

**Anne Bjørn**

# Photographs from Greenland



**TEXTILE &  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
Vol. IV**



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## ANNE BJØRN: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM GREENLAND

*By Randi Nygaard Lium, 1. curator, The Museums in Sør-Trøndelag, Norway*

Since 2007 Anne Bjørn has taught at the Art School in Nuuk at various periods. Next to the school lies *Brættet*, the market, where the area's fishermen sell the day's catch. Here we find seals, cod and herring. Bjørn has let herself be inspired by the goods, that lie for sale, and has focused on the seals' colours, contrasts and fur. The ocean's animals lying with their stomachs sliced open and entrails falling out are at one and the same time both repulsive and fascinating. In a way, it feels like a kind of "horror" aesthetics, which simultaneously documents the richness of the fjords in Greenland.

For an itinerant artist like Anne Bjørn, this area has proven a great source of inspiration. What makes the strongest impression are the cut up stomachs with intestines falling out – and the contrast between the fresh blood from the dead seals and the physicality and colours in the visual expression. This provides a fervour. In this surprising brutality, new images arise. We are confronted with something well known but as yet unseen. The photographs provide knowledge, and at the same time, function as independent artistic expressions. With her clear vision and keen eye for contrasts, Anne Bjørn has found the strong motifs. Photographs of the fish skin's sensuous surface reflect an artist's joy in the material. She seeks the structure in the dead. Through photography, the sea's lost life is recreated.

### **The urbane white**

A textile artist has great knowledge of materials. Mastery of the craft provides a security and a steady course. In Greenland, Anne Bjørn

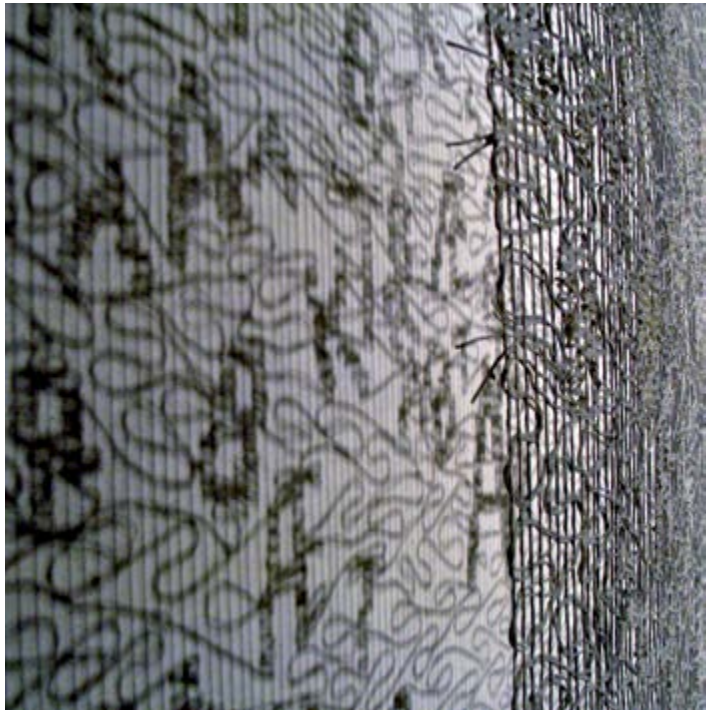
is confronted with other modes of existence. She thrives there and is inspired. Not only because she is comfortable with teaching but also because of a need for “the Arctic” in her own work. The physical proximity to the environment stimulates a wish for creation with the tough reality as a contrast to homely Denmark. Interestingly, the journeys to Nuuk have renewed her art. Now the motifs have a different orientation towards tougher conditions of life and the geography of the wilderness. Perhaps an Arctic picture has been on her mind for a long time both as a longing and a motivating power. I sense that in her examination of various materials, the raw, fish-industrial white, meaning something touched by human hands and work, she seeks – a work far away from the pure and virginal white.

Anne Bjørn has followed her own path and holds a distinct place among textile colleagues in Denmark. Yet, at the same time, the relation to the Danish tradition is visible. This classic dimension, which I consider a distinctive Danish feature, in her case also constitutes

a point of departure for experiments with materials and texture. Different fibre materials and threads are combined with plaster and steel wire. Structures and shades of white play against each other leaving a somewhat tough and urbane expression in the eyes of the beholder. Bjørn does not seek “the white cube” or white snow. More the “dirty/used” white after the fishermen have gutted the fish, or boxes and trash have created a grey/white atmosphere in the backyard. She creates a white physicality that I relate to industry and labour – something, that has been touched by human hand.



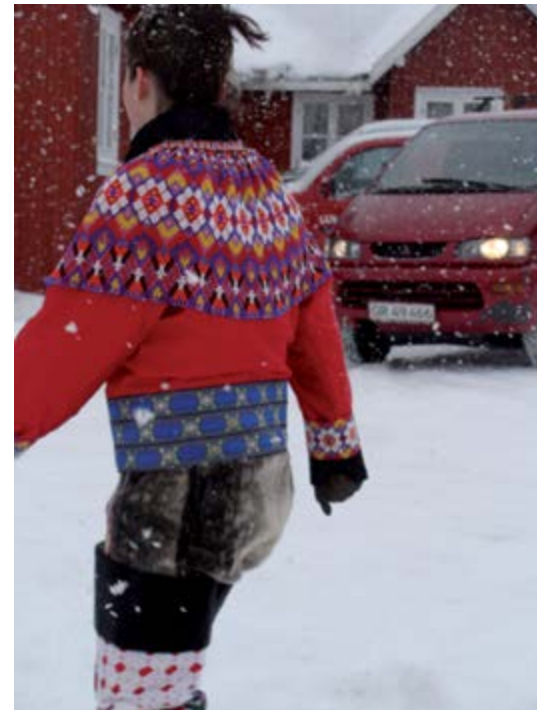
Whale-steaks



## FACTS

Anne Bjørn (b. 1954) was educated as a weaver at the Kolding School of Design from 1973-1975 and trained under the weavers Annette Holdensen, Jette Nevers and Bodil Bødker-Næss from 1969-1973. She made her debut at the Easter Exhibition in Århus Kunstbygning in 1974 and for the next five years participated on a number of occasions at the juried exhibitions in Copenhagen, both at Charlottenborg Spring Festival at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and at the Autumn Festival in Den Frie Udstillingsbygning. She is represented with textile works in a number of public institutions and has made decorations for, among others, The Danish National Broadcasting Service's office in Fyn, Odense Katedralkole and Vingstedcenteret, Bredsted. She is a member of the group Danish Gobelin Art. Besides this, Anne Bjørn has displayed her works in Greenland with a solo exhibition in Katuaq – Greenland's Culture House in Nuuk in 2009.

In her weaving, Anne Bjørn has gone from classic tapestry to today's light and transparent tapestries in various materials associated with the Nordic winter and light. With a sovereign knowledge of materials and being highly skilled in techniques, she continues to seek new original expressions in weaving.







Transport of the catch



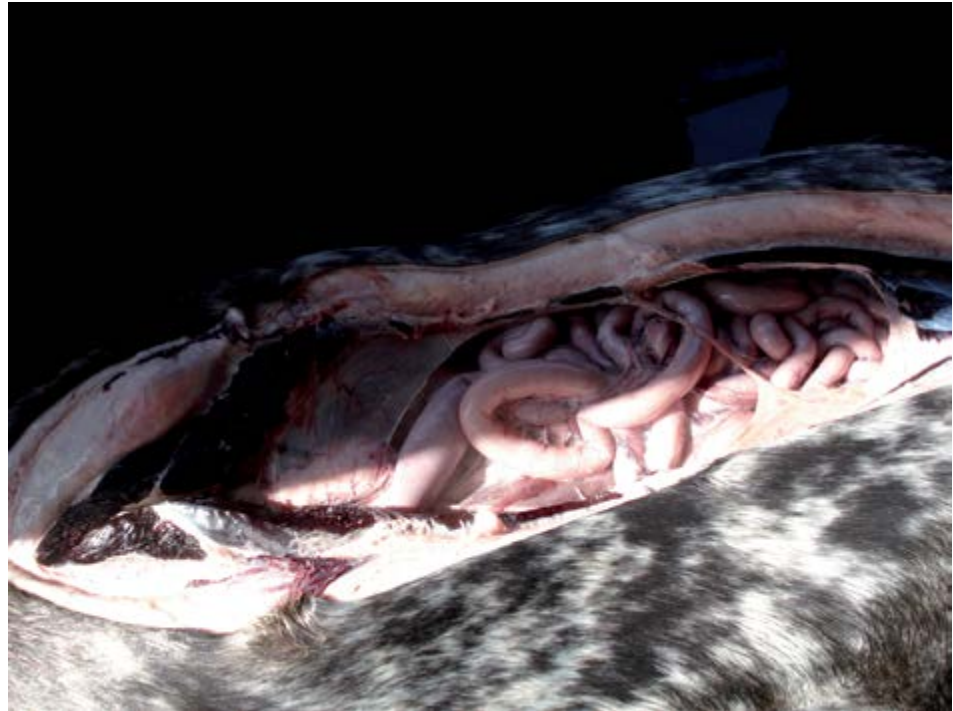
Cutting up the seal

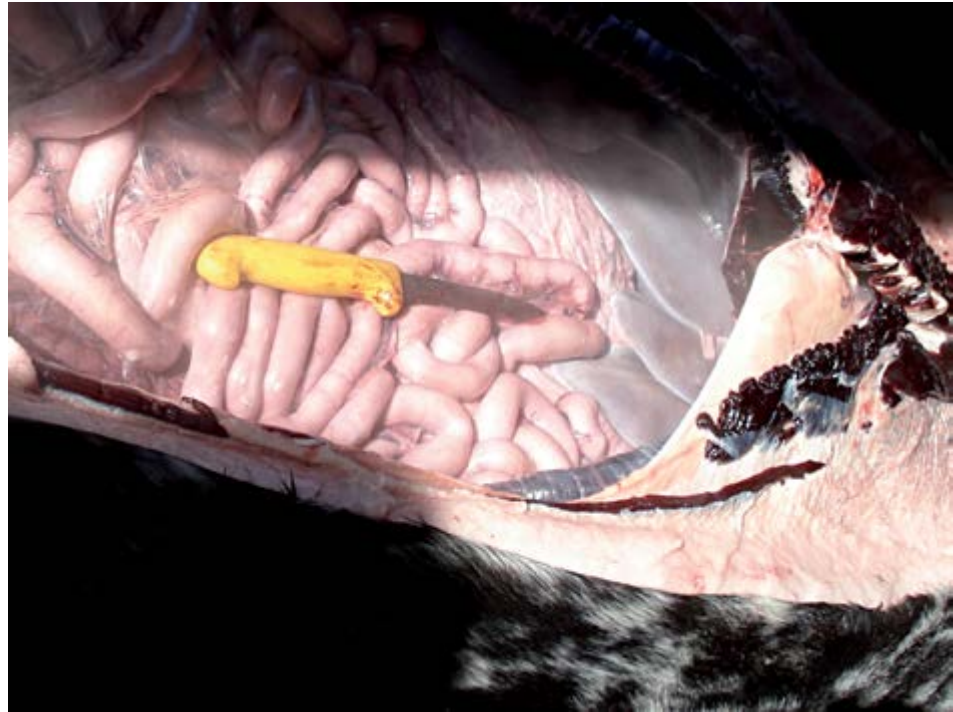




Seal intestines









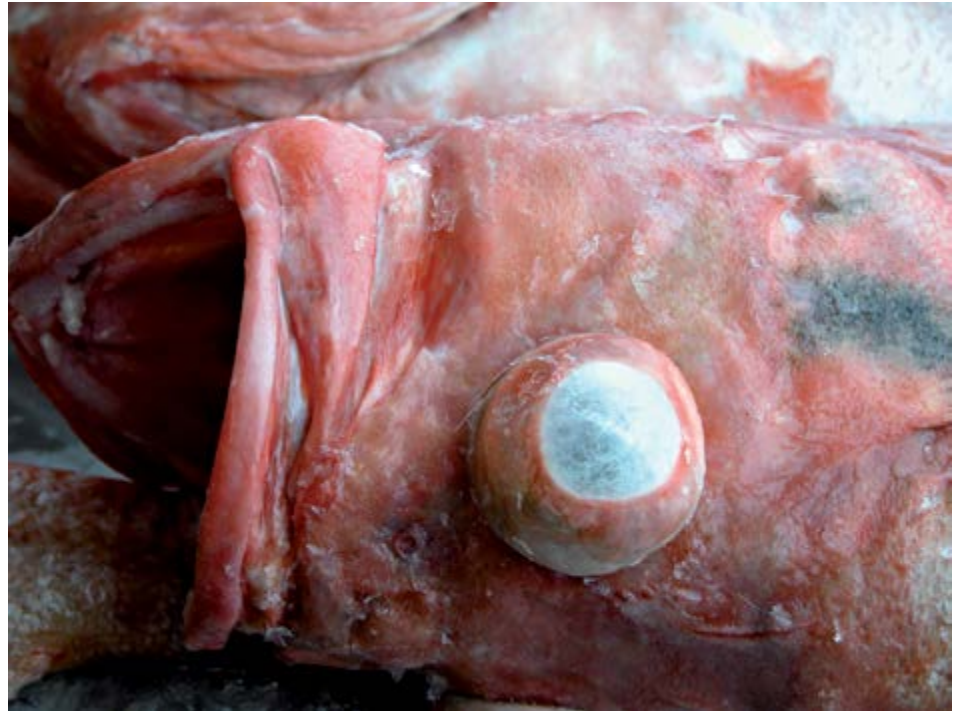




The market







Deep-sea fish



The industrial harbour in Nuuk

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