

IN THE BEST OF FAMILIES

Charlotte Thiiis-Evensen has used most of her family members as objets d'art. They are soon to be exhibited at Sørlandets Kunstmuseum and Kunstneres Hus.

TEXT ANDERS KEMP PHOTO ØYVIND NÆSS – TRANSLATED FROM NORWEGIAN BY BARBRO ROSS VIALLATTE

In 2003 I made the short film "The Moment of Truth", about my Aunt Astrid who at the age of seventy had never been allowed by her mother to cut her hair. In the film she is on her way to the hairdresser in Breivik for the very first time.

Recently Charlotte Thiiis-Evensen was also represented at Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium with the film "My Uncle", about Uncle Vidar, who, in the space of the minute the film lasts, takes out his glass eye, displaying the empty crater where his natural eye should have been. In addition she has recently created an anti-war short film, featuring her own son, was shown at The Norwegian Short Film Festival Grimstad this year.

So what's the story with Thiiis-Evensen and her family? Why does she wish to expose herself in this way? – I grew up in very bourgeois circumstance where much was invested in surface appearance. Everything was thoroughly proper. But growing older, one sees things falling apart. People get divorced, people get ill, says Thiiis-Evensen. – Perhaps it has some therapeutic effect for me to expose what is generally considered taboo, but my hope is that in showing these films I may open up for something universal in which most people might find some recognition.

MOZART UNTUNED From 31. October Thiiis-Evensen's collective family works will be exhibited at Kunstneres Hus. The rooms in which the art is exhibited are made to look like an apartment. The artist's partner, the composer Eivind Buene, will be performing "a little broken Mozart" on the untuned family piano. The piano is delivered complete with wedding photos of the family's divorced couples, the artist's own included. – It is the summary of a certain trend

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39 YEARS OF AGE.

BORN AND RAISED in Porsgrunn, Norway.

MASTER OF ARTS, Literary Science, University of Oslo.

STUDIED at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

DIRECTOR AND JOURNALIST "Bokprogrammet", Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK).

CURRENT SOLO EXHIBITIONS: Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, opening 14th June, and Kunstneres Hus, opening 31st October.

REPRESENTED AT The Norwegian Short Film Festival Grimstad 2008, with «Desert Eagle».

in my work, collecting loose threads so to speak, says Thiiis-Evensen.

When not working with art, Thiiis-Evensen is a fulltime journalist for NRK's "Bokprogrammet". She has always had something of a "double life", at it's most apparent perhaps, when she had one of the principal roles in film director Aune Sand's epic turkey "Dis" in 1995. At the time she had to endure the spiteful hiss of the title where ever she went. But to her the film was "an incredible adventure; and three months in Cairo". Charlotte has never been particularly preoccupied with the politically correct, or for that matter, the myth of the great artist, devoting her entire life to art.

- I have an artist friend who has accused me of not risking everything for art. But to me making art is as natural as making television programs. Not mystical at all.

- How do you combine the two lives?
- It is intense. But I have always had lots of energy. My mother and sister think that i have a touch of ADHD. That my energy is manic. Maybe they are right.

DREADING IT SO, what is the opening night going to be like? Will her family show up? Or will they be avoiding her like the plague in the future?

- It was hard to see my dad slowly and gradually die. Specially for my mother. In the production phase I have been worried that it would make her very sad. And that my ex husband would be upset that our son is be exposed at the cinema in "Desert Hawk", but I have shown the films to all the people involved, so I don't think there is room for much disaster, says Thiiis-Evensen.

- In addition I have had trouble with ethical aspects of certain earlier works, which has made me extra conscious and worried about offending anyone. The bottom line is that this is a family album. A not very idyllic, sad and broken album some may say, but this is what I am interested in: Looking behind the façade.

Charlotte Thiiis-Evensen's father was of the

type of doctor who could examine everyone apart from himself. When it was discovered that he had an atypical variety of Parkinson's disease, only little time was left to prepare for his death. When Eyvind Thiiis-Evensen passed away at the Telemark Central Hospital on 31. March 2006 he left behind – amongst other – a mobile phone. On the phone one hundred photographs and a dozen video clips were found. We are not talking of pleasant holiday snaps or portraits of the grandchildren. The video footage and the photographs were taken by the old doctor while in hospital, trying to call his wife. As his motor skills were severely impaired at this stage, he ended up taking accidental pictures. Of a slipper. A coffee cup.

14. July these images are exhibited at Sørlandets Kunstmuseum under the heading "My Father tried to call my Mother". Whether the artist Charlotte Thiiis-Evensen will be standing in the background sipping champagne, is yet to be seen, but one thing is for certain: She will be viewing her – or indeed her father's – exhibition with mixed emotions.

- The thought that he was lying there in that bed alone, without being able to communicate with the outside world, is what makes me the most sad, she says.

FAMILY ART It is not the first time journalist and artist Charlotte Thiiis-Evensen uses her family for art and film purposes. Already when she was accepted at the Art Academy in 2001, it was with a film where the artist makes an attempt at reading the newspaper, while her daughter is doing everything she can to capture her mother's attention. **D2**

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