



Timeless Objects

Siren Elise Wilhelmsen has three offspring under the age of three, so her fixation with figures and time would probably not totally amaze you. But her obsession began long before the stork dropped the kids on her doorstep, and in fact her most famous creation portrays time in a most unusual form. A numberless clock, endlessly knitting, to tickle your mind with its creative presentation of a concept we rarely stop to think about: the fact that time isn't numbers at all, but an entity we don't own or know the beginning or end of. How time passes, in nature, the seasons, all the animals living and dying, the universe expanding, whether we're obsessed with time or not. Regardless of whether we feel like we're friends with time—or feel that time is pushing us forward like a bully at school.

Siren has called the creative hub of Berlin home for 12 years. Initially studying photography, then fashion design at *Universität der Künste*, before becoming smitten with the vast choice of materials within the field of Product Design, resulting in her changing disciplines. The knitting clock was part of her final exam at the university, and has subsequently been met with impressed nods at exhibitions spanning from Beijing to Vienna to her native Norway. Siren's overarching goal is to present everyday objects in a fresh and innovative way. To initiate a discussion about the objects in your sphere, and ultimately inspire you to utilize objects in a different and mindful way. While doing research for the knitting clock, she interviewed a blind math professor, an astronomer, and a chef, all with professions which lead to a pre-occupation with numbers. As a designer, she's also forced to have a close relationship with quantities and figures, and she utilizes her own body's measurements as she creates; 20 cm from thumb to little finger, 90 degrees angle from thumb to index finger and a one cm broad ring finger.

In the middle of our fleeting conversation about all of this, I ask her if she could describe her brain to me. I find it fascinating how a creative person would try to explain his or hers inner motivation. Siren, instead of describing it in broad terms, starts to tell me a story.

—Well, when I was a kid, perhaps 5 or 6 years old, my mother sent me to the store to buy some brown sauce. I came home with mashed potatoes. In a really frustrated tone, my mother asked me why I'd bought that, since she knew I was able to read, and she clearly asked for sauce. I explained to her that I hadn't even read the large red letters stating that it was mashed potatoes, I'd just looked at the photo picturing the mashed potatoes being covered in brown sauce. My focus was on the visual. That explains how my brain works.

After over a decade in the concrete, graffiti-clad German capital, Siren missed the rainy city of Bergen and packed her accumulated belongings to head home, only to find that the cobblestoned streets felt unfamiliar; she was a stranger in the city she grew up in. Thorough analyzing followed. In Berlin, her design aesthetic inevitably pointed towards her Scandinavian roots in the eyes of her fellow students, although she tried to emerge from those roots and aim for something original. What was she, Siren, if you eliminated the foundation of Bergen, if you swiped her clean of the years in Berlin. What was she without the cities, or with the cities, and in the aftermath of Berlin; what was she now?

The inspiration and evolution she was seeking came in the form of suddenly becoming infatuated with the many shades of blue she experienced around her: in the sky, the shades of blue in the mountains surrounding the city, in the ocean, in the fjords. The thought process led Siren to create woven blue space dividers, with a pattern resembling the mountains leaning gently into the fjords. Her initial

predisposition—and as she felt more at home, aim, to look at her surroundings with objective glasses—has led to a greater project called *The other places are here*—in old Norwegian *Her er annarsstader*. An investigation of her own surroundings, the streets she wandered growing up and all the fascinating information, new materials, ways of producing and surprising secrets that suddenly appear if you look twice, ask around, listen and dive into the stories that always orbit around you, even in the most familiar of places.

'The other place is here'. And time is an abstract thing we're all trying to push into something very specific, something we're in control of. Siren is very conscious of our fast-paced consumer society and the 'IKEA-mentality' of buying cheap items you'll replace as soon as you get tired of them. She wants to create things you'll want to hold on to for life. Timeless objects that will be part of the discussion, in your family, when people come around. That perfectly melt into your everyday life, fitting in, bearing witness of the time that has passed—and meshing well with the time to come.

Words
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YOU+ME DYNAMO LAMP | 2011
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: ELISABETH WARKUS

You+Me is a teamwork between product and user;
the user charges the lamp by pulling the cord and due to its dynamo
technology it uses this energy to provide light—one minute
of charging gives thirty minutes of light.

