

# A STANDPOINT

Av Sanna Harma

I anledning Filosofisk supplements webblansering har vi fått den finsk-norsk-amerikanske kunstneren og filosofistudenten Sanna Harma til å reflektere rundt kunstprosjektet Radio, som er satt opp av kunstnergruppen sofA! hvor hun selv er medlem. Artikkelen i sin helhet samt flere foto fra kunstprosjektet er nå eksklusivt tilgjengelig på Filosofisk supplements nye nettside: <http://foreninger.uio.no/filosofisk-supplement/>. Vi vil med dette få ønske alle velkommen til våre nettsider.

The essay that I am about to write will be written from the standpoint of one of the three persons working together under the artist group named sofA! Since April 2005, this group has done three art-projects that were all sat up in Galleri Seilduken at Grünerløkka, Oslo. The essay has as its starting point the art-project called Radio, which is the very last of the three art-projects that took place from April the 28<sup>th</sup> to May the 7<sup>th</sup> 2006. The essay is a literary project, a thought experiment, which will look into the alleged contrast between the grasping of something by linguistic means and that by seeing. Further, I will claim that both are based on sense experience, and, to be more precise, on the sense of vision in this particular thought experiment. I will look into the phenomenological characters of the experience of something by both the linguistic means and by that of seeing. I will discuss what it is like, and how these two experiences are different and in what ways they are similar. Can they be perceived independent of each other, or are they rather counterparts that complement each other? This will be discussed in more depth in the literary project, which will be available in its entire length on the web site. Here, i.e. in the paper copy of Filosofisk supplement, you will now be taken into the art project Radio based on your ability to experience something through seeing and recognizing words, and the ability to understand and imagine.

Imagine that it is the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2006. You are just about to enter the art-project Radio, an installation that covers three floors of the gallery. Each gallery level is partially visible from the other two levels. One literally walks into the art project through a 3-dimensional physical construction with the length of 19 meters, i.e. a symbolic loudspeaker. In one end of the construction the opening is just wide enough for a single person to press through, but in the other end this black, tense, twisted, spiral-like, wedge-formed construction is much wider. Here two or more people, side by side, are able to pass through simultaneously. One does not enter the loudspeaker in either end of the construction, because the construction is set up parallel to the gallery entrance. Therefore one enters close to the middle of the construction, and then decides which way to proceed. No daylight whatsoever is let in beyond the point of entrance. Through this dark transformation zone, between the “real” and the “manipulated” world, the visitor enters the art project that combines the familiar and the altered.

While going up the stairs towards the first floor, the view opens and one perceives a scene with a chair and a table. Imagine that you stop there for a little while. Both the chair and the table are painted in medium brown. There is a faint smell of acrylic paint from the night before. The atmosphere of the orange toned weak light does not reveal

movement or action. There are hardly any people around. One is literally *in* and *part* of an art-project. One's senses and thoughts are alerted. The table is slightly rectangular, and it is abnormally large, too large for anyone to use. It is actually 2 meters high and has four massive legs. The legs are on solid wheels. A respectably large wooden, brown chair with thin legs accompanies the table.

You continue your walk, and you pass *by* two walls facing each other. Both walls are completely covered by a printed image showing animals. Greatly over-dimensioned, slightly distorted and toned bats and cockroaches overlap and dominate each composition. The colors are purpled, brownish and bluish. Black migrating birds are seen at a great distance. They are in large numbers and against an orange background. Modified animals, such as a bear, a wolf and a chimpanzee, are also used. One cannot easily pick out the individual images of the animals in the dim orange light; rather one senses large quanta of something being in motion.

You walk up the stairs to the second floor. In the dimmed orange light you see a number of standing 1:1 scale display dummies. They are dressed in casual clothing, each equipped with a headlight casting bluish-white light. It is easy to make out the five of them. There is small-sized furniture - tables and chairs - placed on the ground. The tables and chairs are too small to be used by even the youngest child, but too big to be placed in a

dollhouse. The tables and chairs come in clusters, where some of them are placed at a little distance apart from the main clusters. One also sees that there are more tables than chairs, and that each table and chair is slightly different from one another in size, form and shade of brown.

The physical scenario of the art-project called Radio does not exist anymore. The gallery exhibit lasted for only ten days, and all this is already six and half months back. From my point of view the art-project Radio was never directly aimed at expressing a certain philosophical branch, theory or idea. In contrast, the essay, which I am about to write, will work through the same art-project once again, but this time from a philosophical standpoint. I will look into and discuss the differences and similarities between that of grasping something by linguistic means from that of grasping it by perceptual means. My thought is that by concluding this project in a literary form - a different kind of spiral - an interwoven spiral of language and seeing will be described in compliance with that physical, wedge-shaped and asymmetrical spiral that served as an entrance to the art-project Radio. In this interwoven spiral of language and seeing, both the linguistic content and the perceptual content will keep their characteristics within their distinctive properties as they function together. And, again, this interwoven spiral of language and perception can possibly serve as a point of departure for things to come.

---

1 The three persons working under the artist group name of sofA! are Sanna Harma, Ida Julsen and Mona Klubben.