Big and Small Bowl by Carsten From Andersen
A Gift of Contemporary Silver

Micael Ernstell
Curator, Applied Art and Design
The founding of the Ulf Gillberg–Lennart Agerberg Foundation brings a significant opportunity for the Nationalmuseum to reflect trends in contemporary silver-smithing; it is an extremely generous private initiative that started activities in 2020 and aims to encourage purchases for the Nationalmuseum, primarily of contemporary objects in silver, excluding jewellery, created by Swedish and foreign smiths. Acquisitions should preferably be made directly from the smith or their gallerists. The founders are particularly interested in the link between the hand and the brain in the creation process, and hope the foundation will contribute to the development and continuation of the craft.

**Big and Small Bowl by Carsten From Andersen**

A Gift of Contemporary Silver

*Micael Ernstell*

Curator, Applied Art and Design

---

*Fig. 1 Carsten From Andersen (b. 1946), Bowls “Big and Small Bowl”, 2019. 999 silver, 18.7 × 29 cm (h × diam), 1.227 kg and 11 × 12.5 cm (h × diam), 0.324 kg. Gift of Ulf Gillberg–Lennart Agerberg Foundation through the Friends of the Nationalmuseum. Nationalmuseum, NMK 149A–B/2020.*
The foundation also aims to promote academic research related to the area of the collection. The foundation’s board includes Lennart Agerberg, Ulf Gillberg, Anders Lundin, Eva Qviberg and Micael Ernstell. Their future gifts will be donated to the Museum through the Friends of the Nationalmuseum. The Nationalmuseum has no public funding for acquiring design, applied art or fine art, so the collections are enriched through gifts and grants from private funds and foundations.

The Ulf Gillberg–Lennart Agerberg Foundation transferred its first gift to the Nationalmuseum in 2020. The work is from 2019 and is titled Big and Small Bowl, produced by Danish silversmith Carsten From Andersen (b. 1946). It was purchased from Galleri Montan in Copenhagen. Considering the founders’ interest in objects created and shaped by the hand, it is no surprise they selected From Andersen, who has many years of solid experience. The two bowls are made from many carefully considered hammer blows, and are made from 999 fine silver, which contains 99.9% silver and 0.1% copper. In these contexts, it is common to use 925 sterling silver with 7.5% copper in the alloy. Fine silver is softer to work with and is visually gentler. It has less copper, so does not oxidise as quickly, but its higher percentage of silver affects the price and exclusiveness.

Carsten From Andersen finds his inspiration in nature, particularly stones. Once you know this, you can read the bowls in a different way. Their surface consists of many different “casts” of stones, painstakingly made using hammers in different materials.

Carsten From Andersen was born in 1946. He graduated as a silversmith in Frederica in 1969 and as a goldsmith in Copenhagen in 1987. He received first prize in the 2019 HammerClub Awards in Dundee, UK, for the donated bowls. The HammerClub – Platform for Silversmithing is an international forum for silversmiths and interested parties, founded in 2002. Every year, a city hosts their annual symposium with workshops and exhibitions. He explains his fascination with the process:

I am a silversmith… and have held true to all of the traditions and techniques that this venerable occupation demands. It is therefore wonderful, that after many years of faithful service, working within the bounds of the ancient tradition, that I have discovered a technique where the material and the hammer are engaged in joyful play. I speak to the silver, I hear the metal’s will, and its voice guides every strike of my hammer.

My time in the workshop is now spent in a playful dialog, and the results speak for themselves.¹

In 2015, Carsten From Andersen exhibited with Yuki Ferdinandsen (b. 1958) in Lika olikheter at Galleri Schildt, Stockholm. These two smiths are at the forefront in Denmark and both were missing from the Museum’s collections. For financial reasons, at that time only Yuki Ferdinandsen’s Stone could be acquired for the collection of contemporary silver, thanks to a donation by another donor to the Museum – the Bengt Julin Fund (the Friends of the Nationalmuseum).

The entire surface of Stone is decorated with “wrinkled” silver, and its other ornamentation consists of small points made using the Japanese Arare technique. Ferdinandsen explains:

Arare means hail. It’s a technique that consists of small ball-shaped points in regular rows on the surface of both small and large pieces of various metals. In my arare-objects the small hails give a delightful play of light and shadow on the white silver.²

Notes: