

# SOON TAG

## SIEVE

From cake-baking to the extraction of chemicals, the sieve, a permeable membrane, has been separating, and transforming materials domestically and industrially, through human history. It is a tool and a process for organizing all kinds of matter. From the trivial to the precious, sieving becomes a way of separating and ordering our material world.

Metaphysically, sieving is identical to the process through which we filter and organize knowledge; a permeable barrier that organizes our material and epistemological world. This metaphysical sieving of processing, organizing, and dividing thoughts and ideas, dictates the patterns through which we and our surroundings appear in the world, and sieving becomes an analogy for the metaphysical processes of creating order.

The weavings of the metaphysical sieve often appear as an opaque structure, a “natural” becoming of how the world is and how it works. Concepts like nature and culture are sieved through certain epistemic weavings, making them appear as separate entities. These perceived separations are human-made divides in a larger, interconnected world.

In the analogy of the sieve, these weavings are both translucent and permeable, un-fixed laws of nature, a see-through net, forming and transforming the matter of the world. Critically examining the holes in the weavings and the points of potential when en-

titles are permitted to emerge in our consciousness, tells a larger story of which knowledge is considered valuable and true. What knowledge is dismissed, filtered out as unwanted material or organized into rigid oppressive hierarchies.

This point of potential, the weavings of the sieve, is a space for metaphysical becoming that Rebekka Hilmer Heltoft critically explores through her work. She illustrates key moments where objects are taking form, transforming, or falling apart. In her work, nature and culture weave and intertwine, bastardizing each other’s forms, synthesizing and creating new logics. Through a deep fascination with plants, philosophy, and animation, Hilmer Heltoft explores the broader metaphysical structures and potentials of bending, breaking, and remaking the intricate nets of our social sieves of perception.

In *Potential waving at me (with flowers) II* bows sprout roots, and plant-like entities grow hearts like fruits. In *Fold* and *Fold II* lines form boxes that fold and unfold, growing humanoid features, blending with rigid straight lines. The lines and colors of these works vibrate and intertwine the organic and inorganic. The transformation of shapes gestures toward the possibility of many becomings within one world, equalizing the so-called artificial and the natural, and critiquing the constructed nature/culture divide. Rather than sieving the world through binaries, Hilmer Heltoft explores the potential for multitudes to exist, intertwined within each other, becoming in symbiosis.

New sieving create new potentials for understanding, with a certain radical disregard for modern logics. The work prompts a quizzical wondering about a nature and culture deeply entangled and demands the imagining of a new, collective paradigm. The frog-like creatures in *Gazing* seem to be waiting expectantly for this opportunity, giving the human

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ability to gaze and perceive, showing the potential of a world in which humanity and nature are equal in their ability to potentially perceive the world.

Though at times chaotically violent in her dissolving of aesthetic logic, Hilmer Heltoft concerns herself with the hope and potential of this dissolving. In *Whirler (Aogiri)*, the twirling of the seed from the Aogiri tree is kept artificially animated in a glass montre. Whirling around its own core, the seed is held in a contradictory state of potential, always moving, but never settling. Contained within its human-made storm, the seed is never allowed to flourish, underlining the perception of nature as a subject of control and subjugation. The Aogiri, also known as the phoenix tree, has become a symbol of hope, being one of the few trees to survive the atomic bomb. In *Whirler (Aogiri)*, a multi-layered critique of human subjugation and violence upon nature emerges alongside a hopefulness of coexistence.

*Sieve* is an exploration of the potentials for creating and dissolving the epistemological structures that form a rigid nature/culture divide, that structures so much of our modern perception of the world. The amalgamation of the two is presented not only as chaos, but as a space for new understanding. Hilmer Heltoft's work investigates the potency of circular, rather than binary, metaphysics, of sieving the world differently, or removing its metal weavings, allowing for a potent and hopeful dissolvings of a nature and a culture divided.

# READ

## Biography

Rebekka Hilmer Heltoft is a visual artist with a background in philosophy. She currently works part-time as a gardener at the Agency for Culture and Palaces. She holds an MAA from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and has studied at the Schools of Visual Art, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and the University of Copenhagen (BA in Philosophy). Her work has been exhibited at Kunsthall Charlottenborg (DK), Franz Kaka Gallery (CA), CPH:DOX (DK), Wilson Saplana Gallery (DK), GOMO curated by Salon 75 (AT), and Finn's Bakery as part of the public sculpture biennial Sommer Skulptur Søby (DK). She published her first book, *Drawn To The Pencil: Dark Light Glitter*, in 2023. She is the recipient of the Niels Wessel Bagge Honorary Grant (2024) and was recently an artist-in-residence at Arcus Research (2025, Ibaraki, Japan).

*Originally written in 2020, accompanying the works *Gravity Grid 1 and 2*.*

### Kimskiven

Det bliver nævnt første gang en dag vi har gået tur og er ved at sige farvel ved bilen. Hun har langt hvidt hår og kigger på mig med et intenst blik. Hvis I kender min mor, vil I vide hvilket et. Det er det samme jeg af og til ser mig selv kigge ud i verden med, et blik forskudt i tid, en smule muteret.

Jeg har fortalt hende, at jeg er optaget af ting som folder. Flader som folder og derved får form. Idéen om, at hvis noget er foldet, kan det også foldes ud igen, og foldes om. At der måske ikke er så langt fra noget fladt til noget med form. Måske på den måde, heller ikke er så langt fra noget abstrakt til noget konkret. At de kan ligge det samme sted. Senere læser jeg, via de screenshots en ven sender mig, at Deleuze ikke mener en udfoldning er mulig, men at det derimod er en fold i en fold i en fold. Lad os tage tilbage til bilen sammen. Leibniz taler jo også om folden, siger min mor begejstret og peger. Hendes finger ligner en form for lanse eller dirigentpind. Den peger det sted hen, hun om lidt vil tage mig med til, ved at fortælle. Hun forlader Leibniz og går videre. Når et barn bliver dannet, starter det jo med at være en plade, som folder sig. Hun er læge og ved den slags. Jeg er målløs og meget interesseret. Vi snakker om det flere gange, jeg låner hendes fyrré år gamle embryologi-bog, hun sender mig en lille tekst, hvor hun beskriver forløbet. Jeg skriver videre på teksten og tager ud og besøger hende. Hun står i sit køkken og beskriver flere af de ting, du om lidt vil læse. Hun bruger sin egen krop til at beskrive foldningerne og laver på den måde en koreografi: armene ud fra kroppen og hele vejen rundt, ned i knæ, hænderne til hovedet, osv. En del af koreografien er at hakke en tomat, røre i gryden, åbne ovnen og gå over til mig og pege på de bøger, som ligger udslåede på bordet blandt knive og gaffler. Imens noterer jeg, stiller spørgsmål, filmer hende og skriver senere denne tekst.

På den ottende dag i processen er det, som senere bliver

til et menneske, to cirkelformede plader som ligger oven på hinanden. Det hedder en bilaminær, dvs. to-laget, kimske. På engelsk hedder det en Bilaminar Germ Disc. Imellem kimskevns to lag opstår et tredje og kimskeven er hermed trilaminær, dvs. tre-laget. De yderste lag hedder entoderm og ektoderm, det midterste hedder mesoderm. Kimskeven ændrer sig fra at være cirkelrund til at være mere aflang. Afbildningen i min mors embryologibog ligner en halv avocado, et pissoir – R. Mutt? Baronesse Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, er der en forbindelse her? – eller, som bogen vælger at sige, en pære. Den brede del hedder den kefale ende, dvs. hovedenden og den smalle ende kaldes kaudal, dvs. haleenden.

Nu begynder pladen at folde. Vi starter med ektodermen. Ektodermen skaber centralnervesystemet, det perifere nervesystem og overfladen, huden, på mennesket. Midt på ektodermen, i længdegående retning, foldes der nedad, så der opstår en forsænkning. Ektodermens sider mødes hen over denne forsænkning og lukker den således til. Derefter giver ektodermen slip på denne foldning. Den så at sige afsnøres fra ektodermen, og bliver til neuralrøret, som nu ligger under ektodermen. Neuralrøret er forstadiet til hjernen, rygmarven (centralnervesystemet) og det man kalder de perifere nerver. Samtidig fortsætter ektodermens sider med at folde i modsat retning. De bevæger sig mod hinanden og smelter sammen, så ektodermen nu er et yderste lag der ligger rundt om alt andet. Ligesom hvis du krammede et træ og dine hænder mødtes på dets modsatte side. Det giver umiddelbar mening, når man tænker på, at ektodermen jo blandt andet bliver til vores hud. Når ektodermen folder følger kimskevns andre lag med. Det vil blandt andet sige endodermen. Endodermen er altså fulgt med ektodermens foldning og ligger som et indvendigt rør i kroppen, omgivet af ektoderm hele vejen rundt. Dette rør bliver til mavetarmsystemet og de indre organer. Senere vil der opstå små skud på indersiden af røret, som bliver til lunger, lever, nyre osv. Mesodermen følger også med og skaber hjertemuskelceller, glatte muskler og almindelige muskler, knogler, alle bindevæv samt blodsystemet og lymfesystemet. Samtidig med alle foldningerne på langs foregår der en

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hoved-hale-foldning. Det vil sige, at hoved- og haleenden begynder at nærme sig hinanden. Disken krummer sig. Foldningen er mest udtalt i hovedenden. Den folder intenst og danner hjernen over tid. Vi har altså alle været runde flade plader, som derefter har foldet sig. Det er ikke kun mennesker som har en kimske, det gælder alle flercellede (såkaldt) højerestående dyr. Lige der, i denne runde flade form, rummes et potentiale. Min mor fortæller mig, at alle celler, f.eks. de der blev til lever-celler, bærer potentialet til at være de andre celler, i sig. Min matematiklærer i gymnasiet fortalte mig, at den runde form er den som har det største areal i forhold til sin omkreds. Siden da har jeg altid tænkt cirklen som gavmild. En af de første foldninger er det som senere bliver til det neurale. Så selv dine tanker kommer ud af en foldning. Selv dine tanker er foldet ud fra en plade. Hvis vi er begyndt som foldninger fra runde plader kan vi vel også blive foldet ud igen. Eller okay, Deleuze, vi kan sige at pladerne kan blive ved med at folde sig. Ok? Der ligger et potentiale til at kroppen kan mutere og at hvilke sansninger der er mulige, kan ændre sig.

På den måde rykker det flade og det som har form tættere på hinanden. Det som er abstrakt, og det som er konkret, er ikke forskelligt. De er én. Jeg tænker begreber som greb, omfavnelser og fang. Jeg tænker på intellektuelle kroppe, sansende helheder. De gamle folde-steder måske-synlige, eller strøget om eftermiddagen, så der dufter af varmt stof i værelset. Da han var lille sad han og kiggede på terazzogulvet når han var på toilettet. Lige der, ved hans fødder, fandtes uendeligheden. Emhåttens grid, den rist som sidder nederst, ude i køkkenet med fedt på. Et fedtet grid. Lige så fedtfyldt som din hjerne og alle dens foldninger. Greasy grid, fedtet grid, noget som er

fedtet er klamt, besværligt, men også lækkert? Er det ikke sådan? En fedtet kage. Donut-butikkerne der er begyndt at komme til København dette forår.

Du ligger med ryggen til mig og jeg ser din nakke, dit baghoved, bagsiden af dit øre og der hvor det fæstner til dit hoved. Jeg tager hånden til mit eget øre, følger dets halvcirkel og krumning med fingrene. Jeg ser dit øre vokse til et ornament, let frynset i kanten. At være en ramme, at være et begreb, en som griber og kan gribes fat i, at være begge dele. Et vingefang. At være et sansende ornament, en klog krop. Jeg kører en finger gennem dit øres frynser, de bevæger sig som spindelvæv med savsmuld på.

*Text by Rebekka Hilmer Heltoft*

*One out of three letters, which Rebekka Hilmer Heltoft sent in one package to the artist Moyra Davey in 2021.*

Dear Moyra,

From my window in Copenhagen I can see a church. One day the sun was shining and it left a question mark on the roof of the church. A few minutes later it wasn't there. It looked like doubt had disappeared, or that the time for doubt, had disappeared.

At that time I was working from home, since my school was in lockdown, painting watercolors and trying to begin working on a writing project.

When I studied at the Academy of fine arts in Vienna, I had a teacher, who always held the stone workshop. It's a spring workshop, since at that time, the weather is warm enough for everybody to go outside and work. People work with chisels and you hear their consistent ping ping ping from the courtyard garden. At the academy, it's the sound of spring. The courtyard is a wild garden with many stones and many trees, among others a cherry and a mulberry. Old and new works of art lay there. It's not everyone who dares to eat the mulberries, when you begin to think of what materials might have seeped into the ground, during the making of all these works.

My teacher told me that the first stone he carved was a gravestone.

A friend of my family, a sculptor, carved my fathers gravestone. The pink red raw granite spells out STØRST ER KÆRLIGHEDEN (the greatest of these is love) in soft edged capital letters. It's a beautiful grave, everything is allowed to grow wild. So wild that the local ward council once sent my mom a letter, complaining. We informed them that this was not a mistake but a choice. The small square contains all the plants he liked.

It still grows wild, in a graveyard in a small city on the island of Funen. If Denmark were an eye, Funen would be

the pupil of it. I think it's where my eyes were formed as well. It's from and through there that I see. Even though I try to close my eyes and read with the body. To believe in intelligent flesh. I played on the graveyard and walked its stone fence. In another garden, there was a snowdrop covered, secret path in the bushes. Under our horse's mane I would warm my hands.

What is a grave? A grave is a frame for something incomprehensible.

It's said, by Vitruvius (c. 80-70 BC – after c. 15 BC) that Callimachus, an architect working in the second half of the 5th century BC, one day stumbled upon a grave. I imagine that he went for walks as breaks in his work. On the grave he saw a basket, a votive basket that had been standing there for a long time, maybe it had been forgotten. The plant called Acanthus was growing beside and through it. Its stalks were weaving through it, in and out, its leaves bursting out on its sides and top. Callimachus saw this and was inspired, they say that that's how the Corinthian order came into being. In this story a basket on a grave taken over by weeds is the foundation of ornament.

The Acanthus have grown and planted its leafs in an incomprehensible amount of places. To think that it was this dandelion-like, weeds-like plant that were to carry European ornamentation is quite wild. It has also been suggested that the origin of the Corinthian order was the Palmette, not the Acanthus.

What is it about this story that keeps me going back to it? Maybe it's the fact that it's a carrier merged with what it carries. Maybe it's that already here, about two thousand and fifty years ago, in the ornament, the nature-culture divide was dissolved. Maybe it's the simple fact of something growing from a loss. Maybe it's the way ornament and time are intertwined.

There's something about ornament, how it moves

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through history, as some kind of jelly that different things stick to at certain times. Or maybe it's the other way around, things are sticky and they merge sometimes in repetitive movements.

There's a possibility for change here.

Ornament also brings with it, some kind of promise of infinity.

And then there's the way ornament relates to bodies and, I would argue, the possibility for changing sensibilities. There's even a baroque style, flourishing in the middle of the 17th century, which later got the name Cartilage Baroque (Brusk barok). In Dutch it got the name of kwab. Kwab is the way flesh and fat folds. Kwab is "a weak, blubbery mass, notably: of human or animal tissue, such as quivering flesh, or a brain lobe".

At the time I'm writing, Denmark has entered a second lockdown. I've moved from frame-making to filming as a result thereof. In a minute, I will go towards the city hall to film. In there, stands the world's most precise mechanical clock. It was put into motion in 1955 and now it has stopped. Therefore a clockmaker and two helpers have been restoring it in the last year. The clock can, in thought, keep on going forever. There's a wheel that only turns once every 25,753 year. But in reality dust and moist seeps in, so-called technological progress has left the clock an artifact and, last but not least, it takes the time of the clockmakers, who live within a whole other timeframe than that of the clock.

# THING

It's morning and I'm sitting in my apartment by the window. I've opened it to let some cool and fresh air in. Outside everything is covered in a light frosting. I can hear birds and I can hear a ping ping ping. I stick my head out to see where it's coming from. It's the sound of one of countless balconies, which are being installed in the old buildings of Copenhagen, these days. Someone is hammering the building. Another sound enters now. It sounded like a foghorn but I realized it's the sound of a cut in a wall. A cut in a wall as a foghorn or a giant insect, a bee buzzing incomprehensibly loud.

Maybe I'm in a giant garden, one big ornament. If I'm in some kind of garden I wish it could be like one of Mei-Mei Bersenbrugges from *Hello, the Roses*.

In *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Karen Barad quotes the physicist Richard Feynman:

*The fact that there is an enhancement of contours (in the workings of the visual systems of particular animals, including humans) has long been known; in fact it is a remarkable thing that has been commented on by psychologists many times. In order to draw an object, we have only to draw its outline. How used are we to looking at pictures that have only the outline! What is the outline? The outline is only the edge difference between light and dark or one color and another. It is not something definite. It is not, believe it or not, that every object has a line around it! There is no such line. It is only in our psychological makeup that there is such a line.*

And we can even go further than that. If we zoom in, Barad tells on, on this difference in light and dark, we will see that light exists in dark areas and visa versa. Not just metaphorically or abstract but physically. Intuitively, I think this makes perfect sense.

Have you seen Agnes Martins last drawing?

Have you seen Albrecht Dürers pillows and self-portrait? Agnes Martins last drawing was of a plant in a pot, drawn with few lines. At first glimpse it's an outline drawing. At a second I think it could be something else, there's an openness to the line. To see this drawing, on a mental background of her abstract work, sets something in motion.

The cuts continue through the frosty morning. To me it's always questions of these cuts. Their sounds are so loud. Where to stop and where to cut, where to glue? How much to include? Where to "stop"? The violence of the lines that makes something comprehensible. And the (inherent?) violence of abstraction.

Karen Barad again  
*(...) "they" and "we" are co-constituted and entangled through the very cuts "we" help to enact. Intra-actions cut "things" together and apart. Cuts are not enacted from the outside, nor are they every enacted once and for all.*

I'm trying to think of cuts that paste together. Trying to understand a notion of gluing cuts.

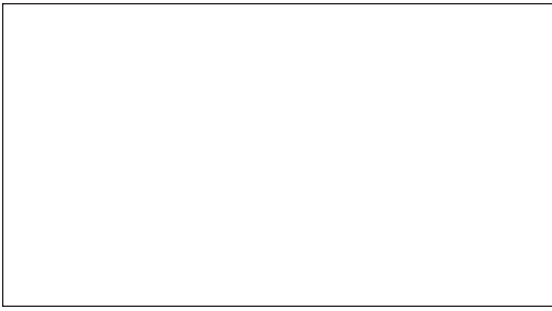
And Albrecht Dürer. It's one paper: on one side is a drawing of his own face, a hand and one pillow. On the other are six pillows in different positions. Was Dürer sleepless? Did someone just leave? Is this a negotiation of possible selves, plural selves, physicalized against our finite amount of days and nights? Pressed against this soft pillow that holds our heads as we rest. A pillow is a grateful canvas; lines can be drawn and redrawn.

At the time of finishing this letter I've moved myself

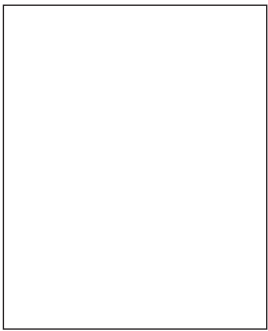
to Malmö. There's a giant chimney outside the window, producing sporadic clouds on a blue sky on this crisp spring day. Several times always exists at the same time. There's a way the simultaneity of these lived different times are enhanced on intensely blue-skied and fresh-aired spring and autumn days. It's as if I can travel through time when this blue duvet makes itself felt.

Kærlig hilsen

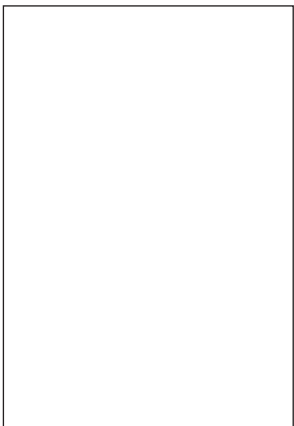
Rebekka



Fold  
Pencil and watercolor on paper, laminate, lock  
146 x 80 cm, 2025



Fold II  
Pencil and watercolor on paper, laminate, lock  
70 x 86 cm, 2025



Potential Waving at me (with flowers) II  
Pencil and watercolor on paper, laminate, lock  
77 x 112 cm, 2025



Gazing  
Pencil and watercolor on paper, laminate, lock  
101 x 36 cm, 2025



Whirler (Aogiri), video, 02:03 min. 2025

Filmed at Ibaraki Nature Museum, Ibaraki, Japan. Seed from an Aogiri tree, one of the few trees that survived the Atomic Bomb. Since then, the tree has become a symbol of hope.

It will be shown at the opening, by appointment or with the QR-code on your own device.

