

**Excerpt from catalog essay for *Decelerate*, a group exhibition at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005
– 06; By Elizabeth Dunbar, Curator, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri**

The importance of the home and the things that bring us together as family and friends also emerges in the work of Anne Lindberg, a sculptor and installation artist who shares Sheila Pepe's proclivity for repetition, handcraftsmanship, tactility, and seductively beautiful materials. Disciplined in their form and methods of construction, yet hedonistic in their beauty and amassing of materials, Lindberg's objects are quiet, poetic and visually-arresting – often eliciting visceral responses. Her primary subject for many years has been the body, which has expanded to inform and encompass a number of related topics, particularly nature and time. Recent works build on these ideas in a more abstract manner, using the body as a springboard for exploring the development of thought, communication, and social interaction – activities that are best forged, refined, and strengthened over the slow course of time.

A dramatic, massive accumulation of material characterizes Lindberg's works. Referencing language and dialogue, *democracy* (2005) is an ashen wooden harvest table upon which are piled hundreds of words that have been physically forged in black wire. Lindberg made the table using wood from a friend's floor (an important detail, given that the table signifies a site of fellowship among friends and loved ones) and the words are a nearly complete transcription of a commencement speech given by environmental writer Terry Tempest Williams, which bemoaned the increasing disappearance of thoughtful conversation in contemporary American life. The heap of words obliterates the content of William's message, a strategy Lindberg employs to reiterate how multiple off-the-cuff remarks and declaration – quickly formulated and untethered to reason and prudent deliberation – drown out the larger, more important discussion of issues at hand. Lindberg leaves us with pronounced and heavy silence. At the same time, she reveals that the words have private reverberations, that they are "maybe a subtle image of how I personally think so many things and never say them. ...It's about my own privacy and containment as well, my own silenced state." That constructing the table and fabricating the words took such a long time is not lost on the artist, who relishes such time for reflection and understanding.

Slowness, silence, reflection, and understanding are also critical components to Lindberg's *old brain* (2005), an astounding pile of sewing thread, 26 feet in length and weighing more than 650 pounds. Made of several hundred spools of thread, the work appears from afar to be a mound of some unidentified glittering, silvery substance. Only close-up do we realize that the structure – an interpretation of the ancient, innermost portion of the human brain – is composed of thousands upon thousands of individual thread, just as its biological referent is composed of thousands upon thousands of cells, neurological pathways, and cranial folds. The old brain, also known as the reptilian brain or brain stem, is responsible for primitive function, including reproduction, self-preservation, blood flow, breathing, sleeping, and contractions of muscle in response to external stimulation. It is the seat of all things cyclical and repetitive (sewing thread draws clear associations to the repetitive gestures of domestic crafts

and alludes to familial warmth, even if that was not the artist's express intent). For Lindberg, the old brain drives artistic practice, which, as its basic, is rhythmic, focused, and accumulative. And, in her opinion, this portion of the brain is too often underutilized or, at the very least, underappreciated, in today's fast-paced world. Saddened by what she sees as a loss of our instinctual understandings (which leads to poor communication and isolation), she pays homage to the brain in marvelous form, perhaps as a means of convincing us to slow down and trust it more.

Lindberg, like the majority of artists represented in *Decelerate*, subscribes to a working process that is characterized by a purposeful slowness and attention to details. Recalling Colby Caldwell's comments on process, Lindberg professes that slowness is "a working process, a way of understanding. The principle of accumulation or time with a material, action, or mark is what is important to me. I feel that it takes a lifetime to *really* understand something....It's the regular movement of my hand, seeing something over and over and over again, touching, seeing an image or form emerge out of amassing or building."

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