



In Search of the Lost Self

What is it like being a young artist today, in the world? What is the role of the contemporary artist? In the autumn we were asked to curate an exhibition with art students for Bonniers Konsthall. With these questions in the back of our minds, we decided to invite students in their penultimate and final years from all Swedish art academies. There was an enormous response. We made hundreds of studio visits and in the end we decided to invite fifteen students to participate in the exhibition that we entitled *In Search of the Lost Self - 15 Art Students*.

Our intention was to shed light on a tendency we believed we could identify among the artists we chose to collaborate with, that is, a search for that which constitutes the self. It is about the right to a room of one's own, the right to retreat, to look to the future and to the past, inward and outward. In these movements, journalistic elements are intertwined with biographical ones, scientific with fictional. Contemporary history writing has become a private concern while the private memory process has become public. That is why we have chosen to curate an exhibition that represents our search for the artists as well as the artists' searching for themselves. We are all in the search of the lost self.

The artists have chosen to play with the oppositions. Their works can be seen as interfusions of conflicting impulses, which, according to us, turns towards the Romantic. The Romantic period, that dominated the cultural life of Europe 1770-1850, saw the emergence of an ambiguous artist's role, which was constantly threatened by exterior circumstances and thus forced on the run. Is this tendency about retreating and turning one's back on the world?

On the contrary, we see the search of a lost self as the very condition for the creation of the self. An interest in the past and need to look back can be a possible strategy for dealing with and creating an understanding for our time, which Proust managed so well with his novel *In Search of Lost Time*.

The introvert tendency, which we have chosen to call a productive melancholy, runs throughout the exhibition. Working in your own room is a possible course of action in order to re-formulate that which surrounds you and to find yourself in a wider context, which then becomes an important pre-requisite for the creative process. What we see in these art students is the search for the right to their own voice, a place in the world as well as in art.

Marianna Garin, Camilla Larsson
& Sinziana Ravini



Malin Pettersson Öberg

B. 1979, raised in Falun, studies at Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm

Malin Pettersson Öberg is driven by a fascination for illustration, typography, text and design. Her works centre on surface and content and how these two levels harmonise. Her method often involves uncovering images and texts from their original context to create works with an inherent ambiguity. For example, the sentimental, luxurious and kitschy elements can be remoulded into firm shapes or vice versa. In *And in my heart there is... (Asnières)*, she borrows farewell greetings from headstones in a Parisian pet cemetery founded at the turn of the last century, and paints them on the white walls of the gallery. The viewer is met by greetings to beloved and deceased friends with names such as Jackson, Socrates and Sultan Galant vom Hatzfeldt (!). Lofty concepts merge with elements from popular culture and the world of fantasy. As a reminder of the transitoriness of existence, an old pocket watch has been drawn on the wall.

Camilla Larsson