

Sara Björnsdóttir (1962) held an exhibition in Berlin at the end of November. There, she presented works characteristic of her diverse approach to art, photographs, video pieces, and a performance during the opening.

The theme was indicated in the title, *Intoxication* (Víma), and as she herself explains, she wanted to “honor red wine”:

“In addition to providing physical pleasure and a mischievous delight, it also has medicinal qualities, being considered very good for the heart and circulatory system, as well as having stimulating effects on digestion.”

Readers of the *Icelandic Medical Journal* could judge this claim on professional grounds.

It is clear, however, that Bacchus has long been a source of inspiration in art, and Sara follows in the footsteps of the many who have played with the analogy between the intoxication of alcohol and the intoxication of artistic creation. One could say that, just as drinking can loosen inhibitions, art has the power to open emotional gateways or guide viewers to previously unexplored perspectives.

At the same time, Sara works in the spirit of artists who have long observed ordinary things day by day. One can especially think of still-life painters of previous centuries, who handled the simplest objects so carefully that their works reveal far more than the subject alone might suggest.

Sara’s photographic work, *Intoxication* (2007), depicts glasses of red wine examined through a slide projector. Patterns emerge that simultaneously evoke the euphoria of indulgence and a subtle distortion of reality.

A similar duality appears in the video piece *Salem Lights*, also shown in the same exhibition. The video camera was focused on smoke from a burning cigarette, producing a beautiful visual effect built upon an object as inherently harmful as possible.

In both cases, she takes ordinary objects familiar to everyone and abstracts them, creating images that stand on their own. Red wine glasses and cigarettes are everyday sources of pleasure and social interaction for many, and these latest works also reference her earlier pieces, where she explores emotion and human relationships.

Markús Þór Andrússon, *Icelandic Medical Journal*, December 2007 (Artist of the Month)