

A TRUE STORY ABOUT ME BECOMING A RECYCLE ARTIST

By Petri Horttana

My father used to draw with me as a child and my grandfather taught me how to craft things with a knife and a piece of wood. As a result of this I felt that drawing and crafting was the thing I was burning for. In kindergarten and during the early school years my teachers saw my skills and during my teens they started guiding me towards something that for me was the only choice in life. I could not even imagine myself doing anything else. Later I did work in factories, as a salesperson and in a harbor, but back to the real story.

As I was aiming high I had to take the High School Diploma even though reading and sitting still was not “my thing”. I was getting frustrated as my 20th birthday was approaching and I had not studied a second of art. After the

graduation I had to do the obligatory military service. This meant that 2 years of studying was “wasted” and I had to work in one of the factories I mentioned earlier. In the spring of 1996 I had my first opportunity to what I really wanted and I applied to Västra Nylands Folkhögskola in Karis where my friends had studied art. My grandfather, probably my best friend in life, did not see things the way I saw them. For him as a worker in an ax factory making “real” things was the only right thing to do so he was a bit disappointed. I will come back to my grandfather in a while...

I really liked the studies as I for the first time could really do the things my heart was craving for! I used all my time at school painting and crafting. During this time I had my first real



solo exhibition. The studies lasted for one year and at the end it was time to apply to a higher level. The only problem was that my creative drive was on overdrive. This led to the fact that I created lots of art but had a hard time focusing on the future. My application to a school that only accepted 12 students each year out of over 300 applicants failed by 1 point, I was number 13. This was a real wake up call for me and I applied for a second year at VNF. That year I was really focused and my art got even better. The next year I applied for the higher level studies I was accepted easily and my real studies had begun!

At this point I found a new love in Design and started seeing the world from a new perspective. The studies lasted for four years and at the end of my first I had to find a place for my obligatory work training. I remembered that the factory I had been working at had a Design department and called the head of design, Mr. Olavi Lindén. He asked me to visit the factory and have a chat. Some days later I arrived at the factory and met with Olavi. We talked about mopeds, wood crafting, fishing... You name it. I was wondering when my job application interview was going to start. After an hour of talking he asked me if I could start on Monday. I was over the moon, but remembered that I had one month left of that term. But after that I worked at Fiskars Design Department every free second I got from school.

Back to my grandfather. He had retired from the Fiskars ax factory where he spent most of his working years. Now he got a real (positive) shock when his grandson was designing the tools he had been producing. This was the first time he realized where my studies were heading though I had tried to explain to him many times. Only one year after this he passed away from cancer and I was broken. My best friend



was gone but I was happy that he got to see where my life was heading.

I graduated in 2003 and had to apply for work. At that point the “dot-com bubble” had bursted and there was really no work to find. Not even the design department where I had shown my

USING CONTEMPORARY ARTS

The meaning of contemporary art is wide. At individual level understanding develops and new insights arise. Contemporary art opens up different ways for expressing emotions and for communicating. By interpreting messages of contemporary art people get more knowledge of how to express themselves.

claws in designing the weed puller (still in production) could hire me. I ended up working at a large department store selling mobile phones and again I got a new view of the planet I live on. I was going to use this knowledge later on in my recycle design... In the year of 2004 I got my first job in Design and started to make real money. I bought a car and started to look for a house to buy. I had more than I could spend, but still I was not feeling happy.

Then in 2007 my life changed. As a child I had an inflammation in my spine and the doctors told my parents that I probably could not run and climb as the rest of the kids. Luckily they did not tell me and I ended up running, skateboarding, playing football and even handball at first division level... Well, anyway, in the year of 2007 after some three years of design work by computers my back collapsed and my working career ended, at least for a while. I had to rehabilitate for three long, hard years. Lots of hard work, sweat and tears were included in this part of my life. The good thing was that I finally had time to paint again.

One morning in 2010 I got a phone call from the principal at VNF (Västra Nylands Folkhög-

skola) where I studied earlier. They were starting a new program in design and needed a teacher. As my back was getting better I gave it a thought for about three minutes and took the job. This was an enormous task as I was not a teacher and now I was going to give these young, burning souls the same I got some years earlier! Looking back it went pretty well... The second year as a teacher was much easier and gave me time to work on my own projects. I had time to look back at everything I had done, I started to look at the planet's future.

As an artist you tend to collect stuff that others see as garbage. I had "tons" of that stuff lying everywhere. I also saw cans, jars, pallets and lots of other stuff being wasted. I saw electronics being used for a year and then dumped for the next version. From all this madness I got a kick start to protest in my own way. I started making products out of trash and spread the knowledge on internet. At this point I also realized that money was only making me sad so I decided that all my designs was going to be free for all to use. Looking back at my life so far I think that even the sad and rough moments had a meaning and living like this makes me happy.

