

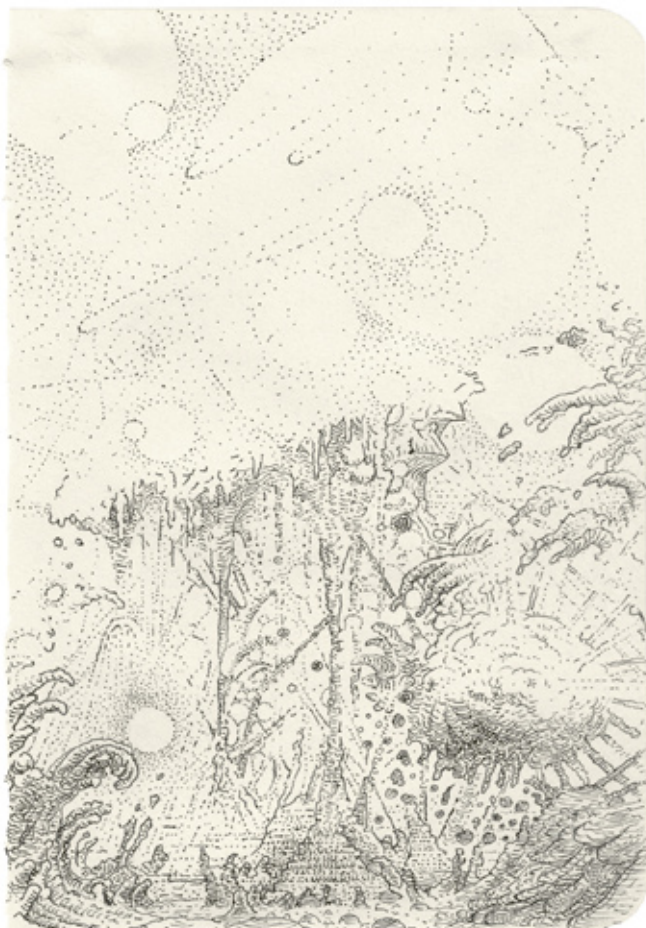
BJØRN BJARRE

SELECTED WORKS

1995 - 2018



Solaris (Notes and Sketches no. 30), 2013-18, ink on paper, 14,5 x 10,5 cm



Solaris (Notes and Sketches no.19, 18, 17 and 8), 2013-18, ink on paper, 14,5 x 10,5 cm



Installation view, Lautom Contemporary, Oslo 2011

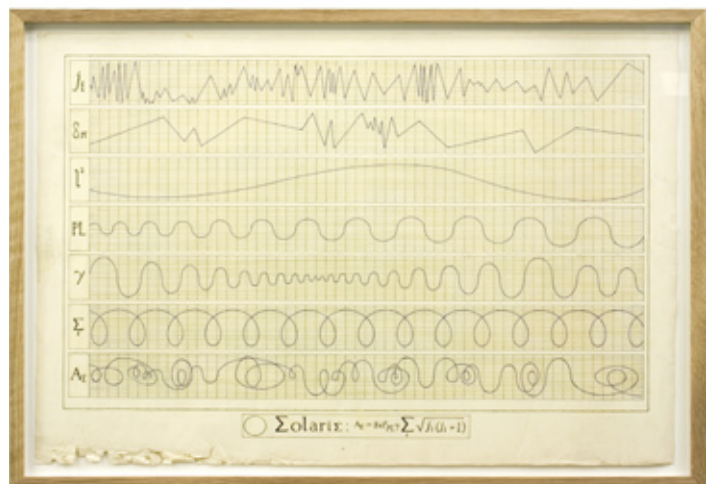
Solaris, 2010 - 2018

A series of works inspired by the science fiction novel *Solaris* by Stanislaw Lem, which chronicles the ultimate futility of attempted communications with the extraterrestrial life on a far-distant planet. Solaris is covered with an ocean that is revealed to be a single, planet-encompassing sentient organism. In probing and examining the oceanic surface from a hovering research station the oblivious human scientists are, in turn, being studied by the planet itself (- excerpt from wikipedia).

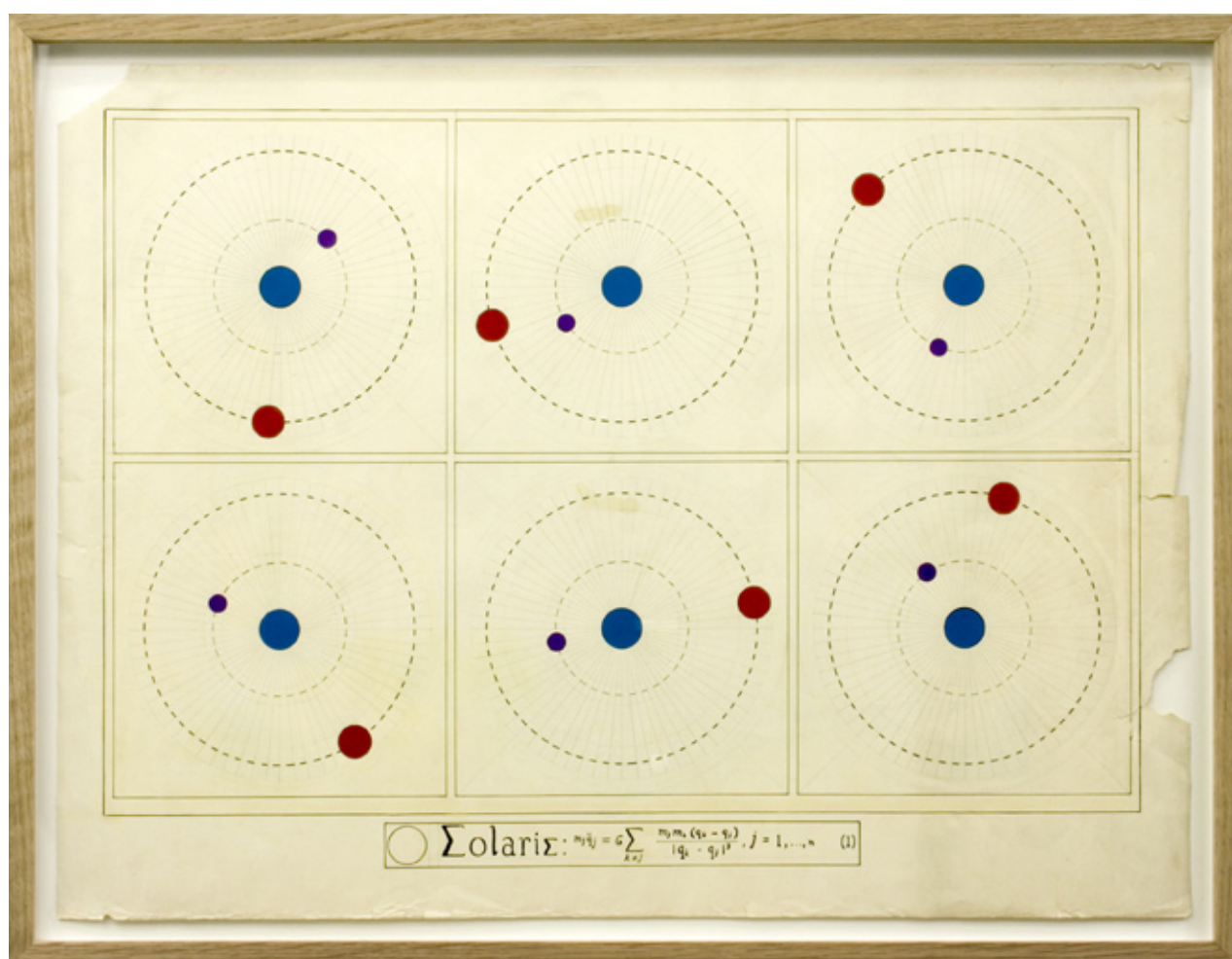
"For some time, there was a widely held notion (...) to the effect that the thinking ocean of Solaris was a gigantic brain, prodigiously well-developed and several million years in advance of our own civilization, a sort of cosmic yogi, a sage, a symbol of omniscience, which had long ago understood the vanity of all action and for this reason had retreated into an unbreakable silence. The notion was incorrect, for the living ocean was active. Not, it is true, according to human ideas -it did not build cities or bridges, nor did it manufacture flying machines. It did not try to reduce distances, nor was it concerned with the conquest of space (...). But it was engaged in a never-ending process of transformation, an ontological autometamorphosis." (- excerpt from the novel).

Being a long-time admirer of Andrei Tarkovskys film adaptation of the novel, I recently re-read the book, and realized that the planet's incessant sculptural activity on the surface is only vaguely suggested in the film. The entire planet resembles a skin of an unknown material which - inspired by the human presence in the space station - is making gigantic abstract and representational formations on the surface. At the end of the novel the main character finds himself for a brief moment seemingly communicating with the strange formless ocean, although the knowledge obtained is as fleeting as the ocean itself. By making these works I am not only visualizing aspects of a probable distant planet, but also - like *Solaris* - probing the human mind for what lies within.

- Bjørn Bjarre



Solaris (Fantasy Landscape no.1), 2010, pastel on paper, 42 x 59,5 cm
 Solaris (Loop Quantum Gravity Diagram), 2011, ink on paper, 48,5 x 65 cm



Solaris (Fantasy Landscape no.8), 2016, pastel on paper, 54 x 78 cm

Solaris (n-body Problem Diagram), 2011, ink and acrylic ink on paper, 48,5 x 65 cm



Meditations, 2015

A series of works made for the waiting rooms at the psychiatric department, Oslo University Hospital, Mortensrud.

Meditations (no.2), 2015, wood, glass, 70 x 120 x 5 cm.

Meditations (no.4), 2015, wooden branch, glass, wood, 45 x 60 x 10 cm.

Meditations (no.5), 2015, wood, driftglass, LED-lights, 28 x 35 x 12 cm.



Totem, 2015

Bronze, concrete, 100 x 20 x 20 cm.

Made for a sculpture park at Granstangen Elementary School in Oslo. The park also includes sculptures by Gustav Vigeland, Istvan Lisztes, Khaled Jarrar, Hanne Tyrmi, Petter Hepsø and Jeannette Christensen who also curated the park as a public commission for The City of Oslo, Agency for Cultural Affairs.



Karesansui, 2011

Sand, stone, moss, plastic frog, pillows, 35 x 700 x 700 cm

In traditional zen-buddhist monasteries the enigmatic rock garden function as a symbol of zen, which is not a religion nor a philosophy, but rather a form of non-thought that gives rise to a certain form of acting. In the words of D.T. Suzuki: "Zen in its essence is the art of seeing into the nature of one's own being, and it points the way from bondage to freedom". Or in the words of Alan Watts: "A way of liberation can have no positive definition. It has to be suggested by saying what it is not, somewhat as a sculptor reveals an image by the act of removing pieces of stone from a block".

Sand and stones are basically the same substance in different stages of evolution, but can in their different form both represent water and mountains. In meditation - the act of being in the present - the meditator becomes a grain of sand in the endless universe, collapsing the imaginary boundaries between animate and inanimate matter. This mystical state corresponds to the scientific theory that on an atomic level everything is of the same material made in distant stars.

The commercial use of zen in popular culture, from self-help books to business management are often comparable to kitsch. Like the commodification of everything else, it creates alienation which is the opposite of zen, even though the opposite of zen is impossible since zen is the oneness of all things. And that just comes to show that words can not describe zen, only rocks and sand - and a plastic frog. Reddit... reddit... reddit...

- Bjørn Bjarre





Untitled (Smiley), 2009

Project for Hovefestivalen, Pvc, helium, 400 x 400 x 250 cm

This inflatable helium sculpture was made for Hovefestivalen, an annual rock festival that gathers thousands of people in a big social event lasting four days and nights. In this context I wanted to make something simple that could appeal to a wide audience, but in a subtle way contradict itself and say something about the commodification of culture, the transience of music, time and human emotions. The Smiley is an universal icon with an ambiguous meaning. It's unfortunate happiness conceals its own opposite. Behind the simpleminded surface lurks the propaganda of capitalism. The sculpture was very popular, but guarded poorly by the festival security team. Already the first night it was released by vandals up into the summer sky, and now suffers an unknown future as toxic waste on some foreign shore.

- Bjørn Bjarre





Rabbit, 2008

Polyurethan, acrylic paint, lacquer, 21 x 8 x 9 cm.

The multippel Rabbit is an attempt to recreate the origin of a pop-art classic; Jeff Koons' similarly titled sculpture in stainless steel from 1986. I rediscovered a film where I as a toddler played with a pink inflatable rabbit, and realized at last why Koons' sculpture always has made such a strong impression on me. The rabbit I played with was almost identical with Koons' sculpture, but not quite. My version is therefore not a copy of Koons, but a faithful representation of a similar rabbit from my childhood.

It is said that the first remembered memory of a life is a significant token of who you are. But what if your memories are based on photographic evidence? The rabbit is both an artificial memory, a fantasy toy animal and a postmodern art object. The innocent cuteness of the sculpture is obscuring the dark side of capitalism and the American dream. By re-making this already made ready made, I wanted to take back what is mine, by making a better and more authentic rabbit than Koons. I also wanted to show that nothing will ever be the same. That every moment in time is unique, and ripe with endless meaning and possibilities.

The sculpture is painstakingly modelled, cast and painted by hand. It is made in an edition of 12 copies.

- Bjørn Bjarre





Untitled (Sandbox), 2008

Made for the annual out-door sculpture exhibition *Tempo Skien*.

Wood, sand, paint, 700 x 700 x 50 cm

There used to be public spaces where people, more frequently than now, could openly debate issues close to their hearts. Today few personal, unmediated and unedited opinions are stated in public. There are also fewer inter-generational meeting grounds. Bjørn Bjarre actively does something about this. *Untitled (Sandbox)* is a minimalist sculpture at the same time as it is an enormous sandbox. Our relation to the sculpture is decided by the fact that its proportions are altered: it is made so that grown-ups appear big, or small, in relation to it, just as children do in relation to an ordinary sand box. Like a demonstration in favour of art and discussion in public space, the white square in the middle of the park invites us to activity and play.

- Anne Szefer Karlsen, from the exhibition catalogue for *Tempo Skien*

Let's get lost, 2008

Painted bronze, plywood, lacquer, wool carpet, 67 x 300 x 200 cm, Installation view, Kunstnerforbundet.





Man and Space, 2007

Books, polyurethan, spray paint, rubber cement, 46 x 30 x 22 cm.

In the Statoil Art Collection

In this sculpture the book as a container of knowledge and information has been transformed into a useless object. A negative, formless space has penetrated the logical structure of language. The series of books from *The Life Science Library* has been saved from the garbage heap of history (my father wanted to throw them away). What interested me about them was their anachronism in relation to the present day, and that they spoke of my nostalgia for the optimistic world view of the 1950's and 60's.

I remember sitting on the living room floor in my adolescence, leafing through the books in awe and wonder at the beautiful images of incomprehensible technological phenomena. When I look at the books today - transformed, or even reduced, to a sculpture - they strike me as relics of modernism and the ambivalence of science. I also think about the limits of language and rationality as systems to describe the world, and the function of art as sabotage.

This useless object seems to want to transcend its own uselessness, and remind me that knowledge and truth - both in science and art - is in a constant flux, forever to be rediscovered.

- Bjørn Bjarre



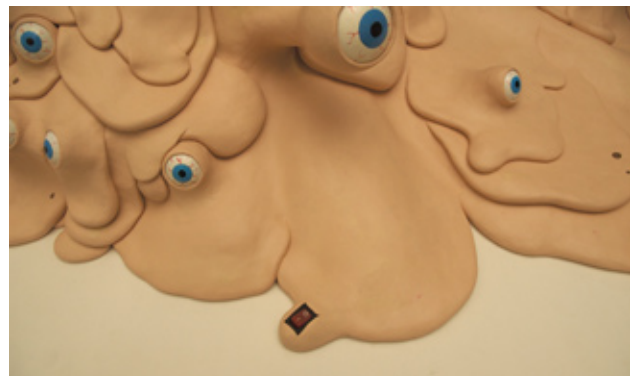
When everything explodes we will be free, 2006

Mixed Media Sculpture, in the collection of The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo. Originally made for The Norwegian Media Authority, Fredrikstad. Commissioned by The National Foundation for Art in Public Buildings (KORO). Dimensions: 170 x ø 160 cm

The sculpture was originally situated on the top floor of the Norwegian Media Authority in Fredrikstad. The Media Authority controls and regulates the media, based on a set of rules established by politicians. The Authority's responsibilities include the establishment of age limits for films and videos, the supervision of marketing and ownership conditions in the daily press and broadcasting, and they ensure that broadcasting laws are complied with.

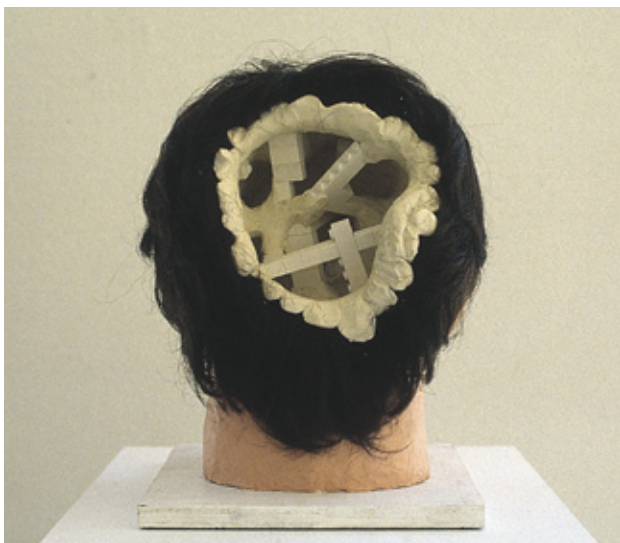
The sculpture may be perceived as a commentary on the power of the entertainment industry and the commercial mass media to create and describe transgressive notions of the relationship between body, perception and technology. It may also be experienced as a grotesque distortion of the media profession itself. According to established opinion the media is the forum in our western culture that safeguards freedom of expression in the public sphere. At the same time the collective sum of channels of information, expression and exposure appears to be a complex and uncontrollable monster with a will of its own that it is impossible to regulate and control.

- Per Gunnar Eeg Tverbakk, from the publication *Andre Kunstrom - Andre Sammenhenger*, KORO 2007





Abstract Feeling no. 34 (Walking Head), 2007, plastecine, wig, textile.
Private collection



Abstract Feeling no. 15 (Construction site), 1995, plastecine, wood, Lego, wig.
Private collection



Abstract Feeling no. 91 (Double), 2002, plastecine, wig
Collection of Norwegian Hydro



Abstract Feeling no. 23 (Fight), 1996, plastecine, book, wire.
Destroyed

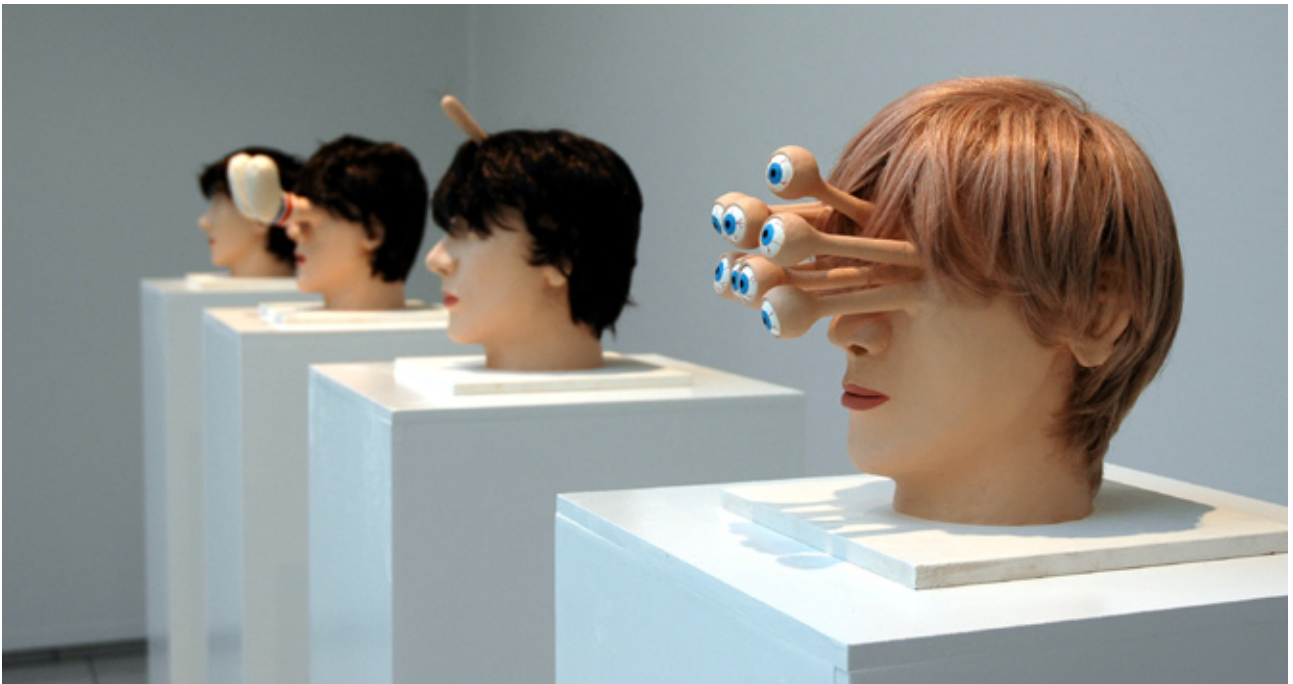
Abstract Feeling, 1995 - 2008

I have an inner vision of the artist positioning himself on the vast wind-blown plain between beauty and death. Storms rage in this place where there is noise and an infinite number of middle-positions. It seems as if the artist - at peril and with openness in body and soul - has become a filter, to catch the middle-positions. The consequence is that the storm has been captured and given a specific form. It is a feeling, a feeling of how it is to find oneself in a world that is something other than the world of normality and beauty.

- Åsmund Thorkildsen, *Dinky Kinks*, from the catalogue *Abstract Feeling*, Galleri F15, 2002

The artist is very aware of the fact that he uses materials that are transient and fragile - easily destroyed. Nobody knows how plastecine reacts over the course of time. This means that the *Abstract Feeling* series contains its own kind of melancholy. Just like all living creatures, the series is part of an ongoing process of change. Unlike much other art, this is a project that is not particularly concerned with the concept of everlasting life. The artist explains the idea behind his carefully planned project like this: "How does an art project begin? I think my project started with the idea of no longer making art that was inspired by other art, which is an impossibility."

- Anne Karin Jortveit, from the exhibition catalogue *In a Norwegian Wood - Norwegian art of the last decade*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warszawa, 2004



Abstract Feeling, Installation view, Kunstnerforbundet, Oslo, 2008.



Abstract Feeling no. 74 (Trippelface), 2002, Plastecine, artificial eyes. Nordea Art Collection.



Abstract Feeling no. 61 (Facescape), 1999, plastecine, artificial teeth and eyes. Private collection.



Abstract Feeling no. 31 (Reverse), 1996, plastecine, Artificial teeth. Private collection.