

Tied-Up

When you look at Steen Ipsen's works, your first thought is that they are clinical models, schematically designed molecules, chemical combinations or works associated with new young rival artists and architects such as Fuck the context/Blob/Image only/GRAFT from Berlin or Bjarke Ingels BIG from Copenhagen.

But neither pure physics nor chemistry seen in the merciless and seemingly haphazard positioning of forms in the new urban design and correct overexposure is present in Steen Ipsen's works of art.

To me, Steen Ipsen's works mirror classic Scandinavian aesthetics related to nature, which is epitomised in the elegant idiom of his works.

Steen's works are distinguished by their high level of craftsmanship. He lays down special rules for how his works should be structured and designed. A common feature of his works is variations of geometric systems based on organic and mineral growth principles such as crystallisation, cell division and cell fission. Methodology and chaos as well as simple and complex structures are intertwined.

Steen Ipsen's decorative works engage and seduce the viewer. And it is obvious that Steen is one of the most significant artists on the new Danish ceramics scene.

Experiencing Steen Ipsen's objects through their brilliant organic, animal and human expressions, with their visceral appeal, overwhelms many viewers, and the high-gloss radiance attracts most.

Steen's tied-up theme consists in Steen's objects of hand-modelled black, white, grey and coloured glazed balls.

The effect of the monochrome glazes of the balls in which the surroundings and the viewer are reflected may seem clinical at first sight, but the image has raw sensuousness thanks to the sculptural tied-up complexity, which deeply moves the viewer. Tying up the objects reins in their power and energy, but it also intensifies their expression.

Parallels may be drawn from current design trends and the pop culture. For instance, take a look at the high-gloss uniforms of Darth Vader and his storm troopers from Star Wars, Chris Gunningham's robots from the music video "All is full of love" starring Björk and Urban Vinyl Designer-Toys from America like Kidrobot, Berliner eBoy aesthetics or the idiom KAWS from New York or the surrealist period starting in the 1920s such as the "Doll" by Hans Bellmer. But it is up to the viewer to interpret and find associations with Steen Ipsen's works just as I have done.

Steen Ipsen is part of the avant-garde group of cutting-edge Danish ceramics artists. Like no one else he creates passionate movement in his works and the strength in the plastic materials he uses exudes life. With unparalleled perfection as regards craftsmanship, he creates the well-known stylized forms, which are the true outcome of complex, systematic geometric variations.

Steen Ipsen's tied-up sculptures express vigorous vitality, but also a clear graphic expression. Steen's vision is to put his works in a spatial context which serves as a relief to architecture and man.

Oliver Gibbins, Architect M. A.
Gibbins European Architects