

**Valand Masters Graduation Exhibition  
"Dirty&Clean"  
Göteborgs Konsthall 1/4-25/4**

Sofie Karp's drawings, imbedded in the Konsthall's archway, work as a teleport from her world of repetitive noise and catastrophic obsession in to a mix of postmodern randomness. My first impression of "Dirty&Clean" is that the works go very well together. There is nothing here that seems to mess things up. The works are placed in such a way that they don't compete with each other, or knock each other out. And it is also a delight to see that the huge hall does not dominate the works, which is often a problem here. I credit the exhibition's curator (Jason Bowman) for doing a good job in putting these very different works together in such a seemingly successful way.

As I walk on, I almost stumble over Pär Darell's triangular shaped advertising sign with a text stating "No Women Allowed At This Exhibition." It is (strategically?) placed as soon as you enter the main hall. This placement, the text not facing the visitor with its explicit message, but excusing itself in its being there, seems defensive. Why not place it at the main entrance to the Konsthall, or have it directly in the archway facing the viewer as she walks into the space? And what does Pär really mean? Are there really no women allowed? I see plenty. Is this statement then just a crude personal longing towards Pär's own wish for the death of feminism and a revival of male-only environments? Or is it a kind of spur-of-the-moment comment not really thought through? Since I don't find any other way to read the work, I have to go with my last thought: there is nothing more here than what you actually see.

To the left and right of Pär's work are Hans Owe Rydberg's wall drawings depicting a hidden figure behind large bookshelves. There are also four glory holes drawn in the "wardrobe" of the foyer, behind the jackets. Both works seem to deal with hidden or forbidden sexual fantasies, whether they are Hans Owe's or based on our collective suppression of lust.

Julie Fournier Lévesque's work is an installation of a circular black stage with five microphone-stands on top. The microphones are reversed in their function, acting as speakers instead of receivers, and each tell a personal story in different languages. The problem here is that I don't feel any intimacy with any of the people speaking. And the alleged cacophony (stated in the exhibition catalogue) is not present. Unfortunately, I missed the performance where Julie and four other persons were reading these texts out loud and at the same time. It seems that it's here the work comes to its right and the issues of communication (problems) and (foreign) languages are best addressed.

In the middle of the space are six large plywood boards with race-car engines painted onto them by Jacob Hurtig. They remind me a lot of the artist Gardar Eide Einarsson's silkscreens on mdf. Similar to Einarsson, Hurtig has found a universe of images applicable to his own use. I don't see any kind of critical or problematizing aspects in them, but they work well as pure aesthetic objects in the room, echoing Jacob's own fetish.

Kristina Lindeberg's work is a three-part installation of minimalist looking sculptures: white shapes of what may have been an arch cut into pieces. The twist here is that the objects are "tortured." Burnt, tied up and pierced by darts, Kristina is applying her cruelty towards these objects. The strategy seems a bit unclear to me though. Is the torture a way to get the sculptures to say something they really don't want to? Or is it the artist's personal struggle with the tradition of sculpture (minimalist in particular) that she wants to shed a light on? In a way I get the feeling that Kristina feels that this kind of sculpture is exhausted in its use and that she is actually trying to get the last bit of information out of them before moving on to something new.

At the end of the hall there are five photographs by Mailind Solvind Mjøen. There is also an additional photograph in combination with a red, old style telephone placed in another room. The telephone is supposed to ring at odd times, activating some kind of hidden emotions in me when I pick it up. But it never does. Am I here at the wrong time? Or is this work in the wrong place? Mailind's personal encounters (of being stalked?), supposedly made-political, is not resonating with me.

Three large photographs are cleverly placed at the far-end wall of the space. Situated high up, they function as billboard ads, displaying Anders Johansson's "message" in the entire room. They depict different individuals showing off homemade style tattoos, subtly placed on their bodies. Superimposed on the photographs is the word IMPERIAL, functioning here as some sort of brand or company name. Also, the inscription "Imperial Ink" appears at the bottom of each photograph. Anders's work is similar to a fashion magazine aesthetic dealing with his own forms of taste and his own sense of culture. Again, I get the feeling that it all ends here: artists' preoccupied in their own universe, not really willing to go outside of their comfort zones. But I could be wrong. Is Anders really criticizing his own slacker attitude and his own "secret" language and symbols by giving us access to his world?

Ulrika Linder is dealing with her folk-music heritage and its breakdown into symbols for Swedish nationalism and right-wing oriented political parties. She has chosen to add to her often seen paintings, a video-installation from rehearsals with her multi-cultural "spelmanlag". I am not sure what the video adds, besides being an installation and documentation of what happened before her concert (with this group) at the opening of this exhibition.

In Pernilla Ljungkvist's installation there is a combination of a photograph and a sound-piece. The sound-piece is a recording of Pernilla's encounter with a spiritual medium, helping her to shed light on her encounter with the ghost of Roy Orbison.

The most interesting work in the exhibition is a sculptural water-measurer by Unndór Egill Jónsson. Hanging from the ceiling, the sculpture is made out of kitchen appliances (bowls, etc.) that collect the rain from the roof. I find the work to be neatly executed in its form and appreciate Unndór's approach as an artist/quasi-scientist making problems for himself so that he can come up with beautiful and interesting solutions to solve them.

I stand in the entrance hall at Göteborgs Konsthall after visiting this years graduation show. The title of the show, "Dirty&Clean," is written with large letters on the wall on my way out. Reflecting back on what I have seen, the title does not fit all that well. Clean yes, but dirty, not at all. I find the exhibition too lacking in both conflict and tension. It all seems very safe and calculated, and I wish for more risk (or dirt) on behalf of most of the artists. This is, in many ways, their last chance to "show off" before they leave this institution; not many seized the opportunity.

**Chris Johnsen**

**John Salquist  
"TMAOC" or "The truth as perceived in THIS MY AGE OF  
CONTRADICTION"  
Rotor 2, 15/4-17/4**

The first thing that hits me is monkish choir-singing music; then after a while, a theatrical voice. The voice works in a loop together with the music, and the sound comes from two triangular white boxes with speakers that are placed in the corners. It is quite dark and the installation contains a slide projector on a carefully made white podium in the centre of the room. The slideshow projects images on a white sheet: geometrical forms, cubes. The same-or similar-images hang on the walls with warm

yellowish spotlights on them (the only thing that is not either white or grey in the exhibition). Two white sheets are draped on the white walls on either side of the slide projection.

I experience the room as a sacred space, and that makes me uncomfortable. All the different elements and objects make it difficult for me to focus on any specific element, and I find it hard to approach the images that hang on the wall while being surrounded by such massive amounts of information.

Since I assume that the whole installation is one piece with one title, "TMAOC", or as it says on the poster "The truth as perceived in THIS MY AGE OF CONTRADICTION", I approach the exhibition as one big concept. Just below the slide projection, there is a white desk on top of which sits a bowl of earplugs (that I didn't use) and small cards with printed instructions. The cards encourage viewers to improvise on "whatever you may see," and also suggest that everything in the exhibition "merely is" and that "nothing is symbolic." On the backside is a handwritten address: tmaoc.reality-intermission.se (similar to the installation, this website is also overwhelming and dense with information).

I find it nice that the artist encourages me to improvise, and I sympathize with the intention behind the advice to the viewer—let's call it a try to "escape" representation. Anyhow, I am not sure what this advice actually means in this work. Where does this will of watertight meaning come from? Where does this "given" about symbols come from? Moreover, the message's undertone hints toward a discussion that I can't really see present in the work; it seems to be a speech in-defense-of or in-response-to something that I don't have access to. The "merely is" and the "be as you are" tell me, on the one hand, to be calm. On the other hand, they also tell me about an absolute truth.

When someone tells me to "just be" (whatever that means) the effect works in the opposite direction. In fact, this sacred aesthetic together with this "nothing is symbolic" concept is far too familiar for that to happen.

Sara Lindeborg

**C:Art and HFF Graduation Exhibition  
"Suckade Vintern till Våren" or "Winter Sighed to Spring"  
Röda Sten, 16/4-22/5**

On view in Röda Sten since the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, "Suckade Vintern till Våren" or "Winter Sighed to Spring," is the graduation show of both the C:Art masters program at Valand, and the bachelors program at the School of Photography. It is a peculiar and somewhat untidy exhibition that creates a certain feeling of insecurity and instability. There are two reasons that can be underlined in order to understand this feeling. First of all it is a graduation show; as the last step in an educational process, these shows are usually a means of individual emancipation from the institution. Therefore, the exhibition must be understood as a sum of individualities more than an effort to try to produce a collective act. In this sense, obvious gaps are created between the students, depending on the level of seriousness of their practice and their degree of investment in general. The second aspect is indivisible to the architecture of Röda Sten itself, which is a former boiler house. The main room monopolizes the viewer's attention, and this creates a struggle between the space and the works themselves.

It is therefore interesting to see that some of the works in this gigantic room develop the same sort of struggle, and it seems logical that the curator (Jason E. Bowman) decided to present them here. Two installations, one by Gunnhild Bjørshol and the other by Bjørn Wangen, are examples of this struggle for space. Bjørshol's installation is a fabric work that re-creates the pattern of a pedestrian crossing on the floor of the gallery using white stripes and black roses. During the opening, visitors were hesitating as to whether they should interact with the work but at some point, they decided to lie down on it. Connected to the personal story of a traffic accident, the

installation develops an in-between space that is both comfortable and dangerous at the same time. On the other hand, Wangen presents a work that tries to combine a more traditional idea of fine arts with the randomness of technology. In it, three robot arms lie on the floor where a large drawing rests. The robots are equipped with pencils and pastel sticks and are randomly convulsing. Creating a feeling of pity for the machine, the installation is also a reference to the traditional topos of creation in the art field. During the entire opening, the artist himself was preventing visitors from walking through his installation, thereby creating a floating moment when visitors were hesitating to approach what they normally should have. In both installations, the exhibition space and the definition of its limits became unstable.

Thus, it is not a surprise to see that the highlight of the show is located on the second floor, escaping the weight of the architecture and also the disorder and incoherence of the graduation show. Displayed in a more traditional gallery space, *Suspension* is a series of drawings by Martijn van Berkum. *Suspension* presents objects which are unfinished, in-progress or in a moment of uncertainty. Here is a covered statue, there a series of mysteriously floating pieces of furniture, there a strange structure made of tools used for construction work. In terms of style, these geometrical forms recall De Stijl, the Dutch avant-garde movement of design, architecture and art of the late 1910s-1920. One of the drawings, for example, is a sort of working table or an instrument that could have appeared in one of Mondrian's paintings or even been a Mondrian maker. For Theo van Doesburg, the leader and theoretician of De Stijl, "the controllable form for painting, sculpture and architecture" was the dominant leitmotiv. In other words, theirs was an attempt to achieve purity and a strict control of forms. Although van Berkum refers to the movement, he relocates it within an uncertain and impure space. One could say that he uses this rhetoric inside a negative space: while De Stijl was part of a modernist ideology where painting and mathematics were working hand in hand, van Berkum's abstractions create objects that are not well defined, but instead are floating, literally in suspension. In this sense, they carry at the same time stillness and movement where the most interesting aspects are not to be seen.

Prior to making *Suspension*, the artist was working with combinations of texts and photos dealing with the idea of landscape. This notion was central to the series of drawings, *This land is a land and a land and a land* in which context becomes the framework that allows any subject to locate, interpret and elaborate a sense of hierarchy within the action of viewing. However, this long-term investigation is directly challenged by *Suspension*, context seems to be erased or in a process of vanishing. It is definitely not absent, but each drawing is an attempt to create an object that tries to transcend its own context. Working directly on a large roll of paper, the artist cut the drawings out after they were completed. Thus, the drawings themselves create their own format, their own invisible context. By evacuating color and the line, the series works with planes and empties, with surfaces and shadows. This allows *Suspension* to develop jointly a modest form and a very conceptual intention.

Within an exhibition that creates more confusion than unity, contributions such as Martin van Berkum's highlight the process of opening one's artistic work to further investigation, to the winter that sighed to the spring.

Adrien Siberchicot