

# MICHAEL KVIUM THE SKETCH



HORSENS ART MUSEUM  
2019

## **Michael Kvium – The Sketch**

In collaboration with Museum Holmen and Michael Kvium, Horsens Art Museum presents an exhibition based on the artist's sketch work. The exhibition features 142 sketches on display, from the 1990s until today. Since 1984 Horsens Art Museum has focused on Michael Kvium (b. 1955) in the museum's collection and the museum has the country's largest collection of works by the artist. Therefore, it is our great pleasure to present a special exhibition that focuses on the studies that lie in the artistic work before the painting is created. Horsens Art Museum has a large collection of sketches created by Michael Kvium, and for that reason it seemed relevant to exhibit a significant part of the artist's sketch works. Likewise, several of the sketches on the exhibition constitute preliminary work for the three paintings 'One of Those Days, Days', 'Future Me' and 'Untitled', which is part of the collection at Horsens Art Museum.

The Danish artist Michael Kvium was born and raised in Horsens. He started his artistic career as illustrator for Horsens Folkeblad (the local newspaper), where he spent six years. Therefore, the exhibition can also be seen as an a way to return to the starting point of Michael Kvium's artistic carrier, which is in drawing and sketch works.

Michael Kvium's approach to working on his drawings is of great importance to his larger paintings and sculptures. He seeks to work in a state of almost positive indifference where coincidences can be allowed to prevail.

It is very rare that Michael Kvium starts the creative process of painting, as it helps to remove some of the spontaneity and coincidence that the work with the sketch creates. For this reason, there are often sketches prior to the paintings, and therefore they also play an important role in the understanding of the artist's creative process but also the motive content of the final works.



### **Thanks to Museum Holmen and foundations**

The exhibition has been realized thanks to Museum Holmen which presented the exhibition up till Sunday 19 May 2019. The exhibition has been created with the support of: A.P. Møller og Hustru Chastine Mc-Kinney Møllers Fond til almene Formaal, Knud Højgaards Fond, Oticon Fonden, Beckett-Fonden, Overretssagfører L. Zeuthens Mindelegat. In connection with the exhibition, Museum Holmen has published an exhibition catalog, which can be purchased at Horsens Art Museum. For the catalog a QR code is included for the short film “The Sketch”, produced by Jonathan Kvium.



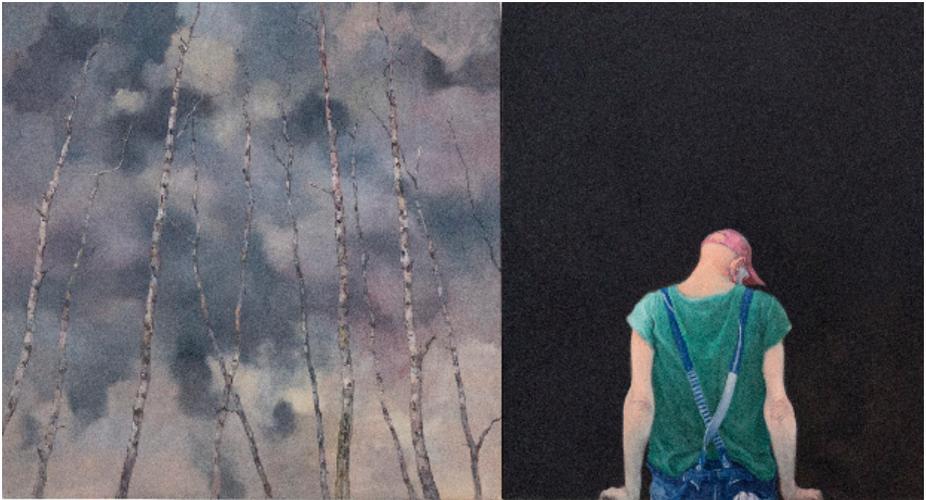
Sketch, 2014  
32 x 32 cm

## **One of Those Days, Days, 2014**

The above sketch from 2014 has served as a preliminary study for the painting 'One of Those Days, Days' from 2014.

In the painting, nature and man are the artistic starting point, as is also seen in many of Michael Kvium's other major paintings. "One of Those Days, Days" consists of three paintings put together into one large work, where the sketch focuses only on the right part of the painting, with a man leaning against the edge of the picture in an empty and endless space. From the man's back pocket hangs a cloth with paint stains, which is particularly noticeable by being painted on its own small canvas, where in the sketch it just hangs beyond the drawn square in which the man is placed. The cloth acts as a requisition and points out that the man is an artist in his workwear.

It therefore seems obvious to consider the man as a reflection of the artist Michael Kvium himself.



One of Those Days, Days, 2014

Oli on canvas. A: 200 x 200, b: 200 x 170, c: 60 x 40 cm

Gift 23/9-2015 from Kulturarvsstyrelsen and Ny Carlsbergfondet



In the outline of the final painting, it is seen that the man has lifted his right hand, which seems to hold onto an object, possibly a brush, which also would lean on the meaning of the painting cloth in the picture and the idea that the man in the painting represents the artist. The man's gaze is in the outline facing this indefinable object in his hand, whereas the man in "One of Those Days, Days" leans both arms toward the edge of the canvas. Likewise, the gaze rests downwards towards part of the pictorial space, we as viewers, do not have access to. In the painting it can be seen that the man's face is a skull, a reference to the fact that death is always present, which cannot be seen on the sketch. In the painting on the left is a landscape motif with birch trees.

The low-profile perspective on this side gives a dizzying feeling of looking up and contributes to the thin birch trees appearing monumental and overwhelming for the crop. The color scheme is pastel in the form of bright broken colors. The sky, however, appears, despite the bright colors, gloomy and dark in the form of the dark purple clouds drifting into the sky that warn of a threatening storm.



Sketch, 1993  
32 x 32 cm

### **Future me, 1993-1994**

The painting 'Future Me' portrays a man physically fused with a child in an obscure and gloomy universe. Both people are dressed in a black dress-like garment as well as bath caps in the colors black and yellow. In the right hand, the man holds a skull. His left arm is coalesced with the child's arm. As the title also points out, the work seems autobiographical in nature, as the man shares several of Kvium's own features. The close trim of the work and the large format of the painting reinforce the confrontation with the viewer.

The work is very symbolic. In both sides, three lemons are seen on a gray background. In the iconography of Christianity, the lemon is used as a symbol of faithfulness and life. The number three is also associated with great importance in the Christian symbolism in the form of the trinity: God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. But the painting may first and foremost point to the cyclical progress of life from birth to death, a memento ("remember to die"). The skull clearly indicates that the cycle ends with death.

Kvium often uses the color combination black and yellow. The colors are related to a sign of blindness consisting of three black dots on a yellow background. Kvium persistently points to our cultural blindness and the absurdity of our notion of own existence, where denial of, in particular, death is constantly present.



Future Me, 1993-94

Oli on canvas. 230,5 x 230,0 cm

Gift 29/10-2009 from Statens Kunstfond

## Untitled, 1994

In the early sketches of the 1990s, death is a theme, often seen through deformed and grotesque human-like figures. One of the sketches from 1994 shows several human-like figures depicted, the one at the bottom right-hand corner, creates associations with the series 'Untitled' from 1994. 'Untitled' consists of four paintings, one of which is represented here on a sketch. In the sketch and in the painting a typical "Kviium-esque" figure is seen; a very crumpled human figure, who looks towards the viewer. The hands of man are bound in gauze. Both in the sketch and the painting, the bodies are placed in an empty void, where only their shadows define space.

Sketch, 1994  
32 x 32 cm



Untitled, 1994

Oli on canvas. Part 1-4. Each part: 140,5 x 140,5 cm (Only one is represented here)  
Gift 28/10-1996 from Horsens Kunstmuseums Venner and Statens Museumsnævn