

Interview with Anne Lindberg on *Les Femmes Folles* blog
Posted 12 January 2012

Anne Lindberg is one of the artists participating in *PLACEMAKERS* a collaborative show opening January 13 at Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts. She shares with *Les Femmes Folles* about growing up around artists, how she sees her work is an abstract form of self-portraiture, aligning herself with ideas and human/spatial concepts rather than gender, insight into her piece *drawn pink* in the *PLACEMAKERS* exhibit and more...

Tell me about your background/where did you grow up? And how did you get into art?

I grew up in Iowa City, IA where my father taught at the University of Iowa. We lived in Australia twice before I was twelve years old, and in Denmark when I was about seven years old. I grew up around artists. My mother is an artist, my grandmother was an artist, my brother is a photographer, my sister-in-law is a poet, one of my Danish ancestors (who lived in Lindberg, Sweden) was an architect, and my husband is a lighting designer. So, I first encountered art with my immediate family. I have lovely memories of lively meals around the dinner table with my family, and a myriad of invited artists, cooks, weavers, historians, dancers, antique collectors and scientists. My father is a geologist and economic geographer, so my voice as an artist is greatly informed by art, literature *and* science.

I have many vivid memories from my childhood of encounters with creative people. I made puppets starting at the age of 4 with a magical woman named Monica, I used to cut colorful paper shapes for hours with my aunt Wendy, I participated in a circus exhibition in a museum by a family friend named Byron, and remember listening to Byron tell about traveling with one-ring circuses in small towns of Iowa, I recall learning to skate a perfect figure 8 on ice with an entomologist named Barbara – these people and so many others in my family showed me something of the compelling and mysterious life of a creative person.

I started college thinking I would study anthropology or history, but after a few internships & jobs in museums I realized that I wanted to make things.

Tell me about the work you do/style/inspiration/process?

Neurologists have determined that the *old brain* holds the seat of our most primal understandings of the world. Goodwill, security, fear, anxiety, self-protection, gravity, sexuality, and compulsive behaviors generate from this lower cerebral core. My sculpture and drawings inhabit a non-verbal place resonant with such primal human conditions. Systemic and non-representational, these works are subtle, rhythmic, abstract, and immersive. I find beauty and disturbance through shifts in tool, layering and material to create passages of tone, density, speed, path and frequency within a system. In recent room-sized installations like *drawn pink* at Bemis, I have discovered an optical and spatial phenomenon that excites me as the work spans the outer reaches of our peripheral vision. The work references physiological systems – such as heartbeat, respiration, neural paths, equilibrium - and psychological states.

I've come to understand my work as a kind of self-portraiture. Within the quiet reserve and formal abstraction is a strong impulse to speak from a deep place within myself about that is private, vulnerable, fragile, and perceptive to the human condition. My work is a mirror of how I experience the world, and as I negotiate physicality, optics and ideas through drawing languages, my voice withholds, blurs, teases and veils.

I frequently return to subtle distinctions between drawing as noun *and* verb as a long held focus in my studio practice. This blurred distinction drives my fascination with an expanded definition of drawing languages and the resurgence of drawing in contemporary art. My collective body of work is an iteration of this language.

What does feminism mean to you and does it work into your art?

I make art. I actually find that labeling myself as a female artist is not helpful, maybe even counter-productive; it seems to shorten or lessen the conceptual reference points too quickly, and direct the discourse narrowly. I prefer to align myself with a broader range of ideas and human/spatial concepts than gender. This may come as a surprise, given the materials I am using in "drawn pink" for Placemakers. I use the materials and processes for their inherent qualities, ability to render a sense of light, amass incrementally mysterious volumes of color, and to engage in new modalities for drawing.

Tell me about PLACEMAKERS, your role and why it's important to you.

The *Placemakers* show is incredible. I am so grateful to Bemis and to Hesse McGraw for the opportunity to envision and build a new work in the gallery. *drawn pink* builds upon a series I have made over the last 1.5 years. These installations, or drawings as I prefer to call them, site themselves within architectural conditions, and tap our most primal physiological states, body memory and optical comprehensions. I have challenged myself at Bemis with a very dynamic color/tone, one that is much more active than previous works. The piece is larger and a much different form than before also, as it reaches far from its core across the adjacent wall, and above your head. Hesse has put forth a quite compelling group of pieces for the show, with a wide & intriguing definition of "place-making"...from architectural inventions, to interactive objects, video projection, to illusions of place. This has been a critical and important project for me at this time in my studio practice.

PLACEMAKERS opens at Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, 724 S. 12th Street, Friday January 13, 6-9p.m. and runs through March 31. Visit bemiscenter.org for details.