

Cecilia Bjartmar Hylta and Samuel Hindolo

Did Habit leave?

September 14, 2025 – January 11, 2026

Opening: Saturday, September 13, 2025, 6–9 pm

Did Habit leave? is a dual exhibition by Cecilia Bjartmar Hylta and Samuel Hindolo which draws upon the artists' shared exploration of the limits of the optical field. Both of their practices involve a working through of found material, or what could be described as a scouring and sifting through the residues of public life. There's a kinship in their artistic sensibility and a shared curiosity for what remains hidden, lingering or latent in a familiar object or image, and the ways in which its habitual meaning can be subtly altered and pushed into abstraction. Abstraction is articulated here as a condition of becoming and a trajectory, rather than as a knowing or a fixed state. It's almost as if the world and the internalized, often unconscious ways in which we perceive and inhabit it, is removed and held at a distance – for us to contemplate and look at anew.

In a physical sense, the exhibition is framed by a large-scale, walkable platform by Bjartmar Hylta, which connects the exterior foyer and the interior gallery through a continuous walkway that wraps around the separating wall. While appearing as a positive, monolithic volume that choreographs movements in the exhibition, the work also incorporates a multitude of negative volumes which lead the eye into an almost bottomless void. These holes are the insides of other positive volumes which have been installed upside down, and that previously had served as bollards to divide and block physical circulation in various cities. This inversion reveals a more clandestine, unpolished interior that shows all that has settled there in the absence of an external gaze. There is a particular latency in this work as it opens up spatial peripheries and cracks of a vacant and lurking kind. Its inanimate presence speaks of an archive of urban space, but subtly withdrawing it from sight and comprehensibility.

In a larger sense, the exhibition is also concerned with form and formlessness, and the ways in which a contour can either point to vacancy and a "negative"

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condition – or suggest presence and the arrival of something. Hindolo's paintings and collages follow this thought; even if figures appear in some of the works, they are pushed into an abstract, vacated and strangely disembodied circuit. It's as if their gestures and words are muffled, distant and removed from legibility. Some of the figures turn their back on the viewer, seemingly immersed in their own insular plot. Similarly, the way space is treated often leads into a sense of detachment and expanse: at times, the pictorial plane opens up into a gaping and limitless visual field that seems full of potentiality, while at others, shapes replicate and reappear in different layers of paint, echoing and shadowing their own presence. Painting has often been characterized as a window to peek into unknown territories, but here it also turns out to be a dead-end – or, rather, a gaze that is lost and consumed in its own reflection. Permeating these works is a feeling of suspense and latency, of contours that are there but never quite graspable.

As a whole, *Did Habit leave?* is less concerned with what we see than with the how and the ways in which our looking is allowed to roam and linger. Looking is both an engagement with what presents as form and its other (absence) – therein lies the particular sentiment of this exhibition.

As part of the accompanying program of the exhibition, an artist talk with Cecilia Bjartmar Hylta, Samuel Hindolo, and Eleanor Ivory Weber will take place on Wednesday, December 3, 2025. Weber is a Brussels-based artist and author. Further information about the event will follow soon.

Curated by Kathrin Bentele

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