

Andréhn-Schiptjenko

STOCKHOLM PARIS



Lena Johansson

Born 1975 in Stockholm, Sweden

Lives and works in Lund, Sweden

Lena Johansson

Lena Johansson is widely recognised for her arresting oil paintings on panel, where motifs drawn from lifestyle media are reinterpreted through her broad, sensuous brushwork. These seductive surfaces engage in a dialogue with the commercial and fashion imagery that informs much of her oeuvre. For Johansson, fashion photography and advertising are not merely vehicles of persuasion, but essential cultural artifacts—reflections of collective dreams, desires and the enduring human pursuit of beauty, seduction and sensuality.

Her practice is rooted not only in the iconography of these worlds, but also in their material reality. Forsaking traditional canvas, Johansson works across both panel and the very garments that inhabit the realm she evokes—white T-shirts, denim, scarves.

In recent work, Johansson extends her inquiry into new territory, examining the criminal underworld's fascination with luxury brands as markers of status and power. Drawing from evidentiary photographs presented in court—images of confiscated waist bags, handbags and other accessories from the world's most coveted luxury houses—she translates these artifacts onto found materials. In doing so, she both complicates the glossy image projected by global luxury conglomerates and underscores the paradoxical allure of the very symbols she interrogates.

Lena Johansson (b. 1975) lives and works in Sweden. She has previously exhibited at institutions such as ARKEN Museum of Contemporary Art, Ishøj, Denmark; Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway; Moderna Museet, Malmö,

Sweden; Lunds Konsthall, Sweden; Värmlands museum, Karlstad, Sweden; Ystads Konstmuseum, Sweden.

Selected solo exhibitions

2025 *Life*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.

2021 *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.

2019 *Painting, Desire and Other Stories*, Joyce Gallery, Paris, France.

Selected group exhibitions

2024 *As Dreamers Do*, Bohusläns museum, Uddevalla, Sweden.

2022 *Women and Change*, ARKEN Museum for Moderne Kunst, Ishøj, Denmark.

2021 Galleri Arnstedt, Östra Karup, Sweden.

2020 Nordic Contemporary, Paris, France.

2019 *Slungad i Groddammen*, Galleri Ping Pong, Malmö, Sweden.

Mellan dig och mig, Ystad Konstmuseum, Ystad, Sweden.

Collections

Malmö Art Museum, Malmö, Sweden.

Nordic Contemporary Art Collection, Stockholm, Sweden.

Public Art Agency, Sweden.

LIFE

Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm,
Sweden, 2025

The visual world that Lena Johansson has built over the years can be likened to a chamber play. In her works, we often find ourselves intimately close to the characters, where gestures, expressions and the relationship between the people in the various works set the atmosphere. Her process has always been driven by intuition and what she calls a subconscious logic - just like in dreams or when she reads the tarot cards she often lays. For over twenty years, Johansson has been collecting lifestyle magazines, delving into them for images that awaken her desires and from these she then creates suites of new stories. There is never a clear narrative that Johansson wants to convey to the viewer, but they often reflect deeply personal experiences from her life.

Sincerity is one of the most important aspects for Johansson in the painterly process. By removing the image from its commercial context and bringing it together with her choices, brushstrokes and narratives, the image takes on a different form. In this process, she allows the motif to control

the degree of intensity and the layers added to the painting - a process she knows has reached its end point when she feels that her inner resonance matches that of the painting. For her, each painting is a unique state of mind and a place where the experiences and emotions she brings to the work are best articulated through the brush rather than through words.

For Lena Johansson, depicting what is considered attractive is also a kind of defiance. Growing up in the Swedish 1970s and 80s was characterised by practicality and functionality, and from this arose an attraction to the opposite - the beautiful, the glamorous, the desire-filled. Depicting these themes is a way for her to elevate them, but also a way to explore their visual language and codes, the identities we construct and their ambivalence. The young woman, whose face is partially hidden behind a veil or mask, is a recurring motif in her work. Johansson is interested in the shield against the world that beauty can also constitute, especially in relation to women. Often portrayed as an object, she is just as much a conscious actor through the choices and the carefully composed surface she chooses to present herself with. The women Johansson portrays can thus be seen as directors in a play they themselves choose to control.



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Life*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2025



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Life*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2025



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Life*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2025

DREAMLAND WELCOMES YOU

Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm,
Sweden, 2021

Lena Johansson has been widely acclaimed for her small, intense oil paintings with motifs derived from lifestyle media. These images represent something deeply human to her; our need for beauty, seduction and sexuality. Through these images - charged with dreams and desire - Lena Johansson examines the inherent possibilities of painting's different expressions, emotional states and references through varied approaches.

The desire as a driving force can take violent forms and in Johansson's latest work, another motif has been added: preliminary investigation photos from crime scenes. These images expose people's dreams from a much darker perspective. Building one's identity and gaining respect through designer clothes and luxury consumption can be such a strong driving force that one is even prepared to die for it. The symbolic value of the brands one associates with, especially for young people, weighs heavily and to strengthen this context, Lena Johansson has in some paintings worked directly on fabrics with counterfeit logos from well-known brands.



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2021



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2021



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2021



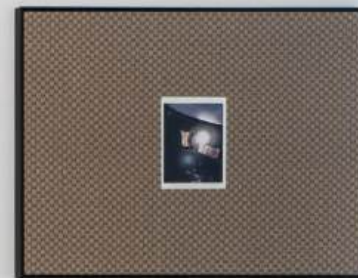
Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2021



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2021



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2021

PAINTING, DESIRE AND OTHER STORIES

Joyce Gallery, Paris, France, 2019

I am really interested in fashion photography and commercial imagery. My opinion is that they are deeply essential, they talk to our dreams and our desires, and they really know how to catch our deepest longings. I think these images are deeply human and speak to our need for beauty, seduction, sexuality, flirtation—all that belongs to us. It is ours to take. When preparing for a painting, I see a photograph as any other object—like a cup or a hat—and I feel free to examine it through painting. I am interested to see what will happen to this imagery as it filters through me and the painting process, which changes its medium and context.

- Lena Johansson

Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Painting, Desire and Other Stories*, Joyce Gallery, Paris, France, 2019



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Painting, Desire and Other Stories*, Joyce Gallery, Paris, France, 2019



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Painting, Desire and Other Stories*, Joyce Gallery, Paris, France, 2019





Lena Johansson

Installation view, Market Art Fair, Stockholm, Sweden, 2018



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *If You Don't Like Art, Goodbye, Fuck Off, Go Home...*, NoCo, Vestfossen, Norway, 2017

TRANSFERENCE

Andréhn-Schiptjenko,
Stockholm, Sweden, 2015

In Lena Johansson's exhibition, the intimate format remains but the paintings show a larger variety of expression. Some portraits are full of details and are painted empathetically; whereas some interiors are populated by more stylized models. The attractive motifs still come from a commercial visual world, but have ambiguous quality, making them evasive and mysterious to the viewer.

The paintings are showing a fantasy and dream world. With the logic of the sub conscious, the motifs and the models are connected in a chain of thoughts about the picturesque in relation to the three-dimensional, about longing to get away, about reality and human relations.



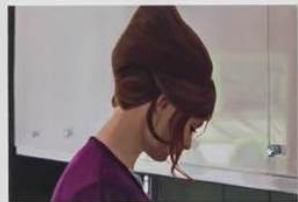
Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Transference*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2015



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Transference*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2015



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Transference*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2015



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Transference*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2015



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Fluid Flesh*, Nordic Contemporary, Paris, France, 2014



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Fluid Flesh*, Nordic Contemporary, Paris, France, 2014



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *The Christmas Show*, Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2013

TAKING THE LONG WAY

Andréhn-Schiptjenko,
Stockholm, Sweden, 2011

Lena Johansson's paintings take as their point of departure imagery sourced from fashion and lifestyle magazines—visuals charged with desire, aspiration and ambiguity. She is drawn to these images not only for their seductive surfaces but also for their capacity to be interpreted in multiple ways. Her selection of motifs is guided by instinctual attraction—whether it be a certain colour, a facial expression, a quality of light, or even something unsettling or provocative.

Through painting, Johansson investigates what occurs when the fashion industry's constructed ideals—its regulated vision of beauty and permissibility—confront the equally codified traditions and expectations of the art world. Her work navigates the tensions between these parallel systems of representation, questioning their aesthetic hierarchies and cultural authority. For Johansson, painting at its most powerful embodies an intense emotional resonance and offers the viewer a profound sense of recognition. The exhibition title alludes to the act of translation—from photograph to painting—and the complex, introspective process of filtering such images through the artist's own vision.

For her exhibition at Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Johansson has created a specially constructed architectural environment. Within this space, the paintings are arranged to form a narrative installation. On the exterior of the structure, a projected image expands the dialogue, while a recessed area in the floor holds a model of a pool filled with coloured water, casting reflections of both the paintings and surrounding walls. This “room within a room” serves to envelop the viewer, intensifying the psychological and emotional impact of the works on display.



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Taking the Long Way*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Taking the Long Way*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011



Lena Johansson

Installation view, *Taking the Long Way*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011

KONST

Lena Johansson: Jag vill undersöka begäret som är värt att dö för

UPPDATERAD 1 GÅR 12:16 PUBLICERAD 1 GÅR 09:30



Lena Johansson framför målningen "The highest form of hope III", 2020. Foto: Fredrik Funck

Begär som något mänskligt, hoppfullt och vackert – och något som kan vara så destruktivt att det är värt att dö för. Habegär och åtråns kraft står i fokus i konstnären Lena Johansson utställning "Dreamland welcomes you" i Stockholm.



Sofia Edgren

Text



Fredrik Funck

Foto



Läs senare



Målningarna på galleriets väggar påbörjade Lena Johansson 2019 – samma år som hon flyttade från Malmö till Lund. En flytt som hade högst personliga skäl: det malmöitiska, i flera avseenden, våldsamma klimatet, hade börjat påverka familjen negativt och att byta stad blev som Lena säger ”nödvändigt”.

– I efterhand blev det uppenbart hur stor betydelse flytten hade för familjen. Jag var inte direkt rädd, men jag hade själv tonåringar i samma ålder som vissa av dem som var inblandade i den pågående brottsligheten. Det fick mig att tänka, att ”herregud, vad är det som pågår”? Att målningarna kom till under den tiden påverkade så klart även den konstnärliga processen, säger Lena Johansson.



Lena Johansson. Foto: Fredrik Funck

Vi ses på galleri Andrehn-Schiptjenko i Stockholm och det första Lena Johansson gör är att beklaga sitt klädval: försommardagen är en av årets blötaste och regnet har gett hennes ljusblå jeans mörka kanter nertill.

En konstnärsintervju inledd med prat om väder och kläder kan möjligen tyckas banal, men nej, när det kommer till Lena Johanssons konst är åtminstone det sistnämnda relevant. I nyöppnade utställningen ”Dreamland welcomes you” har Lena Johansson fortsatt i spåret som hon påbörjade i sitt examensarbete på Konsthögskolan 2007: oljemålningar

baserade på kommersiella fotografier hämtade från mode- och livsstilsmagasin.

Lena Johansson berättar om pappan som arbetade på Konsumentverket med könsdiskriminerande reklam och om dokumenten med dömda kampanjer som han tog med hem från jobbet. Förmodligen, säger hon, är det därifrån hennes djupa fascination inför modefoto och det begär som de ofta förmedlar.



"Ida", 2021. Foto: Lena Johansson

– Att måla av begäret blir ett sätt att upphöja det. Måleri är ju en helt annan process än fotografi, det kräver tid men även en mänsklig hand. Och det sker en förskjutning genom det. Så klart för att motiven hamnar i en annan kontext, men det är även som om måleriet ger dem en annan innebörd. Själv tycker jag inte ens att mina målningar är lika fotografierna. De blir något annat – på något konstigt sätt är det som om måleriets kraft gör motiven mjukare och mer mänskliga, säger Lena Johansson.

På väggarna runt oss syns förföriska modeller iklädda moderätta plagg så realistiskt återgivna att texturen nästan går att ta på. Och lika påtaglig är igenkänningen av deras blickar, miner och poser. Likt arketyper från modevärlden tycks motiven påminna betraktaren om något vardagligt och bekant – för att på samma gång väcka känslan av något djupare och mer dunkelt rotat.

– Vi är vana att läsa de här bilderna och är förprogrammerade på hur vi ska reagera på dem. Ofta är den spontana reaktionen förknippad med något rätt ytligt och grunt, men stannar man kvar väcker de här bilderna, i alla fall hos mig, något djupt existentiellt. Jag tänker att mina målningar sammanlänkas i att de fångar det där allmänmänniska begäret. Vår längtan efter det som gör oss själva åtråvärda. Och för vissa uttrycks den åtrån genom en lyxprodukt av ett specifikt märke.



"Dreamland welcomes you", 2021. Foto: Lena Johansson

Lena Johansson beskriver sin konstnärliga metod som lustdriven. Hon väljer fotografierna hon målar av på intuition. Processen börjar med att hon går ner till Pressbyrån på centralen i Malmö där hon väljer ett gäng

tidningar som hon snabbt bläddrar igenom. Fastnar hon vid någon bild köper hon tidningen. Sedan får den ligga på ateljégolvet tills hon eventuellt börjar arbeta med den.

– I början är jag alltid oförstående inför bildernas samhörighet, men efteråt kan jag se att de hänger ihop och att de bildar en berättelse. Som fragment i en dröm som vävs ihop till ett narrativ när man lyfter blicken. I det litar jag på att mitt urval följer någon typ av logik. Jag vilar i att min intuition vet mer än mitt intellekt.

Undersökandet av begär som ett universellt behov av skönhet, förförelse och sexualitet – värden som generellt förknippas med just den modevärld Lena Johansson hämtar inspiration ifrån – har i den aktuella utställningen kompletterats med ett mörkare motiv: förundersökningsbilder från brottsplatser. I målningarna, baserade på foton av beslagttaget stoff i form av loggade lyxaccessoarer, har begäret slagit över till en våldsam natur.



"Marianne", 2021. Foto: Lena Johansson

Lena berättar om hur hon i samband med flytten från Malmö blev "lätt besatt" av brotten som skedde i hennes närhet. För att förstå det ogreppbara i att det inom loppet av något år skett fyra mord i hennes grannskap började hon beställa hem förundersökningsprotokoll från polisen som hon lusläste. Med protokollen följde fotografier och även om dessa saknade modebildernas suggestiva stämning, var drivkraften bakom densamma: begäret.

– Det som kopplade ihop flera av brotten var att det var väldigt unga människor inblandade. Och att de bland de fotograferade sakerna, sådant som beslagtogs vid exempelvis husrannsakan eller när personerna häktats, fanns en massa lyx- och märkesprylar. Det var Gucci, Armani, Prada... Ja, förundersökningsprotokollen kändes nästan som att läsa en modetidning. Och det blandat med bilderna på tonåringar och blodiga klädesplagg... det var verkligen begäret i dess extremaste form.



Lena Johansson har målat Bosskepsen som hittades när den nu kidnappningsåtalade artisten Yasin Mahamoud åkte fast för ett vapenbrott år 2018. Foto: Fredrik Funck

Vi vandrar längs väggen med målningarna med brottsplatsmotiv som visar sedelbuntar och plasthandskeklädda händer uppvisande lyxaccessorier – alla inramade i tygstycken mönstrade med märkesloggor. Lena Johansson nämner sambanden mellan olika brott och verk: pengahögen som hittades vid ett tillslag mot den kriminella ligan Dödspatrullen, Gucciväskans koppling till gängledaren "Lejonet" och

Bosskepsen som hittades när den nu kidnappningsåtalade artisten Yasin Mahamoud åkte fast för ett vapenbrott år 2018.

– Det är iögonfallande hur identitetsbyggande är kopplat till status. Och hur mycket man är beredd att göra för att bli älskad. Kanske är det inte så svårt att förstå att det begäret kan tippa över till kriminalitet när den där svindyra bilen står precis framför en.

När vi tar ett avslutande varv bland verken säger Lena Johansson att hon känner en ambivalens inför sina målningar. Och även i begär som begrepp.

– Det ligger något vackert och hoppfullt i åtrå och besatthet, samtidigt som den har en destruktiv sida som skrämmer. Men för mig är begär inget syndigt, snarare något väldigt mänskligt. Och jag är inte ute efter att skuldbelägga modevärlden som hela tiden flörtar med den där längtan... Det jag vill är att undersöka begäret och kraften som gör att det kan vara så starkt att det kan vara värt att dö för.

Lena Johansson

Konstnär

Bor: Lund.

Aktuell: Med utställningen "Dreamland Welcomes You" som pågår till den 3 juli på galleri Andréhn-Schiptjenko i Stockholm.

Publicerad 2021-06-07:

<https://www.dn.se/kultur/lena-johansson-jag-vill-undersoka-begaret-som-ar-vart-att-do-for/>

ART

Lena Johansson: I want to explore the desire that is worth dying for

Sofia Edgren, Dagens Nyheter, Published JUNE 7, 2021

Desire as something human, hopeful and beautiful - and something that can be so destructive it's worth dying for. Greed and the power of desire are the focus of artist Lena Johansson's exhibition *Dreamland Welcomes You* in Stockholm.

Lena Johansson started the paintings on the gallery's walls in 2019 - the same year she moved from Malmö to Lund. A move that had highly personal reasons: the Malmö climate, in many respects violent, had begun to affect the family negatively and changing cities became, as Lena says, "necessary".

- In retrospect, it became clear how significant the move was for the family. I wasn't really afraid, but I had teenagers of the same age as some of the people involved in the ongoing crime situation. It made me think, 'Oh my God, what's going on'? The fact that the paintings were created during that time also influenced the artistic process," says Lena Johansson.



Lena Johansson, Foto: Fredrik Funck

We meet at the Andrehn-Schiptjenko gallery in Stockholm and the first thing Lena Johansson does is lament her choice of clothing: the early summer day is one of the wettest of the year and the rain has given her light blue jeans dark edges at the bottom.

An artist interview that begins with talk of weather and clothing might seem banal, but no, when it comes to Lena Johansson's art, at least the latter is relevant. In the newly opened exhibition *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Lena Johansson has continued the work she started in her degree project at the Royal Institute of Art in 2007: oil paintings based on commercial photographs taken from fashion and lifestyle magazines.



Lena Johansson talks about her father, who worked at the Swedish Consumer Agency on sexist advertising, and about the documents of condemned campaigns that he brought home from work. Probably, she says, this is where her deep fascination with fashion photography, and the desire it often conveys, comes from.

- Painting the desire becomes a way of elevating it. Painting is a completely different process from photography, it requires time but also a human hand.

And there is a shift through it. Obviously, because the motifs end up in a different context, but it is also as if painting gives them a different meaning. I don't even think my paintings are alike the photographs. They become something else - in some strange way it is as if the power of painting makes the subjects softer and more human," says Lena Johansson.

On the walls around us are seductive models dressed in fashionable garments so realistically rendered that the texture is almost touchable. And just as tangible is the recognition of their eyes, faces and poses. Like archetypes from the world of fashion, the motifs seem to remind the viewer of something everyday and familiar - while at the same time evoking a sense of something deeper and more darkly rooted.



- We are used to reading these images and are pre-programmed to react to them. Often the spontaneous reaction is associated with something rather superficial and shallow, but if you stick around, these images, at least for me, evoke something deeply existential. I think my paintings are interconnected in that they capture that universal human desire. Our longing for what makes ourselves desirable. And for some, that desire is

expressed through a luxury product of a specific brand.

Lena Johansson describes her artistic method as pleasure-driven. She chooses the photographs she paints on intuition. The process begins when she goes down to the Pressbyrån in the center of Malmö where she chooses a bunch of newspapers that she quickly flips through. If she finds an image that catches her eye, she buys the magazine. Then it sits on the studio floor until she eventually starts working on it.

- "At first, I don't always understand the connection between the pictures, but afterwards I can see that they are connected and form a story. Like fragments of a dream that are woven together into a narrative when you have a higher viewpoint. In this I trust that my selection follows some kind of logic. I rest in the fact that my intuition knows more than my intellect.

The examination of desire as a universal need for beauty, seduction and sexuality - values that are generally associated with the very world of fashion that Lena Johansson draws inspiration from - has been complemented in the current exhibition by a darker motif: investigative images from crime scenes. In the paintings, based on photographs of seized material in the form of logged luxury accessories, desire has taken on a violent nature.



Lena describes how, when she moved from Malmö, she became "slightly obsessed" with the crimes in her area. To understand the intangible nature of four murders being committed in her neighborhood in the space of a year, she started ordering investigation reports from the police and reading them carefully. The reports were accompanied by photographs, and although these lacked the suggestive air of fashion images, the driving force behind them was the same: desire.

- What linked several of the crimes together was that very young people were involved. And that among the photographed items, such as those seized during searches or when the people were arrested, there were a lot of luxury and branded items. There was Gucci, Armani, Prada... Yes, the preliminary investigation protocols felt almost like reading a fashion magazine. And that mixed with the pictures of teenagers and bloody clothes... it was really desire in its most extreme form.



Lena Johansson har målat Bosskepsen som hittades när den nu kidnappningsåtalade artisen Yasin Mahamoud åkte fast för ett vapenbrott år 2018. Foto: Fredrik Funck

We walk along the wall of crime scene paintings showing bundles of dollar bills and plastic-gloved hands displaying luxury accessories - all framed in pieces of fabric patterned with brand logos. Lena Johansson mentions the connections between different crimes and works: the pile of money found during a raid on the criminal gang the Death Squad, the Gucci

bag's connection to the gang leader 'The Lion', and the Hugo Boss cap found when the artist Yasin Mahamoud, now charged with kidnapping, was arrested for a weapons offense in 2018.

- It is striking how identity building is linked to status. And how much people are willing to do to be loved. Perhaps it is not so difficult to understand that this desire can turn into crime when that expensive car is right in front of you.

When we take a final look at the works, Lena Johansson says that she feels ambivalent about her paintings. And also in desire as a concept.

- There is something beautiful and hopeful in desire and obsession, while at the same time it has a destructive side that is frightening. But for me, desire is not a sinful thing, rather something very human. And I don't want to blame the fashion world for constantly flirting with that desire.... What I want is to explore desire and the power that makes it so strong that it can be worth dying for.

De poserar så kaxigt att jag skruvar på mig inför deras blickar

En trio utbildad vid Malmö konsthögskola briljerar på olika vis på Galleri Arnstedt.

Carolina Söderholm



Lena Johansson, "The highest form of hope I" (2020).

Emm Berring, Lena Johansson, Samaneh Reyhani

Galleri Arnstedt, Östra Karup, t o m 30/9.

Ingen viker med blicken i Lena Johanssons måleri. De unga männen och kvinnorna poserar så kaxigt att jag skruvar på mig inför deras blickar. Som vanligt utgår hon från modefotografiet och med säkra penseldrag fångar hon stil och attityd, från gatusmart skateboard-mode till cool collegeromantik.

Men kläderna är förstås aldrig huvudsaken. Om modebranschen ofta kritiseras för sin ytlighet, osunda kroppsideal och tendens att förvandla sina modeller till sexualiserade objekt, spelar Johansson medvetet med dess stereotyper. Inte ens när hon målar direkt på massproducerade t-shirts går hennes porträtt att reducera till varor för konsumtion. På en nivå bejakar hon med sitt djärva, lätt stiliserade handlag bilden som yta och illusion och flörtar med motivens förmåga att reta begäret. Men på en annan nivå kastar hon om maktstrukturer och förväntningar. Sällan har jag sett henne lyckas så väl som denna gång.



Emm Berring, "Svämman".

Bild: Galleri Arnstedt

Även Emm Berring är i högform. I galleriets största sal breder skogen ut sig, med sina slumrande stenar och fallna stammar. Allt är målat med lenhet och täthet, badande i varmt rosa och gröna toner. Det är en natur som känns i kroppen. Formerna tycks sömlöst växla mellan hud och bark, där gläntor och gömslen lockar bakom granruskor och lianer. Fast trots sinnligheten är vi långt från realism. Det är heller ingen bayersk sagoskog i moll som hägrar. Snarare mutar Berring tydligare än förr in sitt revir mellan vaka och dröm, där allt tycks genomlyst men gåtfullt. I detta tillstånd skärps sinnen medan varje sensation skruvas och förstärks. Aldrig har mossan tett sig så mjuk, grenarna så böjliga eller dunklet så midnattsblått.



Samaneh Reyhani, "Morgh-e-Sahar".

Precis som Johansson och Berring är Samaneh Reyhani utbildad på Malmö konsthögskola, där hon tog examen 2017. Känsligt formade i trä och sten knyter hennes verk an till skulpturkonstens antika och klassiska tradition. Fast sättet på vilket hon får begäret och smärtan att pulsera genom materialen är hennes eget. Nu ristar hon in tecken i den rosa marmorn, hämtad från det forna hemlandet Iran. På podiet häver sig stenen likt en gryningsvåg och skruvar sig som en snäcka. Den framstår som ett fynd från en svunnen värld, men intar rummet med intensiv närvaro. I likhet med Berring rör sig hennes organiska former mellan det sensuella och oroande, ibland våldsamma. I den magnifika träskulpturen "Sheydâ" låter hon träets ådringar färgas rosa, där öppningen blir en portal eller passage.

Titlarnas kvinnonamn viskar om erfarenheter och berättelser som bärs inuti och utanpå kroppen. Det är verk av en stark och självständig skulptör, vars arbete jag redan längtar efter att se mer av.

KONST 7 september 2019 09:00

Skörhet och tomhet skapar konstens aha-upplevelser

Thomas Millroth ser en utställning på Galleri Ping-Pong som ställer frågor kring hur man betraktar ett konstverk.



Lena Johansson, "Tillsammans". I kanterna detalj av "Flicka med cerise handskar" och "Den rosa klänningen".

Bild: Olof Nimar

Jag minns när ett konstverk drabbade mig första gången. Tretton år gammal satt jag på bibliotekets tidskriftshylla och försökte begripa mig på hur konstruktiva teckningar fungerade. Texten uppmanade mig att kolla litet extra på en glipa mellan några trianglar. Jag stirrade, och det där mellanrummet visade sig vara startnyckeln till hela bildmaskineriet som rasslade igång; bara för att jag flyttat blicken några millimeter. Kalla det nybörjartur, men det har faktiskt fortsatt. För inte så länge sedan upptäckte jag hur Vilhelm Hammershøi skrapat bort färg med palettkniv och trasa i en målning jag trodde mig känna utan och innan. Med ens förstod jag hur ljuset strömmade in i hans slutna rum.

Alltså, tänk med ögonen. Lätt att säga, men tanken blir inte hel förrän du förstått vad du sett. Och det tar tid. Utan tålamod infinner sig inte den där aha-upplevelsen, som amerikanske konstnären Ed Ruscha kallade för "a kind of huh". Men att ta till sig konst på det viset är ju inget snabbval.



Bjørn Mortensen, "Wall tablet", stengods.

Bild: Olof Nimar

Räcker det då inte att en utställning är medryckande som en melodislinga? På Galleri Ping-Pong lockar Olof Nimar, Bjørn Mortensen och Lena Johansson med perfekt samspel mellan spröda blomsterfoton, bulligt taktila stengodskärl och blänkande måleri ur modets värld. Det känns gott att vara där och allt sätter sig direkt på näthinnan.

Det visar sig inte vara fullt så enkelt. Johanssons avmålade utsnitt ur modetidningar blänker förföriskt. Men jag saknar ett medvetet avstånd mellan motivens ytlighet och verkens måleriska uttryck. Därför känns bilderna ganska pessimistiska och tankarna går till modevärldens kommersiella hårda skal som ska tillfredsställa människors drömda självbilder.

Utställningens titel, "Slungad i groddammen", för tanken till Bashos världsberömda haiku från 1600-talet. Vi är nog många som minns dikten där en groda bryter stillheten då den hoppar ner i vattnet med ett plask. Scenen är tydlig fastän haikun egentligen bara består av tre ord: damm – groda – plums. Det som inte står utskrivet, tomrummen runt orden, fyller vi i själva. Samma sak som när jag lyckas tränga under ytan på ett konstverk.

Mortensens rektangulära väggreliefer ligger närmast Basho. De är tomma sånär som på former som nästan får mig att höra hur vattenytan bryts. Tomhet är inte frånvaro, den ger plats åt något oväntat, och här förvandlas stengodsets jordighet till grodans plask. Mortensens kärl på golvet är tunga och buktar av sand och potatis. Om det inte vore för att de utstrålade så mycket natur skulle de vara direktverkande, okomplicerat sinnliga och taktila. Det hjälper inte att jag koncentrerar mig på dem som stengods, naturen väller ändå in och får dem att kännas sköra. Jag ser det som om de längtade efter att återgå till sitt ursprung i lera och jord. Poeten Iman Mohammed har träffande beskrivit hur ett konstverk kan dras till naturen mer än till kulturen: "Bildens eko kastas fram och tillbaka / mellan berglandskap, byggnader och kroppar."



Olof Nimar, "Scen".

Bild: Olof Nimar

Nimar har frilagt foton av blommor så att en färg dominerar varje bild – intensivt rött, blått, ockra. Han lämnar alltid en marginal där en förlorad scen anas. Under de sirliga växterna finns alltså något som är borttaget för att de ska komma till uttryck. Hans sex "Scener" vilar på lätta träställningar som får dem att likna skulpturer. Material och konstruktion gör bilderna ömtåliga.

På något vis hänger skörhet och tomhet ihop med min aha-upplevelse. Den förutsätter nämligen ett offer av konstnären, att överge ett invariant grepp, stryka över ett lockande motiv eller en virtuos formulering. Under Nimars röda färgfält kring en ensam blomma kan det döljas en prunkande trädgård, som nu är uttraderad, medvetet förlorad. I stället spänns en kvist till en båge laddad med gula blommor. Den förlusten gör verket – huh!

FAKTA

Lena Johansson, Bjørn Mortensen, Olof Nimar

"Slungad i groddammen", Galleri Ping-Pong, Stora Nygatan 4, Malmö, t o m 14/9.

A Room with a View

We catch up with a favourite figurative painter of ours, Lena Johansson who just recently opened her second solo show with Andréhn-Schiptjenko in Stockholm. With a prior background in architecture, Lena tells us about having approached her new exhibition with a keen interest in examining the relationship between painting and room and space.



C-P: I'm personally a great fan of figurative painting and sometimes miss that in today's contemporary art amidst so much abstract art which sometimes strikes me as rather generic and bland. I feel compelled by your work and got very excited learning last year about your new show at Andréhn-Schiptjenko and seeing as well images of what appeared to be new work exhibited by the end of last year at Nordic Contemporary in Paris.

You're based and working out of Malmö. Tell me more about your background as an artist.

L.J: Figurative components are often accentuated in their capacity of bearing context within the realm of contemporary art whereas abstract components are more easily read together with architecture and space. I find that difference between the abstract and figurative interesting.

I graduated from Malmö Art Academy in 2007, having changed from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, around when I met my husband and had children. Since then we stayed here and Malmö for me in many ways is a fantastic city. Prior to enrolling in art school I studied architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm (KTH).



C-P: I like the themes represented in your body of work; notably how it draws on notions of fragility, decay, fleetingness and youth. Myself I'm very inspired by music and when looking at your work I have on occasion found myself ascribing musical lyrics to your works. While the gestures of your subjects are subtle and understated, your works have a quality of being very expressive and evocative. I keep coming back to images of two of your works in particular which are pinned with homoerotic undertones; "Duschen" (2011) and Flicker (Allra käraste Tova) (2011). They appear related and strike me as great examples of the characteristics of your work.

From where do you derive the inspiration for your paintings and what is your method of working like?

L.J: That's lovely that you associate my works to music. I often find myself listening to the same music over and over again. I've had music by Lana del Rey, Emmylou Harris, Modern Lovers, Jonathan Richman, Cat Power and Jens Lekman playing in my record player forever now! My paintings often derive from images from lifestyle media. It's significant that the images are commercial and accessible. I would for instance never use anyone's personal images from a social media account like on Facebook. I've always found it interesting to examine what comes out of the commercialized image when it passes through my hands as a painter; what sort of image emerges as a result? What happens when the sender changes and what narrative and mood is evoked when various images selected are juxtaposed together in a visual story?



Sometimes I think of it as someone trying to sell me something and my taking back what is mine. I collect images that resonate with me for whatever reason. The choice is intuitive and I work much from lust. A photograph is like any other thing. I feel free to interpret what I see. I don't project, and outline directly with colour when constructing a painted work. The best is when I can't recognize or have no prior relation whatsoever to the subjects on the images. The originals serve as projection space of sort. It's important that the paintings are delicately made. I feel for the paintings and speak to them as I work in the studio. In the past I've used painting to examine the notions of motif and identification. Painting makes for a language of its own but also constitutes movements on a surface. I'm very fascinated by painting in its capacity of communicating silently without words.

C-P: When we corresponded recently you were telling me about working away in your studio preparing the new show, pending between euphoria and sheer panic which I imagine is a relatable sentiment for any artist. What can you tell me about the new body of work that you will be presenting in the show?

L-J: I think the motifs have changed to some extent. I've pondered much about the relationship between figurative painting and space. I've studied the interplay between architecture and painting in the Renaissance and Baroque era. I'm very fond of the renaissance man, architect, poet, philosopher Leon Battista Alberti and his theoretical take on painting as a window into a different reality. In that light, many of the significant Baroque and Renaissance paintings are site-specific like Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper or Raphael's

frescoes in the Vatican. The room of a gallery is continuously changing and I'm interested in the gap between painting, reality and fiction.



C-P: I know you've worked with installations that have made part of your solo shows; for instance your first show at Andrehn-Schiptjenko featured a mini pool embedded in the exhibition floor of a special room unit built to exhibit your works and your last show at Bendixen Contemporary Art in Copenhagen presented a series of table installations of boxes carrying still life. I was meaning to ask if working with installation as an independent expression or working with other medias than painting is something you feel compelled to explore more in the future?

L.J: I'm incredibly interested in architectural theory and it'd be great to continue to explore figurative painting in relation to room and space.



C-P: Lastly, what's in store for you next in terms of projects and plans in 2015?

L.J: I hope to be brave and continue to paint, dream and be puzzled and I also hope to be able to execute an exhibition about utopias within architecture and city planning which I've worked on together with my colleague, a researcher and architect. September will see the release of a film, "Det borde finnas regler" for which I've done paintings. Moreover, I hope to get to use the word fantastic a lot during 2015!

Lena Johansson's new and second solo exhibition at Andréhn-Schiptjenko in Stockholm runs through April 18. www.andrehn-schiptjenko.com

All images accompanying the feature courtesy of Andréhn-Schiptjenko and the artist. Photo credit: Jean-Baptiste Beranger



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A Swedish Artist Takes an Ominous Look Inside the Dollhouse

ARTSY EDITORIAL

16 HOURS AGO

Alongside the oil paintings she's best known for—small-scale and richly detailed glimpses of domestic scenes—the Swedish artist [Lena Johansson](#) shows a dollhouse at her [new exhibition](#) at Stockholm's [Andréhn-Schiptjenko](#).

The three-dimensional miniature world is a fitting extension of Johansson's work, especially when you consider the history of the dollhouse. Though today they are generally relegated to the sphere of children's toys and mainstream arts and crafts superstores, dollhouses form part of a fascinating artistic tradition. In their 17th-century heyday, the finest dollhouses were crafted in Nuremberg or Paris, and not intended for children at all, but for royal palaces and homesick brides. They were formal and idealized miniature versions of real houses, complete with exact copies of furniture, carpets, china, porcelain, paintings, even tiny wine bottles filled with real wine.

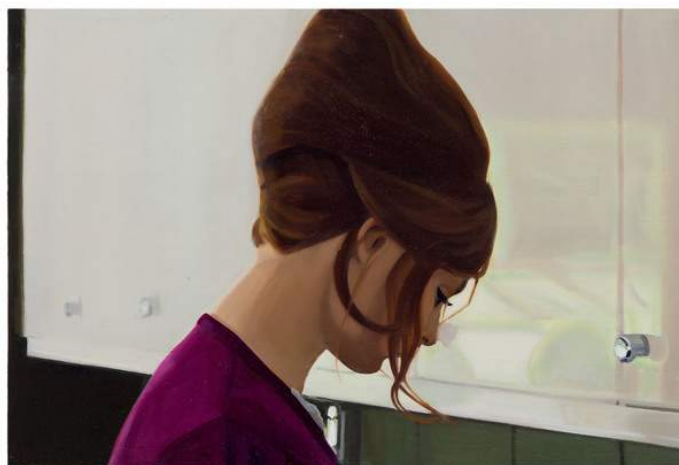
Such painstaking attention to detail, and interest in a home's interiors, is characteristic of Johansson's work. There's wine, too, and lots of it, in the stylish and somewhat unsettling afternoon kitchen scene of *Interiör 1* (2015). Like the other paintings from this particular series—a bedroom scene (*Interiör 2* (2015)) and a dining room scene (*Interiör 3* (2015))—the figures and settings are strikingly fashionable and attractive. And yet, despite tailored clothing and glamorous haircuts, mod design, and sun shining through the windows, there's a sense of foreboding that what you're looking in on isn't actually yours to glimpse.

Not all of Johansson's paintings show such an idealized



Lena Johansson
Interiör 1, 2015
Andréhn-Schiptjenko

CONTACT GALLERY



Lena Johansson
Utan titel, 2015
Andréhn-Schiptjenko

CONTACT GALLERY

world. *Flicka framför vit gardin* (2015) and *Andy* (2012) portray, respectively, a bored-looking teenage girl and a tattooed young man, leaning against a fence, covering his face with his hand. This range of human pain, from boredom to restlessness to anguish, shows through more clearly in her less-than-perfect subjects and settings. It's only in the polished and surreal dollhouse-like world that authentic feeling is obscured.

Perhaps the most intriguing piece in the exhibition, then, is *Leken* (2015), in which a blonde child looks through the window of a dollhouse, where a miniature woman sits at a table, a miniature child sits on a bed, and a miniature man stands outside at the grill. It's an idealistic scene, but it's not clear whether smiles have been painted onto the tiny faces—or what the real-life child, looking in from above, is thinking.

—[Bridget Gleeson](#)

"Transference" is on view at Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Mar. 5–Apr. 18, 2015.

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Lena Johansson
Interiör 2, 2015
Andréhn-Schiptjenko

CONTACT GALLERY



Lena Johansson
Leken, 2015
Andréhn-Schiptjenko

CONTACT GALLERY

Andréhn-Schiptjenko

STOCKHOLM PARIS

LENA JOHANSSON

Born 1975, Stockholm, Sweden.

Lives and works in Lund, Sweden.

Education

2003–07 Malmö Art Academy, Malmö, Sweden.

2001–02 Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm, Sweden.

1999–01 Idun Lovén School of Art, Stockholm, Sweden.

Solo Exhibitions

2025 *Life*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.

2021 *Dreamland Welcomes You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.

2019 *Painting, Desire and Other Stories*, Joyce Gallery, Paris, France.

2015 *Transference*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.

2012 *To All That We Love*, Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark.

2011 *Taking The Long Way*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.

2008 *Johansson & Johansson*, Bendixen, Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Group Exhibitions

2024 *As Dreamers Do*, Bohusläns museum, Uddevalla, Sweden.

2022 *Women and Change*, ARKEN Museum for Moderne Kunst, Ishøj, Denmark.

2021 Galleri Arnstedt, Östra Karup, Sweden.

2020 Nordic Contemporary, Paris, France.

2019 *Slungad i Groddammen*, Galleri Ping Pong, Malmö, Sweden.

Mellan dig och mig, Ystad Konstmuseum, Ystad, Sweden.

2018 *If You Don't Like Art, Goodbye, Fuck Off, Go Home – Art from Nordic Contemporary Art Collection – NoCo*, curated by Göran Christenson, Hämeenlinna Art Museum, Finland.

2017 *If You Don't Like Art, Goodbye, Fuck Off, Go Home – Art from Nordic Contemporary Art Collection – NoCo*, curated by Göran Christenson, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway.

2016 *Painting Failures*, Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden.

2015 *Åtta par i konst*, Vargåkra gård, Hammenhög, Sweden.

Andréhn-Schiptjenko

STOCKHOLM PARIS

- 2014** *Fluid Flesh*, Nordic Contemporary, Paris, France.
- 2013** *The Christmas Show*, Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 2012** *Sense and Sensibility*, Avesta Art, Avesta, Sweden.
- 2011** *Möte med Hill*, Lunds Konsthall, Lund, Sweden.
Nyanser av realism, Värmlands museum, Karlstad, Sweden.
Move, Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 2009** *Happy New Year*, Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 2008** Galleri Flach, Stockholm, Sweden.
Konstföreningen Aura Lund, Lund, Sweden.
- 2007-08** *4 stipendiater*, Uppsala Konstmuseum, Uppsala, Sweden.
- 2007** *Examenutställning*, Galleri Peep, Malmö, Sweden.
- 2006** *Artist Choice*, Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Kabusa invited, Kabusa Konsthall, Glemmingebro, Sweden.
- 2004** Brändström & Stene, Stockholm, Sweden.

Grants

- 2021** The Nisse Zetterberg and Martha Larsson Rome stipend, The Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts.
- 2017-18** Iaspis Studio Grant, London, United Kingdom.
- 2012** The Otte Sköld stipend, The Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts.
- 2011** The Swedish Arts Grants Committee's two-year work stipend.
- 2008** The Swedish Arts Grants Committee's one-year work stipend.
- 2007** The Anna-Lisa Thomson Memorial Foundation stipend.
- 2007** The Edstrand Foundation stipend.

Collections

Malmö Art Museum, Malmö, Sweden.
Nordic Contemporary Art Collection, Stockholm, Sweden.
Public Art Agency Sweden, Sweden.