





## **Nils E. Martin**

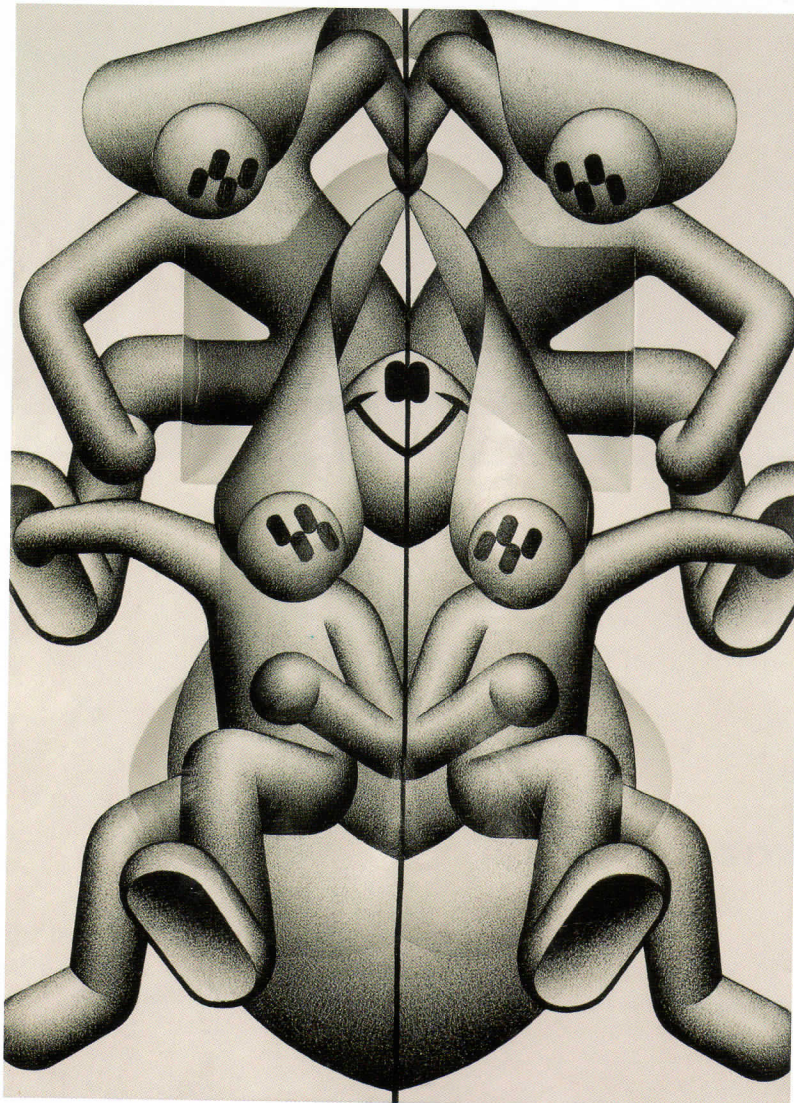
Norway

LOT 14

### ***Boy Pranks V # 3***

signed, titled, dated '00 and numbered  $\frac{3}{5}$   
on the reverse; series of 5  
stoneware, porcelain coating, white paint and  
black oxide pencil  
59.5 by 43 by 8 cm.  
 $23\frac{3}{8}$  by  $16\frac{7}{8}$  by  $3\frac{1}{8}$  in.

**\$1200-1800**



LOT 14

## Nils E. Martin

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"For Nils Martin (b. 1969), combining color with drawing seems an unnatural feat. Thus he has chosen instead to concentrate on his main interest: using gray scale values to render a three-dimensional form. An oxide pen is his most important tool in achieving an effect that resembles dry point even though the ground is porcelain and not paper.

Drawing and painting on porcelain have long traditions. However, Nils Martin is ambivalent about many of the historical examples seen in museum collections where a conflict often arises between the object's form and drawing style, between motif and function. The challenge lies in getting these elements to reflect and play against each other in a more conscious manner, by mastering the relationship between a drawing style that alludes to volume and the three-dimensional form it is drawn on. Even while studying at the National College of Art and Design, Oslo where he received his Master's Degree in 1993, Nils was concerned with this problem. The solution he found at that time is one to which he has remained loyal. By eliminating a number of disturbing problems such as the depiction of space in which the figures are drawn, color and function, and by introducing new elements such as partial forms and surfaces, he found an approach that he could develop in his work.

Perhaps *Boy Pranks* maybe interpreted as a self-ironic jab by Nils at the vocabulary of forms and motifs he has cultivated for so long. At the same time, this series is anything but private. We are presented with a visual game that we all can play. Figure is concealed in figure, form concealed in form, and we are invited to join in the fun of looking." (Excerpts from the *Norwegian Contemporary Ceramics* exhibition catalogue, Amsterdam 1999, by Jorumm Veiteberg)

The sequence *Boy Pranks* is made up of three basic shapes that occur in several guises but are nevertheless recognizable in the drawings. The torso is the basic and central shape of each drawing, and being three-dimensional it also constitutes a physical part of the drawing surface. The tubular shape is a rudimentary human shape where the hollow under

the feet indicates that it is constructed of hollow tubes. The balloon shape is reminiscent of a snowman, consisting of three scoops and with a characteristic smile on his face.

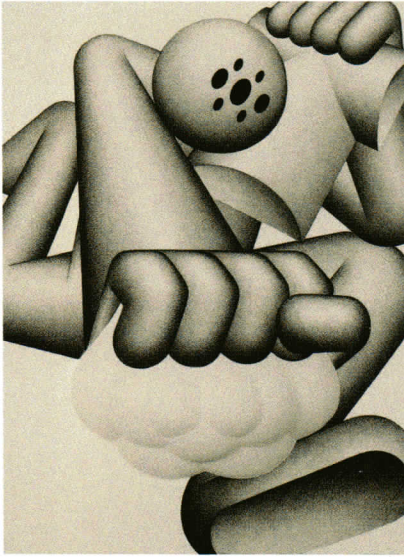
The torso represents an idea that is central to Nils Martin's work: In *Boy Pranks* this shape alludes strongly to sex and fertility, a classical theme which here forms a backdrop to a pronounced criticism of both his own and other artists' proneness to self-importance and pretentious debate of "weighty" subjects.

The other two basic shapes, the aggressive, provocative tubular shape and the benignly observing balloon shape, corroborates this symbolism. They are merely playing pieces of negligible intrinsic value - the hollow tubular shape and the balloon shape, in a singular instance, a broken empty shell. The familiar smiling face is frequently displayed in *Boy Pranks*, and acts as one of the more farcical and flippant elements, they counterbalance the rest of the project that is molded into the classical artistic and academic form. On the one hand, *Boy Pranks* both accomplished and complex is fused on the other hand, with the relentlessly banal, and can be construed as a far-reaching criticism of the level of pretension in today's art. On the other hand, the work can be perceived as little more than action packed frolics.

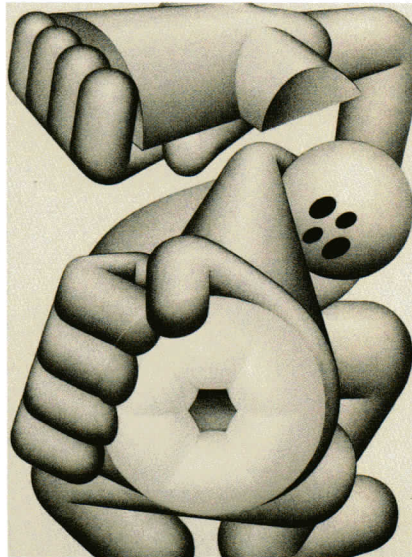
*Boy Pranks* has a deliberately playful attitude, which is depicted by its' richness in detail. An attempt is made to join object and drawing through an overall "industrial" expression, but visually the elements seem unrelated because of the plastic quality of the drawing. The visual experience changes in relation to the object depending on where one stands. From the front, the form and drawing seem quite flat, while from the sides other forms and new drawings appear. The object itself builds on a form that Nils has worked with before. The torso-like main shape is also equipped with several bulging forms. It is tempting to interpret these as a reference to more feminine physical attributes, the only female element in this world of *Boy Pranks*. The motif is otherwise inspired by kick-boxing, round cartoon figures.

by Nils E. Martin





LOT 91



LOT 92



LOT 93

LOT 91

**Boy Pranks II # 1**

signed, dated '99  
and numbered 1/3 on the reverse  
stoneware, porcelain coating,  
black oxide pencil and black crayon  
59 by 43.5 by 8 cm.  
23 1/4 by 17 1/8 by 3 1/8 in.

**\$1200-1800**

LOT 92

**Boy Pranks II # 2**

signed, titled, dated '99  
and numbered 2/3 on the reverse  
stoneware, porcelain coating and  
black oxide pencil  
59 by 43 by 8 cm.  
23 1/4 by 16 7/8 by 3 1/8 in.

**\$1200-1800**

LOT 93

**Boy Pranks II # 3**

signed, titled, dated '99  
and numbered 3/3 on the reverse  
stoneware, porcelain coating  
and black oxide pencil  
58.5 by 43 by 12 cm.  
23 by 16 7/8 by 4 3/4 in.

**\$1200-1800**