cm. Oil on canvas, 2018
 "Flommen", 320 x 200 cm. Oil on canvas, 2018
Right: Installtion views





De Gamle Giganter:
Se mig, Jeg er gammel og ærværdig! Så gammel, at jeg er den ældste på hele egnen. Jeg har set alting begynde heromkring.



De Gamle Giganter:
Lad mig nu fortælle.
Dengang jeg blev skabt, lå der her på stedet kun et lille kloster, som benediktinermunkene havde fået lov at drive af vores store skaber, den herlige Asser Rig af den Hvide Slægt!

*Giganterne 2018.
2-channel videoinstallation,
ca. 6 min. HD video with sound.
Danish dialogue*



De Nye Giganter:
Ja, du er gammel, meget gammel.
Det er vist længe siden, du har haft indflydelse!



De Nye Giganter:
Ved du hvorfor du hedder Sorø?
Det betyder øen i sumpen.
Du ligger jo også nærmest i en sump. Du burde nok have valgt en mere praktisk beliggenhed.
(....)







BESAT LANDSKAB // OCCUPIED LANDSCAPE
Kunsthall Nord, 2017

The exhibition uses the north of Jutland, Denmark as its inspiration with regards to landscape and cultural history.

It is a kind of historical tour of the north, focussing on the famous artists that over the course of time have changed Danish history via their stay and influence in this particular area. The theme is especially focussing on certain heavily influential artist's colonies: the Skagen painters are surely very important for the area, but also other events stand out iconically, namely the artist Peter Louis-Jensen and his activists' occupation of the Hjørdemål church in Thy in 1970.

This happening led more or less directly to the demise of the Thy Camp, also called The New Society, one of the most seminal and visionary political and sociological moments of the early 70's hippie movement.

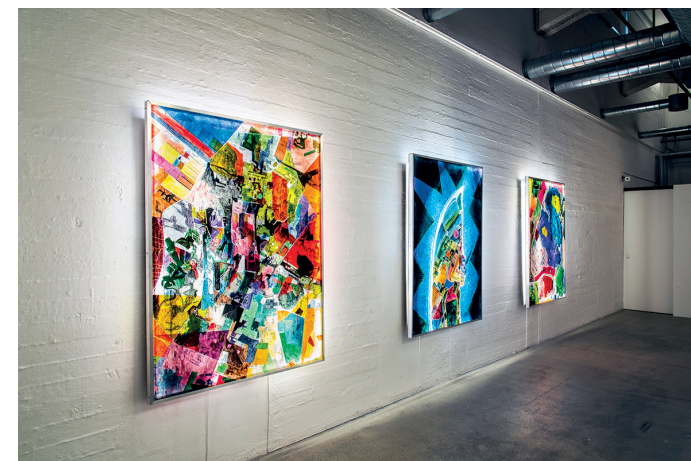
The exhibition radically problematized the effect the artists have on the areas they, for various reasons, chose to inhabit and affect: Is this influence always of a good nature, or does the seemingly unanimous vote in favour of art being "universally good" veil a more complex mechanics which comes into play when radically different cultural groups exert their influence on perhaps more traditional societies?



Left: Installation view (Skagen Grissaille) Oil on canvas (150 x 350 cm.) and plaster columns, 2016.

Illuminated paintings: Acrylic and oil on backlit, printed polyester: "Ørnebjerg", 150 x 120 cm and "Skagen", 150 x 120 cm. 2016

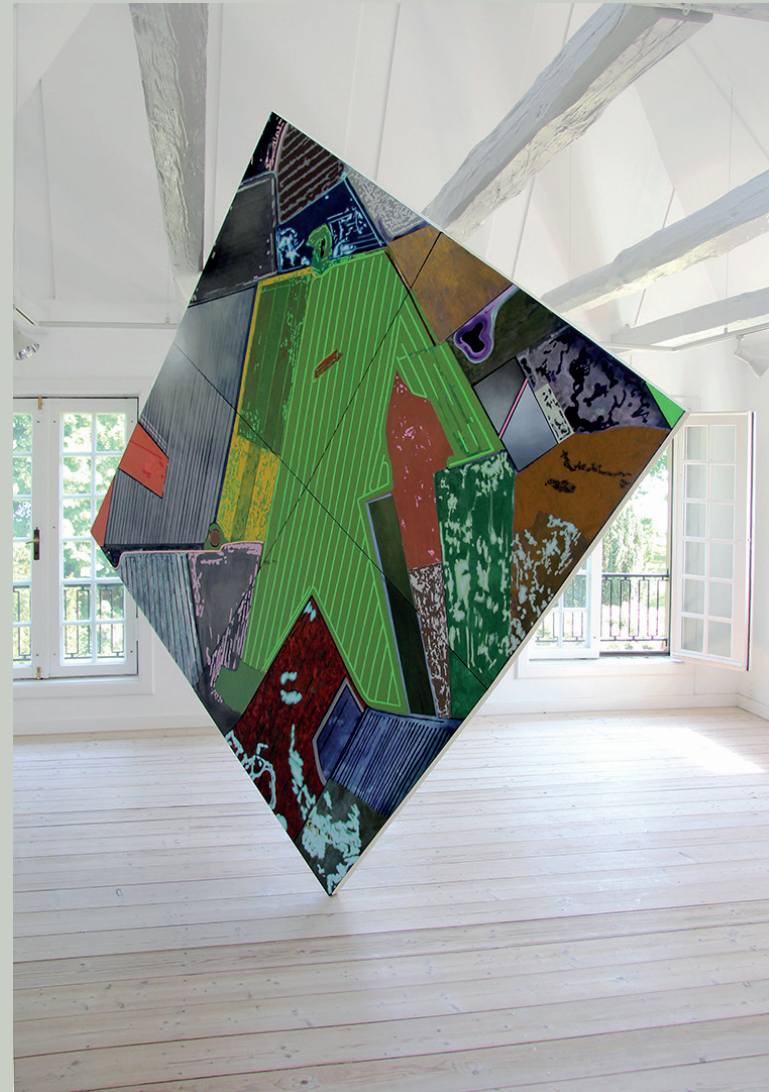
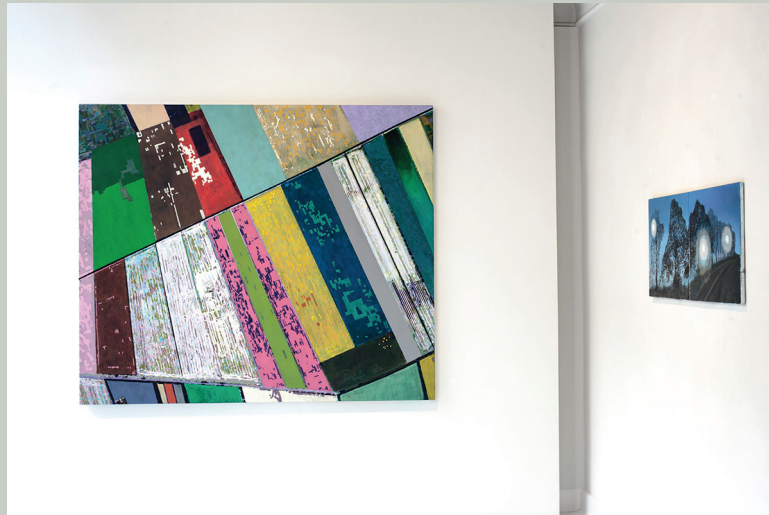
Right: Installation view, wall painting
Installation view, illuminated paintings



Nye Landskaber // New Landscapes
Martin Asbæk Gallery 2016

"Nye Landskaber", Solo show at Martin Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen, 2016

Installation views from the exhibition





Installation views from the exhibition



Public art work

Hedevej Plejeboliger, Risskov

This on-site painting installation was commissioned by Aarhus Kommune for a newly build center (2013) for the elderly, a retirement home where each inhabitant has their own apartment. Many of the residents were senile and very weak. The request was for site-specific work of a clear and comprehensible nature, divided into a series of "nature" themes. the artwork was to cover the areas in the hallways and in the shared living rooms, dining room and leisure spaces. the buildings consisted of 5 very long, almost identical floors with hundreds of meters of wall space. My solution was to make a central wallpainting relating to the nature theme and letting it "spill" or be stretched in a number of variations along the walls and into the rooms. The installation took the artist and 8 assistants several thousand hours of work over a full year and was completed in october 2014.



Views from the hallway with the theme "The Lake".

Outside view, main entrance, Hedevej Plejeboliger.



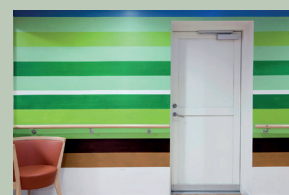
Heden (The Heath)



Søen (The Lake)



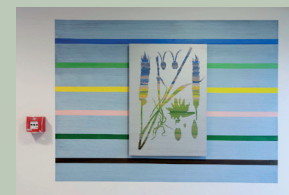
Stranden (The Beach)

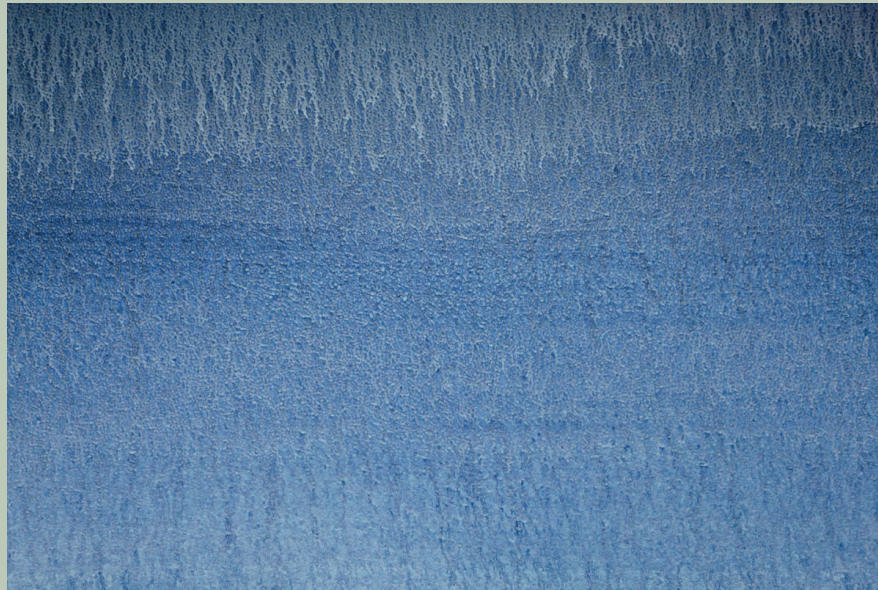


Engen (The Meadow)



Marken (The Field)





Details and views from around the buildings



Public Artwork

BYGST, Slagelse, 2018

Public art installation for the offices of Arbejdstilsynet and Miljøstyrelsen, Antvorskov Allé, 2018. Customer: BYGST, the national Danish agency for building and development.

Both installations are coloured areas painted directly on the wall in the rooms, on top of which a selection of framed graphic prints is hung. The art prints are based on photos from satellites, showing landscapes and agricultural areas where the human influence over nature is particularly massive – in this case the motives are from Kansas, USA, where intensive and environmentally taxing agricultural irrigation- and cultivation systems called “Central Pivot Irrigation” create perfectly circular fields next to one another in a geometrical grid.

The works are critically calling to attention the ubiquity of the human being as it is evident all over the world in this “Anthropocene Era”, characterised by the presence of traces of human influence in all aspects of life and nature on earth.



Thus, the series “21” in the entrance room/social area for the employees, depicts a grid of individual fields which also in reality are adjacent to one another in a rural area in Kansas. These are displayed on a lavender wall. The three individual pieces “Landscape with Red Square”, “Three white circles” and “Brown Circles” are hung on a 2-coloured yellow area in the hallway left of the entrance/social area.

The art works are unique inkjet prints and are printed on Hanhnmühle photorag paper and framed in museum glass.

The book cover features a solid pink background. In the corners, there are dark, detailed silhouettes of trees. The top-left and bottom-left corners show deciduous trees with dense foliage. The top-right and bottom-right corners show evergreen trees, possibly pines or firs. The text is centered in the middle of the cover.

**Søren
Martinsen**

**DANSKEREN
THE DANE**

Danskeren // The Dane

Rønnebøksholm 2014, Trapholt 2015

Landscape. Identity. Tradition

Catalogue text by Dina Vester Feilberg

The Danish landscape has been a pivotal point as regards motif in Søren Martinson's paintings and video works since 2006. Yet you cannot call him a landscape painter, or a landscape artist, because working with landscapes is a method to Martinson more than the practice of a genre; it is a direct consequence of his artistic work with the breaking and making of identity formation in the individual as well as in the nation.

When viewing his paintings from a formal angle the obvious thing to see is the simplification and the distortion. The motif is recognisable,



2Up: "Grundtvigs Udsigt", oil on canvas, 200 x 400 cm. 2013.

Below and following pages: Stills from the video "Danskeren" ("The Dane"), 9 min. HD video, 2013.





Danskeren // The Dane
Rønnebæksholm 2014



though absolutely without the realism that characterizes the tradition of landscape painting; this goes for both colour and composition. Details are generally left out – if they are there, they are never to be found in the foreground, where one would expect to find them, they hide in the background of the painting in a peculiar way, and through this they add a strange touch. As regards motif he relates specifically to the tradition, and his paintings deliberately mirror earlier works, but on a formal level it is more difficult to find inspiring precedents.





Danskeren // The Dane
Trapholt 2015





De Mina

solo show by Søren Martinsen

6 September - 5 October 2013

Martin Asbæk Gallery
Bredgade 23
DK-1260 Copenhagen K

www.martinasbaek.com

De Mina

Martin Asbæk Gallery, 2013

Soloshow by Søren Martinsen at Martin Asbæk Gallery



Left:
Right: Installationviews



CHILDREN OF THE NEW AGE



A project by

SØREN MARTINSEN



Children of the new age

Overgaden - Center for Samtidskunst, 2010

The idea of making a film about “the alternative” first came to me many years ago. When the NewAge-concept began to spread like wildfire in the late 80’s and early 90’s, it was natural to form an opinion of it, and my immediate reaction to the phenomenon at that time was that it was innocent and rather harmless. Also it seemed odd to me that those who believe in the various New Age and alternative therapies often have a great trust in unproven claims of effectiveness, which obviously provoked my rational nature. There seemed at any rate to be a core of blind faith in New Age which I thought it might be interesting to explore.

The New Age movement is characterized by a highly distinctive aesthetic, which finds expression in many different forms. There is a predilection for symmetry, symbols and pastel colours, which I have chosen to use as a motif in the film, and which provided the inspiration for a series of 32 drawings presented at the exhibition. These drawing represent a series of improvisations on New Age images, colours and patterns and embrace with the same enthusiasm symmetry, hierarchies, schematization and a fascination with soft colours and shapes. The drawings and their accompanying descriptions are intended to complement and expand on the film and its theme. But they can certainly be viewed independently of the film, and vice versa.

- Søren Martinsen, interview from the catalogue



Installation views from the exhibition and stills from the video "Children of the New Age"





I am Kryon of Magnetic Service. Watercolor on paper. 30x40 cm. 2011.



Kryon's Universe (1). Watercolor on paper. 30x40 cm. 2011.

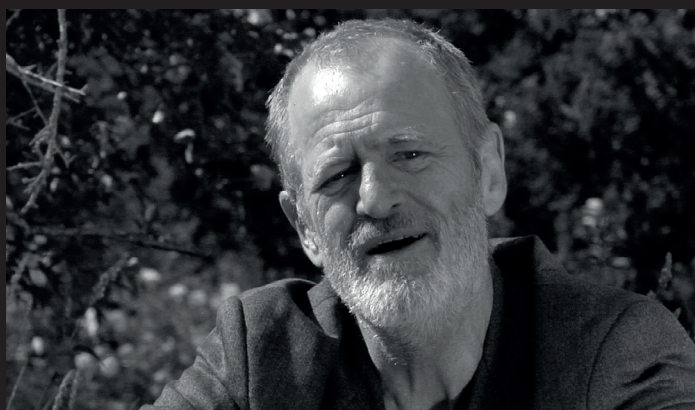




***Flygtig Phantasie // Fleeting
Phantasy***

An experimental film losely based on the play
"Sanct Hansaftens-spil" made in collaboration
with artist Dorte Buchwald.

2008, Duration 12:00 min.





Søren Martinsen

Country Song

Country Song

Statens Museum for Kunst 2008

Stepping into the shadowy room which is the setting for Søren Matinsens installation *Country Song* is like stepping into the hypnotic darkness of the cinema and being immediately disturbed and disoriented. The observer experiences a spatial schism between the infinite



unfolding expansiveness of the paintings and the videoinstallation which gathers the room into a closed introverted centre. There is a tension between internal and external, subject and world, which is emphasised by the aesthetic contrast between the meticulously painted surfaces of the paintings and the raw expression of the realistically documented video pictures.

This strongly psychologically charged space constitutes a platform for challenging one's concept of the country – the landscape and nature – not just as an actual site, a physical topography, but as topos, a linguistically and culturally adopted concept, and as a utopia.

- Birgitte Anderberg



Left: "Rape Field" (Rape Field), detail
Installation view

Right: Stills from the video "SE-LPV-ORT-R-ÆT"
(Autoportrait), video/dvd 25:13 min.



Søren Martinsen, b. 1966 in Lyngby, Denmark

Education:

the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art , 1989 - 1995.

MA in Fine Art, Goldsmiths' College, University of London , 1993- 1994

Solo shows:

Politikens forhal, Copenhagen, DK 2018

The Giants, Sorø Kunstmuseum. DK 2018

View over an area (Udsigt over et område), Vestjyllands Kunstmuseum Janusbygningen, DK 2017

Occupied Landscape (Besat Landskab), Kunsthall Nord, Aalborg DK 2017

New Landscapes (Nye Landskaber), Martin Asbæk Gallery, DK 2016

The Borderline Syndrome, Sdk, Flensburg, DE 2015

Public artwork commissioned by the municipality of Aarhus , Hedevej, Risskov 2013-14

De Mina, Martin Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen, DK 2013

The Dane (Danskeren), Trapholt, Kolding, DK 2013

The Dane (Danskeren), Rønnebæksholm, Næstved, DK 2012

Children of the New Age, Overgaden Institute for Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, DK 2010

Field studies, Martin Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen, DK 2010

Fluoxetine, Galerie Jones, Kiln, DE 2009

Country song, x-rummet, Stations Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, DK 2007

New paintings, Galerie Asbæk, Copenhagen, DK 2006

Broken Mirror, kunsthallen Brænderigården, Viborg, DK 2006

The Roads, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, DK 2004

Group shows:

Grønningen, Den Frie, 2017

Accesso Galerie, Italy, 2017.

Unknown Landscape (North Coast Art Triennial NCAT), Munkeruphus, Gilleleje, DK. 2016

Bring in nature (Bring Naturen ind) Faaborg Museum, DK, 2015

Reality (inside) (Virkeligheden (inden)), Vestjyllands Kunstpavillon, DK 2015

Raringer, Bomullsfabriken kunsthall, Arendal, Norge 2015

U.T. (Landskab 2015), galleri Tom Christoffersen, Copenhagen 2015

Playgrounds, Galerie Leger, Malmö, SE 2013

VIDEO, martin Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen, DK 2013

Fototriennale.dk, fotomuseet brandts klædefabrik, Odense, DK2012

Out of focus, (Ude af fokus), Ny Holstebro Kunstmuseum, Holstebro, DK 2012

Collections:

Kobberstiksamlingen
Statens Kunstfond
Statens Museum for Kunst
Aros
Kastrupgårdsamlingen
Gyldendal
Uppsala Konstmuseum
Malmö konstmuseum
Nykredit
Nordea
Municipality of Copenhagen
Municipality of Næstved
Ny Carlsberg Fonden
Trapholt
Municipality of Kolding m.fl.
Private collections.

Grants:

TaoHuatan international residency, China 2017
The Academy Council's Eckersberg medal 2014
Aage & Yelva Nimbs fond honorary grant, 2012
National Art Foundation's 3-year stipend (Statens Kunstfonds 3- årige arbejdslegat) 2011
Ruth og Finn Thorjussens Fond, honorary grant 2009
National Art foundation's working grant (Statens Kunstfonds arbejdslegat), 2006, 2007

Other:

Currently member of the directory board of the Artists' Union, the directory board of Kunsthall Den Frie Udstillingsbygning. Art critic and columnist for kunsten.nu

