

## Translation of review by Jan K Persson on exhibition 'Have mercy'

What is an exhibition? Paintings and pictures, one after the other in rows, at eye level, for people to look at. A collection of messages and notices on walls. I pause in front of one, lost in contemplation, inspect more closely if it is a small piece and step back if it is a large one. The floor! Well, there is a room surrounding the picture, which is required for my experience. Is it the flat picture that becomes larger and seemingly transplanted three-dimensionally into the exhibition room where I stand and walk? Or the other way round? If a physical object is displayed on the floor, so that I can move round it and inspect it, will the walls then become outer walls and the piece of art then cover the whole room, so that it can breathe? And I will have to step backwards towards the walls in order to be able to see this artwork?

In Anita Christofferson's exhibition *Forbarma dig* (Have mercy) the exhibition area has been fully used although it is largely an empty room. The thinness has been driven to an extreme with pale pictures hung on the white walls which I must examine closely in order to understand. They are thin pieces of material and handkerchiefs elegantly embroidered in small letters, lines from the author Birgitta Trotzig. They are hardly visible, as if disappearing into the material. *I don't want to; Afraid; Don't disappear!* Other pieces are larger, like an old piece of material with an embroidered text that is trying to become more visible: *She remained alone; Loneliness is in the whole soul*. On a vertical cloth hanging from floor to ceiling are the words *measure - be good enough - measure - be good enough* - repeated continuously all round in one, almost invisible, line.

The sparseness of the room is emphasised by several large sun-bleached blinds, hung as extra walls, on which the words '*I don't want to*' are repeated in small black lines. In a corner of the largest room, three chairs stand in a row in front of a narrow band of crocheted stars, unfinished as though abandoned. The only piece of work in the exhibition that hints at hope and growth is '*From the darkness*' two 'living' objects - flowering geraniums - surrounded by large pieces of coal scattered around the pots as if by some life force. Anita Christofferson explains in the exhibition notes that she wants to show the anguish that mankind is living in, in war, in the shadows, behind locked doors. A passage by KG Hammar emphasises the anguish we may feel, but that art can give shape and voice to our despair and a path to hope.

The exhibition is without doubt a powerful gesture made using the most delicate of expression. But what it conveys most strongly, more than just words of complaint, is the feeling created in the room, like a screenshot, that plays out in the mind of the visitor. It has perhaps more to do with existentialism where we stand alone and apart from things, the loneliness of the room, the moment in time. Some of the faded pieces of cloth have creases like abstract language in a strange form. How were they made? I stand only centimeters from them. Yet when I step back into the room I am struck by an intensity that sparkles throughout the sparse exhibition.