

PER LUNDE JØRGENSEN



BE DRAWN

# UNDERCOVER

by Magnus Thorø Clausen

## Protection

They might be described as paintings without the use of paint, the kind of picture read as a painting on first sight, despite being made of fabric in the material sense. They can also be understood as a kind of collage, which has not come about from the use of either paper or glue, however, but rather with the aid of a sewing machine, needle and thread. The pictures fluctuate between various categories without belonging clearly to any single frame of reference. On the face of it abstract compositions, in concrete terms they are made from office chair coverings sewn into canvases which have then been stretched onto masking frames. The abstract dimension of the pictures therefore maps onto a parallel literal reference, since the shapes have their concrete origins in items of everyday furniture familiar to us from office environments or from the home.

The pictures obviously dialogue visually with transformations of the painting medium that take place in the 1950s and 1960s, when new painterly expressions are emerging as a reaction to a rapidly accelerating consumer society

and a need to redefine the subject and the role of the artist. But whereas abstract artists at that time are making paintings that transcend everyday life, Per Lunde Jørgensen's pictures are literally anchored in a specific furniture universe. In this way the abstraction is brought down to earth. Abstraction seldom arises out of nothing, however, and even the abstract forms in, say, Ellsworth Kelly's paintings could be said to be linked to specific sensory perceptions recorded, whether it be of a pavement or of the incidence of light through a window. In Per Lunde Jørgensen's pictures, however, the perceived point of origin has not been translated into a painted form in the same way. On the contrary, the point of origin has been physically sewn into the picture, causing the difference between abstract and concrete to actually collapse. The works give the appearance of paradoxical hybrid objects, which are at once pictures and things.

The chair covering in the works is coarse, hard-wearing and often vividly coloured. The tactile quality of the fabric means that it is sensed just as much with the body as it is scanned with the gaze. The shape of the covering, which is recognizable from picture to picture, is a direct corollary of the design of the chair seats and back-rest from which the fabric originates and which here has been spread out as a two-dimensional surface. The office chairs from which the covers were taken were sourced by Per Lunde Jørgensen through *Den Blå Avis*, a weekly magazine much like the *Exchange and Mart* paper in the UK. In other words, it is not a case of new products but objects that already have a prior history and make reference to previous use. In practice that

means the covers bear traces of wear and tear, of scuffs and stains left by previous owners. That gives the fabric a processual look that makes one think of action painting, but in Per Lunde Jørgensen's chair pictures the processual aesthetic is not the result of the artist's interaction with the material, just a consequence of the object's formerly necessary or random interaction with others' bodies.

The chair pictures' titles precisely plot the geographical radius within which the office chairs were acquired, thereby accentuating the actual selection and purchasing process as part of the pictures' significance and emphasizing the fact that the actual chairs did not materialize out of thin air but are products at a bring-and-buy sale, governed by particular logics. The geographical aspect may seem particularly relevant in relation to the pictures, which consist of many unicolour chair coverings arranged either systematically or chaotically alongside each other on one canvas. For often they call for an in-depth research phase, since chairs of the right colour first have to be located at the market (often from different sellers) before being dismantled and then assembled on a common rectangle. But it is true of all the pictures that they potentially retain some relationship with the context from which they were originally taken.

The office chairs suggest associations with the bodies that have used them, which they have been instrumental in shaping and styling. In that sense each individual chair cover also represents a virtual person, who is no longer present but can be sensed as a ghostly presence through the traces of wear and staining on the cover. Moreover, as ergonomic objects, the office chairs result in a particular

shaping of the body. This direct correlation between furniture and bodies is also involved in the reading of the pictures. The cover has an anthropomorphic, appealing nature that invites one to record one's own body in it. On the other hand, though, the rendition of the fabric as a surface also has a liberating effect from the direct relationship between chair and body, helping to schematize the design of the chair and make it into an almost autonomous icon which is no longer confined to its functional role as a piece of furniture.

The cover can be viewed as a protective membrane and transitional material between body and thing. When isolated and used to form pictures, it may raise questions about the picture as a kind of membrane as well, perhaps? The works evoke the impression of a visual surface, which at the same time might be regarded as a protective zone, safeguarding an underlying invisibility. Despite their clear readability the pictures also have a hidden side. The invisible element within them is the space physically covered by the pieces of covering; but in a more metaphorical sense it is also the social and economic contexts with which the office chair material is associated.

## Intimacy

In another series of pictures Per Lunde Jørgensen has been working on sofas as material for expanded paintings. Just like the chair pictures, the sofa pictures are made from pre-loved furniture, where the coverings have been removed, cut out and re-sewn into hybrid works situated somewhere between object and picture. But the sofa covers have been

lar “skeleton”, the cover shifts closer to the animal skins from which it originates. The topological series is also related to anti-formal works like Robert Morris’s abstract felt objects, in which the appearance of the work is not definitively fixed but varies every time it is hung up, and in that sense also has a performative or gestural dimension.

Most recently, the work on sofa covers has taken a new turn with the series *A las ocho de la noche* (2021). The title is a paraphrase of a famous poem by Federico García Lorca *A las cinco de la tarde*, which describes the execution of the poet Ignacio Sanchez Mejias during the Spanish Civil War, a poem that uses repetitive rhythms and formed the inspiration for Robert Motherwell’s *Elegy* series. On the face of it, the abstract forms mime the form universe to be found in Motherwell, but appearances are deceptive, for here again it is a case of image formation issuing from pre-existing objects. The oblong shapes have been sewn into sofa covers, while the painted figures are based on coffee table panels that have been traced then painted. There is thus a direct juxtaposition of these painted figures with the context of sofa furniture, just as the title “eight o’clock in the evening” could indicate a less heroic and more humdrum time of the evening in front of the television during peak viewing time.

The pictorial nature of the sofa works varies massively altogether. Some pictures have the appearance of almost minimalist picture spaces while others are combined in open compositions. Other new works incorporate painted black surfaces based on coffee tables coupled with pieces of red sofa coverings. The interplay between the red and black shapes gives these works a pictogram-like

carved up into vastly disparate square and oblong shapes, no longer offering a 1-to-1 correspondence with the original shape of the sofas. In other words the works are made up of cuttings from different sides of the sofa cover’s overall surface. The individual cuttings can be stitched together into larger pieces, or they may have been used as isolated fragments. Whereas the chair covers generally have a uniformly rough texture and are roughly identical in design, the sofa fragments differ hugely in their sensory appearance and can vary from textile to coloured leather, for example. The different materialities have provided their tactile look and social connotations, and each has its own way of being worn. In this way the series are also perceived very differently from one another.

As an interior and design object, sofas are associated with the intimate sphere, the home, and the relaxed as opposed to the working body. Sofas, in other words, shape the body in a completely different way to office chairs, and to a greater extent are markers of lifestyle, class, set notions of luxury and so on. Being based on specific sofas, the pictures refer to specific living spaces for the body. In the series entitled *Box Sofa (Dyssegaard) 1–3. 2019*, the cover takes the form of single horizontal lengths extending minimalistically between the right and left sides of the canvas. These are slightly reminiscent of Palermo’s fabric paintings from the seventies and more generally of paintings in a minimal concretist tradition. In contrast to the tautness and surface-like nature of these works, Per Lunde Jørgensen has also worked with whole sofa covers hung as sculptural volumes, as in the series *Topologies* (2017). By removing the sofa’s rectangu-

lar “skeleton”, the cover shifts closer to the animal skins from which it originates. The topological series is also related to anti-formal works like Robert Morris’s abstract felt objects, in which the appearance of the work is not definitively fixed but varies every time it is hung up, and in that sense also has a performative or gestural dimension.

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## Desire

Lately, Per Lunde Jørgensen has also begun to create works based on what might be called a form of site-specific frottage. Frottage technique is traditionally associated with paper formats but has been executed on large canvases here. The pictures, which the artist makes with graphite dust and Indian ink, appear to be abstract at first sight, but they turn out to be impressions of specific objects from rented hotel rooms. The frottages thus differ from the other series in both material and technique by being closer to a form of drawing. They contain a specificity of place that is connected neither with the workplace nor the home but with the (rented) spaces where people stay when travelling. Nevertheless, they share with the other series a preoccupation with membranes, surfaces and covered zones, and an interest in and circling around the spaces and meanings located beneath these surfaces.

There is something fleeting and transient about the frottage approach. It encapsulates a moment, a particular configuration, through direct interaction between body, medium and object, and in that sense also has a performative dimension. The composition of casual lines and suggested figures in the pictures directly reflects the way the canvas has been placed over the objects in the space. It is not as stringently conceptual as it may perhaps seem, and there is a consistent receptiveness to spontaneity and random choices along the way. And yet the existing objects in the space nonetheless act as benchmarks and parameters for the way the result eventually looks. The pictures recontextualize or revisualize a set of objects, and a particular semi-anonymous space, by converting the space into surface and the tangibility into signs.

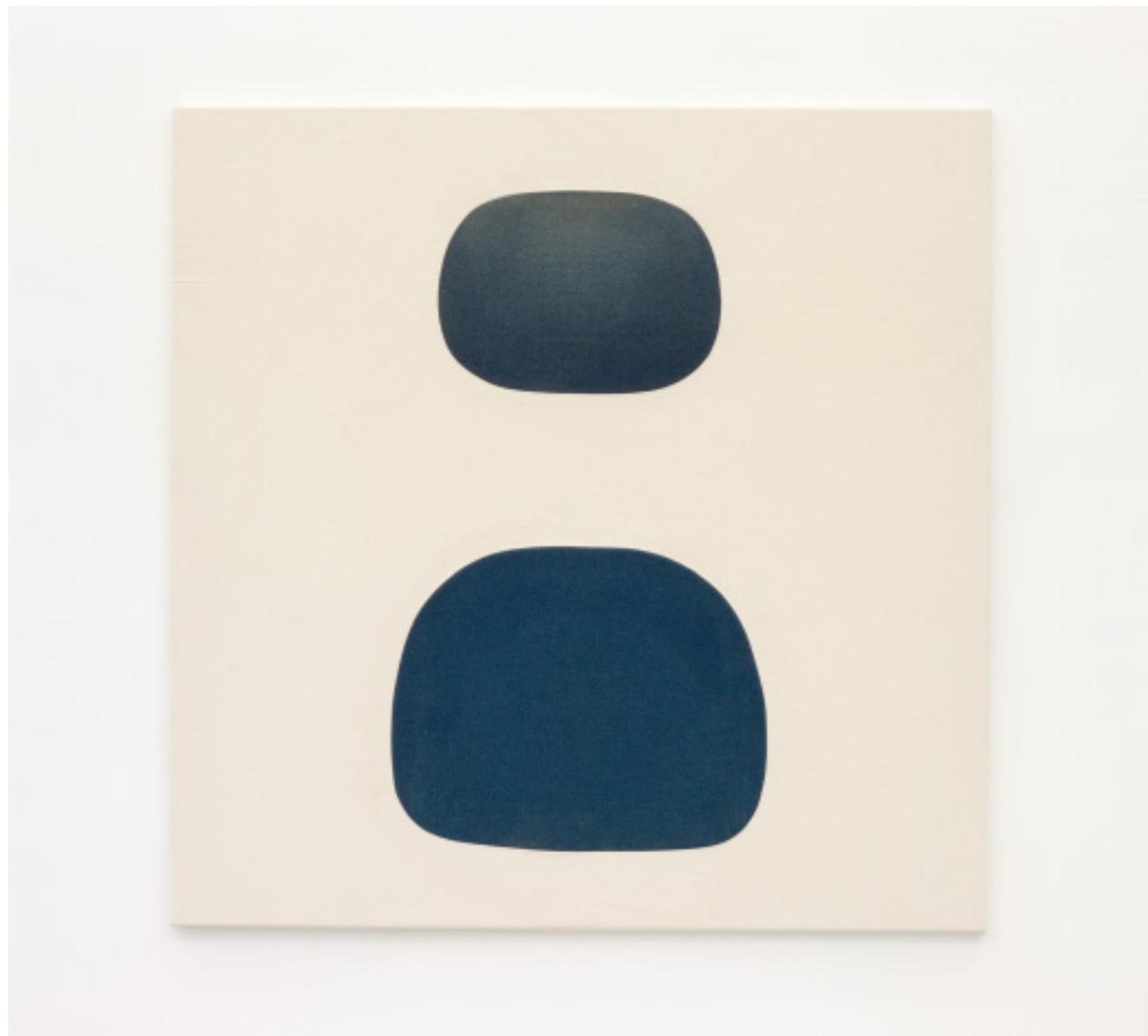
The individual shapes on the canvases can be read as spontaneous expressionism, but have been governed partly by the things and their mutual positions, and in that sense have an objective starting point. The shape of the things jointly determines the form of the impressed figures. The impressions can be perceived as a special way of outlining or even “caressing” the objects in a tactile fashion. In that sense, too, the shapes are kinds of points of desire, of encircling objects that are now absent (desire, according to Lacan, can be defined as a longing for the lost object, and that desire is always pent-up). The different perspectives all point in the direction of intangibility, the play between presence and absence, where what is recorded is at the same time what is missing. The actual principle of impression embodies a crucial form of anti-visibility. In principle, it is a pictorial

technique that could be done with the eyes closed, and one in which the haptic, bodily contact with the things is foregrounded. Just as in the other series, the pictures circle around the interaction between bodies and specific objects through an interface or an undulating membrane. Per Lun-de Jørgensen's oeuvre focuses on the threshold between bodies and objects, with both sides being active and modifying each other. They circle around relational objects like chairs, sofas, handles, lamps and other everyday items with which we are constantly in physical exchange and make daily use of without giving it a second thought. They are objects that are instrumental in shaping postures, behaviours and gestures, and in defining our contact with the world. The special thing about the works is that they focus on the surfaces of these things and partly transform them into abstract diagrams. That enables the things to be seen in a different light and viewed as both an interface and a distance. The membranes comprised by the works are equivalent to the membrane that is made up of our own skin and defines our frontier between internal and external reality. On the basis of speculative realism one might ask whether the essence of things is in their interior or, on the contrary, in the surface, in their encounters with other things? The pictures allow such pertinent questions in contemporary philosophy to be met with sensory qualities and local settings, and that gives the beholder a chance to find his or her own answers.

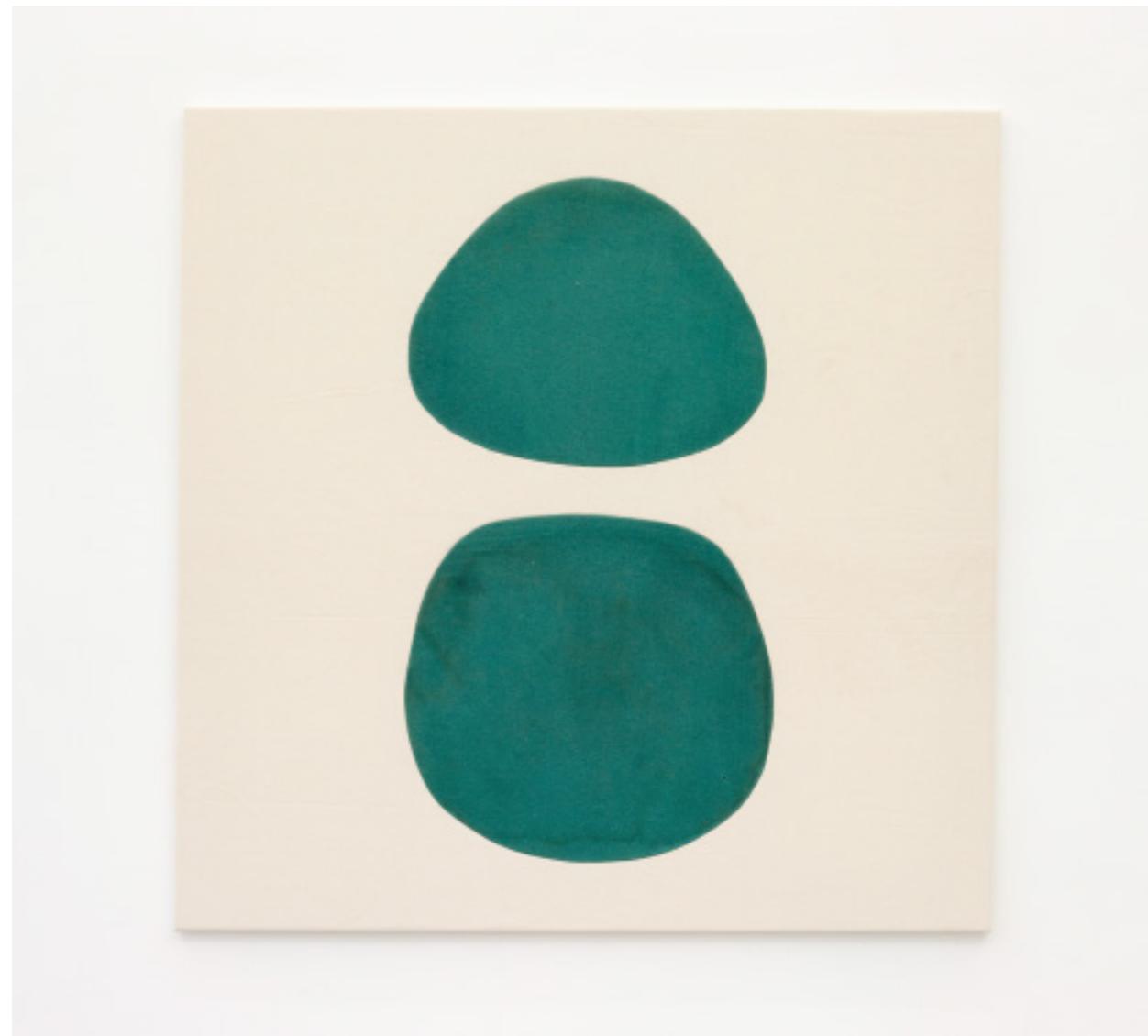




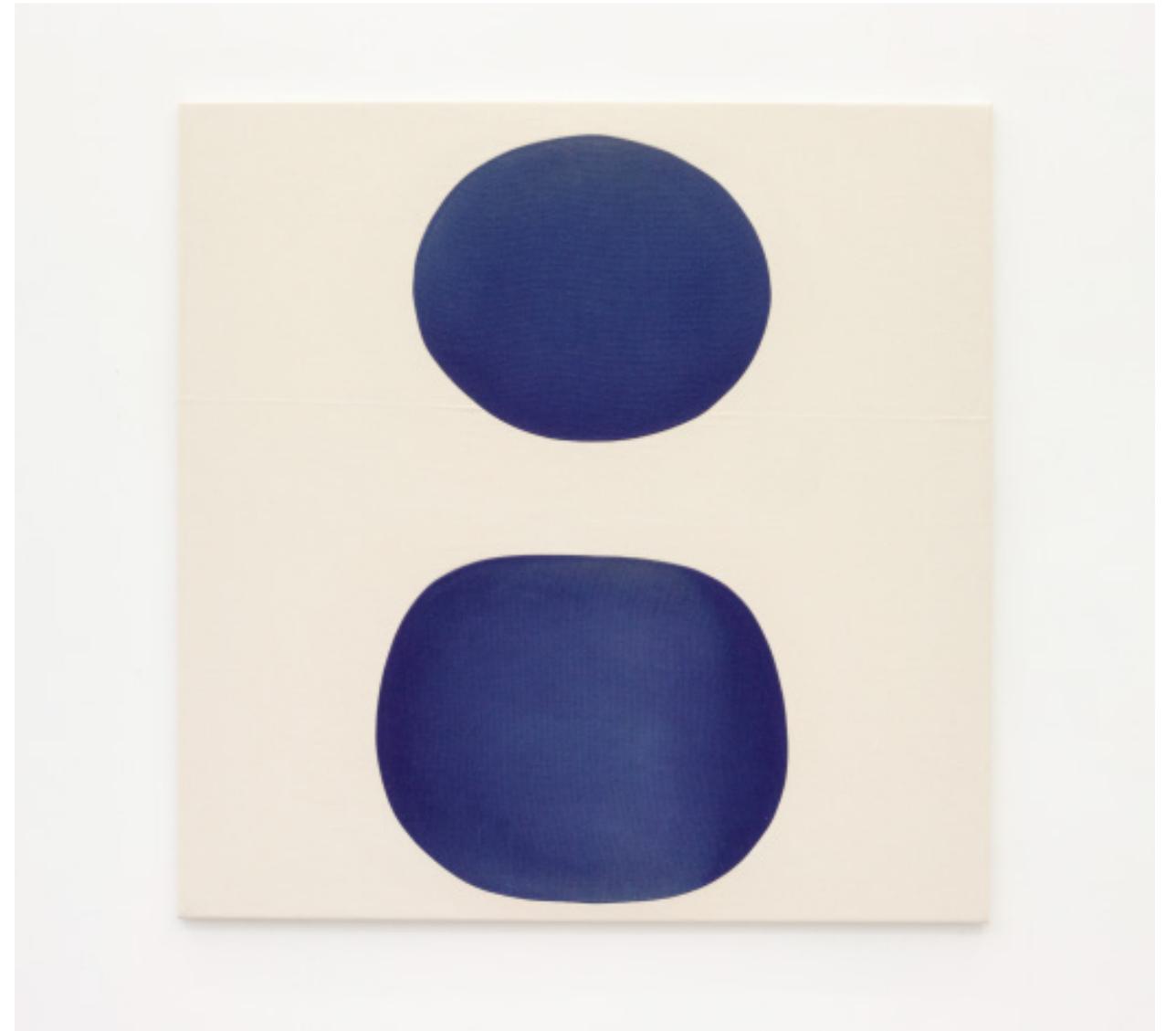
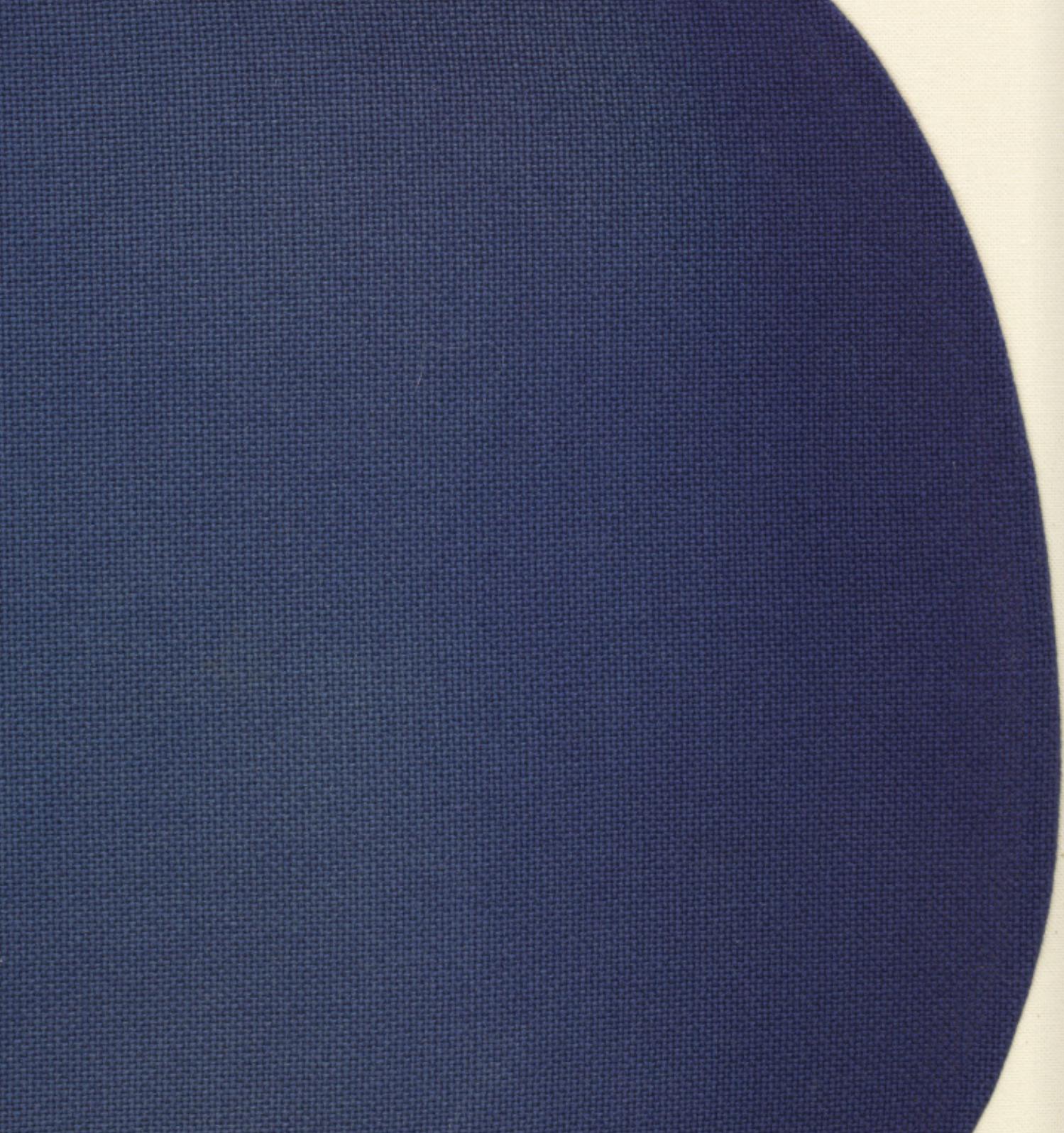
Reassembling the Social (installation view)  
at Bonamatic 2018. *XYZ Cargo* by N55  
(foreground), six office chairs from within  
20 km of Copenhagen 2018 (background)



*Ebay office chairs within 20 km of Copenhagen (Emdrup)*. 2017  
110×110 cm  
Collection of The Danish Art Foundation



*Ebay office chairs within 20 km of Copenhagen (Valby)*. 2017  
110×110 cm  
Collection of The Danish Art Foundation



*Ebay office chairs within 20 km of Copenhagen (Brøndby). 2017*  
110×110 cm  
Collection of The Danish Art Foundation



*6 Red Office Chairs Arranged by Value 1. 2020*  
150×130 cm



*3 Blue Office Chairs Rearranged by Chance. 2020*  
150×130 cm



*Per Lunde Jørgensen*  
*3 Red Office Chairs Rearranged by Chance. 2020*  
Office chair upholstery and canvas.  
150×130 cm/59x59inches



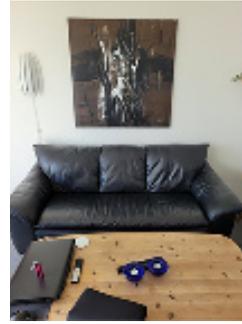
*Per Lunde Jørgensen*  
*6 blue Office Chairs Rearranged by Chance. 2022*  
Office chair upholstery and canvas.  
190×190cm/74,8x74,8inches



*Five Black Office Chairs (Holme) 1. 2019*  
160×140 cm



*Five Black Office Chairs (Holme) 2. 2019*  
160×140 cm





*A las Ocho de la Noche #12*. 2021  
Leather upholstery and canvas  
160×180 cm



*A las Ocho de la Noche #9\_2. 2021*  
Leather sofa upholstery, ink, charcoal and canvas  
190 × 150 cm





*Box Sofa (Dyssegaard) 1-3. 2019*  
120×160 cm





*A las Ocho de la Noche #15. 2021*  
Leather sofa upholstery, ink, charcoal and canvas  
140×140 cm



*A las Ocho de la Noche #16. 2021*  
Leather sofa upholstery, ink, charcoal and canvas  
140×140 cm



*A las Ocho de la Noche #17. 2021*  
Leather sofa upholstery, ink, charcoal and canvas  
140×140 cm



*A las Ocho de la Noche #18. 2021*  
Leather sofa upholstery, ink, charcoal and canvas  
140×140 cm



*A las Ocho de la Noche #19.* 2021  
Leather sofa upholstery, ink, charcoal and canvas  
140×140 cm



*A las Ocho de la Noche #22.* 2021  
Leather sofa upholstery, ink, charcoal and canvas  
140×120 cm



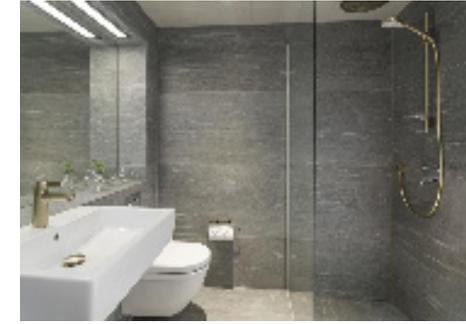
*Topologier (Gentofte)*. 2017  
Preowned leather upholstery  
180×805×25 cm





*Topogier (Ordrup)*. 2017  
Preowned leather upholstery  
160×80×20 cm



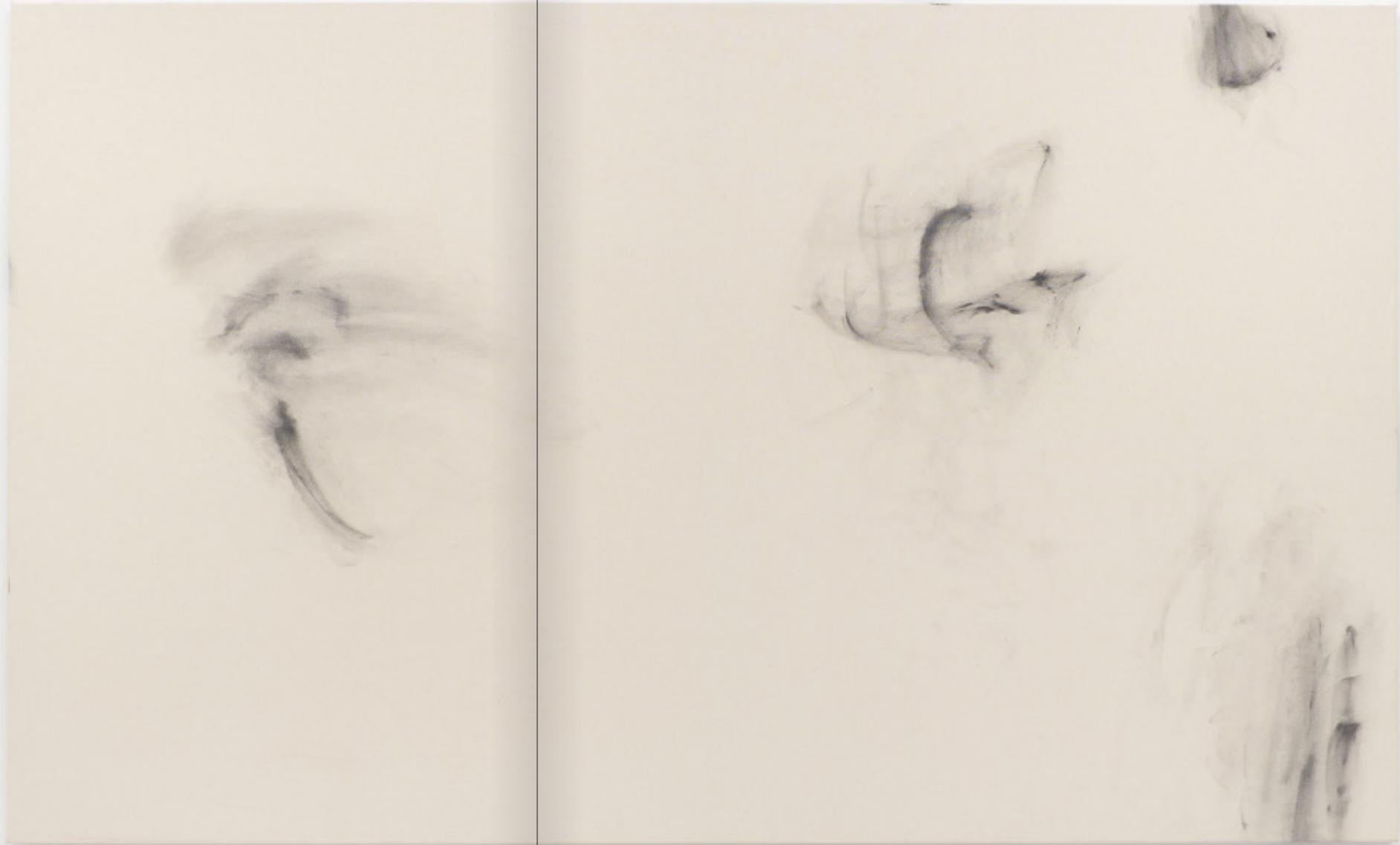




Radisson Collection Royal Hotel, Copenhagen  
Premium Corner Room



AirBnB summerhouse  
Asserbo



*Hotel room frottage #1 (Radisson Collection Royal  
Hotel, Copenhagen). 2022*  
Charcoal and Graphite on canvas  
300×180 cm



*Hotel room frottage #2 (Radisson Collection Royal  
Hotel, Copenhagen), 2022*  
Charcoal and Graphite on canvas  
250×170 cm



*AirBnB Frottage #1 (Asserbo)*. 2020  
Graphite and ink on canvas  
180×300 cm



*AirBnB Frottage #2 (Asserbo)*, 2020  
Graphite and ink on canvas  
180×250 cm





*Pre-owned Windows (Klausdalsbrovej, Buddinge). 2021*  
Double glazed window glass and oak frame  
44×110×4 cm, 44×110×4 cm, 35×44×110 cm



*Cherry Wine Balloon Pacifier. 2020*  
Mouth blown glass and cherry wine  
40×50×60 cm



*Polter Abend Activities #2 Glass Blowing Class. 2020*  
Mouth blown glass  
12×4×5 cm, 4×4×6 cm, 5×5×7 cm



*Bumper Ball (Red). Polter Abend Activities #1. 2020*  
Inflated Latex  
130×160 cm

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Printed in Denmark by Specialtrykkeriet Arco

Foto / Photos:

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Grafisk design / Graphic Design:

Anders Gerning Studio

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