

# BrandBook*Feature*

## **Art***Experience*

### **Art creates space and debate**

What role does art play in the public debate? And how does art affect us? Experience textile artworks that contribute to the sustainability agenda.

*Sharing her insights with us is:*

**Nina K. Ekman**

Artist



# ArtExperience



**Nina K. Ekman**  
Artist

## ***Nina K. Ekman - background***

*Norwegian visual artist, lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark.*

*Although partly self-taught, Nina K. Ekman has studied art at Parsons School of Art and Design in Paris and product design at The Design Academy in the Netherlands. She also trained in copper etching and printing at Atelier Velasco & Meller in Paris. In addition to this, Nina has a master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Geneva, and is a certified MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) trainer from the University of Massachusetts.*

*Nina K. Ekman applies a variety of techniques including tufting, painting, collage, etching, sculpture and calligraphy. To find out more about her projects and to see selected works, visit her website ([ninakekman.com](http://ninakekman.com)).*

## Art creates space and debate

*“Art can and should add another dimension, touch us emotionally and give rise to reflection. That is when something starts to happen inside us. It can create space, openness, and dialogue. It can result in us remembering the experience for longer.”*

There is plenty of inspiration to be drawn from Nina Ekman's textile works. In the field of hotel furnishing and the guest experience, too.

Her works of art contribute as decorative elements and as voices in the debate about sustainability and the climate crisis. They shape a narrative about nature and about mankind's overconsumption of resources. Nina's aim is to provoke emotional imbalance and to stimulate a change in attitude and behaviour.

While Nina has not yet had the opportunity to create art as an element of the guest experience in hotels, she has a clear view of what art has the potential to mean in that context.

### Art as a part of the guest experience

Nina K. Ekman is convinced that art has the capacity to make hotels more personal and value-based. Hotels can quickly become too 'cookie cutter', as she puts it. In Nina's opinion, even the finest design hotels often lack personality:

*“It is not enough to hang a couple of decorative paintings on the wall. Art can and should add another dimension, touch us emotionally and give rise to reflection. That is when something starts to happen inside us. It can create space, openness, and dialogue. It can result in us remembering the experience for longer.”*

The aspect of creating a special experience for guests is something Nina hopes and expects to see to a greater extent in the wake of COVID-19 and the climate crisis.

In fact, the climate crisis and its consequences are a theme close to her heart, and she is passionate about stimulating debate through her art.

Nina has deep insight into people and the way we think and act. She is a qualified psychologist, so speaking to and moving people comes naturally to her.

### Art should affect us at an emotional level

Nina K. Ekman uses her art to stimulate and influence people emotionally. Her aim is to generate insight and a more investigative dimension that changes people's mindset:

*“Art can encourage us to think about our good and bad habits, make us take a step back and think about what we 'just do' without generally wondering why. Art can give us a nudge so that we don't take anything for granted.”*

Nature plays a major role in Nina's portfolio. As she herself explains, there are two levels she is looking to communicate: focus on sustainability, and a personal narrative about nature.

### Nature is a victim of “consumer joy”

Nina K. Ekman's work 'Palma' tells the story of just one of the victims of the unsustainable consumption of the finite resources available to us on Earth.

The rainforests are hard hit because palm trees and the indigenous fauna are being eradicated to make space to produce animal feed, palm oil, textiles, and the like.

*“Palma' is a reminder of the nature we are destroying in our hunt for the joy we think we achieve through increased consumption.”*

In this way, Nina hopes that her palm tree will give rise to thoughts and ideas about lifestyle and consumption.

Through her project 'Silva' – which means 'rain forest' – Nina is looking to accord plants the attention they deserve. Here, she portrays plants in the same way as other artists portray well-known faces and celebrities. In so doing, she puts plants in their rightful place in museums and galleries:

*“Without plants, we – as human beings – could not survive, so plants are receiving only a fraction of the attention they deserve.”*

'Forest Bathing' is the title of another project in which Nina puts nature front and centre. In this project, she uses birch trees as a symbol of the Danish woodland and an expression of a desire to re-establish what has been felled. Nina believes that there is far too little woodland in relation to arable land, industrial facilities, towns, and cities.

Moreover, the forests of the world are vulnerable and exposed as a result of climate change.

### A wake-up call

The sustainable agenda is highly significant to Nina K. Ekman, both in her art and in her everyday life:

*“It has always meant a lot to me. Life is short; I have two children and I can see that we are moving in completely the wrong direction. Even though we are moving in the right direction in some areas, we are not doing enough, quickly enough.”*

As Nina's husband is director at 'Green Transition Denmark', her daily life is packed with facts and figures about carbon dioxide, forests being felled and how badly resources are being wasted pretty much everywhere.

The forest fires in Sweden in 2018 gave extra impetus to Nina's art, powering an increased emphasis on re-establishing nature:

*“Even though we are aware that forest fires often affect the Amazon and other places around the world, the problem was suddenly right here on our doorstep and that served as a kind of wake-up call for me.”*





PHOTOS: Nina K. Ekman



Even if Nina's art tackles tough and gloomy topics, the works themselves are full of life, playfulness, and bright colours. Her art is inspiring in and of itself, and the materials and techniques she uses are likewise a source of joy.

#### **Left-over materials – a world of opportunities**

Nina K. Ekman previously worked primarily with painting, but her desire to use recycled materials and left-overs led her to experiment with textiles and the art of tufting:

*"'Palma' is made of left-over materials that would otherwise have been discarded as a by-product of our rampant consumerism," explains Nina.*

At the same time, the tufting technique opens the opportunity to create three-dimensional works – such as 'Palma' and 'Forest Bathing'.

Working with left-over materials frequently means encountering limitations because only certain amounts of specific qualities and colours are available. That being the case, Nina views the limitations as a driving force for creativity:

*"Limitations are a good way to explore new possibilities."*

This is a highly relevant point and great motivation in the context of working with sustainability and recycling.



Tufting is a type of textile weaving in which a thread is inserted into a primary base.

The technique Nina K. Ekman uses is known as "Hand Tuft".

The tufting technique is also used in carpet production, which involves tufting on machines 4–5 metres wide.

Our Colortec carpets are based on tufting technology.





# More*Inspiration*

**We welcome you inside our exciting world of carpet creation!**

In our brand book you will find information about and inspiration for carpets for the hospitality industry.

Moreover, you can read about interior design in the context of the megatrend sustainability and how this can be linked to creating a great guest experience.

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