

Victor Bengtsson: *Horse droppings are not figs*

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Victor Bengtsson's painterly world amalgamates visual inspiration from traditional, biological illustrations and the detailed density of Flemish Renaissance paintings with motifs quoting Danish peasantry—think: plows, pigs, beets.

For O—Overgaden, Bengtsson has created a 6-meter-wide painting by rubbing color onto hessian, impregnating motifs into the rough structure of the fabric. Leaving the threads visible, the free-hanging colored textile alludes to historical weavings—a kind of poor man's Gobelin. Mimicking the grand storytelling of traditional tapestries, this piece is an epic depiction of rural life in Northern Europe, as if (mis)understood from a distant future. More fabulation than fact, the motifs' soft colors unfold a world gone wrong: a rural harvest in a surreal turmoil assembling oversized vegetables, an awry plow clad in tiles, burning houses, and pigs turned trap nets.

The grand-scale painting is overlaid with a belt of a repeated blue animal motif—a dark emblem with a bright star at its center, hinting at US Pop art while underscoring Bengtsson's tongue-in-cheek or rebellious dyed takeover of historic tapestry. In another series, a series of pigs are cut-out, DIY origami style, from painted canvas. Wonky and imprecise in their remake, the pigs point at how scientific or historical image representations never get it quite right, destabilizing binaries of true and false.

Meanwhile, Bengtsson's associative motifs continue in a broken frieze of paintings puzzling together dormant, or simply dead, human figures or distorted bodies. In Bengtsson's mythologized narratives, disguised as historical weavings, apocalyptic scenarios repeat. As such, these shadow motifs and their distorted depiction of historical farming culture corrupt the idea of a true history, hinting at how pseudoscientific narratives still lurk behind our perception of reality today.

Victor Bengtsson (b. 1997, DK) is a self-taught artist holding a BA in medicine (2019-2023) who lives and works in Copenhagen. He has exhibited at venues including Mendes Wood DM (São Paulo, 2021, New York, 2022, Brussels, 2023); Public Gallery, London (2024); East Contemporary Gallery, Milan (2021); and Someday Gallery, NYC (2024). The exhibition at O—Overgaden is Bengtsson's first institutional solo show.