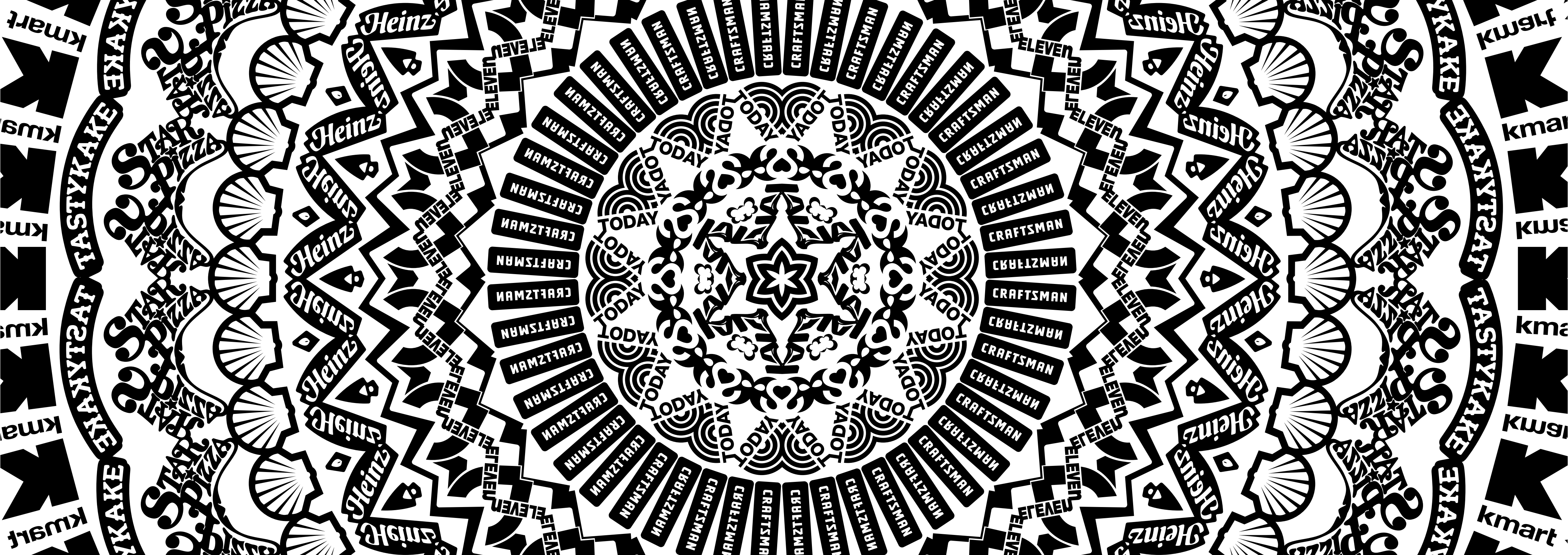


Gunilla Klingberg



31 January - 17 March 2013

WHEEL OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Gunilla Klingberg

Rice Gallery





Foreword

Gunilla Klingberg was the first of our commissioned artists to focus on the floor. While it can escape notice, the expanse of gray limestone at the entrance to Sewall Hall that serves as the floor of two rooms, the gallery and the foyer, is actually one space. By addressing the entire floor for her installation, *Wheel of Everyday Life*, Gunilla revealed the nature of this space in a dramatic way and conveyed the uncanny impression of having discovered a new and unexpected territory. Gunilla also intended for her installation to open up mental space. As a longtime student of yoga and world religions, she based the installation's form on that of a mandala, a circular cosmological diagram used since ancient times as a tool for mediation. She reshaped familiar corporate logos into ornamental elements and combined them in ever-widening concentric circles. Following these circles in the manner of walking a labyrinth, one could feel delight in discovering the logos and at the same time a vague sense of loss, realizing how deeply advertising has entered into our lives, homes, and minds. *Wheel of Everyday Life* prompted questions about the relationship of spirituality and consumerism. "For me," Gunilla noted, "the intention is that one would start to think, 'Has consumerism maybe replaced something in my private life? Or am I searching for some deeper meaning and would I find it here?'"

Wheel of Everyday Life was the setting for an exciting variety of programming, from Hatha Yoga and Tibetan Meditation, to the noontime talks in our Professors' Perspectives series, and RG Reverb, selections of electronic music performed by students of The Shepherd School. We thank all who participated in and supported these activities including Alejandro Chaoul, Beckham Dossett, Aynne Kokas, Jeffrey Kripal, and Rice's Humanities Research Center. Thanks, too, to Juan Olivares and his

fellow student musicians Kenya Gillespie, Joshua Hahn, Charles Halka, Mark Hirsch, Daniel J. Knaggs, Annabella Leslie, Robert McClure, and Rice Electroacoustic Music Labs (REMLABs).

We were thrilled to launch RG CUBICLE, a new video space created from a repurposed gallery office. We will be eternally grateful to Jill Whitten and Rob Proctor who hosted the spectacular, height-of-summer benefit party RICE ICE BABY at their home. This single event raised the funds that made CUBICLE a reality. Thanks to Jill and Rob, the artists who so kindly donated works to the silent auction, to all who contributed, and to everyone who attended. Screened continuously for CUBICLE's inaugural program were Gunilla Klingberg's *Spar Loop*, 2000-02; Fraser Davidson's *Richard Feynman - Ode To A Flower*, 2012; Adam Ladd's *Fresh Impressions on Brandmarks (from my 5-year-old)*, 2012; and Frank and Caroline Mouris's *Frank Film*, 1973. Thanks to these artists and to Peter Lucas, Kelly Sears, and Chapman Welch for their expert advice regarding our many CUBICLE-related queries.

I especially thank Gunilla Klingberg for her brilliantly conceived and executed installation, for her generous interactions with students and staff, eloquent gallery talks, and the good humor that endeared her to us. Among her installation's surprises was a perceived sense of harmony commented on by many visitors. A fellow inhabitant of Sewall Hall asserted that *Wheel of Everyday Life* had the effect of, "making this academic building feel more hospitable and the people who inhabit it more connected." In *Wheel of Everyday Life*, Gunilla Klingberg created a rich experience for both body and soul.

Kimberly Davenport
Director





Rice Gallery, Branded

In a recent, widely covered study published in the journal *Psychology and Marketing*, nearly 93 percent of the preschool-aged children shown the golden arches logo correctly associated the logo with McDonald's restaurants. By the time we become adults, we can read a vast, often international, language of company logos as easily as we recognize the letters of the alphabet.

Swedish artist Gunilla Klingberg mines these logos to produce her art. But in Klingberg's hands, logos for everything from the *Today Show* to 7-Eleven to Shell Oil to Whataburger acquire a mystical significance. For her installation at Rice Gallery, *Wheel of Everyday Life*, Klingberg, a former graphic designer, took these icons of our daily lives and manipulated them into decorative concentric patterns — mandalas of a cosmos both commercial and mundane. Her temporary installation covered the floor of Rice Gallery and extended out into the lobby of Sewall Hall and up the building's windows.

At first, the installation appeared to be a highly decorative black design comprising patterned circles within circles. Slowly, visitors began to recognize the language of the logos. A circle of dots became the Texaco logo repeated over and over again. The stylized shell of another ring was more than just a shell; it was the symbol of the multinational giant Shell Oil, headquartered here in Houston. The same went for the bullseye brand representing Target. A gestural bit of line that looked like Arabic calligraphy turned out to be the Fiesta grocery store logo mirrored into itself. The 7-Eleven logo would be as easily identified in Japan or Klingberg's native Sweden as it is in the U.S. Texans, however, handily recognized the dynamic zig-zaging lines in Klingberg's piece as the W in "Whataburger."





These collections of logos may have spurred discussions of franchising and the loss of small business, of globalization and cultural homogenization. But Klingberg's installation did not rail against these ubiquitous icons; she accepted them as fact of daily life. In a recent interview for the online arts magazine *Glasstire*, she explained, "The logos, as well as the shops, are big chains that look more or less the same all over the world, and often even have the same owners everywhere. The logos link us all together. And they are a link between our public and private spheres, maybe even to the collective unconscious."

By translating all these colorful logos into black and linking them together into a large mandala-like pattern, Klingberg equalized and unified them. Viewers could contemplate the form or walk its concentric circles. It is strange to think of something as quotidian as product and company logos somehow transcending their origins of crass commerce. The imagery seemed ripe for satire, an indictment of the failings of our modern world. But Klingberg looked beyond this reading to find an oddly compelling interconnectedness.

Kelly Klaasmeyer

Kelly Klaasmeyer is a Houston-based arts writer.
This article first appeared in the Spring 2013 issue of *Rice Magazine*.



















About The Artist

Gunilla Klingberg was born in Stockholm, Sweden. She studied sculpture at Konstfack (University College of Arts, Crafts, and Design) and magazine and newspaper design at RMI-Berghs. She has exhibited actively since 1998. Solo exhibitions include those at Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin, Germany (2014); Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden (2014); Eastside Projects, Birmingham, England (2013); Arco, Madrid, Spain (2008); and an IASPIS solo project at the 10th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2007).

Klingberg's work has been included in group exhibitions at Dublin City Gallery, Ireland (2014); the Curitiba Biennial, Brazil (2013); Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, Bermeo, Spain (2012); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2011); Moore College of Art & Design, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2010); The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Norway (2009); and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center/MoMA, New York (2006).

Locations of large-scale, permanent public commissions in Europe include the Municipality of Kristianstad, Sweden (2014); the Municipality of Hamar, Norway (2014); Triangeln Railway Station, Malmö, Sweden (2010); and Nye Akershus Hospital, Oslo, Norway (2008).

The Swedish Visual Arts Fund awarded Klingberg Five-Year Working Grants in 2010 and 2005, and she was awarded International Artists' Studio Program, Stockholm (IASPIS) residencies in 2004 and 2001-02.

Gunilla Klingberg lives and works in Stockholm.



Credits

Gunilla Klingberg, *Wheel of Everyday Life*
Commission, Rice University Art Gallery
31 January - 17 March 2013

Rice University Art Gallery is located
in Sewall Hall on the campus of Rice
University, 6100 Main Street, Houston,
Texas 77005, and at ricegallery.org.

Rice University Art Gallery Patrons provide
major funding for exhibitions. Additional
support comes from Rice Gallery
Members; The Brown Foundation, Inc; the
Robert J. Card, M.D. and Karol Kreymer
Catalogue Endowment; and the Leslie and
Brad Bucher Artist Residency Endowment.
The Gallery receives partial operating
support from the City of Houston; KUHF-FM
and Saint Arnold Brewing Company
provide in-kind contributions.

Funding for travel and accommodations
was provided by IASPIS, the International
Artists' Studio Program, Stockholm.

Gunilla Klingberg thanks Peter Geschwind.

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Pages 13, 20-21, 26-27, 28-29

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ISBN: 1-932281-44-4