



Untitled 2015, cast iron, 8 × 8.5 × 7 cm.



Untitled 2015, cast iron, 10.5 × 11.5 × 9.5 cm.

Elin Hedberg (1988, Stockholm) is an artist based in Oslo. Before attending the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, she studied Metal Design and Craft at Nyckelviksskolan in Stockholm as well as Metal Design and Silversmithing at Leksands Folkhögskola in Leksand, Sweden. While completing her MFA studies at the Oslo Academy in 2015, Hedberg worked mainly with metal smithing, casting, wood sculpture and installation. Her work has appeared in both solo and group exhibitions at the Galleri Seilduken in Oslo.

In my artistic practice, I work with items we already know – items we know how to lift, to hold and to use. We do not think about it, we just do it. I am working with vessels like the bowl, the vase and the teapot. I explore how to change the way we look at them and handle them by making the objects massive or by closing them up so that the viewer can no longer see how they are supposed to be approached. In this way, we cannot tell if the objects are heavy or light, if they are upside down or right side up or how to hold them. By making these changes, I hope that viewers will spend time with the objects to reflect upon and understand them. I believe that we have to experience an object with all our senses, not only with our eyes, to understand it. Even if the »teapot« might look like a teapot, we cannot be sure whether it is a teapot or not until we have walked around it, lifted it up and felt its weight and form in our hands.

I mainly work with metal and wood using various techniques, which are all an important part of my process. The different techniques provide the objects with tactile qualities, changing the way they are experienced. This is important for how the object feels in the hands of the person touching it. My practice includes building larger installations that represent situations that we can recognise or settings that change the way we usually look at and experience the objects. Time is essential in my work process, and I want the audience to spend some time sensing and reflecting upon my works. I have chosen how the objects appear and want to share with others that experience which is more meeting than merely looking. The objects do not reveal everything at first glance; they want you to come closer. *Elin Hedberg*

Elin Hedberg



Happy Family 2014, copper and wood, height 40 cm.
All images courtesy: the artist; photograph: Henrik Sörensen.

The Haptic Aura

Can you touch the aura? That question arises in Elin Hedberg's work: smooth ovoid shapes in metal, wood and sometimes plaster. Many would fit into your hand, but even the larger pieces beg to be touched, cradled, even stroked like a cat. Walter Benjamin described the aura as an appearance of distance surrounding an object, no matter how close at hand. Consider the commanding presence of religious and art objects, which produce a sense of awe and prohibit the sense of touch. While Hedberg fabricates artworks, she seems all too aware of their ability to intimidate viewers. To foil this effect, she chooses useful objects, such as teapots, as models so that viewers get closer to them, perhaps touch them. Some pieces are actual teapots encased in plaster, like broken limbs in a cast; others are copper vessels with spout-like holes but no handles; none could be used to make a pot of tea. Whether or not we touch her pieces, they create a sense of distance – another kind of aura – not because they are artworks but because they do not live up to our usual, useful expectations of them. Devoid of handles yet inviting touch, Hedberg's pieces are like an old friend who suddenly stops offering a hand to shake and wants to be embraced: we are put at a distance and drawn in closer. Or to use Benjamin's terms, we experience a proximity to the object, whether we touch it or not. To emphasise this haptic aura, the artist's practice extends beyond production to display; she exhibits her works together in sets to frustrate any sense of distance created by uniqueness. To date, she has shown them in familiar settings that welcome the viewer: on tables (like a dinner); suspended in the air (like birds flying by); or inside upended pedestals (which become like boxes to be unpacked). Just as a stereo creates surround sound, Hedberg's works are sculptures that become installations: encompassing environments that we co-inhabit with objects. *Jennifer Allen*



Happy Family 2014, wood, 17 x 19 x 23 cm.
Photograph: Henrik Sørensen.



Happy Family 2014, copper, diameter 5 cm. Photograph:
Henrik Sørensen.

Elin Hedberg



Untitled 2015, copper, cast iron and MDF, objects ca. 15 cm high.