

GEORG NORDMARK:
HOUSEBROKEN
28/09/2023–21/10/2023

ISSUES is pleased to present Georg Nordmark's solo exhibition Housebroken. After participating in group exhibitions and art fairs internationally and locally, it is not only his first gallery solo show in Stockholm, it is also the first time he shows drawings. The eight framed drawings on display are a series of pen and wash portraits referencing contemporary art and popular culture through the lens of caricature, or more specifically: drawing as a satirical tradition and iconoclastic tool/impulse.

Alongside, encircled by the drawings, is one sculpture continuing Georg's known interest in the human-animal relationship. Together, the drawings and sculpture form a tragic-comical whole, engrossed in the ambiguities of agency and control.

Georg's drawings are grotesque exaggerations bubbling with references to high and low culture or how culture lives in the subconscious. In one drawing we see Grover, a familiar and friendly monster from Sesame Street, cross-sectioned as if from a medical textbook. Raw tissue and a human hand lie beneath the cute blue fur, the real interior of a muppet. The motif, like many others in the series, depicts a sense of bodily discomfort and loss of control. In two other drawings, we see the cool persona of frat boys revoked. Both are passed out with crude drawings covering their face, humiliated by their more sober fraternity brothers. Cy Twombly paintings float in the background emphasizing the scribbled frat faces and perhaps poking fun at the blockbuster artist and his fellow Modernists. Overall, the drawings are a web of microcosms layered with dark truths and lies about our culture and choices.

A single sculpture sits in the gallery, an anti-squirrel bird feeder, a model of objects used to control natural environments typical of Georg's practice. The squirrel-proof bird feeder exemplifies the concept of 'enrichment', the practice of constructing man-made objects and situations that accommodate natural behaviors. The feed that typically lies inside the container attracts birds and squirrels alike but the small circular holes allow birds in and keep squirrels out. This container acts as a miniature zoo, luring animals we deem desirable so we can observe them from the comfort of our kitchen table. As John Berger notes in *Why We Look at Animals*, "zoos are an epitaph to a relationship which was as old as man", reminding us of our lost connection to the natural world and the role we played in our loss.

Mike Kelley, the late American artist, believed that all one can do with popular culture is "flay it, rip it apart, reconfigure it." We see a similar approach in Georg's work, specifically his drawings. The combination of caricatures focused on humans and our culture with a man-made device created to control animals and their nature becomes a satire of human, not animal, behavior.

The exhibition is accompanied by a poem by Elis Monteverde Burrau.

GEORG NORDMARK

B. 1994 Gothenburg, Sweden. Lives and works in Gothenburg and Berlin. Georg holds a BFA and MFA from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. Solo and duo exhibitions include *From Being Jealous of a Blind Dog's Dreams* at NSFW/Svilova, Gothenburg (2022); Art Cologne Art Fair with Carl Kostyál, Cologne, Germany (2022) and CHART Art Fair with artist Harrison Pearce and gallery Carl Kostyál at Tivoli, Copenhagen (2023). Group exhibitions include *Downtown Issues II* at ISSUES, Stockholm (2023); *Gullringsbo Konstsamling* at Hospitalet, Stockholm (2022); *Things That Used to Feel Fun* at Amazegallery, Stockholm (2022); *Handels X Mejan* at Stockholm School of Economics, Stockholm (2022); *Downtown Issues* at ISSUES, Stockholm (2021); *Transmission*, MFA graduation show at the Royal Academy of Art, Stockholm (2021); *Nectar* at Inter.pblc gallery, Copenhagen (2021); *Panoptikon* at Långholmens prison, Stockholm (2021); *Survival of the Fittest* at Accelerator, Stockholm (2020) and *Twelfth night* with Coyote, Stockholm (2019) amongst others.

SELECTED PRESS

Georg Nordmark, Castenfors, David. Interview, *Art Lover magazine*, print, issue 57, 09/2023

[Teacher free! The Royal College of Art's emotional graduation exhibition shows that art is not just for the affluent middle class](#), Hjertström Lappalainen, Lars-Erik. Review, *Kunstkritikk*, online, 27/05/2022

[Stylish, sweaty and full of sadness from Mejan students](#), review, *Dagens Nyheter*, online, 26/05/2021

Okay ladies, now let's get in deformation.
Jag sitter i en svart campingstol.
Rätt mycket duvor här.
Jag har målat in mig själv i fyra hörn.
Det är mysigt, bra splittrad överblick.
Struten är på.
Georg frågar om en text och jag tänker spontant att frågan är en karikatyr.
Jag gillar den skarpt, min egen tanke, men jag har haft fel förut.
I det här galleriet vill man ha ryggen fri.
Om inte frågan är en karikatyr kan jag skriva en karikatyr:
Georg ber, på sina bara knän, om en text.
Let's go.
I vissa fall känns det rimligt att skriva innan man tittat.
Det är synd att jag redan har tittat, för det här är ett sådant fall.
Jag skojar.
Låt mig tala klarspråk:
Vi befinner oss inuti i det långa huset.
Vi står ovanpå spegeln.
Pelle Snusk har ett efternamn på svenska.
Pelle Snusk är ett pedagogiskt praktexempel på varför författare aldrig ska illustrera sina egna böcker.
Hur många horn står upp?
Fyra, fyra smycken.
Skrattet fastnar inte i halsen.
Det bor där.
Ljudet av en pistol som laddas med en blomma.
I Georg Nordmarks universum är det som att Pelle Snusk "knarkat" lite med Unica Zürn och Hans Bellmer.
Ni fattar vad jag menar.
Lite nål, tråd, andra naglar - voilà!
Vi är hemma!
Jag blundar och visualiserar ett bylte.
Jag gör ultraljud på figuren (the one and only) och skelettet består av stilleben.
Det är så konkret, att göra ultraljud.
Som att göra ansikten.
Som att göra män, myter, legender etc.
Min dotter har en Pixibok som innehåller visor.
I den finns en uråldrig banger vars sensmoral lyder: dockor ska dansa innan de blir tunga och dör.
Motiven i Housebroken dansar och grimaserar, men den urspårade festen är tyglad av tillvägagångsättet.
Det är totally mad, men ändå inte.
Jag älskar när sensmoraler lyder.
Man kan lära gamla sensmoraler att sitta.
Jag älskar läppar.
Men ja, tillvägagångsättet, vilket jävla sätt.
Det är ett wicked ballroom på ytan, men djupet är som fjättrat.
Det är laddning i formalin.
Ni fattar vad jag menar.
Gäckande rörelser som pausats och putsats så pass tydligt att spasmerna fortfarande pulserar.
Jag är överdriven nu, jag är too much, jag skriver er på näsan som förtvinar i realtid.
Jag säger fyrkant istället för kvadrat, jag säger skärde istället för skar.
Om ni fattar vad jag menar så uppskattar ni tragiken.
Jag tittar på den brittiska parlamentarikern som poserar med sin nidbild.

Jag tittar på mannen som inte bara "poserar med" utan liksom hjärtligt kramar om sin stringent hänfulla tvilling.

(Motivet är, naturligtvis, knyckt från en Spottande Bild).

Jag fylls av tillförsikt, för att inte säga ömhet (säg aldrig ömhet).

Jag tänker på när Kungen var skolpolis och gatan översållades av media.

Vilket gjorde skolpolisens arbetsuppgift obefogad.

Jag tänker att den manifestationen av våldsam, ytligt poserande meningslöshet var och är meningen med livet.

Jag är glad att åtminstone en levande själ i Sverige fått uppleva detta.

Ni fattar vad jag menar.

Den ytliga posen ska inte förväxlas med den grundliga.

Min dotter brukar ställa sig på en spegel och hota att hon ska "pumpa den".

Det är lätt att sminka en fågelskrämma en gång, men har ni testat att sminka den igen?

Det blir aldrig lika skönt som första gången.

Ni behöver nidbilder.

Ni need nidbilders inneboende nåd.

Ni behöver bildning.

Ni är Kungen.

När sjuk humor avtäcks bör impulsen hos pöbeln vara att göra den sjuka humorn frisk igen.

Ni föreställer er en keps vars copy lyder:

Gör den sjuka humorn frisk igen.

Jag älskar när copyn lyder.

Georg inviger den sjuka humorn tillbaka till medeltiden med en parodiskt stor sax.

Svenska Mad köptes upp och lades ner, jag vet inte, säkert 40 000 gånger.

Om jag vinner på Stryktipset ska jag köpa upp och lägga ner Svenska Mad en gång till.

Huvuden har verkligen rullat i tjära, fjädrar, strössel, fuskpäls, etc.

Gott så.

Jag tycker att vanlig päls är fuskpäls.

Hundleksaker implicerar att hundar kan leka och att det finns saker som hundar kan leka med.

På mors dag gav jag modern till min dotter en karikatyr av mig själv.

Direkt från Plattan, fortfarande varm.

Det är typ så villkorslös kärlek och tacksamhet ser ut här i framtiden.

Det är som meningslösheten.

Det är som på Louvren.

Frågan var kanske inte en karikatyr så mycket som en kuggfråga.

Det var definitivt ingen bön.

Jag tar Swish.

Ja ja, nästa man till rakning..

Elis Monteverde Burrau



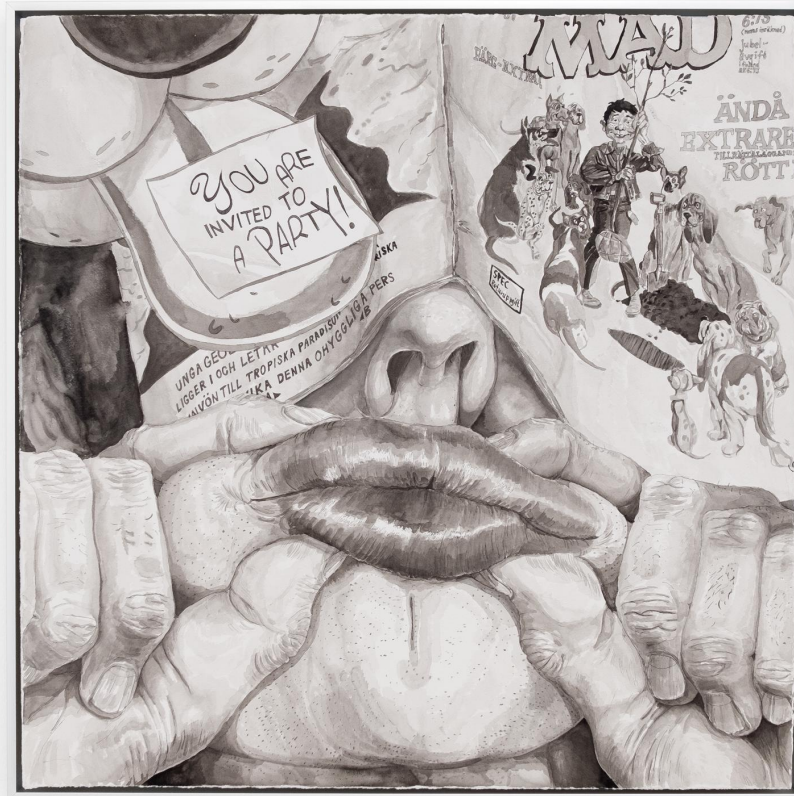
GEORG NORDMARK
#2 Makeup Without Black Lines, 2023
Ink on Arches cotton paper
aluminum frame
60 x 60cm

Drawn from a makeup test photo from the production of the Wizard of Oz has vaudevillian Ray Bolger in an early version of the ScareCrow costume and makeup. Similarly to the marker prank drawings, this is another instance of a face acting as pictorial plane, and the black board and palmer method handwriting from the black Cy Twombly work makes a small appearance. The scarecrow in and of itself is a figure of human likeness in a negative sense (to frighten unwanted pests), not dissimilar from the caricatured portrait.



GEORG NORDMARK
Grover Cross Sectioned, 2023
Ink on Arches cotton paper
aluminum frame
60 x 60cm

Grover Cross-Sectioned is a surreal illustration of an organically correct hand puppet. Paraphrasing a drawing of Georg's from 2015, the motif like many others in the series depicts a sense of bodily discomfort and loss of control. The image is drawn with the help of a medical illustration of a cross sectioned human and a Sesame Street trivia drawing showing how the Grover puppet is operated. However, the image takes its primary inspiration from a David Musgrave sculpture called *Animal*, where Snoopy is reimagined as a plastic anatomy doll, split across the midline. The puppet casts a shadow on an asbestos cement facade and you can see his non-split side reflected in the blind covered window.



GEORG NORDMARK
Nauman & Neuman, 2023
 Ink on Arches cotton paper
 aluminum frame
 60 x 60cm

Nauman & Neuman, the first drawing made in the series, depicts a photograph from Bruce Nauman's contorted and grimacing self portrait series *Making Faces*, covered by an old issue of the Swedish edition of the satire magazine MAD. The drawing's title references both Bruce Nauman and Alfred E. Neuman MAD's freckled mascot. A 'Gross-Up' from the cult Nickelodeon cartoon Ren & Stimpy appears in the left corner.

Acting as a guidepost for the subsequent drawings, this encapsulates the influences and ambitions of the series by incorporating different modes of stylisation within the same motif (the cover illustration and Bruce) and referencing caricature in both subject matter and style (from Nauman's distorted appearance, the level of details being exaggerated rather than photorealist and the caricatured style of the cover illustration).



GEORG NORDMARK
Slimed Self Portrait
2023
Ink on Arches cotton paper
aluminum frame
60 x 60cm

Slimed Self Portrait, captures the artist slimed as seen on the Nickelodeon show *Slime*. The show was a massive hit in the '90s and featured celebrities and contestants that were doused with a glowing green liquid coined slime. The drawing depicts the artist himself surrounded by three works from the show, as if the event occurred in the exhibition. The reference to Nickelodeon continues the recurring allusion to the abject themes and thrill-seeking foulness of children's entertainment, as well as a general sense of discomfort and ridicule. The sliming simultaneously denotes recognition and humiliation, reminiscent of the emotional duality of putting on an art show.



GEORG NORDMARK
Spitting Image
2023
Ink on Arches cotton paper
aluminium frame
60 x 60cm

Spitting Image takes its title from the British political satire television show from where the reference image was taken. A befitting idiom not only for the show that starred puppets made in derisive likeness to public figures but perhaps Georg's drawings as well, dealing with more foul (bespotted) forms of likeness and figuration. The Labour Party politician Roy Hattersley poses with a puppet made in his likeness. The foam rubber doll takes clear cues from the traditions of caricature, which becomes all the more grotesque given a three dimensional shape and motion. Here, it has been returned to drawn image and its physicality is only conveyed by the illusory qualities of likeness and the rubbery, sculpted texture that distinguishes the two. Again this work attempts to speak of caricature without making one outright.



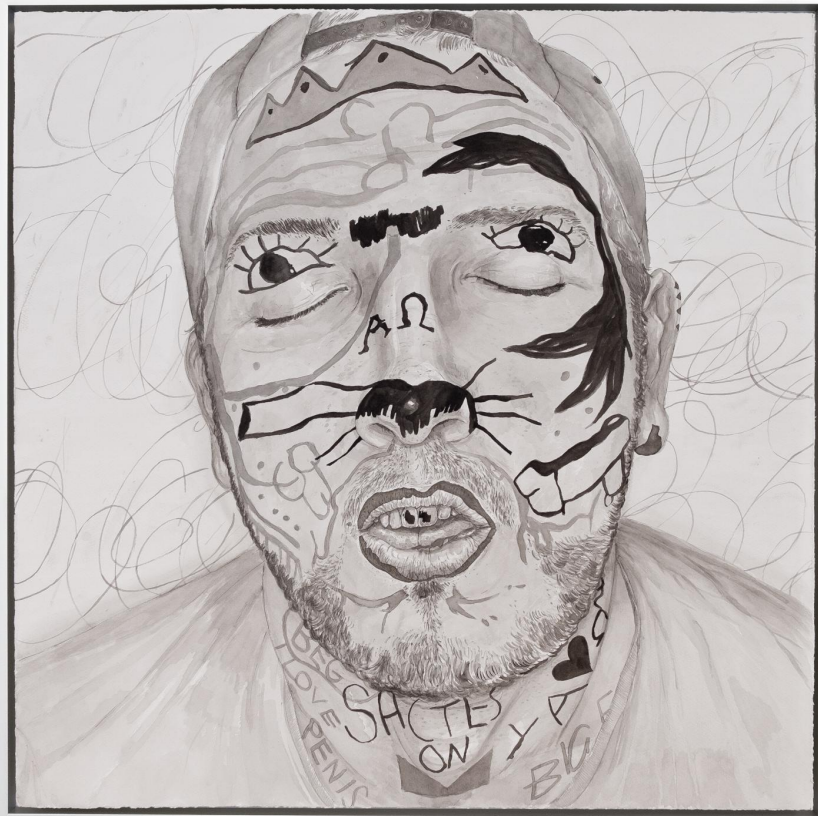
GEORG NORDMARK
Struwwelpeter's Ecstasy
2023
Ink on Arches cotton paper
aluminium frame
60 x 60cm

Struwwelpeter's Ecstasy is based on a photograph of the Swedish theater production of *Struwwelpeter*. The rubbery costuming and dramatic unmasking of the protagonist surpasses the purposefully discouraging details of the original children's picture books illustrations. The cautionary tale of *Struwwelpeter's* poor personal hygiene gave 19th century black pedagogy both a figurehead and the artistic expression of foulness. By returning the unsettling photograph to a drawing, the image affirms the drawn image as a filthy affair, where the ink dirties the pristine paper rather than adorning it.



GEORG NORDMARK
Untitled, 1967
2023
Ink on Arches cotton paper
aluminum frame
60 x 60cm

Untitled, 1967 and *Untitled, 1968* depict sleeping men drawn on with permanent markers. The marker prank, making crude and jeering scribbles on a non-consenting friend, is a truly hands on approach to both portraiture and caricaturing. The act is a most artistic or painterly form of personal offenses and a most philistine impulse to 'deface' someone's face is iconoclasm. It turns the face into an image to then mock and debase it- A more aggressive offshoot of the same defaming impulse that informs these works and their source material. Posed in front of iconic Cy Twombly works, that like their face paint contains both abstraction, semantics and graffiti, casts a formalist light on the doodles and reciprocates with a mocking tone back at the modernist.



GEORG NORDMARK
Untitled, 1968
2023
Ink on Arches cotton paper
aluminium frame
60 x 60cm



GEORG NORDMARK

Anti-Squirrel Bird Feeder

2023

Sandblasted aluminum, steel,

plexiglass and sunflower seeds

167 x 43 x 33cm