

LA CRIÉE
CENTRE D'ART
CONTEMPORAIN
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PRESS PACK

POUR
NE PAS
DORMIR
JOCKUM NORDSTRÖM

The exhibition will open as soon as the health situation permits. It is extended until 30 August 2021.

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35000 Rennes
www.la-crie.org

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Press release

POUR NE PAS DORMIR JOCKUM NORDSTRÖM

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A major figure on the Swedish art scene, Jockum Nordström has devoted over thirty years to his mischievous mix of worlds quotidian and oneiric, human and animal, abstract and naive, natural and architectural. At La Criée centre for contemporary art, he's presenting a selection of recent works: collages, drawings and cardboard sculptures.

WHEN WORLDS INTERSECT

Jockum Nordström is also an illustrator of children's books and a musician. His work is fuelled by references to popular and outsider art, jazz, Surrealism and architecture, in addition to Swedish culture and contemporary art. Out of all this emerge dreamlike fables in which different worlds and eras intermingle. The power of his work resides in the tension he sets up between simplicity of line and polyphony of subject matter.

Among his passions are architecture and a fascination with interiors and furniture going back to his childhood in the Stockholm suburbs, when the housing estates were being built. In his work architecture can be seen in both two and three dimensions. At La Criée he's showing a series of fragile geometrical sculptures, of cheapo residential blocks whose slender lines contradict the saddening clunkiness of their originals.

Nordström defies and defeats pigeonholing: in his case the «supposedly badly made» is very well made – and deliberately so. He emphasises the liberating force of an expressiveness that simultaneously plays on and shakes off the shackles of convention: his forms and characters spill out of the frame, his lines can be messy or wobbly, his paint runs intentional; there are unfinished bits, crude cuts, crooked folds. Plus a sense of composition made all the more striking by its sheer zaniness.

WHEN ABSTRACTION AND NARRATIVE COME TOGETHER

Jockum Nordström's commitment to forms and colours in their primal state is matched by his interest in narrative, whether real or imaginary. Here we have a storyteller moving back and forth between worlds, between characters and scenes, in a mingling of the childlike and the sexy, the contemporary and the timeless, the figurative and the abstract.

The collages on show are in earth colours: greens, dirty yellows, greys, diluted browns and faded blues, with touches here and there of darker, more saturated tones in the same range. The drawings illustrate the dexterity of someone who has been practising since he was a child.

Whirling, singing, enchanting: delightful in their clarity and liberty, Jockum Nordström's works are imbued with his trust in simplicity and the absolute necessity of the creative act.

Exhibited works

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COLLAGES

Skördevaktarn (Harvest watcher), 2017

69 × 161 cm

collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

Den öppna boken (The open book), 2017

54 × 90 cm

collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

Sjukhusparken (Hospital park), 2017

72 × 104 cm

collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

Rymden tystar ljudet, 2017

75 × 54 cm

collage, watercolour and graphite on wood and paper

Loppan (The Flea), 2017

70 × 69 cm

collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

Åt helvete med allt (To hell with everything), 2017

64 × 92 cm

collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

Stjärntydare (Astrologist), 2016

45 × 31 cm

collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

Tamburen (The hallway), 2017

145 × 70 cm

collage, watercolour and graphite on paper

Sista dansen (The last dance), 2017

80 × 104 cm

collage, watercolour and graphite on paper

Kvällen kommer (Evening comes), 2017

138 × 67 cm

collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

Pater Noster, 2014

64 × 99 cm

collage, watercolour and graphite on paper

F.d. (före detta) (Ex. (the former)), 2015

100 × 256 cm

collage, watercolour, graphite and crayon on paper

Förbrukade skor (Used Up Shoes), 2019

95 × 61,5 cm

collage, watercolour, graphite and crayon on paper

Samma spelbord, samma mynt (Same Game Table, Same Coin), 2019

99 × 81 cm

collage, watercolour, graphite and crayon on paper

Nattkvarter (Nightly Quarters), 2019

119,5 × 75 cm

collage, watercolour, graphite and crayon on paper

Skogen (The Forest), 2019

86 × 65 cm

collage and watercolour on paper

Bokens utsida (The outside of the book), 2019

63,5 × 88,8 cm

collage, watercolour and graphite on paper

Exhibited works

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DRAWINGS

An other problem, 2019

42,8 × 37,4 cm

graphite on paper

Jag tänker på Chopin, 2019

27,5 × 21 cm

graphite on paper

I skrivande stund (As I am writing this), 2019

42,4 × 57 cm

graphite on paper

En gång gick jag i trappan två gånger

(Once I went up the stairs twice), 2019

57,7 × 39,4 cm

graphite on paper

Förändringen (The change), 2019

42,6 × 57,3 cm

graphite on paper

A problem, 2019

57 × 34,1 cm

graphite on paper

Naken på en planet (Naked on a planet), 2019

25,6 × 35,2 cm

graphite on paper

Jag har en hund (I have a dog), 2019

29,7 × 42,1 cm

graphite on paper

Gathörn (The street corner), 2019

42 × 48 cm

graphite on paper

Förvillelse, 2019

27,5 × 21 cm

graphite on paper

Larghetto, 2018

33 × 48,2 cm

graphite on paper

Över sten och trapp (Over stone and steps),

2019

42,8 × 39,8 cm

graphite on paper

Accommodation, 2019

45 × 55,2 cm

graphite on paper

Rooms room, 2019

36,5 × 25,4 cm

graphite on paper

Meisterwerke, 2019

35,1 × 26,6 cm

graphite on paper

Hallå, 2019

50,1 × 39,2 cm

graphite on paper

Smycka vår kammar, 2019

27,4 × 21 cm

graphite on paper

Exhibited works

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SCULPTURES

The Large Livingroom, 2008

102,5 × 67 × 9,5 cm

paper, cardboard and graphite

Kostym (Costume), 2010

42 × 38,5 × 21 cm

graphite and watercolour on paper and cardboard

Utan lykta, 2016

19,5 × 22,4 × 11,6 cm

crayon and graphite on cardboard

Flygel, 2015

16 × 19,5 × 8 cm

crayon and graphite on matchboxes, cardboard and paper

Hem min vän (Home My Friend), 2006

26,2 × 185,5 × 15,5 cm

paper, cardboard and watercolor

Landshövdingens Residens (Governor's Palace), 2010

31 × 25 × 16,5 cm

crayon and graphite on matchboxes, cardboard and paper

Wer nur den lieben, 2020

21 × 142 × 10 cm

graphite on cardboard

Scuola Elementare, 2008

32,6 × 91 × 10,4 cm

pencil and watercolor on cardboard and paper

BUG, 2011

23,5 × 38,5 × 20 cm

cardboard, paper, watercolour

Bak rigel och bås, 2012

32 × 111 × 6 cm

crayon and watercolour on matchboxes, cardboard and paper

Kapitel 3, 2018

53,5 × 46 × 9,5 cm

graphite on cardboard and paper

Nattsömnen, 2015

34 × 48 × 10 cm

crayon and graphite on matchboxes, cardboard and paper

Pour se reveiller (Att vakna), 2015

27 × 38 × 10 cm

crayon and graphite on matchboxes, cardboard and paper

Visual for press

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Jockum Nordström, *Skogen (The Forest)*, 2019

86×65 cm, watercolour and collage on paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and David Zwirner Gallery – photo: Per-Erik Adamsson

Visual for press

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Jockum Nordström, *Rymden tystar ljudet*, 2017

75 x 54 cm, collage, watercolour and graphite on wood and paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and Galleri Magnus Karlsson – photo: Per-Erik Adamsson

Visual for press

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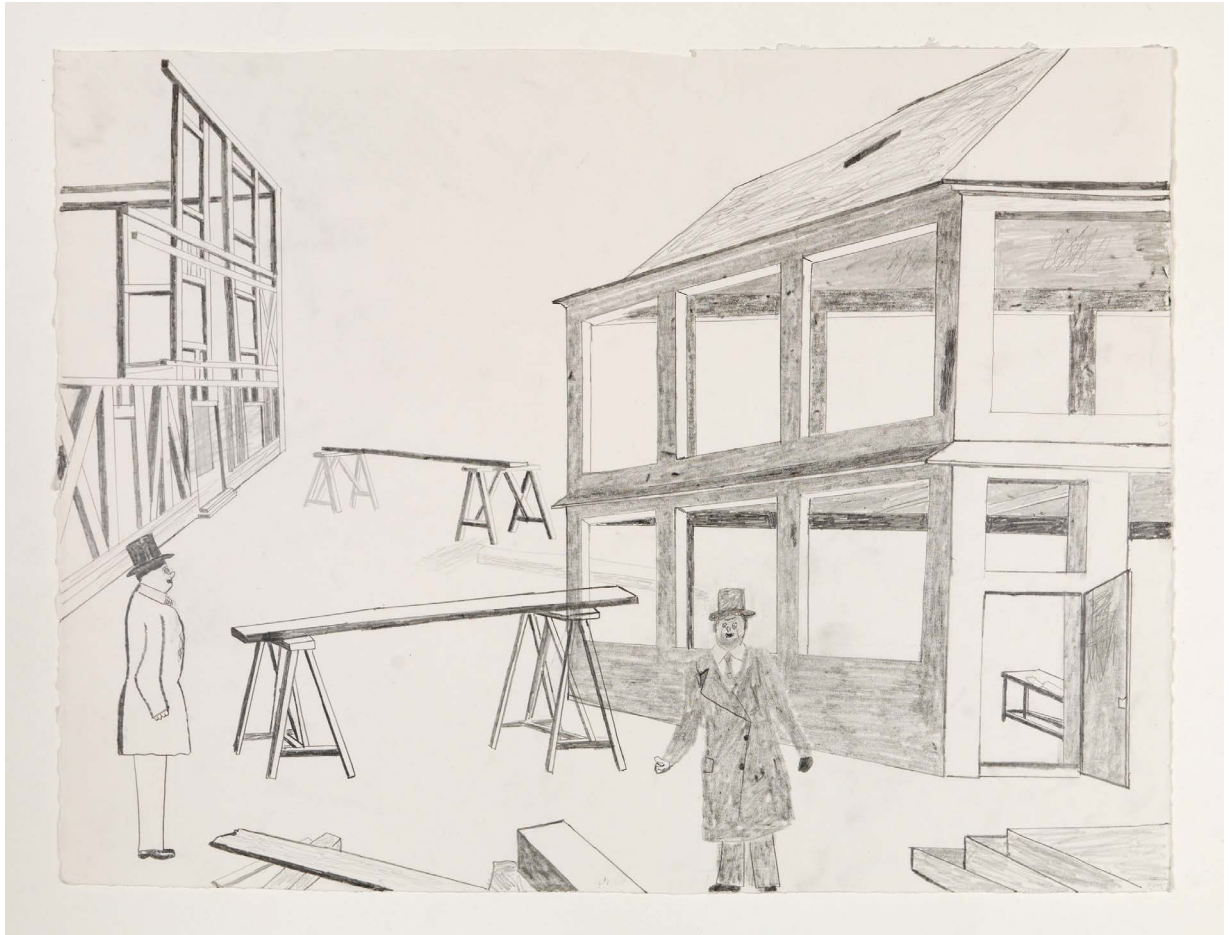
Jockum Nordström, *Kvällen kommer (Evening comes)*, 2017

138×67 cm, collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm – photo: Per-Erik Adamsson

Visual for press

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Jockum Nordström, *Förändringen (The change)*, 2019

42,6 × 57,3 cm, graphite on paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and David Zwirner gallery – photo: Per-Erik Adamsson

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Jockum Nordström, *Gathörn (The street corner)*, 2019

42 × 48 cm, graphite on paper

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Jockum Nordström, *Naken på en planet (Naked on a plane)*, 2019

25,6 × 35,2 cm, graphite on paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and David Zwirner gallery – photo: Per-Erik Adamsson

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Nordström Jockum, *Sjukhusparken (Hospital park)*, 2017

72 × 104 cm, collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

© Jockum Nordström – Courtesy the artist and Zeno X Gallery – Photographer: Peter Cox

Visual for press

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Nordström Jockum, *Den öppna boken (The open book)*, 2017

54 × 90 cm, collage, watercolor and graphite on paper

© Jockum Nordström – Courtesy the artist and Zeno X Gallery – photo: Peter Cox

Visual for press

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Jockum Nordström, *Samma spelbord, samma mynt* (Same Game Table, Same Coin), 2019
99 × 81 cm, collage, watercolour, graphite and crayon on paper
© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm

Visual for press

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Sista dansen (The last dance), 2017

80 × 104 cm, collage, watercolour and graphite on paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm

Visual for press

Please, respect captions and copyrights



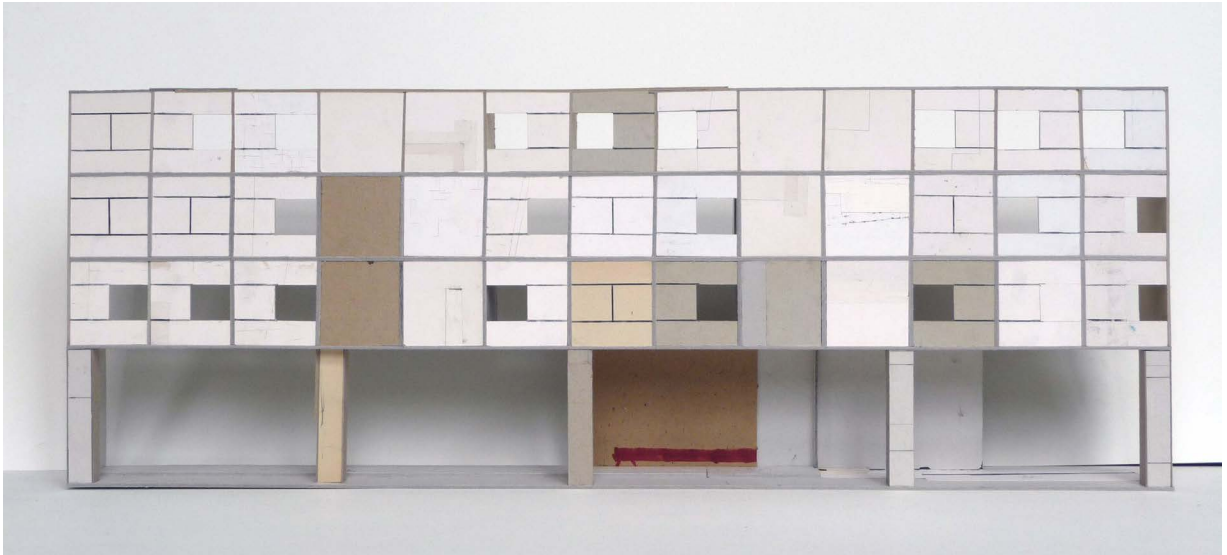
Utan lykta, 2016

19,5 × 22,4 × 11,6 cm, crayon and graphite on cardboard

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm

Visual for press

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Scuola Elementare, 2008

32,6 × 91 × 10,4 cm, pencil and watercolor on cardboard and paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm

Visual for press

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Flygel, 2015

16 × 19,5 × 8 cm, crayon and graphite on matchboxes, cardboard and paper

© Jockum Nordström – courtesy the artist and Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm

Biography

JOCKUM NORDSTRÖM

born in 1963 in Stockholm, Sweden
lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden
represented by Galleri Magnus Karlsson,
Stockholm, Zeno X Gallery, Anvers and David
Zwirner, New York, Londres, Paris, Hong Kong

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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2021 <i>Pour ne pas dormir</i>, La Criée centre for contemporary art, Rennes, France</p> <p>2020 <i>Utan lykta / Without Lantern</i>, Skissernas Museum, Lund, Sweden</p> <p>2019 <i>The Anchor Hits the Sand</i>, David Zwirner, London, UK
Chart Art Fair, Kunsthall Charlottenburg, Copenhagen, Denmark</p> <p>2018 <i>Why Is Everything A Rag</i>, Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, USA</p> <p>2017 <i>Rymden tystar ljudet</i>, Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
Jockum Nordström & Dan Wolgers: <i>Ej funktionstestad</i>, Karlskrona konsthall, Sweden [two-person show]</p> <p>2016 <i>När ingen vandrar vägen fram, då vandrar vägen själv sitt damm</i>, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>2014 <i>For the Insects and the Hounds</i>, David Zwirner Gallery, London, UK</p> <p>2013 <i>All I Have Learned and Forgotten Again</i>, Lille Métropole, musée d'art moderne, d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France and Camden Arts Center, London, UK
<i>Begin, Began, Begun</i>, Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco</p> <p>2012 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris [permanent collection presentation]
<i>Wij Bestaan Niet</i>, Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium</p> <p>2011 <i>The donkey prefers garbage to gold</i> [two-person exhibition with Marcel Dzama], Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden
<i>Les étoiles s'en balacent</i>, Institut Suédois à Paris, France
<i>One Two, House of Sweden</i>, Washington [two-person exhibition with Mamma Andersson]</p> | <p>2010 <i>While the Mortar Dries</i>, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin [catalogue]
<i>Who is sleeping on my pillow</i>, David Zwirner, New York, USA</p> <p>2009 <i>Wry</i>, Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium</p> <p>2008 <i>Beware the Devil's Yarn</i>, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>2006 Jockum Nordström, David Zwirner, New York, USA</p> <p>2005 <i>Jockum Nordström: En pinne i skogen / A Stick in the Wood</i>, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>2004 <i>Beware the Devil's Yarn</i>, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>2003 David Zwirner, New York, USA</p> <p>2002 David Zwirner, New York, USA</p> <p>2000 Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden
David Zwirner, New York, USA</p> <p>1999 Wetterling Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden [Becker Artist Prize exhibition]
Galleri 1, Gothenburg, Sweden</p> <p>1998 Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden [catalogue]
Galleri Dialog, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>1997 Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Västerås, Sweden
Galleri Kavaletten, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>1995 Galleri 1, Gothenburg, Sweden
Projekt Art Pit, Malmö, Sweden</p> <p>1994 Galleri St. Olof, Norrköping, Sweden</p> <p>1993 Olle Olsson-huset, Solna, Sweden</p> <p>1992 Villa Val Lemme, Torino, Italy</p> <p>1991 Galleri Arton A, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>1989 Galleri Arton A, Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>1988 Uddevalla Konsthall, Sweden</p> |
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Biography

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS 2010-2020

- 2020** *Stilla liv (Still Life)*, Hellvi Kännungs, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Gotland, Sweden
Intermezzo, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Sweden
- 2019** *Grafikstiftung Neo Rauch*, Aschersleben, Germany
Works on Paper, Galleri Bo Bjerggaard, Copenhagen, Denmark
Group Show, Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
Dance by Correspondence, CFHILL, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2018** *Chemin Papier, l'illustration et ses marges*, Le Signe, National Graphic Design Center, Chaumont, France
David Zwirner: 25 Years, New York, USA
- 2017** *Samling i förvandling – Tema: Grafik*, Uppsala Konstmuseum, Sweden
Fiac, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Grand palais, Paris, France
Les dix ans du Prix de dessin de la Fondation d'art contemporain Daniel & Florence Guerlain, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Horses, Eighteen/ V1 Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
Beckers Art Award 2017, 30-year Anniversary, Färgfabriken, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2016** *KVARTETT/QUARTET*, National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland
- 2015** *Jubileumssamling*, The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm, Sweden
Donation Florence & Daniel Guerlain, Nordiska Akvarellmuseet, Skärhamn, Sweden
Chart Art Fair, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Copenhagen, Denmark
Prix de Dessin 2015 de la Fondation Daniel & Florence Guerlain, Maison Guerlain, Paris, France
Drawing Now, Albertina, Vienna, Austria
The Bottom Line, SMAK, Ghent, Belgium
Works on Paper II, Zeno Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2014** *Norrskén - Northern Lights*, Studio Fotokino, Marseille, France
The Drawing Room, Magasin III, Stockholm, Sweden
This is our Music / This is our Art, David Risley Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
One two three-come and see the children's book, Västerås Konstmuseum, Sweden
- 2013** *I Want to Hold Your Hand*, Borås Konstmuseum, Sweden
Opening New Space, ZENO-X, Borgerhout, Belgium
On Paper, Centro de Artes Visuales Fundación Helga de Alvear, Cáceres, Spain
Time Waits for Us, Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2012** *Utan Söm och Socka*, Hellvi Kännungs, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Gotland, Sweden
150 years of Swedish Art: Highlights from the Swedish National Collections in Stockholm (Moderna Museet and Nationalmuseum), Hillstrom Museum of Art, Minnesota, USA
- 2011** *Välkommen tillbaka! Saltarvet 10 år*, Fiskebäckskil, Sweden
3rd Thessaloniki Biennale, Greece
- 2010** *Thrice upon a time*, Magasin III Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden
Today is Yesterday Tomorrow, Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden

Bibliography

SELECTED CATALOGUES & BOOKS AND COLLECTIONS

- 2014 *Who is sleeping on my pillow: Mamma Andersson & Jockum Nordström*. Texts by Paolo Colombo and Anders Krüger. Interview between Marcel Dzama and Jockum Nordström. Poem by Stig Claesson. David Zwirner Books, New York (exh. cat.) [revised and expanded edition; originally published in 2010]
- 2012 *Jockum Nordström*, Orosdi-Back, text av Gunnar Lundkvist
- 2013 *All I Have Learned and Forgotten Again*, Lille Métropole, musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut / Hatje Cantz
- 2010 *Who is sleeping on my pillow: Mamma Andersson & Jockum Nordström*.
- 2006 text: Nordebeck, J Gå till Klacken, gå. Illustrations by Jockum Nordström. Wahlström & Widstrand, Stockholm
- 2005 *Jockum Nordström: En pinne i skogen / A Stick in the Wood*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden / Steidl
- 2003 *Between the Table and the Legs/Mellan bordet och benen*. Texts by Mårten Castenfors and Dorothy Spears. Galleri Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm and David Zwirner, New York
- Varför - Därför*. Text and illustrations by Jockum Nordström. Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm
- 2001 text: Nordbeck, J. Vi visste inte vilken tid det var
- 2000 text: Stark, U. Ensam med min bror
- 1999 text: Nordbeck, J. Musiken ställer fram ett par skor
- 1998 *Var är Sailor och Pekka?* Text and illustrations by Jockum Nordström, Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm
- 10 000 gulddollar till den som gifter sig med snön*
- 1995 *Sailor och Pekka och söndagen*. Text and illustrations by Jockum Nordström. Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm
- 1994 *Sailor blir sjuk*. Text and illustrations by Jockum Nordström. Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm
- 1992 *Sailor och Pekka gör ärenden på stan*. Text and illustrations by Jockum Nordström. Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm
- 1991 *Djungelsången*. Text by Eva Wikander. Illustrations by Jockum Nordström, Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm

COLLECTIONS

Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA
Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, France
Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, USA
SFMOMA, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, USA
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Magasin III Museum & Foundation for Contemporary Art, Stockholm, Sweden
Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA
Västerås Art Museum, Sweden
S.M.A.K. The Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium
Lille Métropole, musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Lille, France
Statens Konstråd/The National Public Art Council, Sweden
The City of Stockholm, Sweden
Gothenburg Museum of Art, Sweden
Helsingborgs Art Museum, Sweden
Private collections in Europe and USA

Texts

Marc Donnadiou in « All I Have Learned and Forgotten Again /
Tout ce que j'ai appris puis oublié », exhibition catalogue
Lille Métropole, musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut
Hatje Cantz, 2013

Jockum Nordström creates oddball and apparently naïve narratives; his way of looking at life owes much to the twin influences of folk art and modernist absurdism. Each of his painted, drawn, or cut-up stories is both specific and open-ended, as though—not unlike Henry Darger's paintings—they are part of a much grander and ongoing tale that is going to take a long time to unfold. They are full of disjunctions, incongruities, and allusions, and in that respect they have some resemblance to unusually interesting dreams. The conventional logic of time and space is suspended, and the mood is often *unheimlich*, or uncanny. But there is always a lightness in his touch.

The sociologist Georg Simmel, writing in the early twentieth century, made some interesting remarks about the idea of "the stranger." Strangers, he said, inhabit a fragile but sinister universe. They collapse the boundaries between private and public, past and present, friends and enemies. Strangers, who are the personification of the liminal, serve to expose the fragility of either/or oppositions; they bring the outside into the inside, compromising the comfort of order with a threat of chaos. Nothing is natural any longer; the stranger is someone without qualities and rootless, like the unknown cowboy who rides into town to challenge the menfolk and attract the women. Strangers in small communities are often thought of as "easy riders," and when they're not ignored or run out of the city they're often considered to be very cool. There's much of the "stranger" in Nordström's work. His cardboard miniature buildings, for instance, as well as his dandyish musicians and undressed women, are a little uncanny.

*

Jockum Nordström crée des histoires excentriques apparemment naïves ; sa vision de la vie doit beaucoup à la double influence de l'art populaire et de l'absurdité du monde moderne. Ses peintures, dessins et collages racontent tous des histoires à la fois précises et ouvertes, même si – un peu comme dans les tableaux de Henry Darger – elles s'inscrivent dans une intrigue beaucoup plus vaste et qui prendra du temps à se dénouer. Elles sont pleines de disjonctions, d'incongruités et d'allusions, et en ce sens ressemblent un peu à des rêves inhabituellement intéressants. Les logiques classiques du temps et de l'espace sont suspendues, et l'humeur est souvent *unheimlich*, ou troublante. Mais son trait est toujours empreint de légèreté.

Le sociologue Georg Simmel, au début du XX^e siècle, a fait quelques remarques intéressantes sur la notion d'« étranger ». Les étrangers, disait-il, habitent un univers fragile mais sinistre. Ils font tomber les frontières entre privé et public, passé et présent, amis et ennemis. Les étrangers, qui sont la personification du liminal, servent à exposer la fragilité des oppositions ou bien/ou bien ; ils amènent l'extérieur vers l'intérieur, menaçant d'introduire le chaos dans le confort de l'ordre. Plus rien n'est naturel ; l'étranger est sans qualités et sans racines, comme le cow-boy inconnu qui entre dans la ville pour défier les hommes et séduire les femmes. Dans les petites communautés, les étrangers sont souvent vus comme des « easy riders », et quand ils ne sont pas ignorés ou expulsés de la ville, ils sont souvent considérés comme très cool. On retrouve beaucoup de choses de l'« étranger » dans l'œuvre de Nordström. Par exemple, ses bâtiments miniatures en carton, ainsi que ses musiciens dandy et ses femmes dévêtues, suscitent une certaine « inquiétante étrangeté ».

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Texts

Laird Borrelli-Persson, "Jockum Nordström Is the Rock Star of the Stockholm Art Scene"
Vogue, February 9, 2017

<https://www.vogue.com/article/jockum-nordstrom-stockholm-rock-art-sailor-och-pekka>

VOGUE

CULTURE

Jockum Nordström Is the Rock Star of the Stockholm Art Scene

2017 looks like it will be a very good year for Swedish artist Jockum Nordström.



BY LAIRD BORRELLI-PERSSON
February 9, 2017

Maybe it's all the talk about "alternative facts," but the world seems especially surreal of late, which, combined with a trip to [Stockholm Fashion Week](#), got me to thinking about the alternative universe created by Jockum Nordström. Nordström, a primarily visual artist, had his first show in 1988, and soon became one of Sweden's best-known creators, primarily for his drawings and collages, which are united by the way that they ask the viewer to suspend their disbelief. "Surreal" doesn't feel like the right way to describe these works, because their aesthetic borrows from folk and Outsider art, which gives them a surface naiveté, even though the content can occasionally be R-rated. His series of (appropriately rated) children's books—*Sailor och Pekka*, about a man and his dog—are comfortably considered classics in Scandinavia akin to Jean de Brunhoff's *Babar*.

2017 finds Nordström in can't-stop-won't stop mode, with a solo show in Antwerp, an exhibit at the [Contemporary Arts Center](#) in New Orleans, a soon to be installed commission for Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken (SEB) Bank, plus continued work on a book project in conjunction with the estate of Leo Tolstoy, and an upcoming album. Three days before Nordström and his band closed Stockholm Fashion Week with a performance at the Whyred after party, I sat down with the artist in his hometown to talk about his work.

Your work is comprised of so many techniques—how do you describe yourself?

It's very hard to describe yourself, but I am of course, an artist. I can say it now, when I'm over 50. Pictures are absolutely [the foundation of my work]. Even if I make sculptures, I am still a man who makes pictures on paper.

I'm an artist from the beginning. I was always drawing and painting so it was very natural for me. I think I wanted to be other things first, maybe a carpenter, or sailor. I wanted to be a sailor when I was young, to see the world, but the only thing I could do was draw and paint. [Which I did] all the time. It was for me a way to be private. I created my own world in one way. I was [at it] every day. [If you work hard at it,] in the end you have your tools. [You know how] to draw and paint and you understand what kind of colors you like. And then of course you change it, but you have the confidence to use this when you create, and after a while [you create] a world. But you don't think about this by yourself, it just grows slowly, slowly...like mold!



Jockum Nordström's work in progress. Photo: Courtesy of Galleri Magnus Karlsson

What is your process?

I have a lot—a lot—of books, a lot of records all over. When I make a collage, I cut first. I'm always cutting, and cutting for me is relaxing. I started with this maybe 25 years ago. You cut, and then you paint, and if a [piece] is not the right shape, you cut a little more; take off the head, make a new head. There's a lot of freedom, it's playful.

I really like the process when you make collages because it's different floors: I start to cut and I cut until I am a bit tired. After three weeks or something I have a lot of cutouts and then I start to paint on them, maybe for two weeks or so. When I paint them sometimes I think this isn't a good color, and I can paint the other side. If it's really bad after that, I put it under the water and let them dry and the next day I go on, one more time. It's like you go from details to a picture. If you are a classical painter—I was from the beginning, but I had such bad allergies that I stopped using oils—you start with a picture, with a composition, and go down to the details. [With my collages] it is a totally different thing. I start with all these details, and then draw on them, take some more week, and then take them out. Then I maybe work just with backgrounds, abstract backgrounds. A lot of these are really bad, you know, they're shit, but I can't leave them. I go down and try to make them good, put them on the other way, and sometimes I can use pieces of them. [By the time I'm ready to make] a picture I have a lot of materials.

And how would you describe your approach?

I think you have two different bases as an artist: you have nature and you have relationships: human beings, architecture, cities [with] all the people together. Nature is something else. It's the light and trees, the animals. [When you make art] you have to put in your [own] psyche; you have to do something from your own. And if you work with relationships—films are almost always about relationships—you have to put your psyche in that too.

Texts

"Jockum Nordström Is the Rock Star of the Stockholm Art Scene"
Laird Borrilli-Persson, February 9, 2017

<https://www.vogue.com/article/jockum-nordstrom-stockholm-rock-art-sailor-och-pekka>

I grew up in a city, in the suburbs, so when I was younger, [my art was very much about] my life with all these relationships: love, hate, school, upbringing, building house, break down things. The scenography was always the city in one way, but I think I always have been very, very interested, down deep, in the nature. [It's] the stars and the ocean, the animals the sounds—everything. Somewhere without words. I love that.

What is the role of narrative in your work?

I have a narrative in my head, always. It's about my life, of course, and abstract thinking, too. Sometimes the abstract thinking takes over, and sometimes the narrative takes over. Narrative is very close to drivel because if you are too narrative, too pathetic, too emotional, [you basically say], "Here it is, take it," [and] destroy [the reason] for people to look at it. I really love to work with this [balance,] which is really hard [to achieve]. It's like a man walking a tight rope, and falling off. Then you try one more time. I like that feeling, I always like feeling that this is close to shut.



Jockum Nordström, *The Four Cardinal Points*, 2001. Photo: Courtesy of Galleri Magnus Karlsson

How do you feel about your art being compared to "outsider art?"

I think art is something that is not so related to your personality because you are going to die and the art will still go on. It's like nature, it's not so much about text. I think art is visual, but if you want to do something, [make your mark], I think you have to be personal, to have your [own] voice. And voice is not so much about ego, it's more about feelings, what you have to give to something. For me, if you're an educated artist or an outsider, if you have this voice, you try to make something special. For me, it's the same.

Some of the best artists are outsiders; I think it's the same in music too. Of course I like the educated world, with all these intellectual things; it's very important, maybe the most important, but sometimes it can be very, very dry and destructive. I like artists like James Castle, who was deaf, and Henry Darger. For me it's crazy that you [draw a border between this and capital-A Art.] for this. Outsider art, if it's good, is like educated art. I have never made a border about this, even when I was young. If it had

good colors, good feeling, I was very interested in it, I saw it like a special thing with its own language.

And what about folk art?

I'm from the suburbs, where there are people from a lot of places. I've always been very interested in folk art style since I was young, and I am still. The United States is very strong in folk art because it's a young place with people from all over. I think [these people] took their culture with them when they came to America, so it's very rich the folk art from the U.S. from 200 years ago. I have been looking at that, but I have also been looking a lot at German folk art, and Italian, Swedish, Lappish, Indian things. I mix everything.



Jockum Nordström, *Sailor och Pekka: Varför Därför (Why? Because)* Photo: Courtesy of Rabén & Sjögren, Sweden

How did your children's book series come to be?

When we were a young couple, me and Karin [Jockum's partner, also an artist, known as "Mamma" Andersson] sketched a boy and a dog for a children's book. We made a lot of pictures but it ran out in one way, we were working with our paintings all the time. And then I [fell into a] depression; I was very tired of working with paintings and I started to make this children's book one more time by myself. It was very good for my depression because I had a good time [making it]. In four months everything was done, it was like therapy.

I was young at the time that I started with [the books], and my children were small; now they are 26 and 29. They are big men. When they were small, the main thing with picture books, for me, was the pictures, the feeling of the environment, and the characters, and in some of the children's books [we had] there was so much text, blah blah blah blah blah, and it was so boring sometimes, so I made these more special. The dog can be me sometimes, or he can be the children; and Sailor is me or Karin, the adult world.

The words—I have made five books—always come in the last minute. It's the last thing I do and that's the reason why I like them, because I've built them up from a kind of simple story. I write down a lot of notes on small sheets and I have them in a box. In the end, when everything is done, I look at all these notes and start to make the words, and I want to make them very simple. Sometimes you have very tiny places to put the words in, so I have to cut [the text] down, and I think that's good for the rhythm.

Texts

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The first three books I made in two years or something, it was close together. My children were small at that time, it was easy to do. When I made my fourth book, it was hard to do because my children were bigger and I had no help from them or their friends. But I did it, and I was happy for that. After I made four books, [I felt unhappy about the number]; three or five is much more beautiful in a way, it's more like a family, so I decided to make one more.

Can you talk about some of your upcoming projects, like the show in New Orleans?

[Regarding the show at the Contemporary Arts Center,] the curator, her name is Andrea Andersson, wanted to have things related to New Orleans, to the music. I had a big show in Lille in 2013 that was a retrospective, maybe from 2000 to today. I didn't want to make the same, so I have an idea to have a lot of recent things, from maybe the last two years, if we can borrow them, and then earlier things. I think it could be good to take out the ten or 15 years between, so you have different feelings. I really want to have some graphite drawings too from the beginning [of my career]. For me, they are about growing up, sexuality, the cities. Today my work is much, much more about nature.

I also have a solo show that is quite big in Antwerp in November. I want to make new stuff [for that].

I think I want to make a new children's book, like *Vart ska du?* because I have been writing a lot the last year. Not from the beginning to make a book, more [just] writing. I think I can use words and rhymes from that to make a book.

And then I work with Leo Tolstoy. His grandchildren's children contacted me. They have found fables that haven't [or rarely] been seen, and they have the rights on these and they want me to [illustrate] them. I've been working a lot with this the last year, and I'm going to show them in one month what I have done. Sometimes they are simple things, but they have a very good feeling. It's [a work] in progress; if it fails, it fails, but for me it's really, really happy.

I think Tolstoy wrote these for orphans. They are for educating small children, small stories about simple psychological things, and to learn teach [children] about the spider, how they make their webs, and how tree grow, and things like that.

And what about music? Isn't that something that you're also involved with?

I play in a band, Joakim Åhlund & Jockum Nordström, and we're coming out with the second album now. Playing music is really good for me now, I played when I was younger, of course. I play guitar and base. The first record's name is "The Toad and the Dog," the second is called "The Son of Dracula." I think it's hard to say if it's rock or jazz; it's something else. Sometimes it's more like theater or film music, and sometimes it's more blues.

This interview has been condensed and edited.

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Jockum Nordström, *Long Hand*, 2008 Photo: Courtesy of Galleri Magnus Karlsson

Lili, the Rozell and the Marimba

artistic cycle



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Over two seasons beginning in September 2019 La Criée centre for contemporary art will be presenting a cycle of exhibitions, events, research projects and encounters revolving around the vernacular and its relationship with contemporary art.

The adjective “vernacular” – from the Latin vernaculus, “native” or “domestic” – is generally used to describe what comes from a particular country or region, with specific local (“endemic”, we might say) characteristics: we speak of vernacular languages or names or architecture and so on. The vernacular always has roots somewhere. It has to do with the spirit of place.

The vernacular, though, is not bound by rigid tradition. Its creations may be underpinned by “immutable” features of their place of origin – geography, climate, age-old traditions – but they are also shaped by local changes due to new uses, people passing through, migration flows, globalisation and so on. In this sense they are powerful forces for assimilation. Spirit of place, yes, but of a place that is receptive.

The cycle’s title reflects this blend of roots and receptivity – of the creole and the archipelagic, to borrow from the philosopher and poet Édouard Glissant. The rozell is a Breton cooking utensil and the marimba an African musical instrument also widely used in Latin America. Lili is a nickname with all sorts of overtones.

The cycle *Lili, the Rozell and the Marimba* is an opportunity to put a series of questions regarding points of contact between vernacular and contemporary art, notably:

- What forms do the many inputs and influences between “contemporary” and “traditional” arts (doing and making, craft, folk and popular art, outsider art, naive art, etc.) – between modernity and tradition, local and global – take in the art of today?
- What (new?) ways of working are artists coming up with in “local” contexts?
- How are artists contributing to a rethinking of the connections between popular and scholarly

knowledge, local and global, indigenous and foreign, etc?

The cycle also reflects La Criée’s ongoing interest in narrative:

- How do personal narratives function as vehicles for history?
- Do we have the right to speak about a history that is not our own? What is our initial context? How are we to express ourselves?

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EXHIBITIONS 2019-2021

Seulgi Lee, 21 September – 17 November 2019

Éléonore Saintagnan, 14 dec. 2019 – 23 feb. 2020

Amadou Sanogo, 26 May – 30 August 2020

Mathis Collins & Paul Collins, 26 September – 30 Décembre 2020

Jockum Nordström, 6 February – 9 May 2021

Katia Kameli, 5 June – 29 August 2021

—
RESEARCH RESIDENCIES 2020-2021

Aurélien Ferruel & Florentine Guédon, Rennes

Éléonore Saintagnan, Rostrenen et Rennes

L'École Parallèle Imaginaire, Bécherel, Brittany

—
JOURNAL

The journal will appear biannually and include contributions from artists and thinkers, as well as researchers from various backgrounds and disciplines, including art historians, philosophers, writers and ethnologists.

With a view to drawing up the journal’s content, an editorial board made up of Lotte Arndt, Jean-Roch Bouiller, Baptiste Brun, John Cornu, Katia Kameli, Sophie Kaplan and Émilie Renard will meet regularly throughout the series.

n°1 : September 2020

n°2 : January 2021

n°3 : June 2021

Practical information

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exhibition

artist Jockum Nordström

title *Pour ne pas dormir*

curator Sophie Kaplan

production La Criée centre for contemporary art

dates from 6 February to 9 May 2021*

* dates subject to the evolution
of sanitary measures

La Criée centre for contemporary art

opening times

from Tuesday to Friday: 12 noon – 7 pm
Saturday, Sunday and public holidays: 2 – 7 pm
Closed 25 December and 1 January

address

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access

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free admission

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