

tanja nis-hansen
impatient girl

may 12 - july 1

palace enterprise

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Girl or non places

By Mai Dengsøe, Art Historian and curator

About a year ago I met Tanja in her studio in the outskirts of Berlin. It was spring then, soon summer, and I remember the sensation of entering a colorful and lively room that mirrored the outside seasonal vibe. Tanja pulled out some paintings that were stacked behind a small kitchenette at the back of her studio. Some works were just about to be shipped to Miami and, with a strict deadline, I remember her being on a thoroughly controlled schedule. Feeling happy, she also admitted to being slightly exhausted.

A sense of being stretched too thin emotionally is a core theme in Nis-Hansen's artistic research. Notably, this relational dynamic is present in her recent work *STRETCHER, Stretch her!*, 2023, which signals toward a mental state of being strung out while, simultaneously, it thematizes the physicality and materiality of painting as such. Whereas an actual stretcher keeps the canvas in place, the word itself is spelled out with stems, creating a different image for the inner eye: 'Stretch her.' There is a distinctively crafty quality to Nis-Hansen's works. Particularly in the way she dissects both visual and literal meaning. Her style is poetic, cartoonish, and energetic. Through an artistic language that unfolds in familiar yet peculiar visual expression, she mixes letters, painterly figuration, and narrative with abstract patterns and colorful decoration.

Visiting her Berlin studio I was overwhelmed by the sensitivity Nis-Hansen manages to capture and relay via the caricatured expression that characterizes her figurative style. Between monsters and other trippy figures I traced copied pages from the mother of Virginia Woolf Julia Stephens' book *Notes from Sick Rooms*, casually taped on the "back" of Nis-Hansen's scenography-like series of paintings *Employee of the Month*. Similarly to the experience of finding a meaningful letter hidden in a drawer, I felt that in these half-covert notes I encountered a secretive gesture, a message: a hint of an artist's personal references and interests. Whereas the works' sculptural quality hold a third dimension to Nis-Hansen's painterly practice, the submerged textual correspondence unfolds a fourth space that reverberates a sense of sisterhood across time and space.

When she thus combines literal messages with a highly expressive visual language Nis-Hansen borrows from late-capitalist commercial style and entertainment industry. Illustratively, a title such as *Impatient Girl* on a meta level reflects the fast communication that is essential to consumer society. Moreover, working site specifically, Nis-Hansen has changed palace enterprise into a waiting room. Rather than inviting long-term rest and immersion, this space encourages peoples'

passing through. A waiting room thus echoes a notion of "non-place". Much has changed since 1995 when French anthropologist Marc Augé coined this term, yet I think that airports, waiting rooms and, indeed, art galleries share in their function as containers for interpersonal interaction and the fast transference of significant messages.

With its title, *Impatient Girl*, riffing on Madonna's 1985 hit "Material Girl" this show may invite broader reflection on nostalgia, privilege, class as well as body representation. Nis-Hansen's use of powerful painterly excess and imaginative worlds further calls to mind Judy Chicago's *Power Play* series from 1986 that similarly confronted traditional gender roles to reckon with themes such as vulnerability and toxic masculinity. Moreover, by situating 'impatient girl' in a waiting room Nis-Hansen offers commentary on the exclusivist history and present of the world her artistic medium is embedded in.

Substantiated by the conceptual landscape Nis-Hansen's work introduces, the show *Impatient Girl* amounts to a commentary on contemporary critical discourse concerning fragility and mental health. Entering this discursive terrain, her work raises questions of care and pushes them, eventually, towards 'the uncanny' by utilizing E-X-P-L-I-C-A-T-I-O-N as its primary representational and communicative tool. *AREYOUREADYTOGETHEALTHY*, 2023, asks one work while an accompanying image of a strong hand holding an apple obscures easy access to and reading of this question.

By stretching out a range of sensory and affective impressions and mixing them with fragments and symbols associated with folklore tradition (e.g., the apple, the frog) and science (e.g., the watch and the DNA string), Nis-Hansen's exhibition joins an exciting range of strong artistic visual communication and expression and, in so doing, points towards the precariousness of knowledge. In my opinion, one of the most confronting questions this show puts forward is; who is one to trust? As a whole, Nis-Hansen offers a contribution composed of jolly twists, labyrinth spins and amusement-park aesthetic that is highly preoccupied with art history, attitude and specifically the tradition of painting. The plasticity with which she combines form, media and content thereby creates an elastic and generous framework for her playful, artistic research and experimentation with deep and complex matters.





Tanja Nis-Hansen
STRETCHER, Stretch her!, 2023
Oil on canvas, oak frames
100 x 320 cm



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Tanja Nis-Hansen
STRETCHER, Stretch her!, 2023
Oil on canvas, oak frames
100 x 320 cm
Detail

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Oil on canvas, oak frames
100 x 320 cm
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Tanja Nis-Hansen
STRETCHER, Stretch her!, 2023
Oil on canvas, oak frames
100 x 320 cm
Detail



Tanja Nis-Hansen
Always On Time, 2023
Oil and oil pastel on canvas
Ø90 cm

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Tanja Nis-Hansen
Always On Time, 2023
Oil and oil pastel on canvas
Ø90 cm



Tanja Nis-Hansen

Impatient Girl
Installation view



Tanja Nis-Hansen

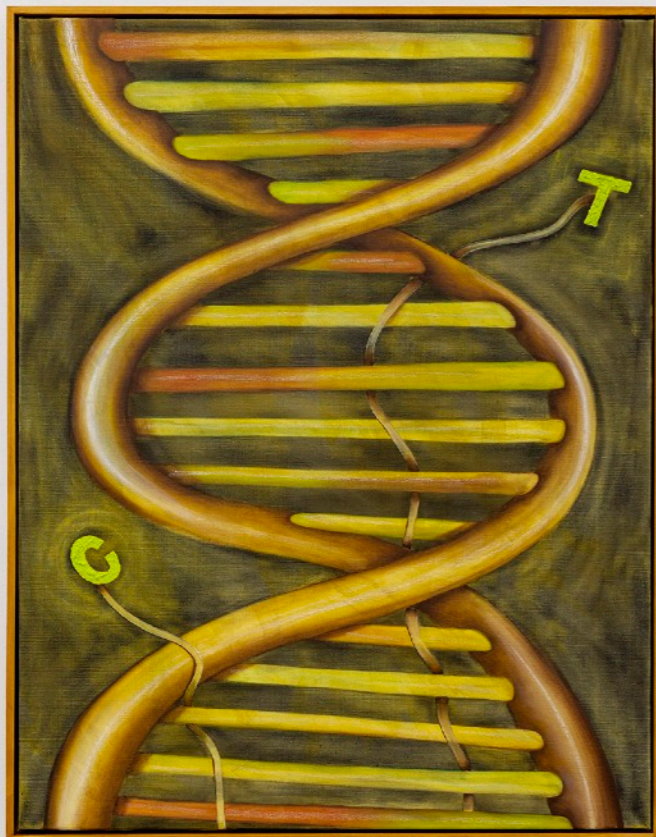
Impatient Girl
Installation view

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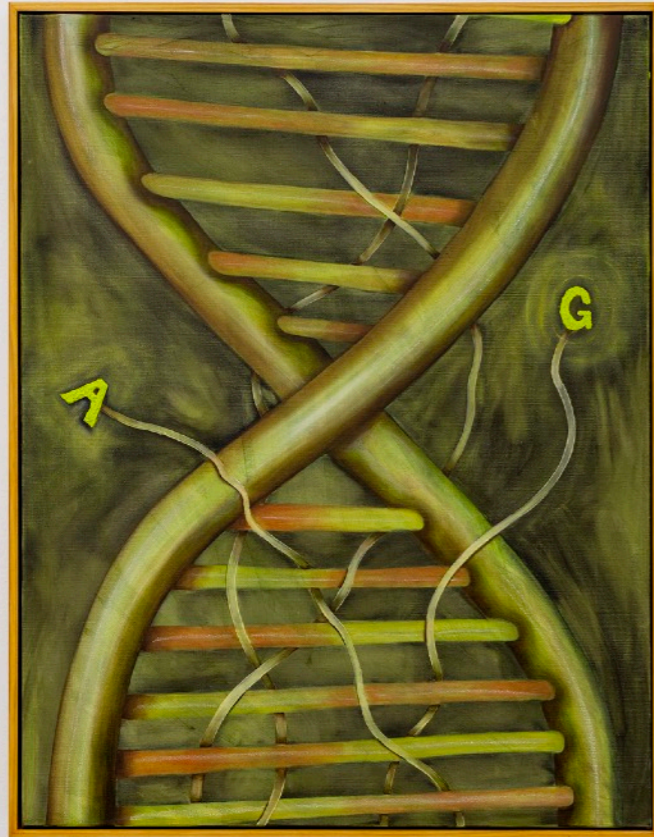


Tanja Nis-Hansen
Little-Miss-Fortune-Telling I, 2023
Oil, acrylic and oil pastel on canvas, pine wood frame
92.5 x 72.5 cm

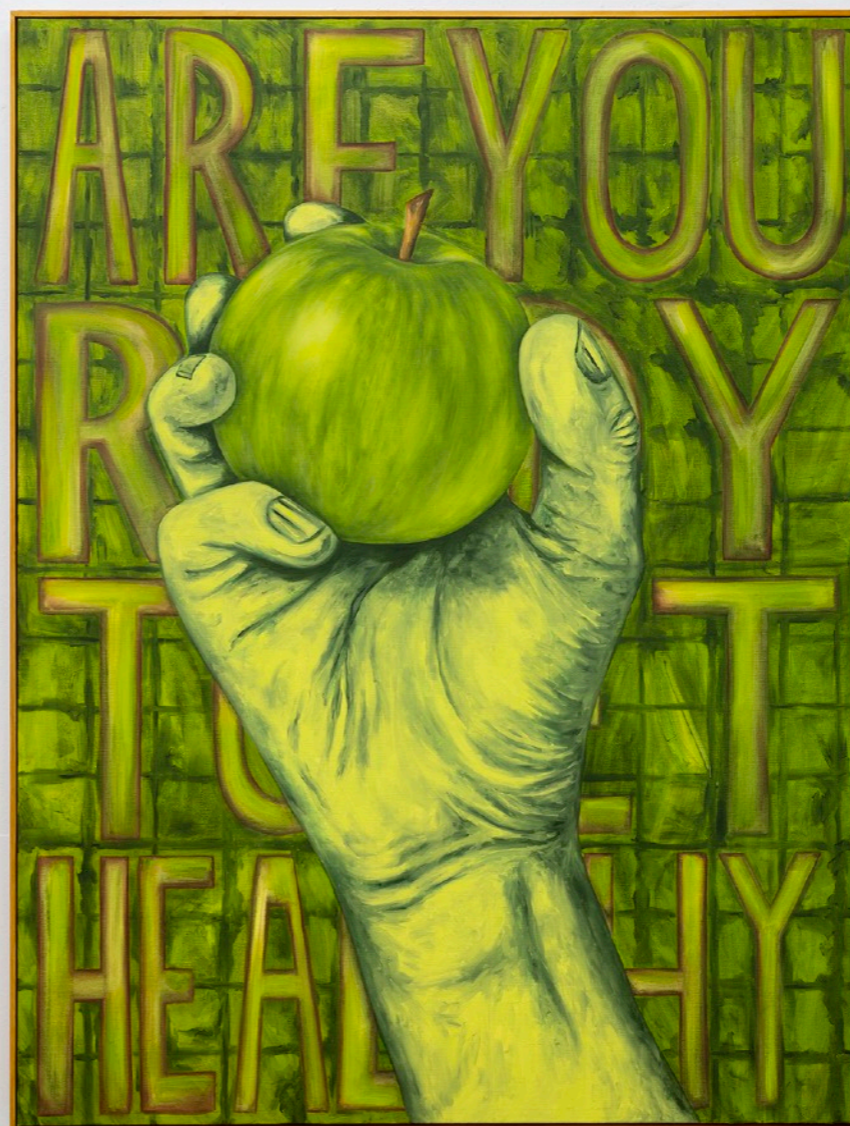
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Tanja Nis-Hansen
Little-Miss-Fortune-Telling II, 2023
Oil, acrylic and oil pastel on canvas, pine wood frame
92.5 x 72.5 cm



Tanja Nis-Hansen
Little-Miss-Fortune-Telling III, 2023
Oil, acrylic and oil pastel on canvas, pine wood frame
92.5 x 72.5 cm



Tanja Nis-Hansen

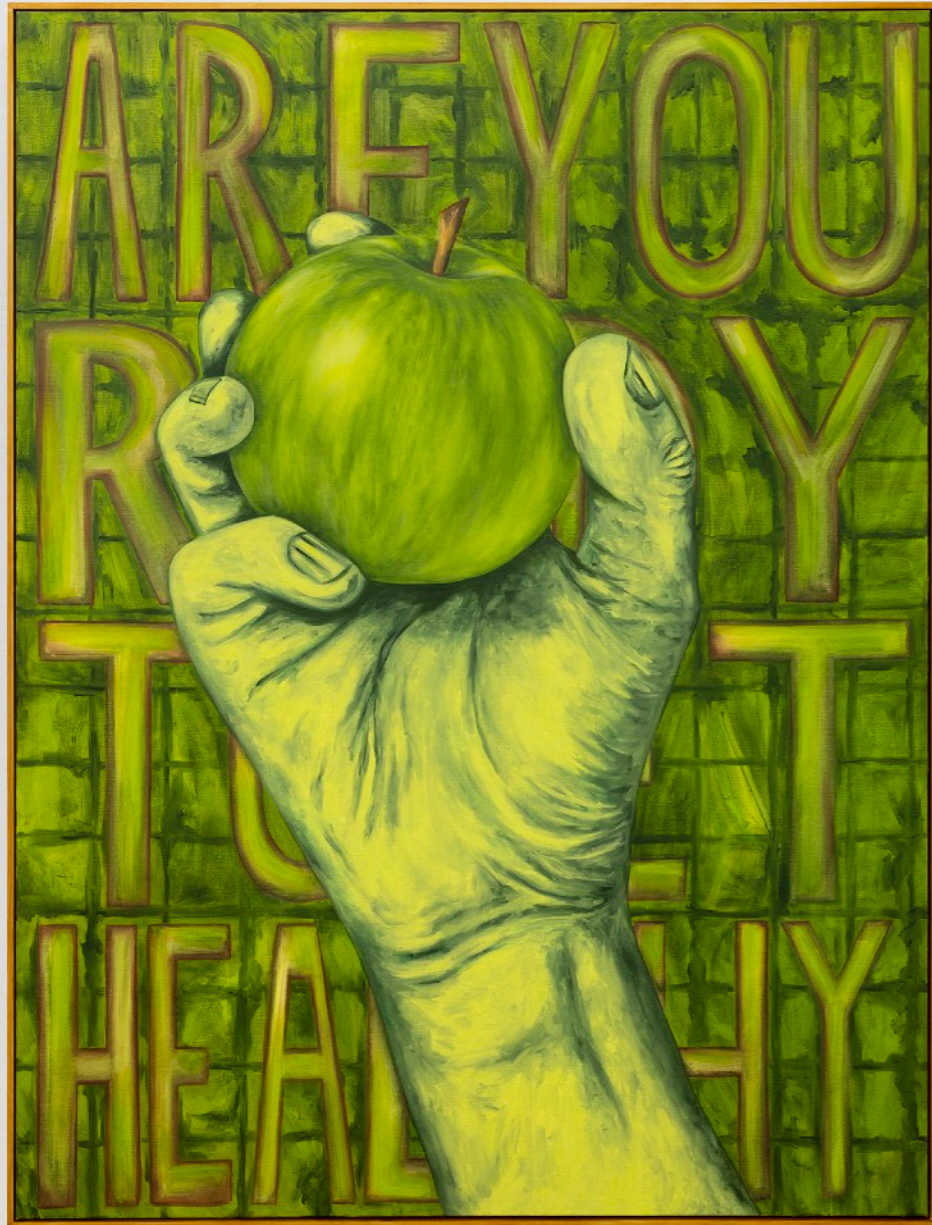
Impatient Girl
Installation view

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Tanja Nis-Hansen
Dr. Giggles and The Dramatics, 2023
Oil and oil pastel on canvas, pine wood frame
162.5 x 122.5 cm

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Tanja Nis-Hansen
AREYOUREADYTOGETHEALTHY, 2023
Oil on canvas, pine wood frame
162.5 x 122.5 cm

tanja nis-hansen
other exhibitions



Tanja Nis-Hansen
Installation view, Employee of the Month
Vestjyllands Kunstpavillon, Denmark



Tanja Nis-Hansen
Installation view, Employee of the Month
Vestjyllands Kunstpavillon, Denmark



Tanja Nis-Hansen
Installation view, Employee of the Month
Vestjyllands Kunstpavillon, Denmark

TANJA NIS-HANSEN

b.1988, Faxe, Denmark
Lives and works in Berlin

Tanja Nis-Hansen lives and works in Berlin. She studied in Copenhagen and Vienna before achieving both her BFA (2016) and MFA (2018) at the Academy of Fine Arts, Hamburg under the supervision of Professor Jutta Koether.

Working between the mediums of painting, text, and performance, takes as her subject the body's presence amid contemporary capitalism - anxious, waiting, resting, ill or non-functioning. Her semi-autobiographical works, which explore motifs including waiting rooms, spiral staircases, moments of rest, and text statements, invite the viewer to think about female labor, exhaustion, illness, bodily maintenance, heritage, and the environment. Perceptible throughout Nis-Hansen's stylistically diverse oeuvre is an abiding curiosity about the history of painting and the social construction of hierarchies of taste. The artist evinces a fascination for theater and stage design, which in her paintings surfaces not only through the inner logic of space on the canvas, but also through an all over "theatrical" mode of representation.

EDUCATION

2014-2018 University of Fine Arts, Hamburg, BFA and MFA, Jutta Koether
2011-2014 Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, AT, Silke Otto-Knapp and Constanze Ruhm
2011 Vera School of Art, Copenhagen, DK, Sonja Lillebæk Christensen and Pernille With Madsen
2008-2009 Spektrum, School of Art, Copenhagen, DK, Ingela Skytte and Thomas Skytte

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**2023**

impatient girl (solo exhibition), palace enterprise, Copenhagen, DK
Belenius (group exhibition), Stockholm, SE
Solito (solo exhibition), Naples, IT
Schwindel (duo exhibition), Galerie im Turm, Berlin, DE

2022

NADA Miami Artfair, Solo booth w. Sans titre, Miami, US
Employee of the Month, VK samtidskunst, Videbæk, DK
The Great Spaghetification, Sans Titre (2016), Paris, FR

2020

LISTE Showtime, BASEL, CH
The Benign Tumour, Catalog release and performance, Hopscotch Reading Room, Berlin, DE

2019

The Benign Tumour, Sans Titre (2016), Paris, FR
De Himlende Øjne, exhibition space Sydhavn Station, Copenhagen, DK
Salon, artberlin Fair with artist duo CONNY, Berlin, DE

2018

Café Miao presents : Tour de Miao, Performance, Münchener Kammerspiele, Munich, DE
On occasion of the performance program Cold Chills by Jutta Koether [Indistinct Radiochatter], MFA Degree show, HFBK Hamburg, DE

2017

The X-mas Show, Performance program, Galerie der HFBK, Hamburg, DE
KAYANAPOLI Procession 2017, Performance program, Casa Morra, Napoli, IT
Suspicious Shapes, Performance program, HFBK, Hamburg, DE

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022

Kassandras søstre, Rundetårn, Copenhagen, DK
 La Forme De L'eau, 7 rue Froissart, Paris, FR
 Sleeping In, JUNE, Berlin, DE

2021

For some bags under the eyes, Sans Titre (2016), Paris, FR
 20:15 Uhr, Duo exhibition CONNY, Galerie Melike Bilir, Hamburg, DE
 Ancient Tongues, L'INCONNUE, New York, US

2019

Kiki Buh Bye, duo exhibition with Soshiro Matsubara, SORT, Independent
 Space Index Vienna, AT
 Bandwagon No 1, Pogo-Bar, KW, Berlin, DE
 Fruits Suspended and Swaying, AEDT, Düsseldorf, DE
 La Première, Sans Titre (2016), Paris, FR
 Space Opera, Crum Heaven, Stockholm, SE

2018

Nominees, Hamburg Workgrant, Kunsthaus Hamburg, DE
 Sanguine Husk, Rumpelstiltskin, New York, US
 Hiscox Kunstpreis 2018, HFBK, Hamburg, DE
 Compassionate, Der Tank, Institut Kunst, Basel, CH
 Amore Atomico di Amore di Lava, Federico Vavassori, Milano, IT

2017

Luxury Problems, Halle für Kunst Lüneburg, Lüneburg, DE

GRANTS

2023 The Danish Arts Foundation, Grant for work production, DK
 2022 The Danish Arts Foundation, Grant for work production, DK
 2020 Berliner Kultursenat, Stipend, DE
 2020 Neue Kunst Hamburg, Travel stipend with the performance
 duo CONNY (with Niclas Riepshoff), DE
 2019 The Danish Arts Foundation, Grant for work production, DK
 2016 Gisela Könk Stiftung, Stipend, DE