

## Art East: 'Voices' speaking in Olde Towne Slidell

Published: Saturday, December 04, 2010, 9:00 AM  
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From the country of gently rolling lowlands with mountains in the west, an exhibition of beautiful contemporary ceramics found its way to a last stop in Slidell. The Swedish artists who present works in various expressions of their artistic language have displayed their art in an international exhibit called "Voices."



Photo by Kathleen DesHotel. 'Loop 1054' by Swedish artist Eva Hild is a hand-built stoneware painted with silica color.

he discussed his own art, some of which symbolized toxic waste, disease and fungi. He also spoke of being a volunteer firefighter in Stockholm and showed three pieces brushed to appear charred that cover the psychological and social support that the ordinarily macho firefighters do not express. Medbo's works are as varied as his ideas and areas of concern.

He also presented examples of the products of Sweden's practice of putting one percent of the cost of any public building into art. This practice opens opportunities and puts the artist in a professional role in public art. The Swedish Statenskonstråd (National Public Art Council) was set up in 1937 with the objective of giving contemporary art a visible place in society by providing state buildings with art. In 1997, the scope of the organization broadened to include public space in general.

Sundberg offered a journey through his focus within art beginning in 1983 studying watercolor and sculpture with an educational plan to include ceramics. He began by creating applied design to wash bases and bath tubs. He also created glassworks in the traditional, classical style. His interest in kiln melted glass led him to make lamps combined with metal parts. Many of his lamp creations began with trips to flea markets to find broken or discarded lamps for inclusion and sometimes as a source of inspiration in each new work of art. He, too, has been included as an artist who created large and

The 10 artists were selected by Inger Molin, owner of [Galleri Molin in Stockholm](#) and an important figure in Swedish ceramics. Beginning with a debut in the Swedish Embassy in Washington, D.C, the exhibit has traveled throughout Europe and across North America. Frida Fjellman, Renata Francescon, Eva Hild, Pontus Lindvall, Mårten Medbo, AnnaSofia Mååg, Gustaf Nordenskiöld, Kjell Rylander, Per B Sundberg and Kennet Williamsson are representative of dynamism and individuality in contemporary ceramic art. Pieces are articulated with humor and abstraction in sculptural and conceptual expressions of existentialism.

Slidell patrons were lucky enough to meet two of the artists, Mårten Medbo and Per Sundberg, who shared stories of their own journeys through art as well as philosophical insights.

Medbo explained that for him the three major elements of art are curiosity, doing it for the fun or it, and creativity. "Everything does not go as you want it to, so you continue on using the three motivational elements," he explained. In a Power Point presentation

amazing artworks for public art projects. Among those are fiberoptic installations in a hospital and a huge pipe tree in another public area.

The works in the exhibit range from colorful lights hanging from above by Lindvall to a collection of five perfectly matched stoneware, hand-thrown dishes by Williamson. In between are gigantic sculptures such as „Loop“ by Hild in which size and refinement of smooth edges is amazing and Fjellman’s triptych titled “Trip Tych 2006” that includes low burned stoneware that was glazed and built with artistic inspiration and includes a volcano, sleeping rabbit, and owl under a cloud. The epitome of velvety smooth porcelain and stoneware creations are by Mååg, with “Hole” and “Form II” being the most beautiful constructions. “Hole” has a less-than-two-inch hole that gives the illusion of being deep because of the manner and colors used in glazing inside the hole. “Form II” is a celebration of perfect balance and symmetry.

It is impossible to pigeonhole this art as having specific characteristics. Each piece is a production of the mind, experience and concern of the individual vision. The works span from bowls to plates and wall hooks to lamps from easily understood sculptures like “Rosarium” to those subject to interpretation as with “Lost.” Regardless of the differences, each has a poetic interpretation characterized by simplicity and sensitivity to form and existence.

“Voices: Contemporary Ceramic Art from Sweden” will have 19 pieces on display through Dec. 17 at the [Slidell City Hall Gallery](#) at 2055 Second St. in Olde Towne. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday, from noon to 4 p.m., and on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. Admission is free to the public and totally worth the time to browse and enjoy the work and culture expressed by artists from another part of the world.

For information about this or future events, call the Slidell Department of Cultural and Public Affairs at 985.646.4375.

News about arts activities in east St. Tammany may be sent to Kathleen DesHotel, 1120 Pennsylvania Ave., Slidell, LA 70458-2008; or by e-mail to [kathleenfocused@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenfocused@gmail.com). All submissions become the property of The Times-Picayune and will not be returned; submissions may be edited and published or otherwise reused in any medium.