

Galleri Riis

SIRI AURDAL and SYNNØVE ANKER AURDAL

Vår

March 18 - April 29, 2023

We are pleased to present the exhibition *Vår* with Siri Aurdal (1937 –) and Synnøve Anker Aurdal (1908 – 2000). The structure of the exhibition is set by the new installation *Almanakk* by Siri Aurdal, which consists of colored and fluorescent plexiglas, hanging from the ceilings in all of the gallery's exhibition spaces. *Almanakk* is developed from the four plexiglas modules that Aurdal made for the group exhibition *Et kollektivt kaos* at Kunsthall Oslo in 2020.

In material and concept, it follows from Aurdal's earlier plexiglas installations such as *Interview* and *Conversation*, but in form *Almanakk* is distinguished by a module consisting of six elements, which are repeated in three different colors throughout the exhibition spaces. The modules are spaces in themselves, but they also create new spaces between themselves. In these 'spaces', a selection of larger and smaller tapestries by Synnøve Anker Aurdal, from 1970 to 1999, are displayed.

The two artists, mother and daughter, shared a profound interest in experiments with new materials and a commitment to social and political issues; yet they exhibited together only once during Anker Aurdal's lifetime, when the exhibition *Three Generations* with Gunvor Anker, Synnøve Anker Aurdal and Siri Aurdal, was featured at the Museum of Applied Arts, Oslo in 1974.

In Oslo's new National Museum, Anker Aurdal's seminal work *Magisk måne* (1967) is prominently displayed in the collection galleries, and Siri Aurdal's monumental *Bølgelengder* (1969-2016) is installed in the museum's large atrium.

The exhibition title, *Vår*, holds a double meaning in Norwegian – *Our* and *Spring*.

SIRI AURDAL (b. 1937 in Oslo) received her artistic education from Statens Håndverk og Kunstindustriskole and Statens Kunstakademi in Oslo 1956-61, with a focus on figurative sculpture and printmaking. After an exhibition at Galleri Kringla in Oslo in 1968, where she for the first time showed an installation with elements of colored plexiglas, her interest went in the direction of sculpture made from industrial products designed for construction and infrastructure. Aurdal was an active and innovative artist throughout the 1960s and '70s, and as part of the politically radical artist group GRAS, Aurdal's module-based sculptures and choice of materials expressed a belief in the political, collective and social role of art. The exhibition *Omgivelser (Environments)* at Kunsternes Hus in 1969, consisted of a monumental sculpture composed of several units assembled from fiberglass reinforced polyester tubes, and was a striking manifestation of her ability to design large scale structures with prefabricated materials.

In 2016, in collaboration with the artist Eline Mugaas, this work was reconstructed with the title *Bølgelengder (Wavelengths)* in the exhibition *Aurdal/Mugaas* at Kunsternes Hus, and led to a renewed interest in Aurdal's artistry. In 2017, Aurdal represented Norway in the Nordic pavilion at the Venice Biennale, and in 2018 Malmö Konsthall presented *Continuum*, her largest exhibition to date. For the opening of the National Museum in Oslo in 2022, the work *Bølgelengder* was installed in the building's largest atrium. Siri Aurdal lives and works in Oslo. She is the daughter of artists Synnøve Anker Aurdal and Leon Aurdal.

SYNNØVE ANKER AURDAL (b. 1908 in Kristiania – d. 2000 in Oslo) was one of Norway's leading textile artists, and since the 1960s an important innovator in the tapestry tradition of this country. With deep knowledge of both Norwegian weaving tradition and the contemporary art discourse, Anker Aurdal was a pioneer. From working with traditional techniques in the field of Arts and Crafts, she moved towards the visual arts scene, where she gained a central position and was instrumental for the understanding of textile art as a relevant medium for contemporary artistic expression. By introducing new materials into her tapestries with an increasingly bold visual language, she played an important role as modernism gained a foothold in Norway in the 1950s. Through motifs and text references, she often commented on topics of her time with satirical humor. Words and phrases often appear in the works, and poetry was an important inspiration in her creative process.

Her insistence on the relevance and possibilities of textile art was radical for her time, and together with Hannah Ryggen (1894-1970), she was an important champion in establishing tapestry as an integral part of the Norwegian visual art scene. Synnøve Anker Aurdal was a prolific artist and worked continuously until her death in 2000, just months before a planned solo exhibition at Vestlandske Kunstindustrimuseum (KODE) in Bergen.

Anker Aurdal is represented in most major collections and museums in Norway, and has carried out many public commissions, e.g. *Høyseteteppet*, 1961 in Håkonshallen in Bergen (together with Sigrun Berg and Ludvig Eikaas), and the monumental *Rommet og ordene*, 1977, which was Norway's gift to Iceland's 1100th anniversary. In 1982, Anker Aurdal represented Norway at the Biennale in Venice. In 2022, the Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo showed the most extensive exhibition of her work to date, and the museum is currently working on a comprehensive monograph on the artist.