

# POV. INTERNATIONAL

NYE STEMME, SYNSPUNKTER OG JOURNALISTIK - ONLINE HVER DAG - UGEBREV HVER FREDAG



## Mille Kalsmose: Relations are Sensations about Cosmic Communities

by Emilia van Hauen

Cultural sociologist, bestselling author

Suddenly, she's standing there - in my office. Tall. Blond. Leather pants. With an insistent, inciting energy. And many laughs, the one after the other, while we quickly establish a wavelength. As if we were continuing a conversation we had not previously begun.

She's come along to pick up one of my books that cannot be purchased any longer. However, I've got a few copies laying around, and this becomes the starting point of a journey into each other's worlds. We share an interest in the 'us', in the 'we', in the others plus myself. Relations are what we are both standing upon. What we are both standing in. And soon, we've come to create a connection that establishes a bridge between sociology's many narratives and Mille Kalsmose's wild world of expressions, and

impressions, which inevitably penetrate their way into the viewer. The participant. The other person. When I visit her in her home, a few days later, what comes to light is how Mille is able to create works that construct the statistics related to our modern imbalances and discontinuity into forms which, in feathers and in colors and in other forms of materiality, simultaneously reflect the frustrations and the longings for coherence that are seated in our flesh and in our minds but have not yet been put into words.

***I'm thrilled. And we keep in touch. In the one moment,  
she's in New York City. In the next, she's in Hong Kong. In  
the third, she's in a third spot. But we keep in touch.***

And also how she, in an utterly un-Scandinavian way, is a veritable well of universal sensuousness that slides its way in under all our rational reservations and fills us up with subtle liveliness.

I'm thrilled. And we keep in touch. In the one moment, she's in New York City. In the next, she's in Hong Kong. In the third, she's in a third spot. But we keep in touch.

In the West, we've never been more pressured. Inside. Insane quantities of stress, anxiety, depression, suicide, insomnia and loneliness mirror the machine-logic of effectiveness and binary measurability that have been allowed to dominate human ambitions for much too long. And that have alienated us in our relation to the world. In our relation to ourselves.

The absence of ontological security, the absence of certainty in our own being, which our relations and our contributions ought to be providing us with as a matter of course, have become elusive factors. And we're suffering. And there's longing ...

... for sensing ourselves as a part of a larger context. A stable larger context. A meaningful stable and larger context. Once upon a time, we were eminently qualified members of the deeply rooted communities into which we were born, and where the

hierarchies, the rules and status were givens, from the moment of our birth. This provided tranquility, common strength and social and creative limitations.

Today, however, we're floating around in free neo-tribal communities with rules that we've got to adopt ourselves, tasks that we've got to create ourselves, and we're being borne forth by a common faith in each other. It's beautiful. Marvelous. Creatively exploding. But also very very vulnerable and volatile.

***And I am listening to the song of the universe - that's what it feels like, in any event - as she starts to play some planet music, which enwraps not only the two of us who happen to be standing inside the room but also enfolds meteorites and pieces of wood, giving rise to a Saturn-like ring of energy and sending my consciousness into free circulation with all the universe's narratives.***

The next time I visit Mille, she has wonderfully set this into form in her art work, *Cosmic Family*.

No longer is her home a trendy apartment in the inner city but, on the contrary, a large house situated in an old and distinguished suburb, where room has been made for installations. Sound has become a matter of interest for Mille.



And I am listening to the song of the universe - that's what it feels like, in any event - as she starts to play some planet music, which enwraps not only the two of us who happen to be standing inside the room but also enfolds meteorites and pieces of wood, giving rise to a Saturn-like ring of energy and sending my consciousness into free circulation with all the universe's narratives.

A piece of unfamiliar planetary rock calls to me. I pick it up. Feel its rough surface. Feel it against my lips. Sensing the vibrations from outer space. Thinking that we human beings, with all our rationale and scientific evidence, ought to be looking instead for meaning as we enter into a context that can far surpass our scientific imagination, because we then might feel ourselves to be less isolated, less alone, less lost, and might instead feel ourselves to be connected. Finished. Whole.

I put it down again. Pick up one of the pieces of wood.

Loving the sense of how something that, materially, is hard feels just as soft as the downy baby's cheek you graze whenever you take such a little creature into your arms. I discover that this is a fragment of a bannister, this old dark and smooth piece of wood, which has let thousands of hands touch its girth, which has gathered maybe millions of stories on the way up - in order to be lived out - and also on the way down - in order to be forgotten. And all these being stored in these fibers of tales that might, with the help of the room's sounds, be released and discharged, the one after the other, so the rest of us can connect ourselves with these tales and can be reminded that we actually are stardust.

And that we are all one and the same.

***The perfect amalgamation of the feminine and the masculine. A sacred wedding of archetypes which is telling, in a perfectly balanced way, about both the limitation and freedom with which we human beings today populate our lives.***

We're sipping tea. Sitting in the kitchen. Laughing. That's something you do a lot with Mille. And suddenly she tugs at me, beckoning me up, and wants to show me the first traces of a new piece that she's busy developing.

From the second that my gaze opens up to behold the art work, I'm lost. In love. Enchanted. This precursor to the work, Gateway, speaks in every way to the woman, the author, the mother, the sociologist, the daughter, the priestess and the witch in me.

In front of me, a frame. A sharp metal frame. Hard, square-shaped, clean, quadratic, and standing. Resting in itself. With a golden softness that mirrors the light and the dreams, while it bears a fleeting crispness in the leaf-weight pieces of paper that have found their homes in each their own quadrants. An altogether particular number of families in the safe society, which the frame bears for them.



The perfect amalgamation of the feminine and the masculine. A sacred wedding of archetypes which is telling, in a perfectly balanced way, about both the limitation and freedom with which we human beings today populate our lives.

It is as if the stories, the longings and the dreams were flying off from the pieces of paper and the metal, and are kissing me tenderly on my forehead, like a soft breeze of humanity in all nuances. And I reach out - and forward - and want to feel the paper, want to touch the brass, and I know that works of art are only finished and ready when we humans have touched them with our souls. But already now, it is more alive than many of the people who may one day come to place their lives inside this construction of community and relationships.

If I could, I would have this work inside my home. And every day, fill out a leaf with stories about the people I meet.

***This highly praised individuality is being articulated,  
celebrated and worshipped. But instead of liberating them -  
that is to say, us - it is turning people into single-flying pieces  
of paper that wither away into nothingness***

Oh, I would also place my own stories about love and betrayal, about successes and failures, about relationships won and lost, inside them, and my diary about our existential conditions would take on a materiality that could touch, palpably touch, those who were reaching out in order to feel Paper&Metal in perfect harmony.

But I cannot have this work standing in my home. So, instead, it has moved into my consciousness. It has become a part of my soul cloud, which I visit when I am seeking refuge from the proselike character and absurdity of everyday life. Because here, there is a human chaotic order in life's unruliness and this gives space and tranquility at one and the same time.

Mille has spoken. About the glaring lack of relationships in her upbringing. And about her attempts to create the same kind of metal frame around her relational affinity by setting up rituals. She has a need for this symbolic reality-creation, which can bring

about calm and a sense of domesticity inside her. But this is something the modern human being possesses. Because we are living in a community of popcorn brains and acid hearts. This highly praised individuality is being articulated, celebrated and worshipped. But instead of liberating them – that is to say, us – it is turning people into single-flying pieces of paper that wither away into nothingness.

Gateway captures these pieces of paper, giving them a home and a tribe, and the heart is soothed and the mind gets calmed, and in this way an antidote to the modern society's homelessness is created. Over time, the work will come to be an archive of the Universe's souls, woven together into a common DNA-strand of eternal life.

***Without the others, we are nobody, and our energy will disappear forever, out into the darkness. But here it gets inlaid with love, inside the crisp pages, and preserved forever by the golden steel. For relations are the first that we meet and the last that we leave. And this is something Mille understands.***

If we want, this can become the domicile of the modern ritual, which weaves all our stories together into a common tale about humanity and accordingly becomes a library of brother-sisterhood. A portal opening into the greatest longings, the largest rendition of this incarnation, and perhaps into the next incarnation, so that the art work is not only of this world, but also spans across timelessness. Because we humans are, first and foremost, relations.

Without the others, we are nobody, and our energy will disappear forever, out into the darkness. But here it gets inlaid with love, inside the crisp pages, and preserved forever by the golden steel. For relations are the first that we meet and the last that we leave. And this is something Mille understands.

She also understands that aesthetics is not merely about superficial beauty. It would be so superficial to believe this. The modern person believes all too much in rationality and forgets that it is our sense faculties that assess whether something is healthy, is good for us – or not.

That's how it's been since we got hearts that beat. For this has always been a survival strategy for humanity: both to express oneself in such a way but also, and to an even greater degree, to orient ourselves around aesthetics.

***if we open our eyes, if we open our senses,  
we can hear what the works are telling us  
about who we are on our way to becoming ...***

Aesthetics do make us wiser, sharper, change our emotions, fortify our senses - and even our immune systems, and it can create a bridge between people. And more than that, it can quite simply bring forth communities that share behavior and history. And that transcend any language, any thought, any tribe, because we share our sense faculties before we share anything else, and this serves to make us alike.

Aesthetics is constituted by stories about people. And that's precisely what Mille is creating every single day. While she is simultaneously creating the future. For she is putting form on that which zeitgeist has just been breathing down our necks - and if we open our eyes, if we open our senses, we can hear what the works are telling us about who we are on our way to becoming ...