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| Politiken 28. februar 1931  **Et liv gennem to Tilværelser**  *– En Fortid som Mand og en Fremtid som Kvinde – Lili Elbe fortæller om Maleren Einar Wegner og sig selv*  Paa den Udstilling af kunstnerparret *Gerda* og *Einar Wegeners* Billeder, der er aabnet i Haslunds og Heymans Hus paa Østergade, hænger et Maleri, der bærer Titlen *Karneval*, og om hvilket Fru Wegener selv oplyser, at det, som saa mange andre af hendes Billeder, har *Lili* til Model.  Ved et Besøg i Gaar paa Udstillingen træffer vi Modellen Fru *Lili* selv, der ukendt gaar rundt mellem de besøgende, kun hilst med et venligt Smil og Nik af Kunstnerparrets Venner, der allerede har kendt hende saa længe, at de aldrig mere tænker over, hvem hun er eller rettere over hvem hun var.  *Einar Wegener maler aldrig mere.*  – Gerda Wegener har til flere Blade sagt, at Einar Wegener aldrig kommer til at male mere – vil De sige os Grunden? spørger vi Fru Lili.  – Ja, det vil jeg. Jeg er oven i Købet glad over, at De spørger mig, for jeg synes, at det er min Pligt over for hans kunstneriske Eftermæle at fortælle Sandheden.  – Hans Eftermæle? Einar Wegener er da ikke død?  – Nej, det er han ikke – men han eksisterer heller ikke mere, han har frivilligt udslettet sig selv for at give Plads for en anden, som han mente havde større Ret til at eksistere end ham selv, og denne anden – det er mig … Ja, jeg véd, at De og maaske mange med Dem vil have ondt ved at forstaa det, for mit Liv har formet sig ganske anderledes end andres, formet sig saaledes, at jeg i virkeligheden ikke lever et Liv, men har afsluttet en Tilværelse og nu er begyndt paa en hel anden Tilværelsesform. Men jeg skal forsøge paa at forklare Dem det.  *Den lille Dreng med Dukkevognen.*  Fru Lili læner sig tilbage i en dyb lænestol og sætter sine højhælede sko paa en Skammel. Der kommer et drømmende Udtryk i hendes store mørke Øjne, medens hun fortæller om det lille Barn, der fødtes ovre i Vejle og som af Præst og Jordemoder blev erklæret for en Dreng og indskrevet i Kirkebogen under Navnet Einar Wegener. Det var en meget køn lille Dreng, og da hans Moder holdt meget af at pynte ham, var der mange, som troede, at han var en lille Pige. Selv følte han sig som en Dreng, når han legede med sine brødre, men hans bedste Fornøjelse var at køre med Søsterens Dukkevogn, vel at mærke, naar ingen saa det, for han hadede at blive drillet. Under hans opvækst kunde det af og til strejfe hans Bevidsthed, at han ikke var helt som de andre, men i hans første Ungdom opslugtes alle hans Følelser af Begejstring for Oldtidens Kunst og Litteratur. Han vilde være Kunstner, og han tog til København og kom ind paa Akademiet. Her traf han den senere Gerda Wegener.  *Venskab og Samarbejde.*  – Einar og Gerda Wegener var ganske unge, da de giftede sig, fortæller Fru Lili videre, saa unge, at de maaske ikke rigtig vidste, hvad de gjorde. Men de har aldrig senere fortrudt det. Det Forhold, som alle andre ansaa for et Ægteskab, var bygget paa gensidig Forstaaelse, urokkeligt Venskab, inderlig Fortrolighed og Fællesfølelse i Arbejdet. Derfor har de aldrig svigtet hinanden og derfor vil de ogsaa i Fremtiden staa hinanden nær som to sande Veninder, der ønsker det bedste for hinanden og vil gøre alt for at hjælpe hinanden.  *Gennem Kunsten til Sandhedens Erkendelse.*  – Gerda Wegener brugte ofte Einar Wegener til Model, og det var gennem hendes opfattelse, gennem hendes Kunstnerinstinkt, der stedse stærkere betonede det kvindelige Element i hans Væsen, at han efterhaanden kom til den rette Erkendelsen af sit eget Selv … Nu kom der en Række Aar, der var saa fulde af Lidelser, at jeg helst ikke vil tænke paa dem. Eiar Wegner følte sig som et Menneske, der tvinges til at gaa rundt i en Dragt, som snærer ham, og hvori han føler sig latterlig. Til de moralske Lidelser kom ogsaa de fysiske, og forgæves søgte han Hjælp hos de franske Læger. Ingen vilde tro ham, de betragtede ham som hysterisk, og behandlede ham med Røntgenstraaler, der som de senere viste sig, skadede langt mere end det gavnede.  *Videnskabens store Mirakel.*  – Ved et Tilfælde, fortsatte Fru Lili, kom jeg saa, da jeg havde opgivet alt Haab om nogen Sinde at blive et normalt følende og tænkende Menneske, i Forbindelse med en fremragende tysk Videnskabsmand, den berømte Gynækolog, Prof. Kurt v. Warnekros, Lederen af *Staatliche Frauenklinik* i Dresden. Han undersøgte mig, og fastslog, at jeg ikke – saaledes som man havde villet gøre mig til, var en Mand, men i langt overvejende Grad var Kvinde … Resultatet blev, at jeg paa hans Opfodring tog til Dresden, hvor han paa en Klinik underkastede mig en Række store og alvorlige Operationer – de første af den Art, som han nogen sinde havde foretaget .. Det var maanedlange Lidelser, adskillige Gange var jeg Døden nær, men Videnskaben og min egentlige Natur sejrede. Det var Einar Wegener, som kom ind paa Kliniken, og det var den Dame, De nu taler med og som kalder sig Fru Lili Elbe, der kom ud derfra.  *Et lykkeligt Menneske.*  – Er De nu lykkelig? spørger vi.  – Ja, det er jeg … jeg er saa lykkelig, som man kan blive det, naar man udfries af Livsvilkaar, der har været en paatvunget, og føler sig helt i Overensstemmelse med sig selv … Det er netop det, jeg gerne vil have, at Offentligheden skal forstaa … Einar Wegener er ikke mere, og derfor kan han heller ikke male mere – det er ikke, fordi han har tvivlet om sin Kunst, at han hører op.  – Men kan *De* da ikke male?  – Det ved jeg ikke … jeg har endnu ikke forsøgt, og jeg føler ikke Trang til det …… Husk paa, for mig er Livet endnu saa nyt, jeg skal først føle mig tilrette i Tilværelsen … Og selv om jeg prøver paa at male, saa er hele min Indstilling, hele mit Livssyn, saa forskelligt, at det aldrig vil kunne blive en Fortsættelse af hans Arbejde, han var saa udpræget viril i hele sin malemaade … Nej, dette er og bliver Einar Wegeners *sidste* Udstilling …  – Tror De, at De helt vil kunne undvære Kunsten?  – Nej, men det er muligt, at jeg vil søge at faa min kunstneriske Trang udløst under helt andre Former … maaske gennem Musiken … hvad ved jeg … Livet forekommer mig endnu saa nyt, og foreløbig nyder jeg at kunne hengive mig til kvindelige Sysler … jeg elsker at sy og lave Lampeskærme … Ja, dem har jeg altså malet.  *En ny Identitet og et ugyldigt Ægteskab*.  – Er det alene for Udstillingens Skyld, at De er kommet hertil?  – Ja, denne Gang, svarer Fru Lili, men jeg har været her før … vi maatte jo til Danmark, for det første fordi jeg skulde skaffe mig en ny Identitet og for det andet, fordi Forholdet mellem Gerda og mig skulde ordnes, rent lovmæssigt. Jeg var forsynet med de nødvendige Erklæringer fra Prof. v. Warnekros, og takket være hans internationale videnskabelige Avtoritet og de danske Myndigheders Forstaaelse lykkedes det forholdsvis hurtigt at faa de juridiske Formaliteter i Orden. Mit Køn er blevet forandret i Kirkebogen, og jeg fik Navneforandring til det nye Navn, jeg ønskede at kalde mig.  – Fik De ogsaa Skilsmisse?  – Nej … Ægteskabet mellem *Einar* og *Gerda Wegener* blev ved Dom erklæret for ugyldigt – de er altsaa ikke skilt – de har aldrig været gift.  – Og hvad er nu Deres Fremtidsplaner?  – Foreløbig bliver jeg her, saa længe Udstillingen varer … I Begyndelsen af næste Maaned rejser Gerda Wegener til Marokko, hvor hun i længere Tid skal opholde sig for at gøre Studier i Anledning af nogle større Bestillinger … Nogen Tid efter tager jeg til Paris, hvor jeg har forskelligt at ordne, og derpaa besøger jeg hende sikkert i Marokko, hvor jeg heller aldrig har været og som det kunde more mig at se … Hvad jeg saa derefter vil gøre … ja, det vil Tiden vise … foreløbig er jeg glad ved endelig at faa Lov til at være den, jeg er, slutter Lili Elbe. – – –  Lili Elbe er under sit Ophold her i Byen blevet undersøgt af en række danske Læger, baade Gynækologer og andre og paa et af vore Instituter er der blevet taget en Række Blodprøver for at undersøge Blodets Hormon-Indhold. Rent videnskabeligt set er hendes Tilfælde saaledes af megen Interesse. Hendes usædvanlige Skæbne vil ogsaa menneskeligt set vække baade Interesse og Medfølelse, og man vil med Spænding imødese Lili Elbes videre Udvikling.  *Fru Loulou.*  Billedtekster:  “Karneval”, malet af Gerda Wegener.  Lili Elbe, fotograferet paa Frauenklinik i Dresden.  Prof. Kurt v. Warnekros, malet af Gerda Wegener. | Politiken 28 February 1931  **An Existence through two Lives**  *– A Past as a Man and a Future as a Woman – Lili Elbe Talks About the Painter Einar Wegener and Herself*  At the exhibition of the pictures by the artist couple *Gerda* and *Einar Wegener* that has opened in Haslund’s and Heyman’s house in Østergade is a painting carrying the tiltle *Canival* about which Mrs. Wegener herself states that it, as so many of her other pictures, has *Lili* as its model.  During a visit to the exhibition yesterday, we meet the model Mrs. *Lili* herself who walks around unknown among the visitors only greeted with a friendly smile and a nod by the artist couple’s friends who have already known her for so long that they no longer think about who she is or rather who she was.  *Einar Wegener Will Never Paint Again.*  *–* Gerda Wegener has said to several Magazines [or newspapers] that Einar Wegener will never paint again *–* will you tell us the reason? we ask Mrs. Lili.  *–* Yes, I will. I’m even glad that you ask me, because I think that it is my duty to his artistic legacy to tell the truth.  *–* His legacy? But Einar Wegener is not dead?  *–* No, he is not *–* but nor does he exist anymore, he has voluntarily obliterated himself to make room for someone else who he thought was more entitled to exist than he was, and this other person *–*  that is me … Yes, I know that you and perhaps many others will find it difficult to understand because my life has turned out quite differently from that of others, turned out in such a way that in reality I am not living a life, but have finished one existence and have now started on a quite different way of life. But I shall try to explain it to you.  *The Little Boy With the Doll’s Pram.*  Mrs. Lili leans back in a deep armchair and puts her high-heeled shoes on a footrest. A dreamy expression comes into her big dark eyes while she talks about the little child that was born in Vejle and that was declared to be a boy by the vicar and the midwife and entered into the parish register under the name Einar Wegener. It was a very pretty little boy and as his mother was very fond of dressing him up, there were many people who thought he was a little girl. He himself felt like a boy when he played with his brothers but his favourite amusement was to push his sister’s doll’s pram, that is, when no one saw, for he hated being teased. During his childhood, it could sometimes cross his mind that he was not quite like everyone else, but in his early youth all his feelings were absorbed by enthusiasm for the art and literature of antiquity. He wanted to be an artist and he went to Copenhagen and was admitted to the academy. Here he met Gerda who later became Gerda Wegener.  *Friendship and Cooperation.*  – Einar and Gerda Wegener were quite young when they got married, Mrs. Lili continues, so young that perhaps they did not really know what they were doing. But they have never regretted it. The relationship that everyone else regarded as a marriage was built on mutual understanding, unshakeable friendship, deep intimacy and comradeship in work. That is why they have never let each other down and why they also in the future will be close as true friends who wish each other the best and will do anything to help each other.  *Through Art to the Recognition of Truth.*  – Gerda Wegener often used Einar Wegener as her model and it was through her perception, her artistic instinct that stressed the female element of his nature more and more strongly, that he gradually came to the realisation of his own self … Now came a number of years that were so full of suffering that I prefer not to think of them. Einar Wegener felt like a person who is forced to walk around in clothes that are too tight and in which he feels ridiculous. In addition to the moral sufferings came the physical, and in vain he turned to the French doctors for help. No one would believe him, they regarded him as hysterical and treated him with X-rays that, as it turned out later, did far more harm than good.  *The Great Miracle of Science.*  – By accident, Mrs. Lili continued, when I had given up all hope of ever becoming a normally feeling and thinking person, I came in touch with a brilliant German scientist, the famous gynaecologist Prof. Kurt v. Warnekros, head of *Staatliche Frauenklinik* in Dresden. He examined me and determined that I was not – such as I had been regarded, a man, but predominantly a woman … The result was that I went to Dresden at his request where he subjected me to a number of major and serious operations – the first of this kind that he had ever performed .. It was month-long suffering, several times I was close to death, but science and my true nature won. It was Einar Wegener who was admitted to the clinic and it was the lady with whom you are speaking and who calls herself Mrs. Lilli Elbe who left.  *A Happy Person.*  – Are you happy now? we ask.  – Yes, I am … I am as happy as you can be when you are released from conditions of life that have been forced upon you and feel in complete accordance with yourself … That is exactly what I want the public to understand … Einar Wegener no longer exists and for that reason he can no longer paint – it is not because he is doubtful about his art, that he stops.  – But can’t *you* paint?  – I don’t know … I haven’t tried yet, and I don’t feel any urge to … Don’t forget, to me life is still so new, I have to adjust to existing … And even if I try to paint, my whole attitude, my whole view of life is so different that it can never be a continuation of his work, he was so distinctly virile in his whole manner of painting … No, this will remain Einar Wegener’s *last* exhibition …  – Do you think that you’ll be able to do without art altogether?  – No, but it’s possible that I’ll try to realise my artistic urge under completely different forms … perhaps through music … what do I know … Life still seems so new to me and so far I enjoy being able to dedicate myself to feminine pursuits … I love sewing and making lamp shades … Yes, those I have painted.  *A New Identity and an Invalid Marriage.*  – Is it only for the sake of the exhibition that you have come here?  – Yes, this time, Mrs. Lili answers, but I have been here before … we had to go to Denmark, first because I had to acquire a new identity and second because the relationship between Gerda and myself had to be legally settled. I had been provided with the necessary statements from Prof. v. Warnekros and thanks to his international scientific authority and the understanding of the Danish authorities, the legal formalities were settled relatively quickly. My sex has been changed in the parish register and my name was changed to the new name that I wished to call myself.  – Did you also obtain a divorce?  – No … The Marriage between *Einar* and *Gerda Wegener* was declared invalid by court order – so they are not divorced – they have never been married.  – And what are your plans for the future now?  – For the time being, I’ll stay here as long as the exhibition lasts … At the beginning of next month Gerda Wegener will travel to Morocco where she’ll stay for a longer period in connection with some major commissions … Some time after that, I’ll go to Paris where I have some things to attend to, and subsequently I’ll probably visit her in Morocco where I have never been myself and which it would amuse me to see … What I’ll do after that … well, time will tell … for now I’m glad to finally be allowed to be who I am, Lili Elbe finishes – – –  During her visit in this city, Lili Elbe has been examined by a number of Danish doctors, both gynaecologists and others, and at one of our institutes a number of blood samples have been taken to examine the hormone content. From a purely scientific point of view her case is thus of great interest. Her unusual fate will also arouse both interest and compassion from a human perspective, and Lili Elbe’s further development will be keenly awaited.  *Mrs. Loulou.*  Captions:  “Carnival”, painted by Gerda Wegener.  Lili Elbe, photographed at Frauenklinik in Dresden.  Prof. Kurt v. Warnekros, painted by Gerda Wegener. |

Translated by Marianne Ølholm

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