

# MADS THOMSEN

## *Curved Space*

**21 September – 17 November 2013**

GL STRAND celebrates Mads Thomsen, one of the young artists on the Danish art scene. At EXTRACT 2011 Thomsen was the winner of the EXTRACT audience prize 2011 and is now making his debut with his first solo exhibition at Kunstforeningen GL STRAND.

Imagine if one could travel in time and move from one dimension to another through the so-called worm-holes of the universe. Curved spaces, worm-holes and transcendental journeys! The fascination of crossing boundaries – both physical and mental – is the basis for Mads Thomsen's first solo exhibition at GL STRAND.

With *Curved Space* Mads Thomsen explores transitions, transcendence and the idea of being able to move among different stages. The exhibition consists of an extensive installation with sculptures, lino-cuts in very large formats and installational animation films, all referring to the classic science-fiction aesthetic. Motivically, human dramas are staged through moods of loss, disappearance and collapse. Conceptually, Mads Thomsen takes his point of departure in the scientific phenomenon the Einstein-Rosen bridge (named for Albert Einstein and his assistant Nathan Rosen), which is the idea of the worm-hole, and how it functions converted to a graphic model. The worm-hole has only been proven in theory, not in practice, but is an example of the relationship of science to the level of abstraction in our consciousness. A level of abstraction that is also used by art and religions. This convergence is central to Mads Thomsen's work with the alluring vision of the worm-hole.

Mads Thomsen (b. 1978) graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2011. He participated in the international group exhibition of young artists at GL STRAND, EXTRACT I, where he was awarded the audience prize for best installation, a solo exhibition at GL STRAND.

The press is invited to the **OPENING**, Friday 20 September at 16:30. Prior to this, the exhibition will be presented at a **PRESS MEETING WITH LUNCH**, Friday 20 May at 11:00, where the artist will be attending. Registration for the press conference to Head of Communication and Sponsorship Sibbe Aggergaard: +45 33360261 / [sa@glstrand.dk](mailto:sa@glstrand.dk). **PRESS PHOTOS** can be downloaded from: [www.glstrand.dk/presserum](http://www.glstrand.dk/presserum)



Mads Thomsen: *Untitled*, 2012



Mads Thomsen's installation for EXTRACT I at Kunstforeningen GL STRAND in 2011.



Mads Thomsen's installation for EXTRACT I at Kunstforeningen GL STRAND in 2011.

## Curriculum Vitae

### Mads Thomsen

F. 1979 i Vanløse, Danmark / B. 1979 in Vanløse, Denmark

#### Uddannelse / Education

Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi/The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts,  
MFA, 2005 - 2011

Det Fynske Kunstakademi/The Funen Art Academy, 2002 - 2005

#### Kommende udstillinger / Upcoming exhibitions

*Krumt rum* (Solo), Kunstforeningen GL STRAND, 2013

Vejle Kunstmuseum (Solo), 2014

KUMU. The 16th Tallinn Print Triennial, *Literacy / Illiteracy*, 2014

#### Udvalgte udstillinger / Selected exhibitions

A Space Called Public, Namill (med/with Nils Grarup), Munich, DE. 2013

KPMG, 2013

Herning Kunstforening, Herning, DK, 2012

EXTRACT I, Kunstforeningen GL STRAND, Copenhagen, DK, 2011

AFGANG, Nikolaj Kunsthall, Copenhagen, DK, 2011

Maps and Legends, Grafikernes Hus, Copenhagen, DK, 2010

Blanks, Q, Copenhagen, DK, 2008

ROYAL, Galleri Tom Christoffersen, Copenhagen, DK, 2006

Westworld, Koh-i-noor, Copenhagen, DK, 2006

The "folkelighed", Sparwasser HQ, Berlin, DE, 2005

5000 C, Filsofgangen, Odense, DK, 2004

Supermarkt of art IV, Gallery DAP og Gallery Luficik, Warszawa, PL, 2003

Ergo, Ergo, Copenhagen, DK, 2003

Fight-Night, Namill (med/with Nils Grarup), DFK, Odense, DK, 2003

#### Legater / Grants

Ny Carlsberg Fondet, 2004

Statens Kunstråd, 2012, 2013



Photo: Torben Stroyer



Mads Thomsen. Sketch for a linocut for the exhibition *Curved Space*

## **THE DIFFICULT FIRST SOLO.**

**Interview with Mads Thomsen in connection with his exhibition CURVED SPACE at Kunstforeningen GL STRAND**

By Exhibition Curator Pernille Fønnesbech

**Pernille Fønnesbech (PF):** *In 2011 you participated in EXTRACT I, where you had created an installation consisting of one very large linocut, a series of medium-large linocuts and several smaller sculptural works. And for your work as a whole you were rewarded by the public with the audience prize, a solo exhibition at GL STRAND, which you are opening in August. What are your thoughts on the whole about what will be your first solo exhibition and about its significance for you as an artist?*

**Mads Thomsen (MT):** I think it has very great significance, because it's the first time I've been allowed to try my hand on the Danish art scene in earnest. The EXTRACT exhibition was after all a group exhibition, where we were all invited against the background of our graduation works. Of course one feels honored, but it also means that one can hide a little among the crowd. Having to stand up for one's own artistic decisions a year later is a very big and instructive task, and I'm very anxious about it, since I would like to get off to a good start with my first exhibition.

**PF:** *Can you say something about the idea of the exhibition itself?*

**MT:** The exhibition takes its point of departure partly in a spiritual aspect and partly in a scientific aspect. I have drawn inspiration from the Einstein-Rosen Bridge [ed.: named for Albert Einstein and his assistant Nathan Rosen], which is the idea of the worm-hole and how it functions converted into a graphic model. I have created it as a sculpture in the exhibition, and it will be the focus for some graphic works that are more about the transcendental, but attempt to draw on both worlds – the spiritual and the scientific. I am very interested in transitions. There's a mixed feeling of being both fascinated and awed by the contemporary – that is, that something that is bigger than



Illustration of the linocut process. Photo: Torben Stroyer

oneself. And it is inherent in the idea of the worm-hole that there is something that could implode and cancel out everything, but at the same time can also be a portal, a transition from one dimension to another. It is also inherent in the transcendental that it takes place in the mind – that is, moving from one stage to another, from life to death or simply, quite spiritually, entering another state. I think there's an interesting tension between the two fields. As far as I can see, science and the spiritual actually work with the same things, but from different parameters. And I'd like my installation to be located in that field of tension. The viewers read what they like into it, but for me it is about creating an atmosphere around this field, and offering the potential for reflections about it.

**PF:** *Do you also think that art can help to build a bridge to a stage where one experiences something of the transcendental?*

**MT:** That would be demanding too much of art. It's primarily a sensory experience and must help to give people an experiential basis they can project themselves over into and to form a basis for a reflection on a theme.

**PF:** *You have earlier worked with imagery with features from Japanese manga strips, but also with moods evoking ideas of destruction and dystopia. How do you see your coming exhibition in relation to the earlier works?*

**MT:** It will be very closely connected to my earlier works. My field of interest is still the dystopia, just as I am continuing with the linocut and the graphic idiom, the black-and-white surface and the contrasts. This time I'm also working with an animator to make the two things complement each other – that is, the moving animation and the line drawing which has no motion. This is how I want to evoke a basic atmosphere in the exhibition and strengthen the graphic works in a more installation-like direction.



Photo: Torben Stroyer

**PF:** Besides continuing with two-dimensional works and the adding of animation, the exhibition also includes a sculpture, which is a representation of the Einstein-Rosen Bridge. Irrespective of its specific reference to Einstein's theory of the worm-hole its smoothly polished and mechanical aesthetic expression has some undertones of an unexplored future and a strong reference to the Science Fiction genre. Could you try to clarify this reference?

**MT:** The sculpture is an alien object in the space and refers to the worm-hole's vast dimensions – being able to go from one dimension to another. That fits well with the polished look. I have tried to keep the sculpture as mechanical-looking as possible. After all, it has to point back to science, which is a factual entity. It has great rigor and stands there as the black object that contains secrets and something inexplicable. The worm-hole, it has just been proved, exists in theory, but not in practice. It is hugely fascinating and like the graphic works it touches on the transcendental as something fictive, so the sculpture also makes the scientific theory appear more as a supposition than as true knowledge.

**PF:** It's a vast theme you're working with. But formally too, you have moved into a borderline field. For example you have chosen to work in certain graphic formats where you have had to create a new printing press to make the very large prints for the exhibition. Is that a result of the theme chosen for the exhibition, or did you as an artist simply feel like moving upward in the format?

**MT:** It's a combination. I like working in large formats with prints. With the conventional print format you can easily take in the whole picture space all at once. I would like to put pressure on the graphic medium and challenge it, just as has been done in painting. And then there's also an issue of relating the graphic works to a bodily dimension, where the viewer can get a sense of disappearing into or getting lost in the work.

**PF:** Thank you, Mads. We're looking forward to seeing the exhibition!