



Camilla Nørgård

The Museum Fascine Machine
The story of a Pile and it's range
—To be continued—



March 2019

It started with an invitation in 2019 to participate in the exhibition *Byens egne veje (The Village's Own Roads)*, in Skærbæk, a small town in the region of Southern Jutland (Sønderjylland). I went to Skærbæk several times and walked and drove by car or bike around in the area. In Skærbæk sweeping machines and lawn movers are used a lot, so it seemed as if there were no bits and pieces left over from former or future projects.

Skærbæk Local Museum

I was introduced to the history and house of Skærbæk Museum. A former grocery, it had since 1985 been an active local museum and local archive, run by volunteers, collecting and making exhibitions. It was the place to which people donated things from around the area. In 2016 the economy was no longer sustainable, and the Skærbæk Museum was taken over by the official museum of the region, Museum Sønderjylland. In 2017 the museum in Skærbæk closed and all the items were either driven to Tønder and placed in the storerooms of Museum Sønderjylland, or returned if it was possible to find the donator – or otherwise destroyed.

The Pile

Together with some colleagues I went to visit Museum Sønderjylland in Tønder, to see their collection and to see if there was anything left from Skærbæk Museum. Here I saw the Pile for the first time. We had been walking around inside the Museum – lots of interesting stuff – then my colleagues had to pick up some paintings they had borrowed, and in the meantime I walked around behind the museum.

There it was – the Pile – almost shining. As a concentration of everything you need. Everything that had been and were to come. New bricks, old bricks, some handmade, some industrial, concrete tiles, homemade concrete casting, a burned root of a big tree. Branches. Ants. Iron rods, leftovers from a bench – and lots of other stuff. Partly overgrown by a bush, marked by lichen or paint or whatever. Clearly not in order, but not in totally disorder either. Actually not really a pile, but something between pile, stack and heap. It was a place to put stuff, but also a place from where to take stuff back when needed. It was part of the museum – and at the same time it wasn't.

Land reclamation (landvinding)

As Skærbæk and Tønder are both situated by the Waden Sea (Vadehavet) and influenced by traditions from Vadehavet, the sea also sweeps into this story. Reminiscences of fascines are visible many places by the seaside: two rows of posts with small branches linking them together. This construction holds on to the organic material that sweeps over with the tide, and by and by new land is reclaimed. The locals has a concept for this proces - *slikgårde* - literally silt-farm. With this in mind, I went by car to take as much as possible from the pile behind Museum Sønderjylland in Tønder. I wanted to bring something back from Museum Sønderjylland to Skærbæk, and I wanted to make it difficult for tide and times and circumstances to sweep it away again. I wanted to make a *Museum Fascine*.

June 2019, Skærbæk Museum Garden

At the location of the former museum in Skærbæk there is a garden. Hedges all around a grass lane and (at that time) with a nice birch tree. Somehow, maybe just as leftovers, there are seven “cultural heritage” items left in the garden: A plow, an anchor, a stone with wholes from Bronze Age, a milestone, a woman torso by artist Svend Wiig Hansen, a fire hydrant and two stone reliefs from a house. One item per society field you could say. None of the things in especially good shape, but the lawn and the hedge around them carefully cut. Here I wanted to place my *Museums Fascine*.

The Museum Fascine

The Pile from Tønder was flattened into two long parallel rows in the middle of the garden, between the seven items, and stretching all the way from one hedge to the other, so visitors would have to jump over it to pass. The stones and other things were placed side by side in pairs – either by contrast or resemblance. Somehow the reclaiming of culture quickly came to work, because the Fascine demanded more items, and as I began looking, I found some exciting stones behind a hedge in the museum garden. The next day unfortunately the nice birch was cut down. Nobody knows why. Maybe because there was going to be an exhibition?

Autumn 2019

Four months later, on the occasion of the 100th year for Sønderjylland's return to Denmark (having been German since 1864), I was invited to the exhibition *Always together – mostly happy*. I immediately thought that Skærbæk and the *Museum Fascine* should be part of this. In 1920 Skærbæk was one of the towns to vote for a return to Denmark with big majority, and many people in Skærbæk still have strong feelings about this. Apparently some people even advocate that the peaceful minority model for the Denmark-Germany-border-country ought to have status as immaterial UNESCO heritage, seeing differences and strengths as advantages instead of problems. This positive approach has for sure not always been the way to look at it, but it is part of the official policy now. This exhibition is part of it as well, I suppose.

January 2020

We, the Danish participants, went down to Hamburg to meet the other contributors and see the venues of the planned exhibition in Gängeviertel. Gängeviertel is a part of Hamburg, where you can still experience the old town labyrinth of a working class area. It was occupied by squatters a couple of years ago and has now been taken over by the occupants, with a renting contract and deal with the city Council, that they renovate the area bit by bit. It is almost like a minority island in Hamburg, where each side have recognized the other parts strength. There is graffiti all over, trash and marks of past and futures. I went for a walk in the neighborhood and to the Museum of Ethnology Hamburg. It has a very big and fine collection, with a great collection of for instance old Norwegian, Swedish and Sami household items. The current exhibition reflected actively on the museum's history, their collection and the power relationship. What to collect and keep, how did it come into the custody of the museum – should it be given back to where it came from?

May 2020

I went to Skærbæk to take the *Museum Fascine* apart. I wanted to take it on a tour, adding mobility, folding it out and develop it into a *Museum Fascine Machine*. First to Aarhus, where it will collect and add material and immaterial value. Then the *Museum Fascine Machine* will go to Hamburg to gain even more – and then back again to Skærbæk Museum Garden – now with a higher cultural value. The caretakers hadn't been able to cut the grass close to the fascine's items. Somehow grass was the only thing the fascine had managed to hold on to. The stones had sunken down into the ground – I think, if it had been there one more year it would have disappeared into the ground. When I removed the stones there was no grass beneath them, but lots of ants. Already the next day the contours of the bare imprints were more blurred. Once again, I loaded as much as I could of the *Museum Fascine* into the car. There was no room for it all, so some items were left in the garden in Skærbæk, to keep the place until the *Museum Fascine Machine* will return.

Museum Fascine Machine ingredients

- 1 concrete tile, grey 30×30×5 cm. Used for pavements.
- 1 broken concrete tile.
- 10 small handmade bricks, purple, black, red, brown blurred (15×8×5 cm). Maybe from inside an oven?
- 3,5 hard burned outdoor tiles (3 brown and 0,5 yellow), from Hasle, Bornholm.
- 1,5 red roof tiles (new), Danish standard industrial element.
- 4 Danish standard industrial made bricks, 3 red, 1 yellow.
- 1 cast iron cylinder for outdoor lamp pole, 19th century style.
- 2 light grey concrete cubes, industrial standard.
- 2 concrete shells, cast in situ for a roof.
- 2 black indoor tiles, 20×13, never used.
- 6 fragments of red bricks.
- 2 ends of a bench (cast iron), 19th century style.
- 3 narrow Höganäs tiles with yellow glaze.
- 1 homemade cast concrete tile.
- 1 piece of a cast concrete drainpipe.
- 2 Hasle tiles.

- 7 square indoor tiles 10×10 cm.
- 1 concrete tile with deposition.
- 1 brick, very flat – but still not a tile.
- 1 chaussé stone.
- 1 big burned tree root, and 2 lesser pieces.

Added in Skærbæk:

- 1 very round stone circa 15×15 cm.
- 5 iron rods, 50 cm.
- 3 chunks of asphalt.
- 1 branch caught in the *Museum Faskine*.
- 2 screws.
- 2 sticks.
- 7 small nature stones found in the hedge.
- 12,5 old bricks (Middle Ages, monk's stone).
- 1 piece of granite, chipped, with holes, maybe for door handles?
- 1 granite stone, chipped, with 3 holes.
- 4 pieces of aerated concrete (two of the pieces were one in the beginning of this process).
- 2 big granite stones, not chipped.
- 2 smaller granite stones, not chipped.

Museum Fascine Machine

We drove to Aarhus, the Pile and I. The Pile was left in a friend's house, in a room nicknamed the Atomic basement. In the room there was also a pram, a freezer and some mattresses. In august I will come back to the Atomic basement, get the Pile out and install the *Museum Fascine Machine* at Godsbanen in Aarhus. It will grow and gain value with stuff from the area around Godsbanen and perhaps from the Atomic basement. We will decide and exchange, the Pile and I. Then we will go to Gängevortel in Hamburg, and see what and how we can include, install and attract. After Gängevortel the Pile and I will go back to Skærbæk and reinstall the *Museum Fascine Machine*, extended version.





Published for the exhibition **Always together – mostly happy**, on the occasion of the 100th year of the reunion of Sønderjylland ¶¶ The exhibition is shown in Den Rå hal at Godsbanen, Aarhus and in Gängeviertel, Hamburg August / September 2020 ¶¶ Thank you to Gunvor and Claus in Åbyhøj, Cai Ulrich von Platen and Åse Eg Jørgensen ¶¶ Photos by Camilla Nørgård ¶¶ Printet in 100 copies by Laserprint