

SCHLOSSGASSE 5
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WWW.PHILIPPZOLLINGER.COM**PAUL FÄGERSKIÖLD**

Longue Durée

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In Marvel/Disney's new streaming show, 'Moonknight', an Egyptian god rapidly rewinds the sky a few thousand years, so that the location of treasure may be triangulated. That humanity has had the ability to compute this less dramatically for a while seems to have been forgotten. When it comes to the cosmos, magic and science and history always seem to rest equitably in pockets of collective belief. The blocks that build culture and technological advancement, for better and worse, are tied up with the sky as screen as well as empty, infinite beyond; where formation and prospection beckon and impose.

Paul Fägerskiöld's recent works hold those two understandings together: the night sky as the primordial two-dimensional television and the dark hole of constant activity, swirling around our small wet rock, glimpsed, and dreamed of traveling within, only through ancient arriving light. As constructed images they set up a dichotomy between figure and ground and, physically at least, that is all. Like dark Yves Klein monochromes, but with cosmic bodies, rather than birds, puncturing the "greatest and most beautiful work". That their internal framing reveals itself as the same surface and level as the sparkling gapes creates an incredible flatness within depth. It confuses the understanding of the depicted as figurative referent and the physical paint as a shield, or solid oil paint object, that one can imagine being lifted off. Like early Donald Judd paintings these works are neither painting or sculpture, relating to a bastardized both. Unlike Judd's they're not afraid of viewers' relation of them back to the lived world. Subjectivity is not only allowed but an added integral medium within.

In that way the execution of the works and the content are the same. Abstract fields that become star maps and landscapes unifying the world across location and time. They speak to the microcosms and macrocosms around and including the viewer, their content depicted by that which is around it, like nanoparticles sensed by gravity alone. Even before one recognizes the subject defining titles, the works trigger the viewer's lizard brain leftovers and the desire to find patterns for safety and survival. As they transport to times distant, near and far they also spin one across a globe made relatively small against duration and space. It is up to the viewer and their knowledge and experiences to read and feel content here. With an expectation and humility that this will change across people and time. The ability for the human brain to find narrative in nothing and everything is scary, banal and utterly amazing, from scientific discoveries to QAnon to the "luck" of a poker game. When it comes to the heavenly bodies in which so much of human achievement and fault has been influenced and witnessed by, I am reminded of Auden's lines of unrequited love:

Looking up at the stars, I know quite well
That, for all they care, I can go to hell

Fägerskiöld is mainly concerned with perception across his bodies of work. From biologically, how the eye conceives of space and form, to the cultural matters of national space. Perceiving all of this

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is to attempt to place oneself and any meaning in the world. The curiosity they motivate is universal, as is the associated hubris of the human race. The idea that stars affect one from the moment and location of birth, or that they record human history is as arrogant and unfounded as culture and art itself. The belief that marking now for tomorrow matters in an endless eternity. That we find it seemingly impossible to stop man-made changes on the planet whose water will erase the cultural landmarks we bask with pride in (see: Italy, Venice) is tied up with this same vanity. Yet, within this work, one finds nothing nihilist. Any depiction of a future is always one of faith, the idea that, no matter how dystopic, humanity may continue for another hundred or ten thousand years. As much as these works resist the painterly it is important then that Fägerskiöld has painted them. Reaching back into the past and the future the viewer understands by his labored hand that he as a viewer himself has been there and composed and recorded, if only interiorly. That he does it knowing when the time arrives he will be gone relates to a collective and utopian hope. Essay, *Total Dark Sublime*, Mitchell Anderson, April 2022

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Paul Fägerskiöld explores the interrelationship between the concept of time, the construction of meaning and image-making. He was born 1982 in Stockholm, where he currently lives and works. In 2010, Fägerskiöld completed his studies at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm and prior to that, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Recent solo exhibitions include at Galerie Nordenhake (Berlin, 2022); Niels Staerk (Copenhagen, 2021); Kunstmuseum Thun (2021); Borås Konstmuseum (2019) and Moderna Museet (Malmö, 2013). In addition, he has participated in numerous group shows, such as at Bonniers Konsthall (Stockholm, 2020, 2016 & 2010); Olbricht Foundation (Berlin, 2017); Weserburg, Museum of Modern Art (Bremen, 2016) and Sven-Harrys Konstmuseum (Stockholm, 2016). Fägerskiöld was the recipient of the Åke Andrén Foundation's Art Grant (2018), the Fredrik Roos Art Grant (2013) and Maria Bonnier Dahlins Award for Young Artists (2010).