

LISSON GALLERY

*Kunstforum*  
28 February 2019

**KUNSTforum**

# Nathalie Djurberg und Hans Berg in der Frankfurter Schirn Kunsthalle

28. FEBRUAR 2019 · MUSEEN & INSTITUTIONEN



Vom 28. Februar bis zum 26. Mai 2019 stellt die Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt/Main erstmals in großem Umfang das Werk von Nathalie Djurberg und Hans Berg in Deutschland vor. Die Ausstellung gruppiert sich um drei großformatige Rauminstallationen, die bei uns in dieser Zusammenstellung noch nie öffentlich zu sehen waren: „The Parade“ (2011), „The Potato“ (2008) und „The Experiment“ (2009). Insgesamt umfasst die Ausstellung vierzig Video- und Soundarbeiten. „In spielerisch erzählten, düsteren Fabeln voller schwarzem Humor werden die großen Fragen der Menschheit verhandelt.“ Djurbergs „Puppen aus Knetmasse, Ton, Textil und Kunsthaar sind Protagonisten einer filmischen Narration, die seit 2004 durch die Musik von Hans Berg ergänzt wird.“ In ihrer Reihe „Atelierbesuche“ hat Anneli Botz in „Kunstforum“ Bd. 257 das Duo Djurberg/Berg interviewt. <http://www.schirn.de>

Dazu in Band 257 erschienen:



## Atelierbesuche

Im Atelier von Nathalie Djurberg und Hans Berg

VON BOTZ, ANNELI · ATELIERBESUCHE

Dazu in Band 227 erschienen:



## Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg

»Maybe This is a Dream«

VON MÜLLER, SABINE ELSA · AUSSTELLUNGEN

# LISSON GALLERY

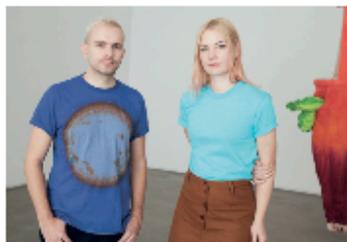
*Beaux Arts*  
June 2018

BeauxArts  
&Cie

## **Six talents décapants**

De la HD hyperréaliste à l'argile ou au fusain, ces jeunes artistes créent des univers tour à tour loufoques, poétiques et transgressifs. Portraits hauts en couleur.





## Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg

### Entre tendresse et débauche

Nés en 1978, en Suède.

Leur modelé tendre et texturé en dit long sur leur dépravation. Humains ou non, les personnages en argile de Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg sont possédés et exhalent un parfum sulfureux. Corps élastiques, lèvres pulpeuses, justaucorps en

sequins ou latex, ils se caressent, se contorsionnent ou s'exhibent sur les beats d'une techno hypnotique. Rêve ou cauchemar ? Entre innocence et luxure, ces films aux couleurs pimpantes sont de petits bordels inconfortables. Présent dans les circuits de l'art contemporain et auteur d'installations, ce duo suédois exhume des inconscients les peurs et fantasmes les plus transgressifs. Un univers tactile, lugubre, aussi sordide que jouissif.

DE GAUCHE À DROITE

#### **No VIP**

Ce petit cochon fait partie des Lilliputiens confectionnés par les artistes et présentés sous forme d'installation. Ou quand les figures innocentes de notre enfance renaissent de leurs cendres pour nous hanter.

2017, tissu, rembourrage, câble, résine époxy, silicone et bols peints, 28 x 18 x 49 cm.

#### **Worship [extrait]**

Bienvenue dans la jungle bling-bling des désirs. *Worship* est une immersion dans un royaume de phallus pop, de grosses motos clinquantes et de marionnettes en chaleur.

2016, animation en pâte à modeler, vidéo, audio, 8'6".



#### **Delights of an**

##### **Undirected Mind [extrait]**

Comme les réminiscences d'un enfer perdu, cette vidéo est un croisement entre *le Petit Chaperon rouge* et le dessin animé *My Little Pony* version dark. L'éveil d'une sexualité déviante dans une maison de poupée.

2016, animation en pâte à modeler, vidéo, audio, 6'40".



LISSON GALLERY

artforum.com

11 May 2018

# ARTFORUM



Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg, *The Parade* (detail), 2011, eighty-two mixed-media sculptures, five video projections with sound. Installation view, New Museum, New York, 2012. Photo: Benoit Pailley.

STOCKHOLM

## Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg

MODERNA MUSEET | STOCKHOLM

Skeppsholmen

June 16 - September 9

Curated by Lena Essling

This midcareer survey of Berlin-based artists Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg, “A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air,” marks their first comprehensive exhibition at a major museum in their home country of Sweden. Djurberg has been refining her Claymation technique since 2001, folding visceral allegories and painterly

tableaux into fantastical tales propelled by the deep biological drives for sex, violence, and power. Berg, her collaborator since 2004, sets these narratives to hypnotic electronic soundtracks that offer profundity to the absurdity of her clay formations. In addition to a teeming compilation of more than a dozen such films and a selection of new sculptures, the exhibition will feature four immersive installations, including *The Experiment*, 2009, and *The Parade*, 2011. The accompanying catalogue will vivify the works with contributions by the show’s curator, Lena Essling; musician David Toop; artistic director Massimiliano Gioni; and philosopher Patricia MacCormack. *Travels to the Contemporary and Modern Art Museum of Trento and Rovereto, Italy, October 5, 2018–January 13, 2019; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, February 28–May 26, 2019.*

# LISSON GALLERY

*Elephant*  
Winter 2017



# The Delights of Undirected Minds

# Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg

“I think I know how it’s going to look, how it’s going to be made and, in the end, I don’t. It’s so shocking that the mind thinks it knows.” Artist duo Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg discuss consciousness and the illusion of choice, sexuality and surrealism, desire and worship—and, of course, their music- and animation-making practices—with Louisa Elderton.



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*“If you’re using a medium that doesn’t have that much history, it can give mental freedom”*

Previous pages  
*Shame & Guilt*, 2016

This page  
Portrait by Ériver Hijano

Following pages  
*Passing Comfort*, 2016



ALL WORK IMAGES © NATHALIE DJURBERG & HANS BERG; COURTESY LISSON GALLERY

As I leave behind the sullen grey skies and bitter cold of Berlin's streets to enter the home of Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg, which doubles as their studio, they are busily preparing for an exhibition at London's Lisson Gallery. Animation edits are being refined, vinyl records are stacked high, and sculptures of big-bottomed moons, mischievous carrots and deviant *My Little Pony* dolls are staging their own orgiastic dramaturgy on a raised white platform. I remove my shoes to slip and slide on the shiny wood floor, socks offering no support.

Both artists were born in Sweden, but they actually met in Berlin in 2003. At the time Djurberg was already working on her signature clay and plasticine animations, while Berg was making techno music. Together, their practice finds a way of accessing and physicalizing our most hidden (and often dark) desires, giving form and sound to these apparitions. During our conversation, sexuality, consciousness, choice and happiness are threads that constantly interweave, leading to a rich and energizing discussion—one that proves we can never really know how things will turn out when beginning a chilly winter's day.

Louisa Elderton: Many of your works present surreal or even absurdist approaches to ideas of sexuality. Why do you make work about that subject matter in particular?

Nathalie Djurberg: I think that much of my work deals with sexuality. The very first animations I did were about sexuality and desire. Sex is something that connects all humans and animals, and is one of our most fundamental needs and instincts. For me, art is personal because it comes out of me, but I am really channeling what I see as basic human needs and desires, and visualizing every aspect of those desires—even those that could potentially be considered shameful or violent. The difference between Hans and me is that he's very clear on most things and I am not—sorry that I'm talking about you!

Hans Berg: Let's see if I agree...

ND: I identify easily with a variety of characters. I say: "Oh, that could be me, I could have done that." I internally examine whether I would have done that, if I was in that situation, with that background, and mostly I answer a probable yes. I never feel sure of what I'm really like—how the external and internal versions

of myself align or diverge. But Hans is always sure of who he is. For me, I'm much more amorphous, I could be anything and perform anyone—that is what you see in the work. I am performing those characters, so to speak. For our exhibition [at Lisson Gallery] there are three animations: the third title we stole from Pink Floyd, *The Dark Side of the Moon* (2017), because it's about secrets. The first film, *Worship* (2016), is about exposing the superficiality of the world today; scraping away at it and exposing its underbelly. When you look at music videos (particularly hip-hop), which often appear shallow and objectify the female body, it seems as though it is misogynistic and against women. But if you scrape away the surface and look at its essence, it's about worship. So for me, that work is about exploring how worship relates to desire—what happens when I peel away the layers or divisions between desire, sexuality and worship.

HB: None of the videos are actually explicit. It feels explicit but it's not.

LE: So it's about creating a certain mood.

ND: The second animation, *Delights of an Undirected Mind* (2016), is about when you're little and you start feeling sexual, but there's no direction to it or assumption about what sexuality is or should be—it is instinctual. The work is thus [akin to] raw desire, sexuality that never left the initial early state, never developed from adolescence to adulthood. Every animation is more about the feeling that it evokes than what is really happening or being depicted. I get asked sometimes what I want to say with the work, as if I have a specific and clear message, like a preacher of sorts. But it's not about that. If you are a preacher, you have to believe that you know more than someone else.

HB: It's about exploring.

ND: I feel like I don't have anything to teach anyone. It's just a point of view.

LE: It's interesting that you say your work is about feeling rather than narrative content per se, particularly because that is a profound aspect of music—the feeling it creates.

HB: Music is so open-ended. It's often about feeling, not about this intellectual pursuit.

LE: What's your starting point for an animation and at which point do the music and imagery begin to interweave?

HB: With the film, it's some idea Nathalie has; some thought.

ND: It's often just there, nagging at me. If I haven't been able to let go of an idea or issue, that's usually when I have the urge to begin working on a new animation. I start to look for the solution to that issue. If I can't find the solution or resolution somewhere else outside of me, in other people's art, music or film, then it becomes an idea that goes into the work.

HB: But if it's some burning question inside you, you can't solve that by consuming something outside of yourself.

ND: When you can't, it's like an obsession and then the idea forms. For me, the most interesting thing about art is the process that goes into making it, to see the various paths it takes; to think it was going in one direction and then suddenly it veers off in another direction. You have to trust that and follow it.

LE: Will you discuss the idea together or do you work quite independently? When does the dialogue begin?

HB: It begins pretty early, but not really about the work. I think the dialogue is about the obsession and things around it.

ND: Yes, about the obsession or the conflict. I often ask myself, "If there was a perfect world and it was happy, would I still make art?" For me, it's about examining and revealing something in myself that I am not able to reveal in any other way. I expose aspects of myself in order to get at the heart of the human condition.

LE: But no one could ever be totally happy. The broad spectrum of our emotions is what makes us human.

ND: Sure, but if you're not happy it's impossible not to seek happiness. Also, there is great beauty in the difficult moments. Happy moments just pass by, there is no glue to them, no need to examine or correct. There's a lot of violence in the animations and then there's moments of tenderness or beauty, it becomes so heightened, so magnified. It's about that polarity.



LE: I've just been writing about Michel Eugène Chevreul and his contrasting colour theory: that when colours are observed adjacently they directly influence one another. It's the same concept.

HB: Which goes for everything, in a way.

LE: How do you approach the making of sound for your animations, Hans?

HB: When she [Nathalie] starts animating, I begin to think of ideas of what the music could be. It's easy to just think about the music in your mind, as it's all so open at that stage. But when you actually start working on it, you make one decision and it just continually narrows down. I think it's the same for Nathalie.

ND: Yes, I think it's like my own process but sped up by a hundred times, because my work takes such a long time. Hans might despair about the music for a few days, and in another few days it will be done.

HB: Yes, it's quick, but it's always the same process. In the beginning I think: "It's horrible, it's so bad," and then sud-

denly two days later it's like: "Oooh, this is good."

ND: You have to deconstruct the ideas that you have when you started making it.

LE: So there's a different time ratio when it comes to the music and the animation?

HB: Completely different. It's so much faster to make music than it is to take all the pictures.

ND: With the animation you sit, then you move it, take a picture, and then move it some more, and so on and so on.

LE: How did you begin to work together?

ND: We met here in Berlin through a mutual friend, and she suggested that he make music for me. Beforehand, I had tried to make music on my own, which is now laughable. Initially, I gave him a finished animation and said: "OK, see what you can do with this." What he did changed it completely. It added another layer; it changed the film. It was what I had wanted to do, but hadn't been able to make on my own.

HB: It's about enhancing the emotion. All music is emotional, although sometimes you don't evoke the emotions that you think you're going to in people.

ND: So then I just gave him another one, and another one. For a while, I was quite decisive about what I wanted—drums for this one—and it came to a point where I hadn't really realized that I could let go of the responsibility. I had an animation where I was very sure of what I wanted; Hans did what I wanted, and it turns out it was not what I wanted! It didn't work at all. So then I realized that music was not my thing and that he can do it much better without me. That was like freedom for me.

LE: How do you discuss the work together?

HB: It's so sensitive to play something early on. It might be just an idea—a tenth of what it's going to be—and you don't think it's good yet.

ND: You have to be really careful not to destroy the other person's process. I feel like a few times I did destroy his process.



or made him unsure about it. So you have to hold back. But it's the same the other way, sometimes I have an idea where I really want to do this, and Hans is like [makes an unsure face].

LE: So you have to be mindful of each other?

HB: Definitely. When we're discussing ideas, it can be difficult. It's so sensitive and open, as if someone comes and pokes you.

ND: Sometimes you just don't know where it's going to end up. We almost never talk in terms of: "What are you doing now? This, this, this." It's never like that; we're always talking around it, not really touching the subject exactly. That's a natural process, not touching it. In a way, if I was able to describe in words what I'm doing, then I wouldn't make animations, I would just use the words.

LE: Visual art is often ineffable, demarcating something that words can't quite touch or describe.

HB: It's so fascinating because with words you can do other things that you can't do with music or with images. I think it's extremely interesting how different things can be expressed in different ways. It's the combination of images and music that makes it so great because it's emotional, but also starts an intellectual thought process. You're influenced by the music faster because it hits you more quickly than images, which you have to process with time.

LE: I'm interested to hear that the music and image arrangement doesn't necessarily arise from a direct conversation between the two of you. It's more roundabout, and stems from your relationship with one another.

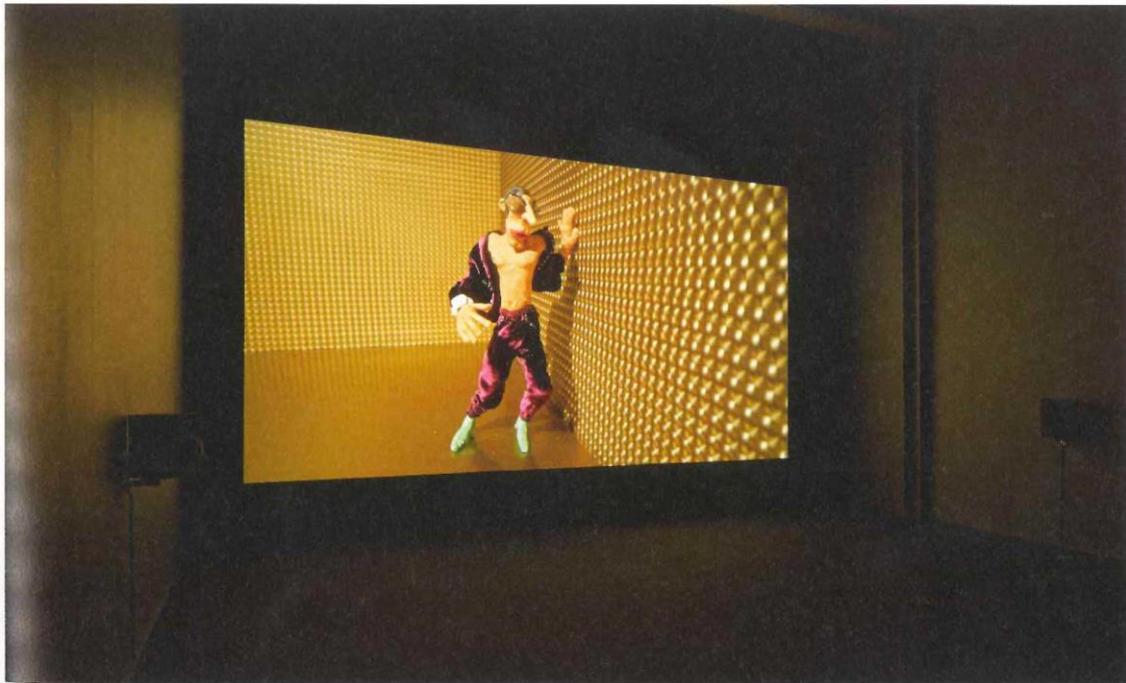
ND: I think it's also because we have the same background. Even though I went to an art academy, I taught animation to myself. In the beginning it was so experimental and the work was very simple. Even moving the camera and understanding that I could edit it in the camera was like: "Oh wow." So that meant that the

ideas always came first and the technical ability dragged behind. So it's a question of technique alongside ideas, thinking, "Okay, so how do I do this to realize the idea?"

LE: So it's about the purity of an idea and how best to communicate that?

ND: Yes, but somehow it's also laziness. Even now, I could take courses that would make me much more professional. But I don't. I don't really have an interest in that.

LE: That can produce such unique, interesting and idiosyncratic approaches to work. I've just finished editing a book called *Vitamin C: Clay & Ceramics in Contemporary Art* (Phaidon), in which you both feature. Because so many clay and ceramics departments closed in art schools in the 1980s [particularly in the UK], many artists are not formally trained in how to use the medium, and that has produced very unique approaches to making.



ND: Exactly. In terms of animation, there is a history, but the history of art and animation is not very long. It's not like painting, which goes back to the start of civilization. Of course, you're always free to do whatever you want: art is the place to do that; but it's difficult not to look back at history. So if you're using a medium that doesn't have that much history, it can give mental freedom. Or at least for someone like me. Some artists don't have a problem with that, or love that history, referencing back and back.

LE: Damien Hirst said he could hardly even contemplate making work once he had seen the paintings of Francis Bacon.

HB: Yes, sometimes it's like that with music. Sometimes I think, "There's just so much good music out there."

ND: I'm interested in the idea of choice. Everyone thinks and feels that they make a choice and that it can shape their reality. But actually, research suggests that the choice is already made for you. For me, that idea gives me a lot of freedom. I have a brother who studies consciousness science—philosophy, psychology and a lot of neuroscience—and for him, reading about this subject where there is no choice—that you never made a choice, you only believe that you made a choice—is incredibly difficult because he really wants to be in charge.

HB: You could enter a life crisis just from studying!

ND: If you look at it from the perspective of spirituality, or think in terms of non-duality, they say the same thing. There's not really a choice. But even if you could actually make a choice, you could never know where that choice is going to lead because there are so many, many different potentialities.

LE: So you think we're not in control?

ND: No, I think we're completely out of control, with the illusion of control. And that's fine; I have the illusion of control too.

HB: It's practical, maybe.

ND: There is a point where my brother and I start fighting. If you say you have no control and, for example, you don't have any money, then you could go out and do whatever you wanted to. But it's like, no, would you really do that?

LE: Well, that's a question of where morality sits within this concept of individual control. Lack of control shouldn't necessarily equal lawlessness or chaos.

ND: It's more about instinct and what you're pulled towards. If you remove those layers of difficulty in yourself then you wouldn't necessarily do those [bad] things.

[The photographer Ériver Hijano arrives.]

Ériver Hijano: There's a new paper and TED Talk that's been published by the philosopher Dan Dennett which is called "The Illusion of Consciousness". It's actually this exact argument. Although they're trying to figure out what the evolutionary point of consciousness is. We don't really need consciousness, there's no explanation for it. One of the things is the ability to organize and converse, tied to language, and there's also this sense of freedom being tied to responsibility—that if people believe that everything is predetermined then they're more prone to act poorly and immorally.

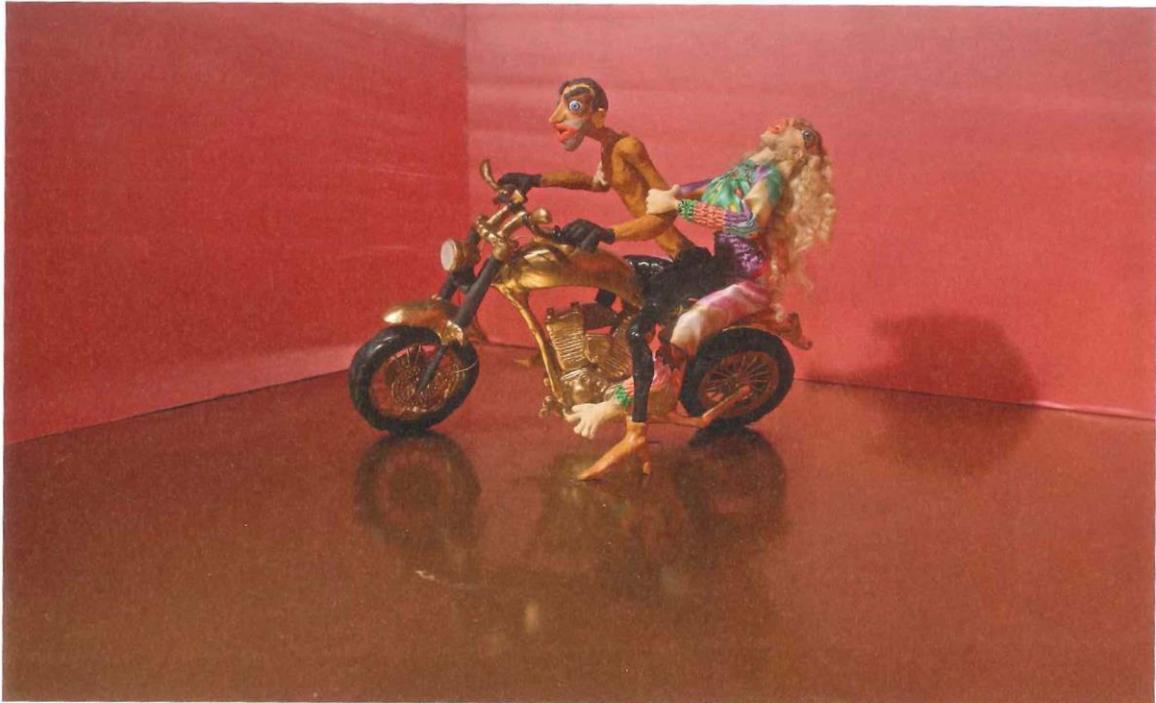
ND: That's so interesting. Referring back to our work and how we're pretty similar, Hans learned to make music the same way I learned animation. He started DJing by having two tape recorders next to each other.

HB: I was trying to make mixtapes.

ND: Was that a choice then? There's not really a choice. There's just an interest, and that interest pulls you in a very specific direction. I can see that with animation; I think I know how it's going to look, how it's going to be made and, in the end, I don't. It's so shocking that the mind thinks it knows.

Previous pages  
Installation views  
*Who Am I to Judge, or, It Must  
Be Something Delicious*,  
Lisson Gallery  
London, March 2017

Opposite page  
*Worship*, 2016  
Stills



# LISSON GALLERY

*Studio International*  
4 May 2017

## studio international

### Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg: Who am I to Judge, or, It Must be Something Delicious

Lust, sexual desire, sin and guilt are explored in a series of short claymation films supported by a new sculptural installation from the Swedish artist duo Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg



Lisson Gallery, London  
31 March – 6 May 2017

by ALEXANDER GLOVER

In his landmark book *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud noted: “The virtuous man contents himself with dreaming that which the wicked man does in actual life.” If you wanted to find a visual representation of this statement, you could certainly begin with this new exhibition by Swedish duo Nathalie Djurberg (b1978) and Hans Berg (b1978). The only misleading aspect of this is that the work is not just a dream, but also a nightmare. If you were born in a Catholic household, as I was, feelings of guilt and shame towards indulging your innermost desires are familiar friends. But there is nothing quite like the discomfort felt by witnessing an animated lust-ridden wolf fellate the udder of a cow, on all fours (obviously), to the sound of a dark and pulsating techno beat in their short film *Delights of an Undirected Mind* (2016). This is the wonderfully warped world of Djurberg and Berg.

## Studio links

Vic McEwan: 'I played a paddle-steamer to an audience of 1,000 and used a hospital bed as a cello'

Maggie's Centre for cancer care, Oldham

Portraying a Nation: Germany 1919–1933

Afruz Amighi: 'I wanted to make a procession of characters that embodied both good and bad'

Evgenia Arbugaeva: 'I'm always making up stories and believing in magic'

Ida Applebroog: Mercy Hospital

Willow Hai: 'The jade burial suit is the single most important object in the show – and the best in China'

George Drivas: Laboratory of Dilemmas – Venice Biennale 2017

Masterpiece Fair 2017

A Handful of Dust: Photography after Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp

The first work on show, *Who am I to Judge, or, It Must be Something Delicious* (2017), is a sculptural installation made specifically to go alongside three short claymation films. At first glance, you could be forgiven for thinking that the installation is a children's playpen filled with toys. But as you get closer, and with Berg's haunting sonic accompaniment creeping through the room, you begin to understand that the scene is, in fact, quite sinister. A large white platform or plinth supports an army of Djurberg's mischievous anthropomorphised Plasticine creations, the sight of which is reminiscent of the satirical novel *Gulliver's Travels* when the tiny Lilliputians capture and tie down the comparatively large Lemuel Gulliver. Except, here, there are several of these situations going on at the same time. Various minute figures, including acorns with arms and legs, assault and ravage, en masse, innocent-looking suited elephants and pink ponies. A banana has its skin slowly peeled off while, elsewhere, many of the sordid perpetrators smoke cigarettes. Cut-out speech bubbles litter the platform, spelling out such utterings as, "Was it remarkable?", "I did nothing to help my brother", "What crap is buried here", and the most ominous one simply saying, "no VIP".

The installation has echoes of Jake and Dinos Chapman's *The Sum of All Evil* (2013), where a mass of crucifixes bearing hundreds of Ronald McDonalds are spread across a Holocaust-inspired setting. But where the Chapman brothers attack key figures linked to capitalism, Djurberg and Berg make no such attack. There is no specific blame necessarily being thrown out in *Who am I to Judge, or, It Must be Something Delicious*. The "bad" characters are interchangeable with others that are being assaulted. Instead, this piece, like a lot of Djurberg and Berg's work, is simply an examination of the kinds of thoughts and actions humans indulge in at their most perverse. The soundtrack to this perversion, played on three record players with one vinyl label stating, "There is nobody home here" makes you feel as if you are in the depths of a dark and treacherous jungle, moved along by the humming vibrations of what cannot be seen. But if you continue into the custom-built viewing room in the backspace of the gallery, you will find yourself in a whole different jungle of darkness.

Here, a trilogy of short claymation films play on a continuous loop, tied together through their exploration of themes of innocence, depravity and sexuality-related shame. In *Delights of an Undirected Mind*, the viewer is drawn into a stream of consciousness dream that is pedalled along by familiar characters derived from *Little Red Riding Hood* and *My Little Pony*, but in very unfamiliar territory. The dream is that of a young teenage girl, exploring sexual fantasy, ranging from the seemingly innocent to the deviant. The sexual allure of certain foods features, with two cucumbers spooning each other in bed, while a mouse clammers on a slice of cheese, slowly massaging it until aroused. Interspersed throughout this dream sequence is a matador, slowly caressing his own body, taking swipes at a cake with a long sabre. These sinful desires then reach a climax with the young girl defecating on her own bed, only to sweep her shame away under the pillow.

Sexual desire is explored further in *Worship* (2016), where the various tropes and stereotypes of pornography are assessed. Backed by Berg's pounding electro-pop score, various characters switch between victim and perpetrator among a sea of latex, whips and phallic objects. In an interview at Kunstraum Dornbirn in Austria in 2016, in which the two artists discussed the presentation of *Worship*, Djurberg recalls how, during the making of *Worship*, she began to realise that her view of her own sexuality was shifting. Djurberg suggests that she felt as though she was "not just a victim, but also the perpetrator and it can be in very subtle forms".

*Dark Side of the Moon* (2017), the most recent claymation short by Djurberg and Berg, relates to hidden trauma and finding the strength to deal with it. A girl wanders through the forest with a nervous pig, arriving at a locked cottage with a mooning moon and a smoking wolf parading around it. When the girl unsuccessfully attempts to open the cottage door, the moon hints to the girl that eating sweets will provide comfort and fulfilment. The source of the trauma in *Dark Side of the Moon* is not totally apparent, but if *Delights of an Undirected Mind* was the dream, *Dark Side of the Moon* is the nightmare. Through these videos collectively, are Djurberg and Berg simply "dreaming that which the wicked man does in actual life"? We can only dream.

The Guardian  
29 March 2017

Wednesday 29.03.17 theguardian



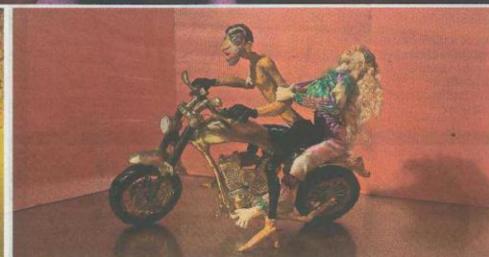
Arts

## Once upon a bondage crocodile

Twisted fairy tales beneath a buttock moon, crocodiles cracking whips, some sweaty bump'n'grind with a corncob ... Nathalie Djurberg tells **Hettie Judah** about the agony and the trauma behind her weird claymations



'Humour can break through' ... left, Hans Berg and Nathalie Djurberg; top, a still from Delights of an Undirected Mind; right, Worship



**W**hen the crocodile wearing a bondage collar starts whipping the giant rat riding a motorbike made

of wieners, you may find yourself thinking: "Wow, this really can't get much odder." But you will, of course, be wrong - even though the crocodile is already in bed with a latex-encrusted octopus and a fox in a fox-fur stole.

Nathalie Djurberg - the maker of Delights of an Undirected Mind, as this animation is called - is on a mission to probe the more uncomfortable corners of the human psyche, those sticky recesses where the loose term "sex" is used as convenient shorthand for a tangle of sly and shaming urges and revulsions.

The fact that the Swedish artist undertakes these explorations in claymation - a medium one might assume to have reached its erotic climax with Gromit operating a sexy bunny marionette in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit -

adds a healthy dose of the ridiculous. Rendered in Plasticine, scenarios that might otherwise cause mental scarring and a lifelong aversion to condensed milk become oddly lovable.

Delights is one of three recent works - all created by Djurberg with her partner, the composer and occasional techno DJ Hans Berg - for a show that opens this week at London's Lisson Gallery. "Humour can break through in a way that being serious can't," says Djurberg over tea and coconut milk during a pause in the show's installation. "I think humour is one of the smartest ways to communicate. As soon as you laugh, you let your guard down. It's also very difficult to make something monumental with stop-motion. Hans can do that with the music - but if I try to do something monumental, it just cracks me up."

Djurberg and Berg divide their time between a rural community in their native Sweden ("a village with about 20 houses, a gas station and a forest,

but almost no people left") and an apartment in Berlin. In both places, Djurberg works in a home studio, making the clay sculptures, sets, costumes and props. She craves this stage - the physical making - often producing more than she needs just to extend the process, before the months of animation commence.

It is not just the endless slog of the animating she doesn't look forward to: Djurberg's films can be emotionally raw and at times troubling. "Sometimes it's just lovely and I'm really happy," she says. "But when it's an animation that's taking a tougher tone psychologically, it can be exhausting."

The most recent work, Dark Side of the Moon, was so gruelling that, for the first time, Djurberg considered abandoning it. "Moon is about hidden trauma and things you have to push through. I wanted to quit making it, but I'm too proud to stop. I started animating, then stopped for a month. It was like walking through mud. But

because I have my studio at home, there was never any escaping this bloody animation. The mood in the apartment was terrible."

Set in a forest clearing, Dark Side of the Moon focuses on five warped fairytale archetypes: a not-so-little girl, a suave smoking wolf, a neurotic pig, a moon with mooning buttocks, and a locked cottage. Something terribly unpleasant seems to have happened, but quite what is unclear. When the girl struggles and fails to open the cottage door, the moon suggests that she comforts herself instead with sweets, to sate her emptiness.

Delights of an Undirected Mind, meanwhile, explores the curious undirected desires experienced in early childhood, and the dawning of a sense of shame. "I remember sexual dreams and fantasies from when I was very little," says Djurberg, "and they did not have a target. They were absurd."

The third work, Worship, is a sweaty, butt-loving excursion into sexually charged music videos. Its Plasticine cast grind themselves ecstatically against props - from sequin-encrusted fish to a giant bejewelled corncob - in a state of veneration and near orgasm. It's a worship of the physical body and, rather than a pastiche of hip-hop, Berg's music samples devotional chants and induces shudders with its heavy bass and mounting tension. (An LP will be put out by Vinyl Factory to coincide with the show.)

While the atmosphere is undeniably charged, there's actually nothing more explicit to see in Worship than split latex, spilt milk and the occasional supporting string: a reminder that all these erotic raptures are nothing more than stop-motion models. As Djurberg says of her medium: "With clay, no one really gets hurt."

PHOTOGRAPHS NATHALIE DJURBERG AND HANS BERG; LISSON GALLERY

Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg are at Lisson Gallery, London, from 31 March until 6 May. Details: [lissongallery.com](http://lissongallery.com)

# LISSON GALLERY

Cision Wire  
5 May 2016

<http://news.cision.com/wanas-konst/r/nathalie-djurberg---hans-berg--rafael-gomezbarros-and-per-kirkeby-opening-at-the-wanas-foundation,c2003452>

**NEWS**  
Powered by **CISION**

## Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Rafael Gomezbarr and Per Kirkeby opening at The Wanas Foundation

THU, MAY 05, 2016 19:21 CET

The Wanas Foundation – Wanås Konst opens this year's exhibitions on Sunday, May 15. The art duo Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg (Sweden) along with Rafael Gómezbarros (Colombia) occupy the sculpture park, art gallery, and buildings of Wanås. They reflect the age we live in and drift between dream and nightmare, internal movements and migration.

Djurberg & Berg seduce and shock us, blending desire and fantasy. In the Art Gallery, they debut their new film work, the stop-motion animation *Worship*, 2016, and their unique world of images inhabit the beech forest as for the first time they display a large sculpture group outdoors. Also for the first time, a work is being installed on the façades of the 15th century Wanås castle and the art gallery as Gómezbarros' installation *Casa Tomada*, comprised of hundreds of gigantic ants, is presented in the sculpture park. He is motivated by the contemporary history of his homeland and tells of a violent reality. In the Art Gallery, Per Kirkeby (Denmark) displays new monoprints as well as paintings and sculptures from 1981 to 2016. Press preview Thursday, May 12, 12pm.



Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, *Worship*, 2016, stop motion animation. © Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg; Courtesy Giò Marconi Gallery and Lisson Gallery.

### **Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg show a new film work and a large outdoor installation**

Djurberg & Berg represent one of Sweden's most remarkable oeuvres in the international art scene. For Wanås Konst, they are creating their first large outdoor installation, present an installation in the art gallery, and debut a new film. work In the new works, they use sculpture, sound, and light to reinforce and distort experiences of nature. In recent years, they have moved from film to sculpture, as in a constant spiral of transpositions, and wandered from figurative to abstract and back again.

At Wanås Konst, we meet the different faces of their practice. In the park, they present their first large scale outdoor work, *In Dreams*, 2016, a sculpture group that takes nature as its starting point—but in a transformed version. The sculptures are reflected in a silvery, shimmering material. They refer to *Alice in Wonderland* in the new work, and Djurberg describes the group of sculptures as a teenage party: "The teenager's conviction, with that fantastic self-assurance, that she knows absolutely everything and has a firm grasp on reality has been displaced; it is like waking up with one foot in this world and the other in an 'Alice in Wonderland' world."

The relatives of this sculpture group reside in the Wonderland of Djurberg & Berg, acorns wear ruffled underpants, a bird in heavy makeup smokes out of its rear end, and another bird, its eyes wide open, appears to be in a trance.

In the Art Gallery, they present a completely new film, the stop-motion animation *Worship*, 2016. With this, Djurberg & Berg return to clay animations after having worked in recent years with more abstract motifs and landscapes in charcoal and chalk as animated films. In the action, sexuality is ever-present: victims and perpetrators switch roles, evil is everywhere, characters exploit and are exploited. On the art gallery's upper floor, the duo's installation *Gates of the Festival*, 2014, is being shown for the first time in Sweden. This work combines neon sculptures that are synchronized with music and moving pictures.

Nathalie Djurberg (born in 1978 in Lysekil) & Hans Berg (born in 1978 in Rättvik) are two of Sweden's most remarkable artists of their generation. Djurberg began working with film while studying at Malmö Art Academy, and her animations of clay figures have attracted attention in large-scale solo exhibitions internationally. She and composer Hans Berg form a duo that has allowed the animations to wander off the screen and has created three-dimensional sculptures, installations, and stage designs with surrealist influences. Djurberg & Berg are based in Berlin. Since the Venice Art Biennale in 2009, they have investigated sculpture as expression and allow us to enter new worlds populated by birds, giant fruits, and glazed donuts. In Sweden, Djurberg & Berg's films were shown in a large exhibition at Kristianstad art gallery in 2010, and in 2012, they had a comprehensive exhibition at Röda Sten in Gothenburg. Their international exhibitions include Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, and Fondazione Prada in Milan. They have recently been featured in solo exhibitions at ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum in Denmark, the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) in Melbourne, and Gió Marconi in Milan, as well as in group exhibitions such as *The Great Mother* at Fondazione Trussardi, *An Introduction* at Fondazione Prada, *Arts and Foods* at the Triennale di Milano, as well as in Milan.

### **Rafael Gómezbarros' installation *Casa Tomada* occupies Wanås Castle**

Rafael Gómezbarros (born in 1972 in Santa Marta, Colombia) is being introduced to a Swedish audience for the first time. On the façades of the art gallery and Wanås castle, *Casa Tomada (House Taken)*, a work that is comprised of 300 half-meter-long sculptures of ants. For the artist, ants are a symbol of the industrious and hard-working migrant, transplantation across the world, and social organization. The ant's body is formed by skulls and reminds us how migration is intertwined with danger and death, and of the brutal reality in the artist's homeland. As the result of prolonged wars and conflicts, Colombia's borders hold millions of internal refugees today.

Since 2008, Gómezbarros has installed his hundreds of ants on public buildings in Colombia, but he shows when they are exhibited in other places around the world that they carry a story that reaches beyond Colombia's borders and impacts us all. The global migrant weaves together one place with another, the local with the global—Bromölla with Bogotá. Wars, urbanization, and economic inequality—the reasons behind people's movements in the world bear many similarities. *Casa Tomada* takes place in a highly relevant global context. The whole world is encapsulated in

Gómezbarros' ants. In the Art Gallery, visitors will find an exhibition with photographs documenting *Casa Tomada* on various buildings around the world and also a workshop that will be open during the exhibition.

Gómezbarros works in Bogotá and has done a number of notable exhibitions internationally, among them large installations at the Saatchi Gallery in London; Bienal del Fin del Mundo in Mar del Plata/Valparaiso, Argentina; the Offenes Kulturhaus center for contemporary art in Linz, Austria; the 11th Bienal de la Habana in Havana, Cuba; and the first Trienal Internacional del Caribe, Museo de Arte Moderno in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. He has also had a number of exhibitions with other works at museums and galleries in Colombia, such as Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino in Santa Marta, Museo de la Aduana in Barranquilla, Museo Bolivariano Arte Contemporáneo in Santa Marta, and Museo de Arte del Tolima in Tolima. In the autumn of 2014, contemporary culture program SVT Kobra featured Gómezbarros in an episode that garnered a great deal of attention.

**New work by Per Kirkeby in this year's *Revisit***

In the Art Gallery, visitors will find a suite of monoprints created especially for the exhibition that focuses on Per Kirkeby (b. 1938) and displays a long and multifaceted art practice. *Revisit* is a part of an exhibition series that highlights artists in the sculpture park. His red brick sculpture *Wanås*, 1994, is part of the sculpture park's permanent collection. With Kirkeby, the red bricks are set against the chalk drawings on black background, and standardized measurements against shapes that were formed by hand. In the exhibition, we can follow his versatility as an artist—through drawings, sculpture, and graphics—and see both older and completely new artworks. The images on black masonite, his “boards,” are dated from 1987 to 2009, the bronze sculptures are from 1981 to 2010, and a series of monoprints where each print is unique. Kirkeby has worked with masonite of the standard 122 x 122 cm format since the 1960s, creating both paintings and chalk drawings. Elements from nature recur frequently. The small bronze models are preliminary versions of Kirkeby's brick sculptures that are placed in landscapes and cities around the world; they are also models for impossible works or projects that never came to pass. The bronze sculptures bear the imprint of the hand that kneaded the clay, in contrast to the predetermined expression of the brick modules. Kirkeby works in series; motifs recur in altered, developed forms in every medium. One image gives birth to the next.

Per Kirkeby had his first solo exhibition at Den Frie artists' association in Copenhagen in 1965. Since the 1980s, he has occupied a strong position in the international arts scene and participated in exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale (1976, 1980, 1993 and 1997) and dOCUMENTA in Kassel, Germany (1982), as well as solo exhibitions at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark (2008), Tate Modern in London (2009), and others. Recent exhibitions 2016 include *Avantgardens Blå (The Avant-garde's Blue)* at Kunstföreningen GL STRAND, as well as Galleri Bo Bjerggaard, both in Copenhagen. Kirkeby held a position as professor at the Art Academy in Karlsruhe from 1978 to 1989 and at Städelschule in Frankfurt from 1989 to 2000.

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**Press Preview**

Thursday, May 12; Lunch 12pm, followed by a tour with Elisabeth Millqvist, Artistic Director of The Wanas Foundation – Wanås Konst, as well as artists in attendance.

RSVP by May 11 to Sofia Bertilsson, [press@wanaskonst.se](mailto:press@wanaskonst.se)

Welcome!

**Exhibition Information**

**Vernissage: Sunday, May 15, 2016, inauguration 1pm**

**Exhibition Dates: May 15-November 6, 2016**

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**Exhibitions 2016**

Vernissage and Season Opening in the Sculpture Park: Sunday, May 15, 2016

Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg

Rafael Gómezbarros

*Revisit* – Per Kirkeby

Exhibition Dates: May 15 – November 6, 2016

The Sculpture Park with the Collection

The sculpture park with its permanent collection is open daily year-round from 8am – 7pm

#### **On the Calendar**

Summer Season: May 15 – Nov. 6, 2016

May 16 – September 30, Monday-Sunday 10am – 5pm

Midsummer Eve – Closed

October – weekends only, 11am – 4pm

Oct. 31 – Nov. 6 (autumn break), open daily 11am – 4pm

#### **Super Sunday, June 12, 2016**

**David Svensson, *Världens hem* (The Home of the World)**

**Maria Bajt**, Children's book room and book release of *Cows Can Dream* by Maria Bajt and Jason Diakité in English and of the audio book in Arabic

**Exhibition dates: June 12 – November 6, 2016**

#### **Wanås Konst Live**

**Autumn Choreographies at Wanås Konst**

**By and with Dinis Machado, Anna Pehrsson, Zoë Poluch, and Rachel Tess.**

**Program: August – October 2016.**

**Helena Olsson, *Touch Tour***

**Sunday, September 11, 2pm**

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#### **Ongoing**

Winter season at Wanås Konst

November 2, 2015 – May 14, 2016

Sculpture Park open daily 8am – 7pm

Art Gallery, indoor installations, Café, Shop and Deli opening May15.

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Wanås Konst/The Wanas Foundation

Wanås, SE-289 90 Knislinge, Sweden

[www.wanaskonst.se](http://www.wanaskonst.se)

#### **For questions and further information, please contact:**

Sofia Bertilsson, 46 (0)733 86 68 20, [press@wanaskonst.se](mailto:press@wanaskonst.se)

Web: [www.wanaskonst.se](http://www.wanaskonst.se)

Newsroom: <http://news.cision.com/wanas-konst> (download high resolution images)

*Wanås Konst – Center for Art and Education, presents and communicates contemporary art that challenges and redefines society. Wanås Konst produces site-specific international art and learning in an innovative and available way for the many. Wanås is a place in the world where art, nature and history meet. Wanås consist of a medieval castle, an organic farm, a scenic sculpture park and an art gallery in southern Sweden. Wanås Restaurant Hotel opens on the premises Fall 2016.*

*Since 1987 contemporary site-specific art by international artists has been produced at Wanås. Today the sculpture park holds more than 50 permanent works, created specifically for Wanås Konst by artists such as Ann Hamilton, Jenny Holzer, Yoko Ono and Ann-Sofi Sidén et al. Every year thousands of children take part in educational activities. Read*

more at [Wanås Konst](#) / [The Wanås Foundation](#)

#### Tags:

[Alice in Wonderland](#) , [Knislinge](#) , [colombia](#) , [Östra Göinge](#) , [Jason Diakité](#) , [Santo Domingo](#) , [Per Kirkeby](#) , [Tate Modern](#) , [Louisiana Museum of Modern Art](#) , [Röda Sten](#) , [Santa Marta](#) , [Wanås Konst](#) , [mattias givell](#) , [Elisabeth Millqvist](#) , [Hans Berg](#) , [Nathalie Djurberg](#) , [Rachel Tess](#) , [the wanås foundation](#) , [skulpturpark](#) , [Sculpture Park](#) , [marika wachtmeister](#) , [Bogotá](#) , [maria bajt](#) , [wanås slott](#) , [elan](#) , [Nathalie Djurberg Hans Berg](#) , [rafael gomezbarros](#) , [Museo de Arte del Tolima](#) , [Museo de la Aduana](#) , [Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino](#) , [Museo Bolivariano Arte Contemporáneo](#) , [Fondazione Prada](#) , [Fondazione Trussardi](#) , [Kunsthalle Wien](#) , [Gió Marconi](#) , [Offenes Kulturhaus](#) , [Malmö Art Academy](#) , [Avantgardens Blå](#) , [brick sculpture](#) , [Zoë Poluch](#) , [Anna Pehrsson](#) , [Dinis Machado](#) , [Städelschule](#) , [Helena Olsson](#) , [Wonderland of Djurberg Berg](#) , [Wanås Castle Rafael Gómezbarros](#) , [Venice Art Biennale](#) , [Museo de Arte Moderno](#) , [Trienal Internacional del Caribe](#) , [program SVT Kobra](#) , [Triennale di Milano](#) , [Galleri Bo Bjerggaard](#) , [Den Frie](#) , [Sofia Bertilsson](#) , [dOCUMENTA](#) , [contemporary art](#) , [outdoor sculpture](#) , [land and art network](#) , [the long run](#) , [gio marconi gallery](#) , [monoprint](#) , [permanent collection](#) , [Wanås Castle](#) , [contemporary dance](#)

## About Us

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Wanås Konst is run by The Wanås Foundation. Anon-profit foundation in Östra Göinge municipality, in the South of Sweden, only 1.5 h from Copenhagen, Denmark. Founding Director Marika Wachtmeister initiated the art projects at Wanås in 1987. Since 2011 the foundation is led by Elisabeth Millqvist and Mattias Givell.

Wanås is part of European Land and Art Network (ELAN) and a Long Run Destination – a leader in sustainable development within the tourism industry, community development and cultural management.

Read more at [www.wanaskonst.se](http://www.wanaskonst.se)

## Contacts

**Sofia Bertilsson**

Media & Communications

+46 (0)733 86 68 20

<http://www.wanaskonst.se>

[press@wanaskonst.se](mailto:press@wanaskonst.se)

**Wanås Konst/The Wanas Foundation**

Visit: Wanås, SE-289 90 Knislinge, Sweden Postal address: PO Box 67, SE-289 21 Knislinge, Sweden

+46 (0) 44 660 71

<http://www.wanaskonst.se>

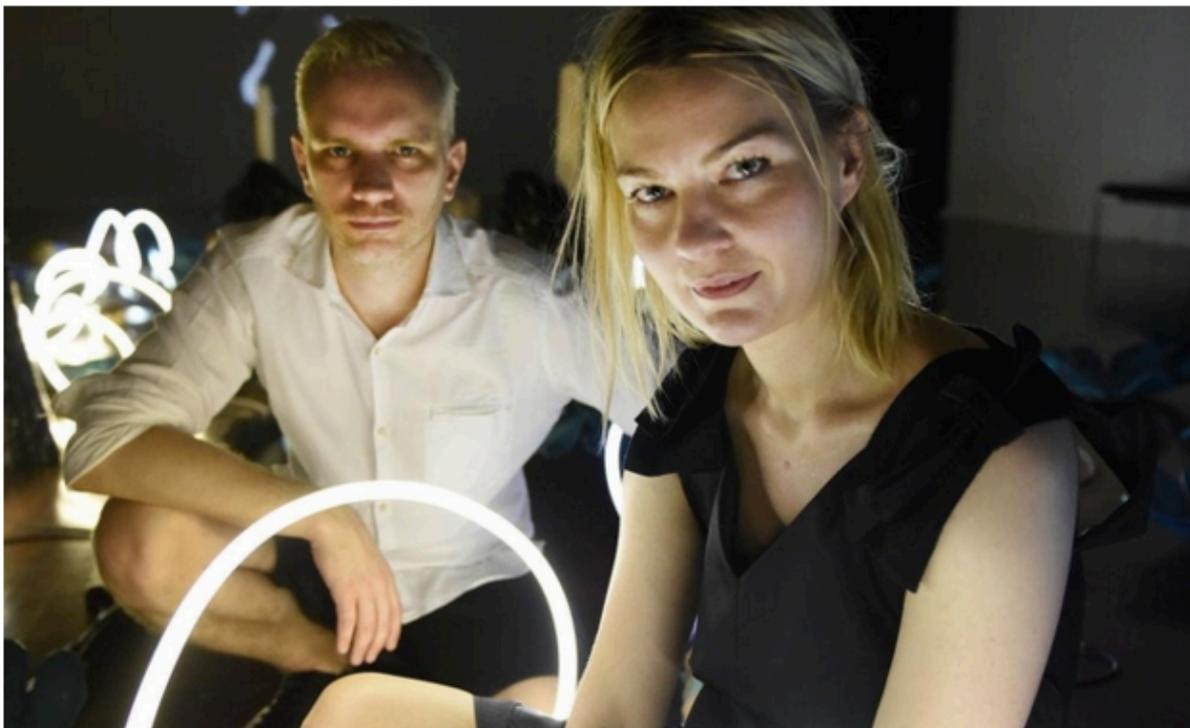
# LISSON GALLERY

*The West Australian*  
25<sup>th</sup> February 2016

## The West Australian

### Secrets lurk down garden path

Lyn DiCiero - The West Australian on February 25, 2016, 5:46 pm



 Hans Berg and Nathalie Djurberg, the artists behind The Secret Garden. Picture by Toni Wilkinson.

**A sign outside The Secret Garden warns visitors: “The exhibition contains strobe effects and some adult themes.”**

It's rare to see this type of signage at an exhibition – so what's inside?

Another warning is repeated outside a smaller gallery in which a suite of short, claymation films are peopled by clay figures playing out graphic, at times comical scenes of greed, lust, eroticism, violence and gruesomeness.

These are delivered with a ferocity that Perth Institute for Contemporary Arts director Amy Barrett- Lennard suggests would make Sigmund Freud blush. Then there's the fluffy, shaman-like rabbit on a screen in the main gallery, with changing psychedelic eyes. His world appears to manifest on the gallery floor with squiggles of neon light and oversized sculptures in a variety of media depicting melting popsicles, bluebells, golden-capped acorns, oak leaves and woven cushions.

In other gallery spaces, on walls, tables, and hidden in tall ceramic pots, animated films dribble, flow and morph, and as with the entire exhibition, dramatic, mysterious or hypnotic music is played together with the works.

There's an Alice in Wonderland meets Grimms Fairytales aspect to the exhibition – surreal yet playful but also cuttngly brutal.

But what does it all mean? Its Swedish creators, artist Nathalie Djurberg and her life partner, electronic composer Hans Berg, in their first exhibition in WA, hope visitors will reach into the recesses of their minds and create their own narrative for the work.

Djurberg says The Secret Garden is like an endless field of possibilities. "When you're awake, things are so determined – but when you are sleeping and dreaming, everything is changing. So it's this world where things haven't been narrowed down yet."

The inspiration for Fever Dreams, a suite of animation projected on to tables, harks back to Djurberg's childhood dreams when suffering feverish flu.

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"In those dreams, things became distorted to the extent I didn't know how big or small my body was. It was incredibly scary because the world didn't feel like it was completely solid. I felt it could break apart," she says.

"Now if I could have those dreams again it would be amazing."

It's no surprise to learn Djurberg is highly influenced by fairytales.

"We didn't have television when I was little until I was around 10. First, my mum would read to me and then I read to myself. Even when we got television, my mother was very strict on the hours we could watch. As a result, I love narration and storytelling."

Djurberg says her savagely blunt claymation films are her way of deciphering the world.

"I've always thought I wouldn't do art if the world was perfect – then it would just be a celebration. For me art is both a sharing and a pointing out. I don't have any answers to anything, can't claim I have anything to teach anyone and don't know more than anyone else – probably less."

Two minutes of claymation film represents two months of work for Djurberg, who creates everything herself, from the puppets, to the environment and film. In using 12 to 18 frames per second instead of 24 gives the films an intended jumpiness.

"When something is very perfect or made on a computer, it distances the viewer. I like the grittiness and the small mistakes. Everything is hand-created and I like the closeness in comparison," she says.

It was her claymation films which first brought her to international attention. She has exhibited worldwide, including at Tate Britain and the PS1 Contemporary Art Center in New York. At the 2009 Venice Biennale, Djurberg was awarded the Silver Lion for promising new artist.

She met Berg in 2004 when a mutual friend suggested they work together. "When I saw her work I thought it was the most amazing thing I'd ever seen. I'd never seen any art like it so I really wanted to make music for it," he says.

Djurberg says now the music makes up half the work. "It put another layer on top of the visual and changed the outcome. When there's music, it contains you in the space and takes away the distance between you and the work."

Berg says there's a definite nod to techno music in his score. "It just needs a beat and you'd have electronic music. My solo projects are purely club music – and then this. I make the music a sort of journey, so it's a narration in itself."

He says there's a lot of humour in their work. "When you have something quite gruesome or cruel, the silliness is such a distortion. If something is difficult, humour sets it free. They are clay puppets, they're not real people but it's amazing they evoke such feelings in people who see them."

**The Secret Garden is at PICA until April 24.**