

# READING ECHOES

- Narration and illustration

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## **Abstract**

The main theme of my thesis work has been the role of illustration. I wanted to challenge both its traditional role in relation to text and in terms of expression, through using an abstract expression rather than a figurative one. The purpose of this was mainly to widen the view of what illustration can be and what it can be used for. Through giving text and illustration equal terms of existence, the goal was to make them equally important. To achieve this I worked with two writers. They wrote to illustrate my images and I made images to illustrate their texts. This resulted in two chains of interpretations, one for each writer, each consisting of six images and six texts. The two series of images and texts were presented in two separate books.

Thank you:

Simon Himmelstrup Andersen

Christian Valeur

Eva Dahlin

My classmates

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# Introduction

## *Background*

One of the things I've enjoyed the most since coming to HDK is to make images. I used to study industrial design. During this time I had hardly sat down at all to make an image for purposes other than visualizing an idea for a product or to practice my drawing skills. Starting my degree at HDK, I rediscovered how much I liked drawing and painting. After training in my previous school to make my drawings depict something very specific, it has been liberating to explore more abstract shapes in the images I make.

I wondered what I could use these abstract images for in a design context. In a couple of projects in HDK I had used them as illustrations. But looking outside school, as far as I could see, most illustrators work more or less figuratively, and the works that are more abstract are often vector based. I worried I would have a hard time getting jobs. Should I go more figurative or go into vector graphics? Are there enough applications for abstract illustrations?

Simultaneously with pondering these questions, I needed a concept for my degree project. The whole thing could have looked very different if not a fellow student had come up with an angle for me. That happened at a brainstorming-session in the degree preparation course. Before that, I had planned to let the project be about the difference between art and illustration, or the lack thereof. Instead my classmate, Louise Kempkes, suggested working with a writer and making a chain of interpretations. I liked the thought of it, but had long been adverse to using ideas that were not my own. I thought the project then wouldn't feel mine, that it would feel like cheating, or it could simply have been that I was too proud. But this time I couldn't think of any real reasons not to go for it. Being open to other peoples ideas turned out to be a recurring subject throughout.

## *Objectives*

This work was most of all about illustration. One of the objectives with the project was to explore the relationship between text and illustration. Most often an illustration is supposed to help explain or enhance what a text is saying. But when put side by side, text and illustration will always affect each other in other ways too. Not only is the illustration interpreted with the text in mind, but the interpretation of the text is also influenced by the illustration next to it. They fill each other with meaning. In this project the objective was to investigate this symbiosis further, exaggerate it and even try to blur the lines between text and image, narration and illustration. It was an appealing idea to produce texts that could not have existed without the images that inspired them and images that could not have existed without the texts that inspired them.

Another aspect of illustration is the question of expression. Most illustrations are more or less figurative. A lot of the time they depict people, probably because a lot of texts deal with human characters. Images depicting people are often called illustrations even though they are not accompanying a text. This also goes for images of houses, animals, cars, trees and other familiar things. It seems this is especially common for drawings or digitally made images. This can make one think that illustration is about, and is dependent on, being figurative and using a certain set of media. Trying to expand this perception of illustration, my second objective was to explore different media and pursue an abstract expression rather than a figurative one.

## *Aims*

The aim of the project was mainly to widen the view of what illustration can be and what it can be used for. Through giving text and illustration equal terms of existence, the goal was to make them equally important.

For my own personal sake, this is what I aimed to do:

1. Develop my illustration skills.
2. Challenge myself through:
  - a) reaching out to others asking for help and contribution
  - b) letting go of having complete control of the outcome and
  - c) not being able to go back and drastically change the images I make

### *Questions*

What makes a good illustration?

In what ways can text and illustration relate to each other?

Can the relationship between text and image be a completely equal one?

How much should the style of writing affect the style of illustration?

How does one express feelings through images?

What makes something an illustration if it's not connected to text?

Why are some images called illustrations and others artworks?

# Implementation

## *Defining the project*

Initially the plan was to make one series of images and texts together with one writer:

text-->image--> text-->image--> text-->image-->text-->image--> text -->image-->text-->image

In this process both texts and images would work as illustrations (reflective) and as narrations (continuing ahead). Our interpretation of each other's work would drive the process forward. The goal was not necessarily to create a cohesive story, but rather to take it by stride and trust that the process would give the series cohesion, being an obvious one or not.

As it turned out, the first writer I asked, Christian Valeur, didn't have time to participate for the whole duration of the project. I was familiar with his writing from before and thought he would be good for the project, so I adjusted the setup so that he could take part. At least that was the initial reason for adjusting it, but then there were other good reasons too. Making it into two series instead of one allowed me to do the process twice and compare. It would also challenge me to interpret two different styles of writing.

I decided to begin the series with an image rather than a text. This way the relation between text and illustration would differ from the norm already from the beginning. Having made that decision, the possibility opened up to start the two series with the same image. This gave room for more comparison still; I now had the opportunity to see how the same starting point would develop in two different directions according to the writers' styles. First I made a series with Simon, and then with Christian.

--> text-->image--> text-->image--> text-->image-->text-->image--> text -->image-->text

Image

--> text-->image--> text-->image-->text -->image--> text-->image--> text-->image-->text

## *Research*

Before writing my project description, I read some articles on illustration. It occurred to me that I didn't know too much about it. In the article *Putting Humpty Dumpty together again: When illustration shuts down* James A. Erikson writes about the risk illustration runs of ruining the possibilities for freely interpreting a text. If the illustrations are more specific than the text, it can lead the reader to be blind to other ways of interpretation than what is illustrated. Another interesting point was the different types of illustration Erikson brought up:

When pictures and text work well together, their relationships has been categorized as symmetrical, complementary, or in counterpoint (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2000; Nikolajeva, 2005). Symmetrical illustrations tell the same story as the text. Complementary illustrations add details that enhance the readers' interpretations of the text, and counterpoint illustrations tell two different stories, cooperating to create a new meaning. Counterpointing illustrations often provide rich opportunity for pluralistic interpretations with both text and illustration becoming essential for interpreting the message.

As I saw it, this opened the door to more abstract illustrations. They could work as counterpointing illustrations.

Another article I read was encouraging. It was about how illustration is having a renaissance after being pushed aside for the sake of photography for a long time. Especially one quote reassured me:

In terms of different styles, I can say 3D-Graphics are very trendy, but illustration, following the idea of abstract illustration, is an interesting upcoming field too.

Pascal Johanssen, owner of the Gallery Johanssen in Berlin and curator of the *Illustrative*, an annual international festival for illustration

Other than this, I didn't find that much relevant reading before starting out the work. Rather, it was crucial to get the project started, as an important part of it was learning along the way. During the work however, I read up on different topics I felt I needed to learn more about, such as color, oil painting, tempera, book design and bookbinding.



### *Choosing the writers*

As mentioned, I first contacted Christian Valeur, an acquaintance of mine. To be honest it was most of all because he was about the only writer I knew. Fortunately I liked his writing as well. Next I wrote to both a writing school in Gothenburg (Författarutbildningen Litterär gestaltning, Göteborgs universitet) and a writing school in Bergen, Norway (Skrivekunstakademiet i Hordaland). A student from the Norwegian writing school replied quickly. Before agreeing to work with me he wanted me to read a sample of his writing, so I could see if I liked it or not. After sending him the image that I wanted to have first in the series, he sent me his first text. I liked the text and we agreed to work together.

## Schedule

The schedule was very important for this project. In order for the writers and me to reach the set number of six texts and six images in each series, we had to work steadily. The work order was roughly like this: from February to March I worked with Simon, and from March to April I worked with Christian. There were a lot of adjustments done to the schedule during the course of the project. Sometimes I was late sending off an image, sometimes Simon or Christian were late with a text. Keeping track of time was important to make sure there would be enough time to design and make whatever the end result would be.

Mostly the schedule consisted of blank spaces that were filled up along the way

	Søndag	Mandag	Tirsdag	Onsdag	Torsdag	Fredag	Lørdag
5				1	2. <u>Bilde 1</u> ✓	3	4
6	5	6 <u>Tekst 1</u> ✓	7 <u>Bilde 2</u> ✓	8	9 <u>Tekst 2</u> ✓ Verledning 10.00	10	11
7	12	13 <u>Bilde 3</u> ✓	14	15 09.30 - Lunsj Josef Albas 13-18 - Tekst forges Krafttag kl. 19.05	16	17 <u>Bilde 4</u>	18
8	19	20 Legge ut på Hok portfolio side Lagt bok - nakkelp - sine stierelser	21 08.00 <u>Tekst 4</u> ✓ HTR notatdelinger	22	23 <u>Bilde 5</u>	24 Sende mail	25
9	26 Hedda	27 <u>Tekst 5</u>	28	29 <u>Bilde 6</u>	1. Mars	2. Mars v. 10.00 <u>Tekst 6</u> Male over bilder Pub	Søndag Forberede Y.L. Civonags

FEBRUAR

## March 2012

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9				(B6)	1 Bilde 1	2 (B6)	3
10	4	5 Tekst 1	6	7 Bilde 2	8	9 Tekst 2	10
11	11	12	13 Bilde 3	14 skisse	15 ta med egg Tekst 3	16 permisjon trere?	17
12	18	19 Bilde 4	20 seminar!	21 kjøpe egg Tekst 4	22	23 10.00 Erik Bilde 5 Love bok	24
13	25 Lage møkkup 1:1 MED tekst + bilder	26 Bilde 4	27 Tekst 5 Sett opp lest legge inn, gjør Bilde 4	28 Tekst 1	29 trere Bilde 6	30 13.00 plott M&P	31

Se også Bilde 9  
Maille Eva  
trere

## April 2012

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14	1	2 Tekst 6	3 Text 7	4	5 07: Bilde 6	6 06-09 hjemmesida	7 09.00 layout bok - klippe ut rose - bedre isdanser - ta bort strek - legg film?
15	8 Mailbok Easter 1. påskedag	9 Text 6 Bokbinder?	10 Kjøpe ark 10.00 Erik Spør om gullskrift	11 hva slags papir? Ta med hjem prøver av alle material	12 8-12 Plott	13 Mailbok Til binding	14 Mailbok Kjøpe mailbok ark A4
16	15 Mailbok	16 Bestill EN! Drake	17 Oso	18 pres	19 pres	20 Email Miriam	21 pres
17	22 pres	23 pres	24 pres	25 Opponent + Deadline - All helt forslag	26 09.00 presentere	27	28
18	29	30					Young Jelzy

### *Choosing the first image*

The first image in the series was important because it would set the tone for the whole project. I made a lot of different images to choose from. I wanted the image I chose to be simple, yet evoke feelings in people, to look meaningful, but have the meaning be an open-ended question. This way the writers could decide for themselves where they wanted to go with their interpretations. I was pleased to see they went in very different directions. This made their texts all the more interesting to illustrate.



*The opening image*

### *Making the series*

For the most part there was about two days to respond to a text with an image. When first receiving a text I would read it several times before writing down key words on what I thought was at the core of the text and its mood. Then I'd sketch on different ways to express these key words. Sometimes the process was quite linear, and I'd work my way up to an end result. Sometimes I'd choose an early sketch that I'd originally discarded as the end image.

### *Example of a linear process*

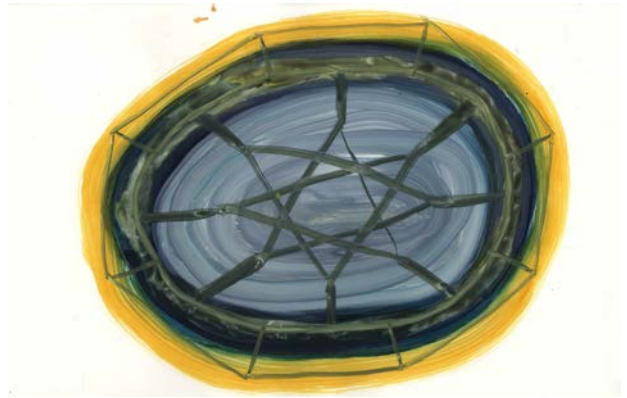
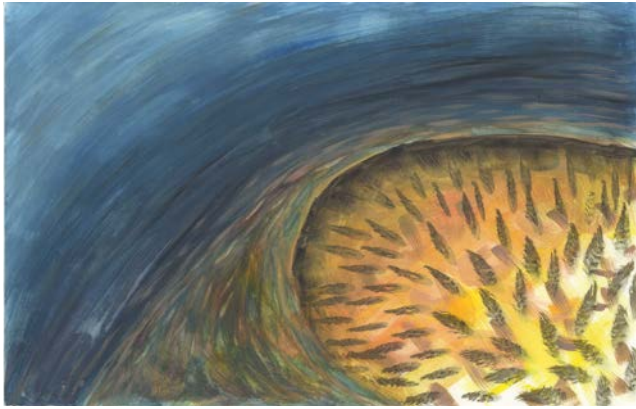
Nu regner det igen. Der står en skraldespand her, og den stiller jeg mig op i. Folk ser spørgende nærmest mistroisk til. Nogen vender sig leende mod deres følgeskab. De går rundt med små t'er i hånden, og jeg spørger hvor DET ligger. „I er godt nok er langt væk“, råber jeg. De råber, at det er mig, der er langt væk. „Korleis“ svarer jeg og dukker mig ned, så kun en lille hårtot stikker op. Min krop er som denne skraldespand. Organer: Gamle mælkekartoner, et blad læst af et menneske, en uåbnet cigaretpakke fra en der lige er holdt op med at ryge, hvorpå der står: *nu dør du*. En svensk nøgle, en spist chokolade og en hel pakke ris. Noget fra et jakkeærme, et skrabelod, en slidt vante og en spids sko, et sæt nøgler og en magisk ring. Klistrede mønter, et ikke-menneske med en stak *Megafon* under armen. En lille hund, en mand med stok, chef, kassedame, buschauffør, stilladsarbejder og et lille bitte stykke skolekridt, som befinder sig nede i min storetå.

Intet af det der sker her  
er hovedhandling i  
menneskenes liv  
jeg tror ikke  
de findes.

#### *Key words:*

- loneliness
- inside/outside
- distance
- isolation

*The second text from Simon*



*Choosing a concept to illustrate the key words and adjusting it*



*The image chosen in the end*

*A non-linear process*

TUNGE KYSS  
KYSS EN TUNGE  
EN TUNGEKLØNE  
KORTPUSTET AV TYNNE LEPPER  
GEIPEFJES

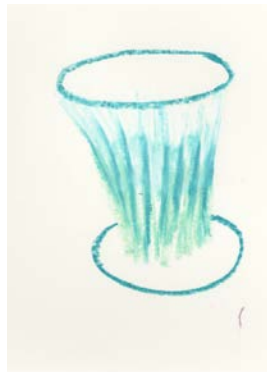
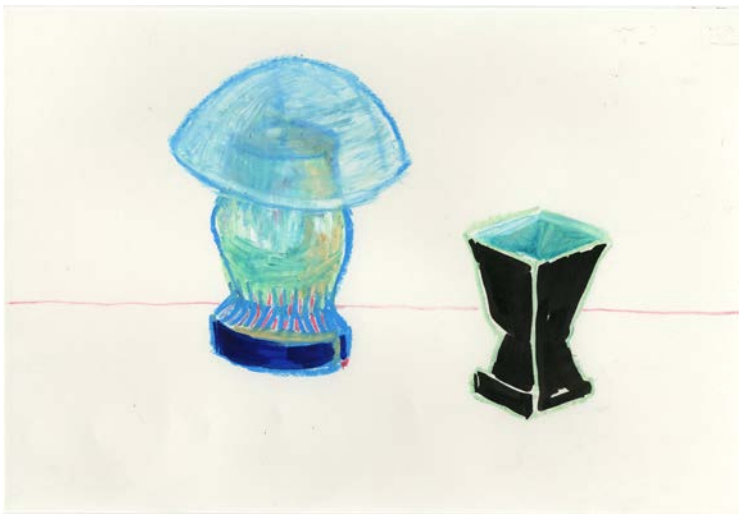
*Key words:*

- vulnerability
- insecurity
- fragility
- un-elegant
- cute

*Christians fourth text*











*The image chosen in the end*

### *Working with the writers*

The collaboration with the writers was quite different between the two different writers. I started off working with Simon. He was sometimes insecure about what he had written for me, questioning if it was good enough or fitting to the project. When the fifth text was due, he sent me two texts, both of them illustrating the proceeding fifth image. He wanted to use one of the texts as the sixth and final text, following the sixth and final image. I argued that this was not how the concept was set up, that image and text were supposed to follow each other. I wanted to get across to him that the whole point was to in turn get inspired by each other. Writing a text to follow an image he hadn't seen before was cheating in my eyes. After some discussion back and forth, we decided to put both of his original texts in use. This was not according to plan, but I figured that the most important thing in this project was not to follow a plan but to experiment with text and image. The sixth text, Simon argued, was sort of like an image in itself, and I couldn't help but to agree. Still, to keep true to the process, the order in which the text and image is put in the books shows what came first.

With Christian things went smoother, and he answered the task much like I had expected him to. This was timely because parallel to working with him I needed to make decisions about how to show the results of the project.



Image number 5

#### En vild kat springer ud af din favn

Ethvert menneske har sin måde at sidde på

Skal man sidde fremme  
med albuen støttende mod bordet  
og hånden mod hage og kind  
eller skal man sætte sig tilbage  
med benene over kors  
armene uorganiserede?

Der er forskel på lige at have sat sig og at have siddet her længe

Du er et helt almindeligt menneske  
og en meget lille del af tiden går med at være det

Tilpasser dig omgivelserne på samme måde  
som når man slår hårdt i bordet  
fordi man er utilfreds med noget  
men ikke helt ved hvad det er

Man kan vel sige at ethvert menneske  
har sin måde at stå imod på  
som at feje krummer ned fra et  
bord med rund hånd  
Jeg kan ikke kræve noget af dig  
som du ikke kræver af dig selv

Så en kat springe ned fra en bænk i dag  
Den løb langs rækværket på en måde  
som om at den ville sige  
at den boede henne under solen  
det var pelsen der afslørede den  
da den smøg sig under min hånd

Text number 5

Leder efter liv blandt de døde, bevæger mig rundt blandt lig. Det er en forenklet konklusion at drage. Det her er ikke en ny start, men en slutning.

Røgen fra de to store skorstene på halmkraftværket svæver i en lige linje henover mine forældres hus, røgen dækker for fuldmånen og skyggen lægger sig på taget. Lyset fra gårdlygten gør, at jeg kan se skyggen bevæge sig henover krystallerne i sneen og himlen er helt frostklar. Det ligner et billede der hører til en idyllisk historie. Jeg står i fuldkommen stilhed og overværer det, den eneste lyd kommer fra en bil der kører nede på hovedvejen flere kilometer væk. Da jeg slukker cigaretten i sneen, for at tage skoddet med ind i skraldespanden, har vinden vendt, for røgens linje går ikke længere på tværs af rummet mellem mine forældres hus og månen. Skyggen er forsvundet.

Text number 6

### *Making choices for the books*

In deciding which form the series would be presented an important point was somehow reflecting the process. When beginning working with the series, the writers and I had no idea where it would end up. It was not important either. The fun was in exploring, and in one way the process was the project. Correspondingly I wanted the reader/viewer to not see it all at once. The experience should be more like walking through a forest than driving on a highway. That's why the choice fell on doing a book, rather than for example displaying everything on posters on a wall.

While designing the book I had a tutoring session with Aslak Gurholt Rønsen who works at *Yokoland*, a small design studio in Oslo. I wanted advice on what to think about when making a book and also just to talk about the project in general with someone outside school. He told me about a couple of books they had designed and some useful things to think about when designing books for print. We didn't talk that much about my project though. He wasn't too keen on my idea for the form of the books (folded three-way as they are in the end result), nor that they were so big. He said it was a bit gimmicky and that he liked books to be more modest and let the content shine instead, plus that it was a disadvantage that people would put the pages back in wrong order after looking through it. I took his advice into consideration but decided to stick with my idea for the book form. Probably I didn't emphasize it enough in the tutoring, but I did think it related to the project and that it was a sensible way of showing the series. However I thought a lot about what he said about not making a "show-off" book where the cover overshadows the content. Even with an untraditional format and a substantial size, I tried to keep the cover pretty simple. It was for example very tempting to use gold or silver in the letters printed on it, but against the linen cloth the differences in typeface would not have come through very clearly. The red color contrasting the linen showcases the text better.

To differentiate the books from each other I thought of having them be bound in two different colored cloths, but I didn't find a good combination of colors and material. Instead, I decided to make the books different through typography. Initially the plan was to have one typeface for each cover, alternatively use all different typefaces all over the place. Erik, the book binder, suggested using the same three typefaces on both the books and alternating them. I thought this was a good idea that would create both cohesion and diversion. Choosing three typefaces that were different from each other in style and size was not so easy, partly because there were so many good ones to choose from and partly because a lot of them didn't come in different sizes or they only in capital letters. I chose the two headline-typefaces because I thought them beautiful and special, the last Times Roman one because it was simple and classical.



*I almost chose green fabric on one of the books*

With the texts inside the book, there were other considerations needed. The texts were supposed to be read easily and then connected in the readers mind with the adjacent images. To help make that connection, I presented the texts visually in the same manner as a lot of the images, on a scanned in paper. This way the images and texts were both surfaces. In my mind this helped underline the equal value of text and image I had stressed during the project.

When it came to how the texts were built up, I set them pretty much the way I received them from the writers.

In choosing paper, there weren't a lot to choose from. In order to bind the book as I wanted the sheets needed to be over 400 millimeters tall and over 600 millimeters long, with the fiber grain going vertically. I wanted to show the different nuances of the scanned in paper, so I chose a white paper. In addition I didn't want too much texture in it as some of the images had detail in them that would get lost in very grainy paper.



## Results

The series are presented in two books, called *Billedbok* and *Om sorg* (roughly translated to *Picture book* and *About grief*). The books are bound by bookbinder Erik Hernevik. The material used on the cover linen fabric. The cover typography is set in red and is made up of various typefaces from Eriks workshop: *Carulus*, *Times Roman* and the name of the last one is unknown. The paper used is *Mohawk* 148 g/m<sup>2</sup> in white for the main pages and a thinner paper in light grey and peach pink as lining paper.

The books are three folded and the pages show three steps at a time: a text, the texts preceding illustration on one side and its succeeding illustration on the other. This shows where a text was coming from and what it turned into.

There is one exception to the order of image-text-image, and that is the last text and image in *Billedbok*. The last text comes before the last image because it was written before the last image was done. The text is derived from the fifth image and therefor placed after that image.

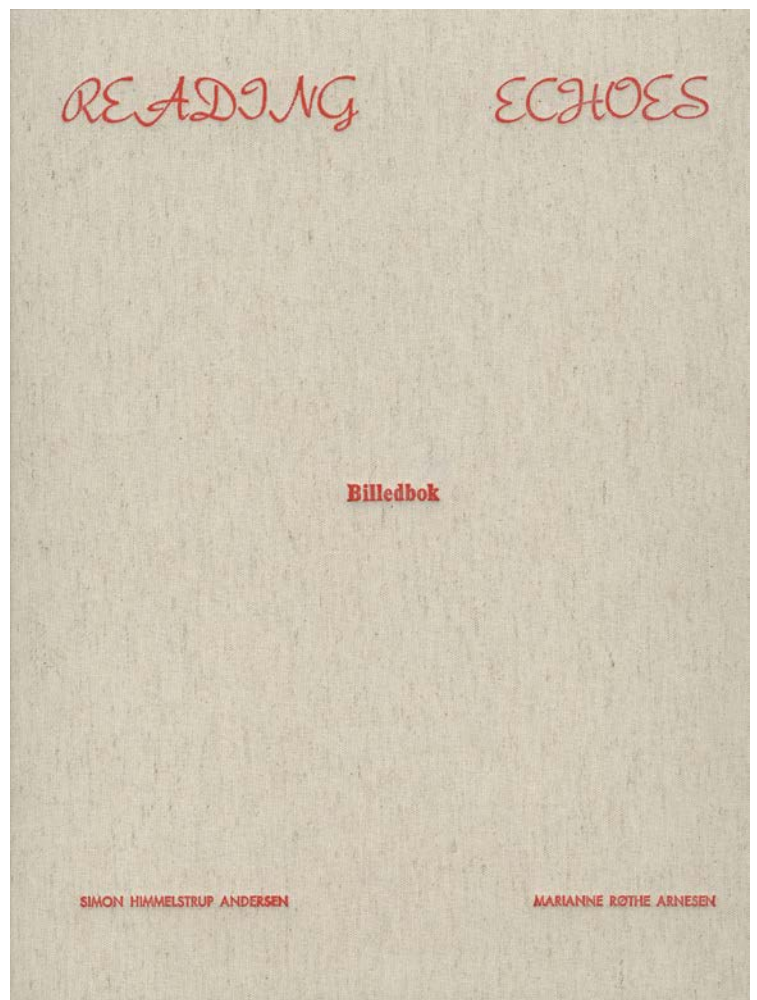
The images are done using different media such as acrylics, oil paint, tempera, oil pastels, markers, chalk, digital tools or a combination of these.

In addition to *Billedbok* and *Om sorg* I made a process book showing mail correspondence between the writers and me and sketches for images. The book is bound together by glue. The paper types used are the same as in the main books. As one of the writers didn't want too many people reading our mail conversation, this book will not be shown at the exhibition, though the sketches in it will still be shown in one form or another.

*Unknown name of type*

*Times Roman*

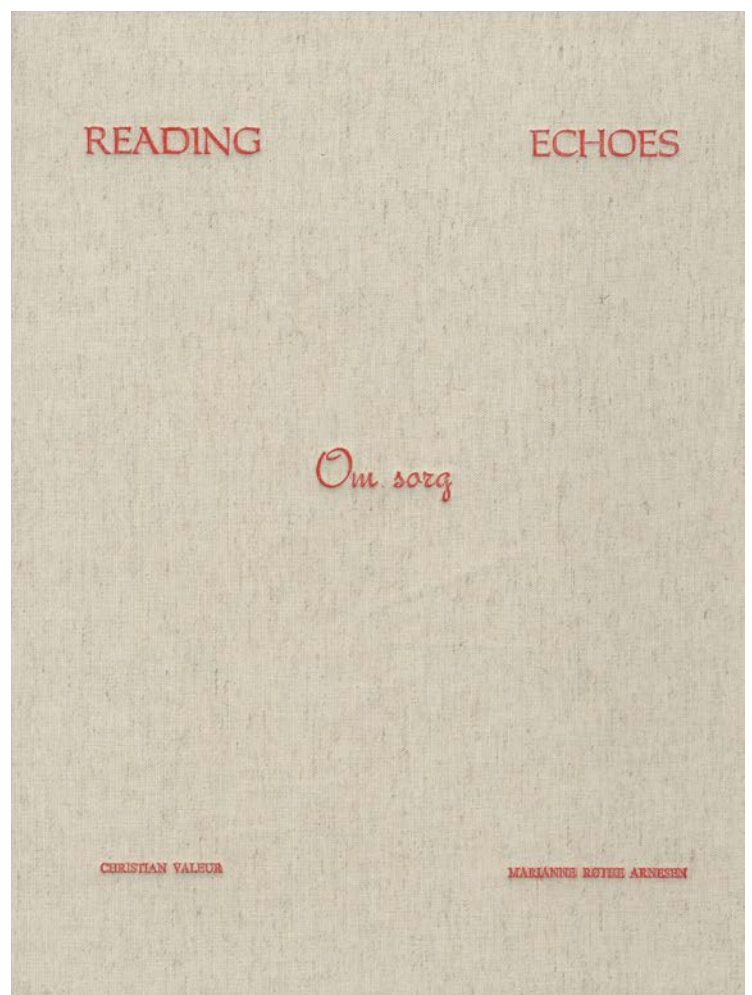
*Carulus*



*Carulus*

*Unknown name of type*

*Times Roman*





*Photos by Lisen Axelsson and Carl Ander*

### *The texts*

As for the writers they had quite different styles of writing. Whilst Simons texts were for the most part pretty serious in their mood, Christian often mixed seriousness with humor. And while Christian had a quite consistent form in his texts, Simon varied his style throughout. Christian interpreted the brief pretty much like I had expected, with a constant evident connection to the images I made. In Simons texts it was sometimes difficult to see how they were inspired by the images. On the other hand, his texts had a lot in common with images themselves, reading them often evoked thoughts of dark landscapes and surroundings.

The texts shared some common traits though. Most of them were written from the point of view of “I” instead of writing about a “she” or “he”. This could be because there are no people in the images I made; therefore there was no ready character to project thoughts and feelings upon, and to create a story around. Rather, the images can be seen as looking through the eyes of someone, and seeing what they are seeing.

Another common trait in the texts is that a lot of them deal with loneliness in different forms. In Simons texts this is often very clear, such as in his first and second text, where he describes one person observing others from a distance. Christian more often wrote about interaction between people, (like in *Isdronningen* and *Om sorg*) but still the interactions in these texts are most of the time filled with distance and coldness. The people relating to each other are insecure and do not understand the other person. Here as well, the lack of visible characters in the images could be one of the reasons for the theme of loneliness. The notion of looking at something you don't quite understand and being literally alone in the image may have helped trigger the feeling of alienation and loneliness in the texts.

### *Evaluation of objectives and aims*

The objectives for this project were to mix the roles of text and illustration and to expand the view on what illustration can be through using an abstract expression and a variety of techniques. I think I did mix up the roles. I also used an abstract expression for the most part; the least abstract was the image of the little vase. I should maybe have tried to do more research beforehand on what abstract really means, or defined what I mean when using it, because it's a blurry word.

I didn't experiment as much with technique and media as I had thought, especially I left the digital tools pretty much alone. Mostly I painted. Maybe it was a bit unrealistic, or at least not ideal, to set the goal of exploring a lot of techniques. It takes time to master just one, so maybe it would have been better to pick just one and get really good at it. At the same time I enjoyed discovering what I could do with media I hadn't used before.

As for the aim of making text and image equally important through giving them equal terms of existence, I pretty much did that. Although in the books text and image aren't completely on equal terms, given that each spread has two images and only one text. This compromise enabled the shape of the book to be as it is. Or maybe it isn't so much of a compromise as the middle placement of the texts makes up for some of what they lack in number of displays.

# Reflection

## *- on my learning process*

This process has been a lot about learning and gaining experience for me. As well as the objectives and aims that were about challenging illustration, the personal goals I set were:

- a) reaching out to others asking for help and contribution
- b) letting go of having complete control of the outcome and
- c) not being able to go back and drastically change the images I make

Those turned out to be important and directional for the project. The first point about making contact with people was the start of the project. The most rewarding about it was overcoming some of my hesitance against taking contact with people, asking them to help me, and then trusting that they will. Forcing myself to ask writers to help me, set the tone for the project as a whole. I tried to be conscious of my choices throughout and not let them be run by fear, but by what was best for the project. I was tested at this for example when there were troubles with the last text in Billedbok, when trying to get permission from the writers to show the process book in the exhibition and when asking for external tutoring with Yokoland. None of these efforts gave the result I had hoped or expected. Still, it gave me practice in talking to and discussing with people I don't know very well and it showed me the importance of always being prepared to receive valuable experience. Now that I am aware of that, maybe next time I'll be better prepared still.

Letting go of the complete control over the projects outcome was both liberating and intimidating. Liberating in the way that the writers took on some of the responsibility of making choices. For me the decision-making is the heaviest and most challenging part of any design process. It felt good to share the weight of this with someone, making it our project rather than mine alone. Still, at times the collaboration was challenging. I ended up spending more time than I thought writing e-mails, worrying about texts not arriving and worrying about being too insistent or nagging.

On a positive note the structure of the process had a good effect on my

work habits. I learned that working with short deadlines works well for me, as I can have a tendency to stop and overthink things or let my mind wander if I get the opportunity. There were usually two or three days between receiving a text and sending back an illustration. Having someone else relying on me to deliver images forced me to not procrastinate too much.

Lastly, I've learned a lot about making images and illustrations. In the images I did I struggled with the balance of staying true to the texts on one hand and on the other hand making the best possible image. There could be something from a text I was bent on symbolizing in a certain way, but the composition in the image turned out badly. When conferring with Eva she would always prioritize how well the image worked on its own rather than as an illustration. She argued that if I had thought a lot about the text and immersed myself sufficiently in it, whatever came out when I made images would in one way or another contain the text. I would then try to find a compromise and sacrifice some of the symbolism, but still make sure the image had the feeling I wanted to protrude. Because the images were abstract, feeling turned out to be more important than symbolism anyway; it's not a given that the viewer will get a certain symbol or metaphor, but if I can get across the feel of the text then the possibility to relate is higher.

After sending an illustration off to one of the writers, I would usually sit back down with sketches and other rejected images and continue working on some of them. Eva played a big part here as well in pushing me to work further with the illustrations (both the ones used in the final series and the discarded ones) and have patience with them, rather than starting on new ones all the time. It was very satisfying every time I could transform a bad image into something I was pleased with, even though these were not intended to be shown in the final results of the project.

*- on the examination*

The examination took place on the 26th of April, 2012. Present was opponent Peter Eccher, examiner Martin Farran Lee, tutor Eva Dahlin, and myself.

The feedback from the opponent was an interesting listen. He had worked with similar issues like the ones in my exam work before. Combining texts and images, collaborating with others, such as writers, and also writing himself, he had insight into the process of telling stories with images and relating images to texts.

Regarding my project, Peter had thought of a few things I had not, for example on my choice for the first image in the series. I had chosen it because it was simple and open for interpretation. But because it was simple image this made it more “open”, Eccher said, not only for interpretation but for the readers of the books. He explained that this made the reader feel welcome to step into the realms of the project. If the opening image had been more intricate and complex, it would have been perceived more intimate; the reader could have felt like they were intruding on something private without the possibility of being included. At the time of the examination I felt it was pure luck to have achieved an including opening image without thinking about it. But in retrospect, I think the qualities I wanted the image to have, simple yet interesting, open yet mystical, might also be qualities of an intriguing and inviting image.

The opponent also asked me how my background as an industrial designer affects my work as an illustrator. I hadn't reflected very much upon this before. I came to the conclusion that my background shows in the way that my illustrations tend to illustrate objects of some kind, even though they are abstract, and that they often lean towards the three-dimensional even when I try to make “flat” images. This is something I want to work on even more, mixing the flat and voluminous.

Concerning the graphic design in the books, there was some critique. While the opponent liked the way the text looked, martin and Eva didn't care for it. And after the presentation I have grown to agree with them. I think it looks a bit childish. While I was trying to give text and image equal terms by giving them similar appearance, I now think its ok to have the text be in contrast with the images. This can make a more balanced complete picture. After tutoring with Eva (after examination) on the



matter, I understood that what's most important for the text is that it can be read freely and there are as little distractions as possible interrupting this reading. When re-doing the books I have opted for a simpler solution.

Another point of criticism was the choice of paper in the books. Martin thought it too white, too thin and cheap looking. I didn't agree about the white, I think it looks good and that it shows how some of the images are done on a yellowish paper. Yet for the new books I have chosen a thicker version of the white paper because the thinner paper had started to bulge a bit in the books.

I've also changed the cover of the process books.

## References

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