

## *Follow the Line*

We are pleased to open the gallery season with an exhibition by Maria Nordin (b. 1980). *Follow the Line* is Nordin's second solo exhibition at the gallery and presents a group of new watercolors. In her latest work, Nordin addresses the relationship between the human body and its surrounding physical reality. Maria Nordin received great attention for her large-scale watercolors and animations already during her education at the Royal Institute of Art (2005–2010). In 2011, she was awarded Becker's Artist Award and had an extensive solo exhibition at Färgfabriken in Stockholm. Nordin is frequently exhibited at galleries and museums around Sweden, and has already become an influential artist who has renewed and developed watercolor painting. Next year she will have a solo exhibition at the Nordic Watercolor Museum in Skärhamn.

Sarah Guarino Florén, curator at Södertälje Konsthall, has written a text about the new exhibition:

We enter the world through someone else's body. Our being is dependent on someone else's physical existence. Matter formed of matter, a new body relative to another human being's body. The little child is, in its body, its own individual. However at the beginning, it does not differ itself from the breast that makes it grow. Someone else's form has shaped me.

In her latest work, Maria Nordin focuses on the relationship between the human body and its surrounding physical reality. A tangible reality where we constantly move around objects and geometrical shapes, and where architecture and its room embraces us. We tend to imagine this relationship as neutral and more palpable than, for instance, psychological impact, but is it actually that simple?

We are in a continuous relationship to our surrounding, to what exists outside of our own body. Without the shapes of others we often lose our own. Our inner experience of the world through one single body is illusionary; more likely, we exist in a continuously reciprocal forming process. People interfere with each other throughout their lives through an intricate network of psychological, social and physical processes. Individuals react and respond differently towards aspects of this impact. Where one person sees harmony, another senses threat. What I perceive as an adventure may, to you, be mundane. Where someone feels distress, others feel secure.

As a painter, the relationship with the material becomes more than an abstract idea. Watercolor painting entails a fragile encounter between water, pigment and paper. The result is reliant on the artist's skills and knowledge about the characteristics of the material. However, just like when a body is to be formed in another body, randomness plays a role. The balance between controlling and shaping, and the ability to handle the force of chance, requires years of practice and experience, to, like a DNA, form matter into what the artist aims to present.

By letting an illogical distorted form become predominant, Maria Nordin allows her figures to be shaped in a different logic from the one we have become used to see in her conceptually and physically recognizable bodies. The underlying idea determines the composition, which means that the reshaping and adjustment as a concept is

physically revealed in the picture. A pair of too long legs; shoulders that have left the contour of a 'normal' body; a person whose contours overflows, creates an under the surface violent effect. Absurd bodies, sure. At the same time, a reminder of the shortcomings and state of subtle violence that we repeatedly expose our bodies to. Spreading legs on the subway leads to constrained space of someone else. Also, we can all recall the vexing feeling of trying to fit into too small clothes. Our furniture form the way we sit, our clothes the way we move.

We often talk positively about how 'form follows function', only, what function are we actually to follow? To whose form must we adapt? Maria Nordin explores and questions this in her work by tangibly integrating a physical resistance in her images, and letting the bodies of the figures conform. The eye notes and reacts to the deformation. The disturbing moment that makes us as viewers physically aware of our own shape -- our own bodily being in this world.

SARAH GUARINO FLORÉN  
CURATOR AT SÖDERTÄLJE KONSTHALL