

Hege Cathrine Hauge Thoresen (1986, Bærum, Norway) is an Oslo-based artist working with drawing and graphics. Her main artistic practice is mezzotint, which she uses to create small and large-scale works. Before earning her BFA at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts in 2013, she did a six-month exchange in the Department of Printmaking and Painting at the Glasgow School of Art. Before completing her MFA studies at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts in 2015, she participated in group shows at the Norwegian Printmakers Gallery in Oslo and Trykk 17 in Stavanger.



Untitled 2014, from a series of 56 prints, mezzotint, 5 x 5 cm.

I'm drawn to the notion that light gives a visible form to hard matter. I work primarily with mezzotint yet in an extended manner, using other methods of printmaking together with the traditional mezzotint technique. The way nature presents itself aesthetically and poetically fascinates me. This fascination leads me to investigate structures, patterns and changes. Changes that occur as part of a spontaneous process, such as decay, in relation to the human body or to nature. The mezzotint technique is time-consuming in itself, so I use this sense of duration to investigate the concept of time in a wider perspective, beyond my methods and materials. I prefer small-scale works to achieve an intimate encounter with the viewer. *Hege Cathrine Hauge Thoresen*

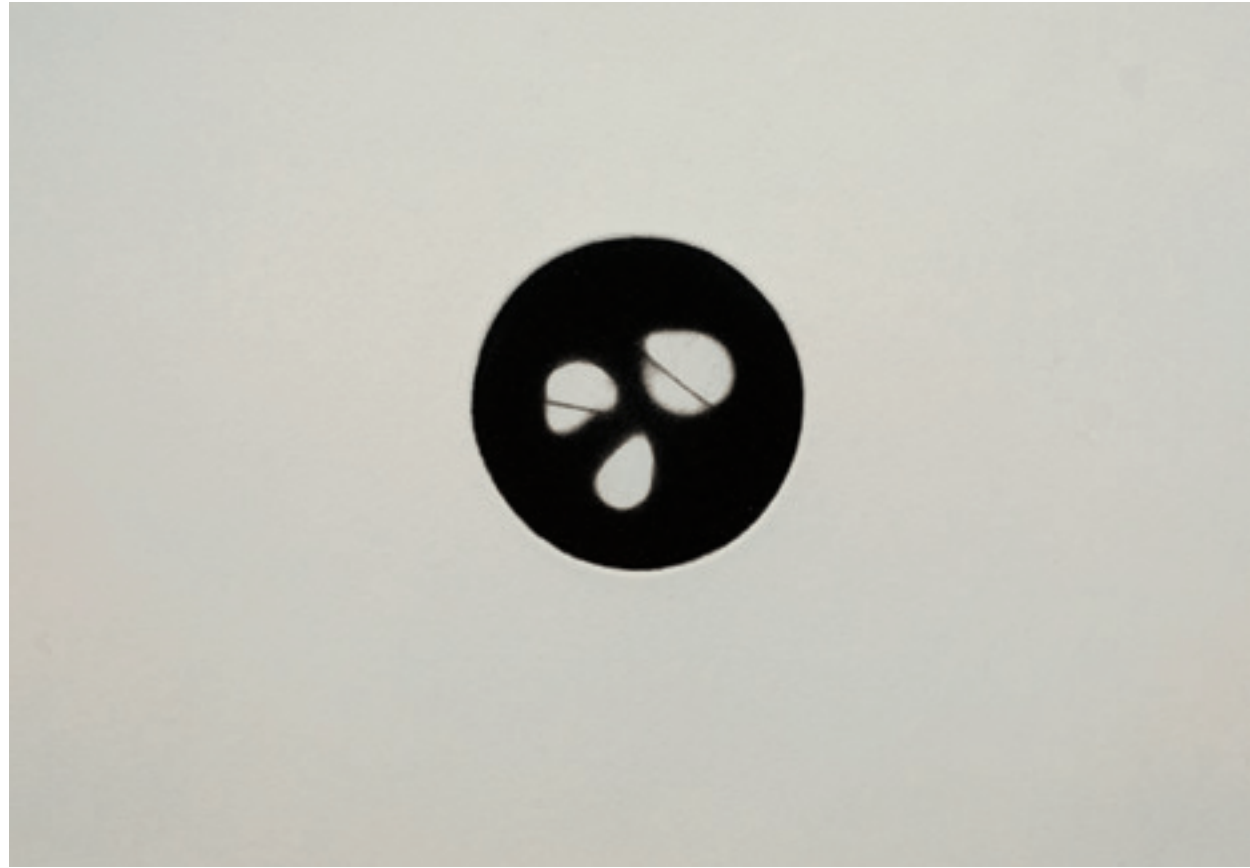
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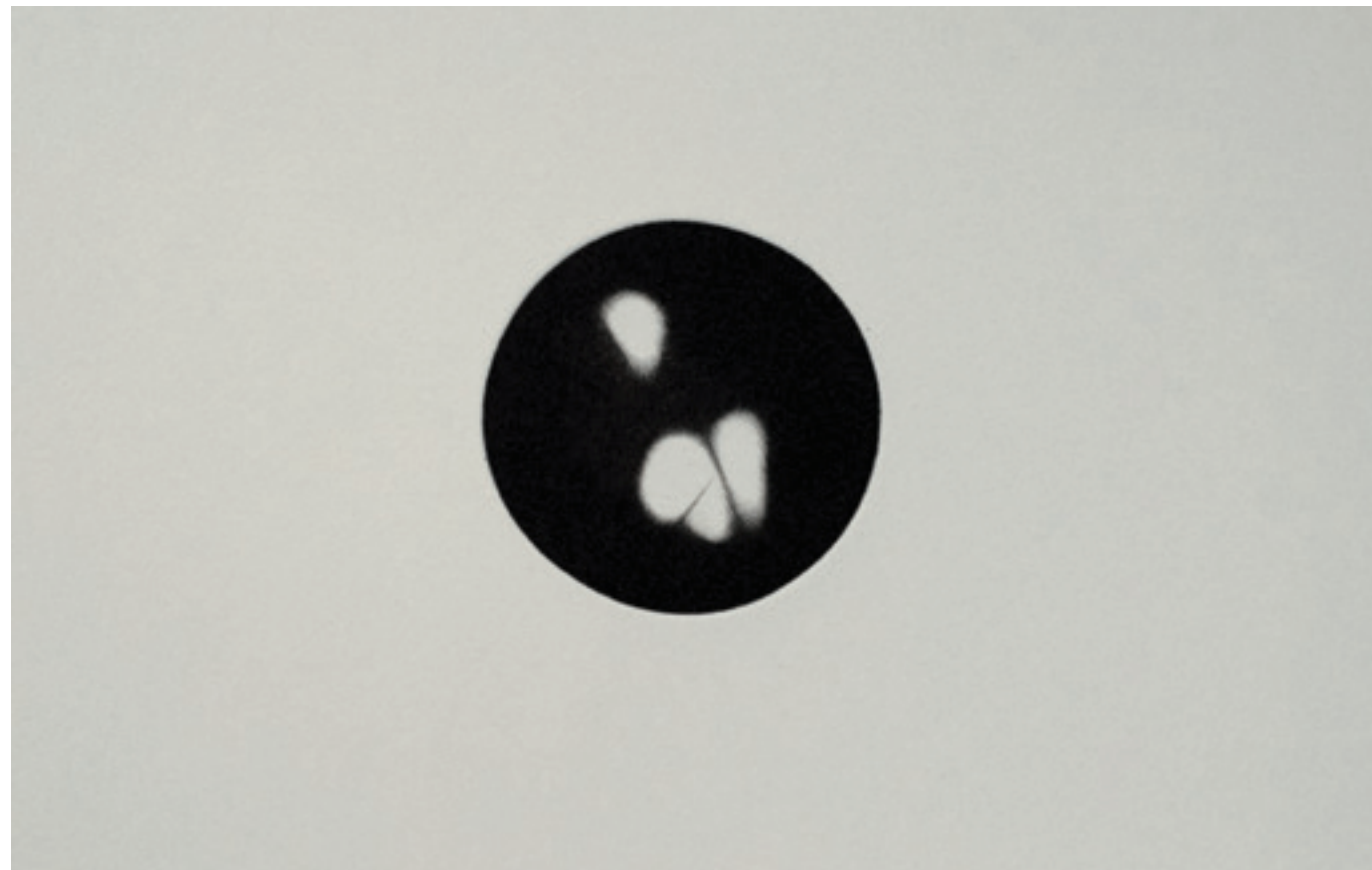
Untitled 2014, from a series of 56 prints, mezzotint, 5 x 5 cm. All images courtesy: the artist.

Haptic Light

Hege Cathrine Hauge Thoresen exists in two worlds: one with the rest of us and the other teeny-tiny, unhurried, intricate world of mezzotint. The artist has dedicated herself to this medium, a method of printing invented by Ludwig von Siegen in the 17th century. Dedication is no exaggeration. While a small-scale work – the size of a credit card – can be done in a day, a large-scale work can take up to five months. The slightly-abstract images of Thoresen's smaller mezzotints could be moths fluttering at a candle but viewed through keyholes, themselves sometimes covered by tissue paper in blue, red or yellow which glow in the black ink like the last embers in the ashes of a dying fire. Her larger mezzotints are more figurative, some showing factory buildings, emerging from the black through the light in their multipaned, muntin windows. The size and appearance of these larger prints initially recalls underexposed black-and-white photographs, if not x-rays. Yet any similarities with photography or x-rays end there. The artist prefers the dark-to-light technique of mezzotint: using a rocker to manually fill a copper plate with countless dot-like burrs which she then painstakingly shapes: burnishing, smoothing, flattening. Every burr must be defined; the method seems akin to sculpting hundreds of copper pinpoints by hand; one careless move could turn a fine mezzotint into a mere engraving. But why bother when you could engrave or, faster yet, press a camera button? Mezzotint knows no rivals for its degree of tonality; prints are not light or dark – black or white – but offer a unique experience of perception usually reserved for the roving human eye: fog up close and far away; the reflection of twilight on snow; the fading glow of a smart phone screen turning itself off. Seeing light gains a tactile dimension and, with it, the proximity of touch. Whatever the imagery, Thoresen's prints seem shrouded in secrets, due to not only their darkness but also their faint perceptibility. The sombreness may evoke spies, ghosts and assassins, but you still instinctively move closer to them, as if you were listening to the whispered confession of a friend. While adding touch to sight, Thoresen's prints manage the rare combination of trepidation and intimacy. *Jennifer Allen*



Untitled 2015, mezzotint.



Untitled 2014, mezzotint.



Untitled 2015, photoetching, 20 x 25 cm.