

# CATALOGUE 2007



"In good times and backlighting"  
A portrait of the fashion designer couple  
Margit and Erik Brandt



Portrait-Confrontation &

Sur-Realistic-Realism


finn  
ulf


Artist-painter and Architect MAA


# GRABOWSKI


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# “I want to paint”

Poem by Ole Hyltoft, author, writer  
and reviewer to Finn Ulf Grabowski  
(Translated from Danish into English)



*There are people who want to rule  
brutally and command.  
Let them mind their own business and say:  
I want to paint.*

*If your life is going around in circles  
like a game of patience unsolved,  
you must scream: No, stop, set me free,  
I want to paint*

*To the one who is ugly  
from speaking with envy,  
you must say: One really gets pretty  
when painting.*

*It is quite a lot,  
it is a somersault  
that consciousness takes saying:  
I want to paint.*

*The honest artist,  
is certain of scandal,  
preferably the frightened had forbidden  
him to paint.*

*The fact is  
that the speech of the unknown  
is transmitted through the hand  
that dares to paint.*

*The spark of spirit,  
which smoulders in hibernation,  
turns into blazing fire when you say:  
I want to paint.*

*We deprived Death of  
his final victory.  
The second turned eternal  
the moment we had painted it.*

# About Finn Ulf Grabowski's Art

By: Erik Meistrup – Artcritic and writer



## About Finn Ulf Grabowski's “Sur-Realistic-Realism”

By: Erik Meistrup – Artcritic and writer

A good example of his Sur-Realistic-Realism is “The watch tower”.

**Grabowski's** understanding of surrealism is an experience of the real world containing clashes of a character that can only be understood as **“Sur-Realistic Realism”, i.e. they do not break the realism, but in a way double or triple it.**

The classic sur-realistic world creates a projection of inner pictures on the canvas that might interpret the classic understanding of Freud's theory of the influence of the unconscious on feelings and understanding of the reality (real world).

Grabowski is in another time where the unconscious has shrunk in favour of a deliberate manipulation of reality in order to create another reality. Even though this is a traditional analogous painting thus the way of thinking behind is a digital understanding of the relationship between realism and the immense possibilities of the virtual world to create new worlds.

**“The watch tower”**

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Painting no. 2 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm



## About “Portrait-Confrontation”

*By: Erik Meistrup – Artcritic and writer*

A good example of what “Portrait-Confrontation” is “King Oscar”:

**Grabowski paints his portraits of actual persons in a way that places him among the real portrait-painters**, but at the same time he is working in a postmodernist way with the “genre” by either placing the person in another room than the studio, or he is adding elements to characterize the occupation or character of the person in question. Though one does not know the person oneself one gets the idea that the person has a kind of iconic status, which is also found in Grabowski’s Sur-Realistic Realistic paintings.

**Grabowski’s** portraits show us the person or persons in a very direct way, which involves the beholder in the understanding of the painting’s subject, which again suspends the privacy and makes it general and not personal.



**"King Oscar"**

**Portrait-Painting of Oscar**

*Painting no. 3 – Acrylic on canvas 70x70 cm*

# A “Success Portrait”

By: Erik Meistrup – Artcritic and writer

What is the price of a success ?

Probably individual, but in most cases something to be seen in the features of the persons and in the shaping of the body. “In good Times and Backlighting” – a success shown that has cost blood, sweat and tears. The ups and downs of their lives are inscribed in their faces, and in their perpetual watch for the rewards of the future and the good life. Margit Brandt wears a medal, “THE GOLDEN BUTTON”, recieved in 2006 for a great contribution to the history of the Danish fashion-design, and the husband and colleague, Erik, is trying to create shade from the mercilessness of the floodlighting by using his own book, “BIOGRAPHY” – telling about their life from rashness of youth to this very day with the recognition of our limits.

**Grabowski has hit the “bull’s eye” with his description of the couple’s genuine, confident arrogance and smile of joy mixed with the lines of lives lived in the faces in a sort of cocktail of pleasure.**

*“In good times and backlighting”*

The portrait of the fashion designer couple Margit and Erik Brandt

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*Painting no. 1 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*





# A “Grabowski Style”

*By: Erik Meistrup – Artcritic and writer*

Evaluation of a painter and his style takes place frequently. How does one exactly recognize this artist and why? Finn Ulf Grabowski has in relatively short time established his own special way of expression, which finds its motives in three different categories:

## **SUR-REALISTIC-REALISM**

## **ARCHITECTURAL ABSTRACTION and PORTRAIT-CONFRONTATION**

The three categories have a Grabowski style in common, namely the use of photo-realistic expression, which was developed in the late 1960`ies and established another kind of reality than the apparent reality. Another common feature is that a kind of fusion between the chief motif in the foreground and a background motif is established that accentuates the chief motif in a clear, direct and communicating manner as on this painting:



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***“The Scotsmen are coming”***

*Painting no. 4 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*

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***“Portrait-Painting of Pia Kjærsgaard“***  
Partyleader and member of the Danish Parliament

*Painting no. 5 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



# “Sur-Realistic-Realism”

By: Erik Meistrup – Artcritic and writer

The classic surrealism wanted to create a projection of inward pictures on the canvas. Pictures that should interpret the classical understanding of Freud’s Theory about the influence of the unconscious on feelings and understanding of reality.

Grabowski is living in another period where the unconscious has shrunk in favour of deliberate manipulation with reality to create another reality.

Although this is a traditional analogous painting the thought behind is a digital understanding of the relationship between realism and the infinite possibilities of the virtual world to create new worlds.

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## “The moon in daylight”

Painting no. 6 – Acrylic on canvas 100x100 cm





***“The beach-party”***

*Painting no. 7 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*

In the “The moon in daylight” **Grabowski’s** understanding of the Sur-Realistic is an experience of the world containing clashes of character that might be understood as **Sur-Realistic. I.e. they do not break the realism, but double or triple it so to speak.**

The important thing is to use the analytic eye, which the architect develops in his work, and combine it with the free artistic creative inward eye, usually used by the novelist or poet. Grabowski is working not only on keeping his balance between these contrasts, but is extending his work too to a new basis, to a different artistic platform. In widening his concept Grabowski constructs his motifs with emphasis on the iconic. I.e. whether an item, a building or persons are in focus, he is establishing his own world, giving every element an independent iconic function and effect.

In “The beach-party” it is the relationship between the classic separate bathcabin, where one could hide changing before visiting nature, and the still more classically, gauzily dressed graces dancing to awake the seasons.



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***“Out of time”***

*Painting no. 8 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*

In **“Out of time”** it is the classic silhouette of a woman waiting on a railway platform passed by an active, independent, modern woman, who does not need a uniform around her personality as the traditional woman.



### ***“Transformation”***

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*Painting no. 9 – Acrylic on canvas 100x70 cm*

In **“Transformation”** two women are placed in an alpine resembling landscape with a quite modern sort of covered garden structure. Here the women too are two eras and two attitudes. The traditional, passive person tied in an ethnic pattern, and the modern, free woman, celebrating her new strength by for instance keeping her long covering skirt.

Grabowski chooses in other paintings to play on words and makes them real in a surreal way such as “Sea Bath“ or...

**“Sea bath”**

*Painting no. 10 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*







***"On his post"***

*Painting no. 11 – Acrylic on canvas 100x100 cm*

... where the words are visualized, getting concrete and placed in contexts, where their realism contrasts with the realistic elements in the rest of the motif.

# “Confrontation Portraits”

By: Erik Meistrup – Artcritic and writer

Grabowski paints his portraits of real persons in a way that places him among proper portrait-painters, but at the same time he works postmodernistically with the genre either by placing the person in other rooms than the studio or he is adding elements to express the person’s occupation or character. Though one does not know the person oneself one gets the experience of a person with iconic status also found in Grabowski’s **Sur-Realistic Realism**.



*“The newspaper reader” or “Newspaperreading in the moonlight”*

*Painting no. 12 – Acrylic on canvas 100x100 cm*

The newspaper reader is not distracted by the woman with the corset.  
He is not receptive to her challenge.



***"Walking on the beach"***

**A portrait of Kirsten Gregers and Mikael Grabowski**

*Painting no. 13 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*

The couple in "Walking on the beach" seem to communicate with the beholder with an information or perhaps a message about the green can that has grown to oversize, and for that reason must play a central role for the couple's promenade on the beach.



***“On the wings of singing” or “Singing has wings”***

**A portrait of the Royal Operasinger Tina Kiberg**

*Painting no. 14 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*

The Portrait “On the wings of singing” shows an operasinger who is used to exceed all barriers with her singing. Evidently she is the master of the classic scene, with the dramatic identification (Wagner), also shown clearly in the posture of Tina Kiberg. But try to compare her with the painting “The odalisque and the snake” where...

...the woman from the time of the classic opera is much more for decoration and may be picked like the apple of knowledge that she is holding in her hand.



***“The odalisque and the snake”***

*Painting no. 15 – Acrylic on canvas 100x100 cm*



***“She looks straight through you”***

**Portrait-Painting of Sanne Neergaard, Psychologist and Sexologist**

*Painting no. 16 – Acrylic on canvas 70x70 cm*

**Grabowski's Portraits** give us the person or the persons in a very direct manner that involves the beholder in the understanding of the painting's choice of motif, which removes the privacy and makes the personal figure general. A good example of this is the portrait: “She looks straight through you”

*– Erik Meistrup  
Artcritic and Author*

## Various examples of “Sur-Realistic-Realism” and “Portrait-Confrontation”



**“Mermaid on land”**

Painting no. 17 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm





***“The green garden”***

*Painting no. 18 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*





***“Portrait of Mrs. Karin Salling”***

*Painting no. 19 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*





***“Thor's hammer”***

**Portrait of the Minister of Finance Mr. Thor Pedersen**

*Painting no. 20 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



***“Two persons standing together”***

**Double-portrait of Mrs. Karen Jespersen (former Minister of the Interior- and Minister of Social affairs) and Ralf Pittelkow (author and political commentator)**

*Painting no. 21 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



***“The green car”***

*Painting no. 22 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



***“A portrait of a dentist”***

**Portrait of Mikael Grabowski**

*Painting no. 23 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



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**“Wind-Power”**

*Painting no. 24 – Acrylic on canvas 100 x 70 cm*



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**“Birdwatching”**

*Painting no. 25 – Acrylic on canvas 100 x 70 cm*



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**“Horse-Power”**

*Painting no. 26 – Acrylic on canvas 100 x 70 cm*



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**“The turning torsos”**

*Painting no. 27 – Acrylic on canvas 100 x 70 cm*



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**“Cover up”**

*Painting no. 28 – Acrylic on canvas 100 x 70 cm*



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***“The “Collection” – At the danish national gallery of art***

*Painting no. 29 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



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***“On his way to a committee meeting in DR”***

*A portrait of the author, writer and now a member of the board of directors in DR, Ole Hyltoft*

*Painting no. 30 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



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***“Walking with staffs on the beach”***

*Painting no. 31 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



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***“Turning a Torso”***

*Painting no. 32 – Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm*



***“A pyramid in Paris”***

*Painting no. 33*  
– Acrylic on canvas  
50x100 cm



***“Laundry on a washing line”***

*Painting no. 35*  
– Acrylic on canvas 100x100 cm



***“Submerged rocks”***

*Painting no. 34*  
– Acrylic on canvas  
70x100 cm



***“I am skating and  
picking anemones in november”***

*Painting no. 36*  
– Acrylic on canvas 70x100 cm

## “Architectural-Abstractions”



### **“Architectural-Abstraction” (no. 58)**

*Painting no. 37*

– *Acrylic on canvas 100x100 cm*

Here Finn Ulf Grabowski’s architectural background is felt clearly, and only the mutual relationship of the different geometric patterns and forms plus the effect of the perspective are used.

## “Photo-art”



### **“Photo-art - 8. Series – opus 4A”**

*Manipulated photo transferred on silver-plate. Photo-art no. 38*

– *Photo on silver-plate 60x60 cm*

In this example of Photo-Art one gets the idea that Finn Ulf Grabowski is mixing the real world with elements from the unreal world in such a way that the sense of reality of the beholder is put to the test.

# CV – Curriculum Vitae for Finn Ulf Grabowski

*Artist-painter and Architect MAA*

Finn Ulf Grabowski is a 45´er, visual artist, member of the D.B.F., The Association of Danish Art-Painters and Architect MAA and RAIA and BDA. Finn Ulf Grabowski started his architectural studies at The Architect School of Aarhus, and later he studied at The Royal Danish Academy, of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. He got his Diploma from the Professor Henning Larsen's department in 1970.

**More on [www.finngrabowski.dk](http://www.finngrabowski.dk)**



*Jens Erik Sørensen, Director of ARoS Art-Museum, John Donaldson, Professor of Mathematics and Ole Hyltoft Author, Writer and Reviewer together with the Artist, Finn Ulf Grabowski at the vernissage at City West Art Gallery Dec. the 9th 2006.*

## Separate exhibitions

Broke the “Sound-Barrier” with a début exhibition in Canberra, Australia in 1983; and later several exhibitions, among others a separate exhibition at The School of Architecture in Aarhus 2005 with the title: “Architectural-Abstractions”, opened by Jens Erik Sorensen, the Director and Curator of ARoS, The Museum of Art in Aarhus, and a separate exhibition in the summer of 2006 “Sur-Realistic-Realism” in the “Strand-Galleri”, in Gl. Skagen, opened by Annette Johansen, the Director and Curator of the Art-Museum of Skagen, and finally ultimo 2006 a new Exhibition: More “Sur-Realistic Realism 2006” at City West Art Gallery, opened by the author and reviewer Ole Hyltoft.

**Finn Ulf Grabowski is mentioned in “DANSK KUNST 06” by Torben Weirup (page 91).**



Art that gives food for thought –  
– which is far more than just decoration!



Finn Ulf Grabowski at his easel painting

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