

Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir

Written by: Jón Proppé

Exhibitions of works by Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir are strangely evocative, complex, yet seemingly accessible, intensely personal but bound by rigorous rules and logic. Drawings are central to her art but she also uses cut-outs, watercolors, textiles, and a variety of other media, including sound, to build up multilayered works that seem capable of almost infinite extensions and repetitions. Above all, she presents objects and art as though they were part of an ongoing research project, an inquiry into an undefined subject with indefinite results but carried out with obsessive attention to detail. On the one hand, her exhibitions are like old-fashioned museum installations, collections of objects and reconstructions arranged on taxonomic principles that seem never quite to manage to encompass the material; on the other hand, the work is almost embarrassingly personal and intimate, as though the viewer was permitted to browse the private diary of someone whose thoughts and reflections, while clearly urgent and deeply felt, are not intended to be shared.

Guðný Rósa studied in Reykjavík, Stockholm, Brussels, and Antwerp and now lives and works in Belgium, though she also exhibits extensively in Iceland, most recently in the National Gallery. Her work reflects a variety of influences and there is a dialogue with contemporary Belgian artists but she also draws on sources outside the art world, on found images and objects, scientific and technical illustration, and even mass-produced imagery such as wall paper and patterned textiles. Her art is hard to classify; it is often reminiscent of Fluxus installations, a comparison that applies not least to the vaguely scientific approach she uses in arranging and presenting her works, as though they were an amateur collection of exempla, only not botanical or geological but assembling some new class or order, indistinctly understood and not quite logical. Many of the works, especially perhaps the watercolors, look organic, like illustrations of cell structures or mysterious, undefined body parts.

Repetition is central to Guðný Rósa's method. Her objects executed in series have variations that could potentially be extended infinitely, with shapes and patterns repeated in different materials and media. Her execution is alternately tentative, with an unfinished or sketched quality (as often in her watercolors), or else obsessively meticulous (as in her delicate cut-outs and intricate sculptural objects). Her installations are arranged around themes inviting repetition, where variations sprout from a simple premise or form and sprawl to fill the exhibition space as though in a desperate but doomed attempt to achieve completion and closure. Drawings spill out onto to gallery walls; objects proliferate in linked series; materials are mined for every possible configuration of their elements.

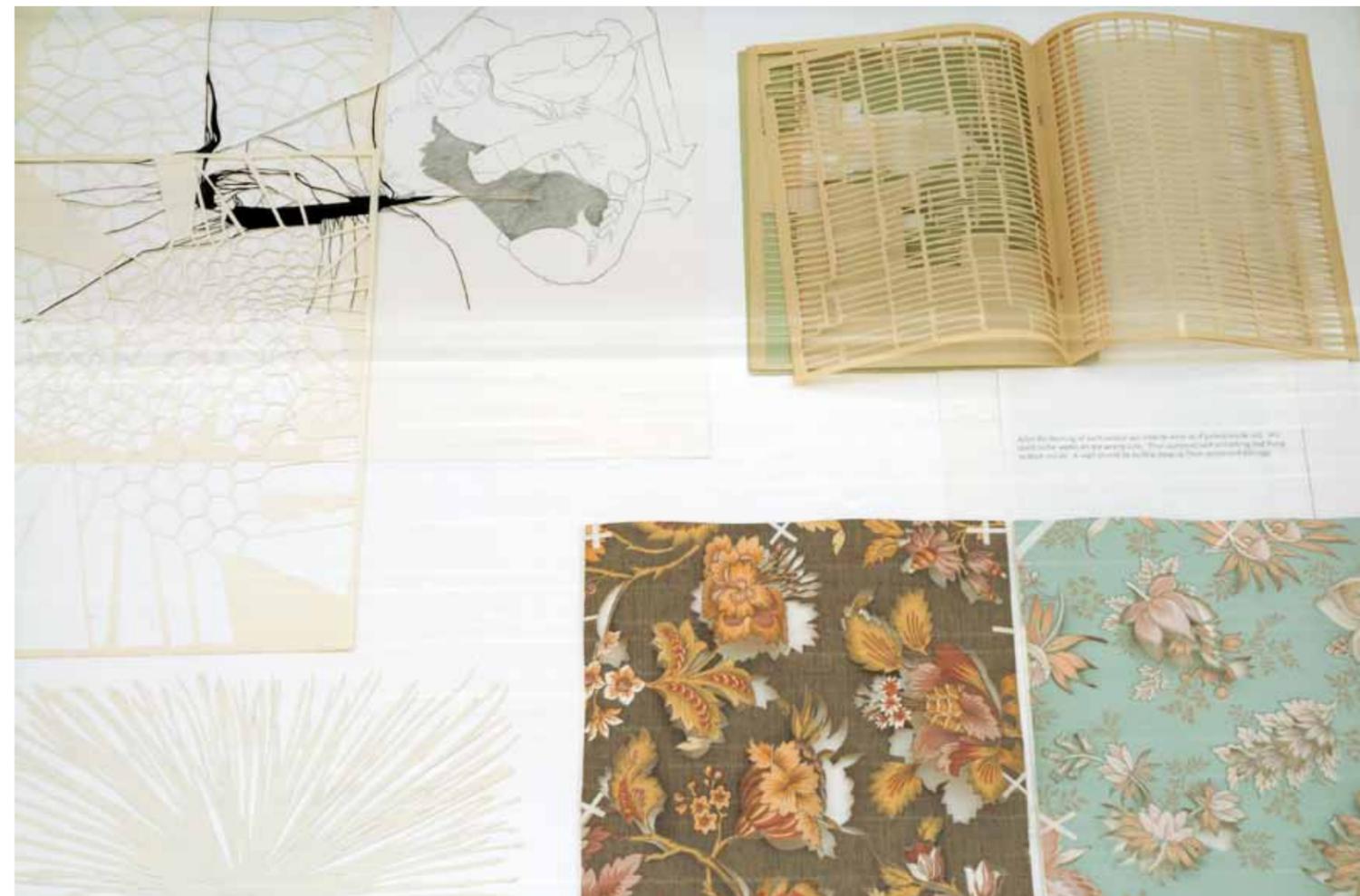
Thematically, much of the work may be said to deal with communication and how difficult it is to make sense. A signature work in this regard is the sound installation Guðný Rósa presented at her exhibition in Galerie Conrads, Düsseldorf in 2006, in which a child read an English translation of an Icelandic poem, attempting pronunciations of words in Icelandic, French and Flemish. While her works certainly reflect a carefully thought-out aesthetic, there is also an underlying philosophical attempt to explore such issues as interpersonality, taxonomy, and the production of meaning. How do we communicate our personal understanding of the world? Can our science ever encompass our experience?

The impossibility of ever answering such questions satisfactorily accounts for the slightly melancholic air of Guðný Rósa's exhibitions but there is no hint of desperation or angst, nor any of the cynicism that so often now replaces rigorous research in art. Instead, Guðný Rósa nurtures her melancholy lovingly, lending her works sense by taking the time and effort to execute them as carefully and completely as she can but without promoting the illusion that they can ever be definite or fully finished. This is a sophisticated and thoughtful aesthetic, grounded in the historical development of contemporary art but also intensely personal and sincere.

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Born in Reykjavík 1969 // Studied at: Reykjavík School for Visual Arts / Kungliga Konsthögskolan, Stockholm // École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de La Cambre, Brussels / HISK—Hoger Instituut voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp // Selected solo exhibitions: 2003 Sint-Lukasgalerij, Brussels / 2004 Living Art Museum, Reykjavík / 2005 Project Rooms, ARCO 05, Madrid / 2007 Gallery Koraalberg, Brussels / Gallery Suðsuðvestur, Reykjaneshæð // Selected group exhibitions: 2004 IJS / ICE, Museum Dhont-Dhaenens, Deurle / 2006 *Leere X Visions: Connections*, MartaHerford, Herford / 2008 *From Another Shore, Scandinavia House: The Nordic*

Center in America, New York / *La Durée*, National Gallery of Iceland / Nordic Drawing, Rackstad Museum, Arvika.



Vitrine—Wallpaper
2008

Vitrine containing diverse carved paper works and drawings

16 x 67 x 79 cm

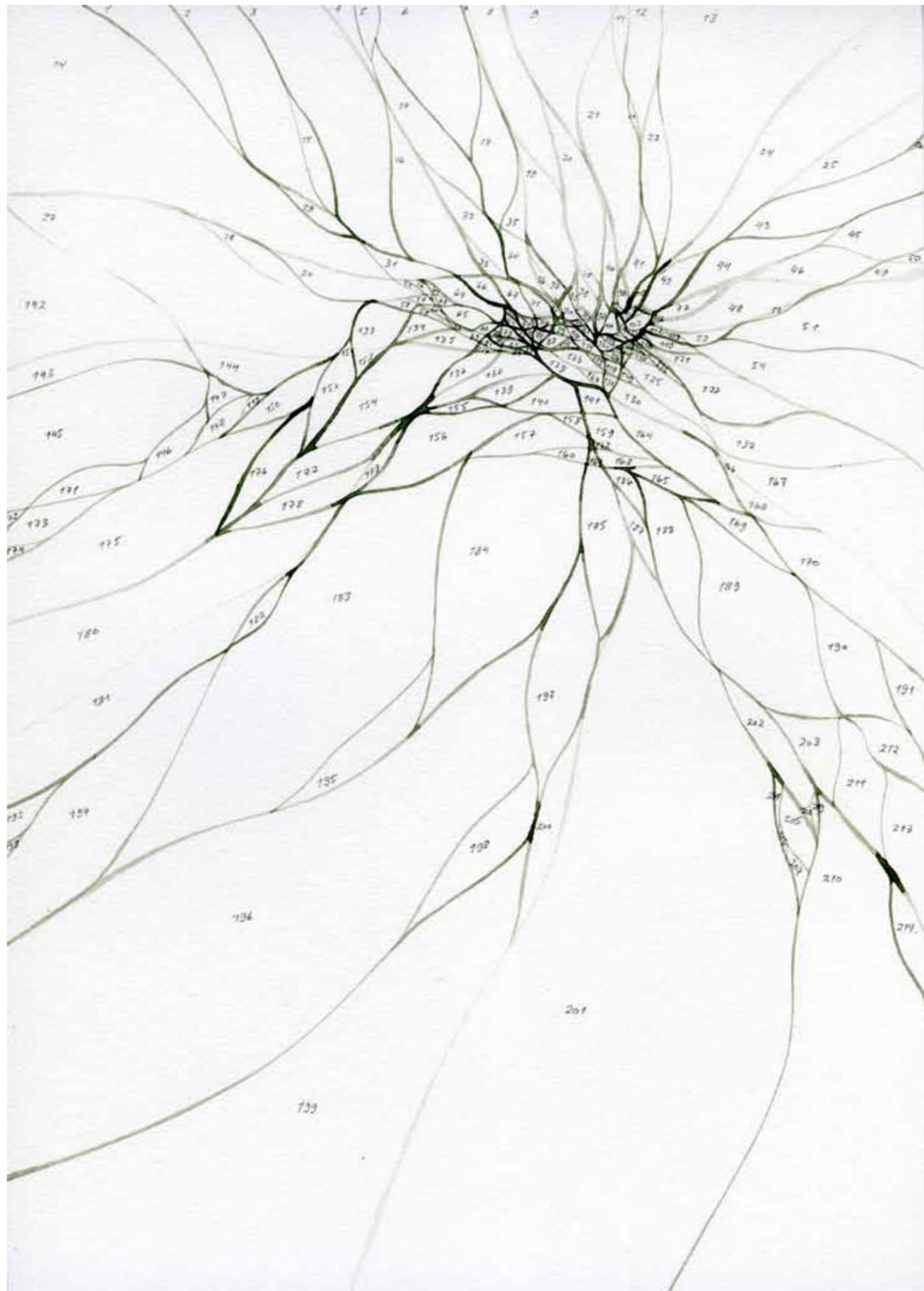
Reykjavík Art Museum

*Untitled—Cardiac
Catheterization*
2008
Water-based materials and
pencil on cut paper
29.7 x 21 cm
Reykjavik Art Museum



Untitled—Dream
2007
58.5 x 74.5 cm
Various water-based
materials and carving on
paper

Un Mot Perdu
2007
Water-based materials and
pencil on paper
29.7 x 21 cm



375-10 January
2007
Installation (detail)
Gallery Suð Suð Vestur,
Reykjanesbær

