

Handen och håret
10.04.21 – 04.07.21
Inez Jönsson & Dina Isæus-Berlin
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A text about two artists; Inez Jönsson och Dina Isæus-Berlin. A text about their exhibition Handen och håret (The Hand and the Hair) at Fullersta Gård.

In conversation with the artists it becomes evident how different they are from one another, both in their personalities and their artistic practices. A great deal differs: how they approach their work, their choice of material, their choice of words in describing their practices, even their body language. Dina Isæus-Berlin gesticulates, there is a fervency and devotion in her voice that is expressed all the way through to the canvas. She describes the process of selecting a title for the exhibition *"We discussed the title for a long time. There were several words that united us, but most of them made us sound like two old modernists. We wanted a title that had some humor."* Inez Jönsson's tone, not that different to her work, is calm, almost stoic. She chooses every word, every sentence with precision. When I ask her about the title of the exhibition I receive a poetic, near cryptic answer *"The Hand and the Hair is the tool, the material and the motif"*.

When I ask them to reflect on each other's work and practice Dina mentions the American artist Agnes Martin that bears significance for her: *"I think some of Inez's work vibrates in the same way"*. Dina, filled with insight and contemplation describes Inez's practice with great clarity *"Inez's works are filled with an inherent movement yet completely still. Her practice is situated in a key discourse of painting, one of materiality and picture, about the concrete and the pictorial."* When I press Inez on her approach to her practice, she answers *"The wordless also holds the tactile. I act in the meeting between painting and crafts. That is where I find wordlessness, in the practical knowledge that has been passed on through the work made with our hands."* Inez describes Dina's practice with a balanced, visual language, *"Dina's work immediately makes me think of frozen signs, as well as speed, calligraphy and movement"*.

The site, Fullersta Gård, has influenced both artists approach to the exhibition. Both Inez and Dina describe how the rooms feel pleasure-filled, how the architecture demanded that they carefully consider the installation. *"The possibility to shift the gaze from one room to the other and let scenes emerge and then disappear"* was a recurring thought for Inez. She explains how *"it is hard not to be aware of the surroundings at Fullersta Gård, it makes its way into the room together with the light and will change as the seasons shift; from spring to summer"*. She continues *"In one of my pieces, consisting of several weaves made from gunny and pine, the wood will darken in the sun and the*

colors will alter.” Dina agrees, “Fullersta Gård has been with me when I made these paintings whether I liked it or not. The rooms have their own character and the tile stoves are like site specific artworks that completely dominate the small rooms. I can see the influence of the house in both scale and color even if it wasn’t something I aimed for.”

During my studio visit with Dina we spoke a lot about humor and self-distance in the process of art-making. How the artist takes on their own work and practice and takes it seriously. Dina clearly expresses how important it is for young artists to have a vision beyond one exhibition. Being an artist is often a lifelong commitment. Humor and the interaction between the two artists is reflected in the title, in their cooperation and also in their practices.

How do they view their dialogue and collaboration? Dina replies *“Dialogue is a word that holds so much, I can see it in the light of the inner logic of a painting, where the dialogue between different surfaces, textures and marks is an important element, or in a bigger picture as an exhibition’s dialogue with external influences.”* To Inez the collaboration centres around pace and interaction between her and Dina’s work. *“I have thought about Dina’s way of working with light, contrast and tempo (full speed) that comes to a stop in her paintings, like a frozen movement that makes me think of signs and calligraphy. There are both similarities and differences between us.”*

Inez talks about material as expression. Before the actual creative process begins, she must choose her material as it is of great importance to her practice. It is fascinating how the material; the weave and horsehair become a manifestation of pureness; a kind of purity that can be translated from the work to the beholder. The expression of humanity in the lines that aren’t completely straight intertwine with the poetry of Inez’s work, barriers continuously broken in her reliefs. By revisiting traditions of craftsmanship, taking inspiration from nature, Inez’s will to create exact lines in an imperfect world emerge. Inez portrays our, as well as her own vulnerability in her work by examining the flaws around her. The reliefs become mirrors for the beholder to view both oneself and their surroundings. *“I want to expose the relationship to nature that run through my material in their own right, as portraits of themselves. At the same time, it is important to make the material my own, by cultivating and arranging them”* she says.

In her painting Dina searches for a gesture with an energy that has the capability to convey vitality and spirit. The gestures, the expression on the surface, is in direct correlation to Dina as a person, her body, mind and the knowledge she holds. In these lines, floating movements on board and canvas, the beholder can perceive the narrative in Dina’s work as cyclical, a constant loop. When answering what her approach is to narrative is, Dina refers to language as concept. She states that language is very present in non-figurative art. *“...in the establishment of different surfaces positions towards each other among other things. Wordlessness is to me not the lack of language,*

but to deny narration. The story, the words, are so strong that they will inevitably draw the beholder from the visual impression." Dina's own assurance validate and saturate her work. The paintings speak; seeing and feeling a story without needing actual words or a descriptive text; drawing the viewer from the work, the visual impression. Dina creates in this wordless arena, however the work; the paintings are not without words. She describes the impossible *"to think and experience at the same time"*, creating magic by evading storytelling. However, in her painting she orchestrates a foundation for the beholder to create their own interpretation, a chronicle and a plot that lets emotions be projected onto the surface. The experience arises, and it is as if a new emotion takes form with every brush stroke, and a new narrative emerges.