

Bus Riders – visit to SPP

For Bus Riders’ third get-together of the year, we visited SPP and were guided through their corporate art collection by CEO and fellow Bus Rider member **Sarah McPhee**. Through the merger with Storebrand in 2007, SPP received access to 250 years of art collecting. In connection to SPP’s move into new offices in 2012, the company also began to collect art on a small scale with focus on modern contemporary Scandinavian art. SPP has a dedicated curator who chooses the art to ensure that there is a red-line in the collection that can stand the test of time for another 250 years. SPP has over the past year educated six employees with a passion for art in more detail about the collection to serve as internal ambassadors for the art. Anders Johansson, a staff member at the Stockholm office,



took us on a guided tour focusing on his and Sarah’s personal favorites which commenced with **Maria Friberg’s** piece *Still lives #3* on display in the reception area of SPP. Maria Friberg had kindly offered to join us for the



evening and explained in her own words her work to Bus Riders’ members. Maria explained that the piece which showed a man in a light suit lying down barefoot on a pile of books revolves around themes of power, masculinity and man’s relationship to nature. Notions about identity, gender and social hierarchies are present in her art. The men in her images are signs for men, trying to find their place in times of turmoil.

One significant piece we focused on was two self-portraits by artist and photographer **Mette Trongvoll** taken with a few hours in between, in order to symbolize how human beings never are the same as we were an hour, a day or a year ago, how we always change and are affected by our environment. The pieces are hung right in the middle of the employees’ cafeteria which is in-line with how SPP works with their art collection; meant for everyone to enjoy not only clients.



SPP’s collection also includes several pieces by contemporary Swedish artist **Andreas Eriksson**, born in 1975. Andreas resides in Kinnekulle in Västergötland after a hectic period in Berlin during which he contracted electrical hypersensitivity. Andreas wishes to

explore and describe the Swedish seasons and darkness and often works with nature as a source of inspiration.



His piece *First Drop* welcomes visitors as they enter SPP's offices. Anders explained that the work has resulted in a wide range of feelings from SPP's employees, from those who felt moved by the work's majestic composition to others who felt that their children could master the same work. Sarah explained that as CEO of SPP, these reactions fuel her passion for the company's commitment to art and its ability to spark emotions and dialogues among people.

On the fifth floor, outside a couple of conference rooms, is a sculpture by Andreas placed, "*the sork pile*" where Andreas again caught inspiration in nature, after having found several sork piles in his garden. They represent a world beneath the surface, a world we can't see nor hear; a symbol of the subconscious. Sarah McPhee explained that on several occasions the piece has given her a reason to smile as external visitors often are so taken by the work that they afraid to meet it with the eye, in worry of that it might be an

error or a problem with the cleaning. She also mentioned that the piece itself has attracted employees as well as external guests to visit the 5th floor just to experience it.



Among the more significant artists represented at SPP is [Klara Kristalova](#). Klara was born in Czechoslovakia by artist parents and came to Sweden at age 1. The head is a central symbol in Klara's work, where thoughts are being thought, dreams are dreamed and secrets are preserved and protected. Klara often works in ceramics, and has a sculpture of a head at SPP.



Finally, in one of the board rooms hangs a daring piece by [Andres Serrano](#), a Christian, conceptual artist and photographer who



recently finished an exhibition at Fotografiska Museet in Stockholm. His piece at SPP is a photographed replica of the sculpture *Le Penseur* by [Auguste Rodin](#). Serrano is regarded as controversial and provocative, he uses body liquids in his art and leaves no one unmoved. The fact that SPP dares to break the mould of the otherwise very traditional financial industry and pick such a controversial piece of art to be on display in a board room perfectly sums up the element of surprise and passion that Bus Riders' members were able to experience during the visit.



The evening was concluded by interesting discussions regarding political expressions within art and the many interpretations of creativity.

