CHILL

Herman Bergman
1100 Degrees

December 3
— January 7,
2022

HERMAN BERGMAN


HERMAN BERKMAN
BAL DU MOULIN ROUGE
1889
PARIS
VELVACOAT

1100 Degrees
From Constantinople to Cyborg futurism
— A story in bronze

The exhibition *1100 Degrees* is a celebration of Swedish sculpture and its close ties to one of our most remarkable craftsmen and entrepreneurs in the modern age. Herman Bergman, whose incredible drive, self-confidence, fearlessness about the unknown, and care for his loved ones and co-workers allowed him to create a movement that wouldn't just elevate Swedish art in general, but also make an international impact. This represents a goldmine of insight into a key part of our Swedish art historical heritage, which emerged during those dynamic and eventful decades in the last century.

Bronze casting is one of the oldest techniques in art. The material's unrivalled durability and capacity for transcribing the sensitivity and nuance of the sketch and the sculptor's hand have ensured that bronze has remained a timeless material for artists to experiment with and return to. A particularly intimate interplay emerges between the expertise of the foundry's staff and the intentions of the artist. This non-verbal translation tosses the interpreter out into an unfamiliar landscape of lines, surfaces, folds, structures, and then, shades and resolutions of gold, glossy chestnut, and patina green. A job that remains to be done when the sketch made from plaster, wax, or some other material that is malleable at room temperature has been handed over to a process that offers no one-size-fits-all solutions. CFHILL's exhibition presents a diverse selection of artists, from various generations, who all have some special relationship or other to the Herman Bergman Fine Art Bronze Foundry, which was established in 1895.

Today, the foundry, which has been located in Enskede since the 1950s, employs a small staff of experts with a unique skill set related to this ancient, demanding, and often potentially lethal practice. Anybody who ever gets the chance to visit the foundry will remember their time there for the rest of their life. Behind an unassuming door in an industrial estate that has been squeezed into a residential area, one will literally find the totality of Swedish sculpture jumbled up among ancient originals, portraits of past celebrities, politicians, artists, dressed-up reindeer-keeping Sámi, angels, nudes, horse heads, a girl or two by Lena Cronqvist, plaster pieces and bronzes, all resting on tightly spaced shelves that reach from floor to ceiling. This is the reception and office of Leif Schölin, CEO of the business and a self-taught bronze caster who has been studying the craft since the 90s. There is so much more here, though.

This overwhelming barrage of impressions continues in the actual workshops, where each individual stage of the process is tended to based on specialist knowhow and an array of technological gadgets that have been designed exclusively for this particular place and one single purpose: the casting of artworks in bronze.

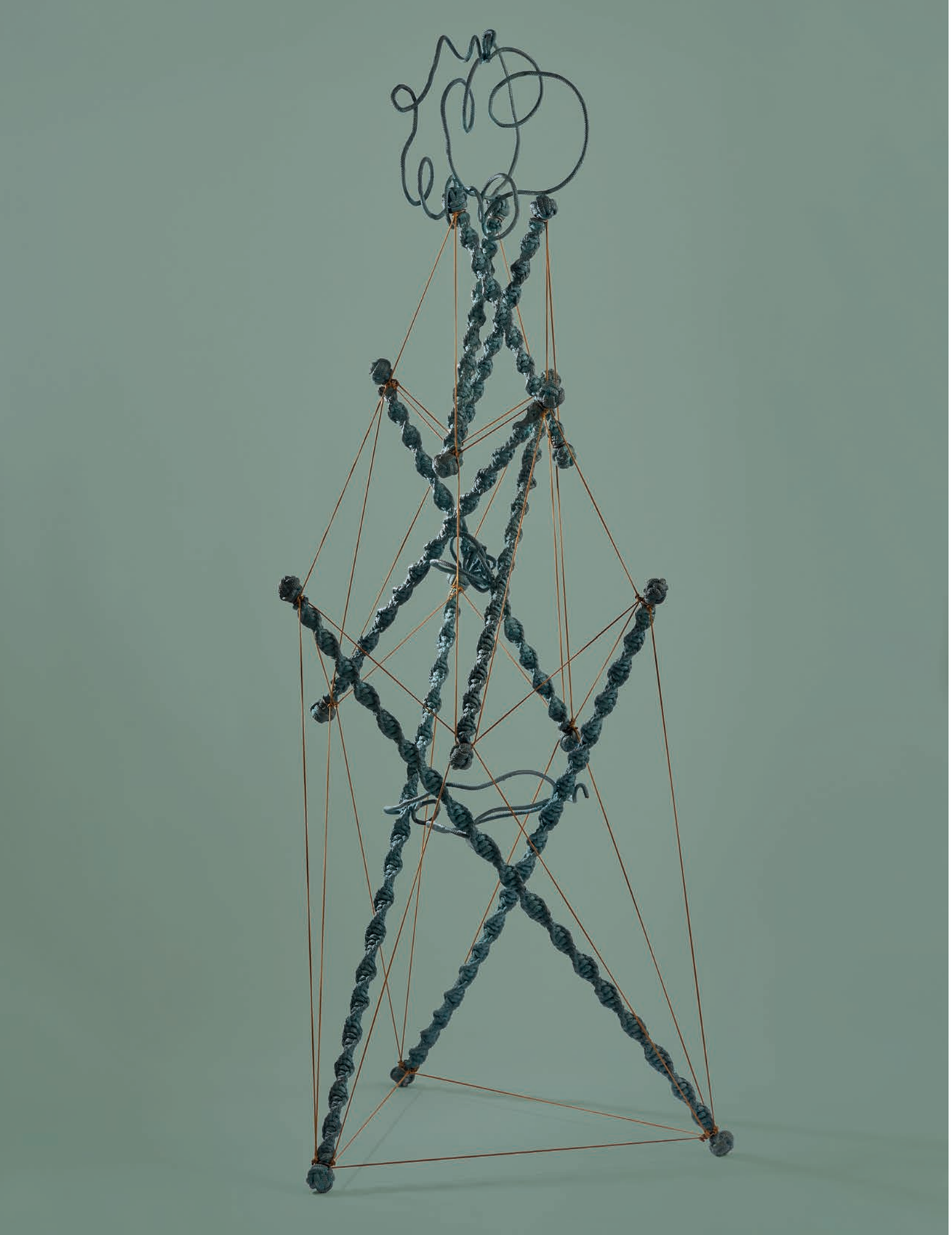
The artists in this exhibition have all experienced this process. They all know the shock, fascination, and intrigue over the potential and internal qualities of this material that can be experienced as a result of this process, which depends just as much on the artist's intentions as it does on the interpretations of the caster.

1100 Degrees, which is curated by Michael Storåkers with the assistance of Herman Bergman's CEO of many years, Leif Schölin, is the result of years of preparation, research, and production of new artworks. These works are new in the sense that they are new casts of both ancient classics and works by contemporary, still-active artists. It has been fascinating and thrilling to get to experience this remarkable technique and witness the many phases of the process that demand such incredible physical effort and precision.

We hope that this exhibition will help draw attention to the potential of bronze in the modern age, as well as to its fascinating history, and to a unique individual in Swedish art history who is all-too-often overlooked.

Participating artists: **Bella Rune, Carl Milles, Cajsa von Zeipel, Lena Cronqvist, Jens Fänge, Klara Kristalova, Charlotte Gyllenhammar, Cecilia Edefalk, Jesper Waldersten, Meta Isæus-Berlin, Torsten Renqvist, Denise Grünstein, Henrik Ekesiöö, Ester Eriksson, Katrine Helmersson,** and **Kajsa Mattas.**
Also on show will be a new cast of the head of Diana (originally from the 16th century) and the head of a Byzantian horse (probably around 100 B.C.)

Michael Storåkers
Anna-Karin Pusic
Michael Elmenbeck



Bella Rune

Give this question some serious thought: which inventions have had the greatest impact on human history? Which single spark of inspiration did the most to simplify and facilitate existence for our hairy ancestors a hundred thousand years ago? Without having asked any archaeologists or evolutionary biologists, I'd still like to suggest that at least one of these vital inventions must have been string. This piece is a celebration of string executed in bronze. Classic, twined string, reinforced in multiple cords–the kind of string we've all seen used to fasten tarps, drawstrings, burlap, fishing equipment, and all kinds of packaging. The string winds its way through roller-coaster curls, balancing on a frame that is also dressed in fabric.

Until the autumn of 2021, Bella Rune was Professor of Fine Art, Textile at *Konstfack*, and her main innovations in sculpture have been achieved in the medium of textile, where she has incorporated a fusion of contemporary and older traditions. She has mentioned that textile fascinates her because of its elastic utility and the meaning it communicates in its roles as a sheltering membrane in the form of clothing or tents, as a carrier of symbolic meaning in the form of flags, and as a communicator of tradition in the patterns that travel back and forth between continents. The huge clothing corporations establish trade routes and transnational relationships.

This isn't the first time Bella Rune has taken a closer look at the potential of string. In a series of works executed in dyed yarn, she created airy pillars, which can serve as the focal point for an entire gallery space one moment, and collapse into a small enough footprint to fit inside a pizza box the next. Bella Rune participated in the Timisoara Biennial in 2016, and had a solo exhibition at the Carl Eldh Studio Museum in 2020. She is represented in the Moderna Museet collection, and has participated in a long list of international exhibitions.

Bella Rune
Equilibrist
2021
1 of 3
Bronze
165 x 55 x 75 cm

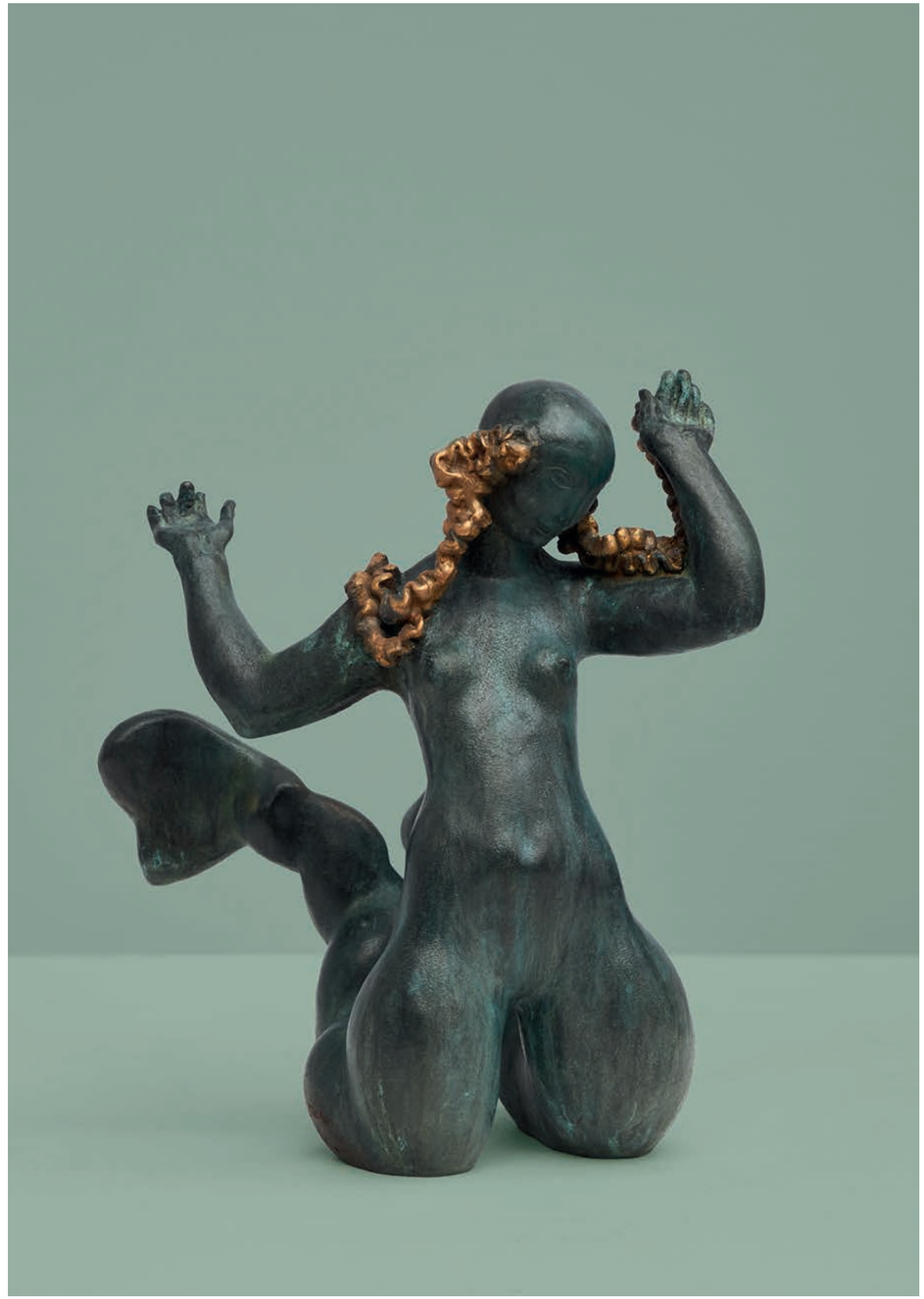
Carl Milles

The great innovator in sculpting around the turn of the last century was Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). His radical break with the then-prevailing doctrine of bronze sculpting involved the actual process of creation, the application of fingers to clay and other soft materials, and the way it comes to expression in the irrevocable products of casting. One could say that this brings attention to and exposes our mortality. Carl Milles was one of those who remained open-minded about the potential for sculpture to express the ideas and spirit of the age, and his encounter with Rodin would be an eye-opener. The age in question, however, the late 19th century, was not ready to accept less heroic expressions, however rich and vibrant they may be. These two giants of art history, who were separated by 35 years of age, met in Paris when Rodin went to see Milles after the latter's submitted work, *Helvetesportarna [The Gates of Hell]*, had been rejected. They became acquainted, and Milles spent some time studying under the master. The impact of those years is fully evident in *Pojke från Martinique [Boy from Martinique]*, a piece that possesses none of Milles's later characteristics, but which is nonetheless both intriguing and enchanting. The young man's head is executed with almost perfect anatomic precision. One senses the warmth of the skin, the sensitivity of the lips, the tension of nerves, and the contraction of muscles. The gaze is turned down, but this presents as an expression of concentration rather than bashfulness. It seems natural to suggest that his closest relatives in art history are the seductive, dramatic youths portrayed by Caravaggio. Contemporary viewers will also pick up on something refreshing in the gaze of this artist, who doesn't seem to be burdened by any of the biological racism that had already become influential among European intellectuals at that time.

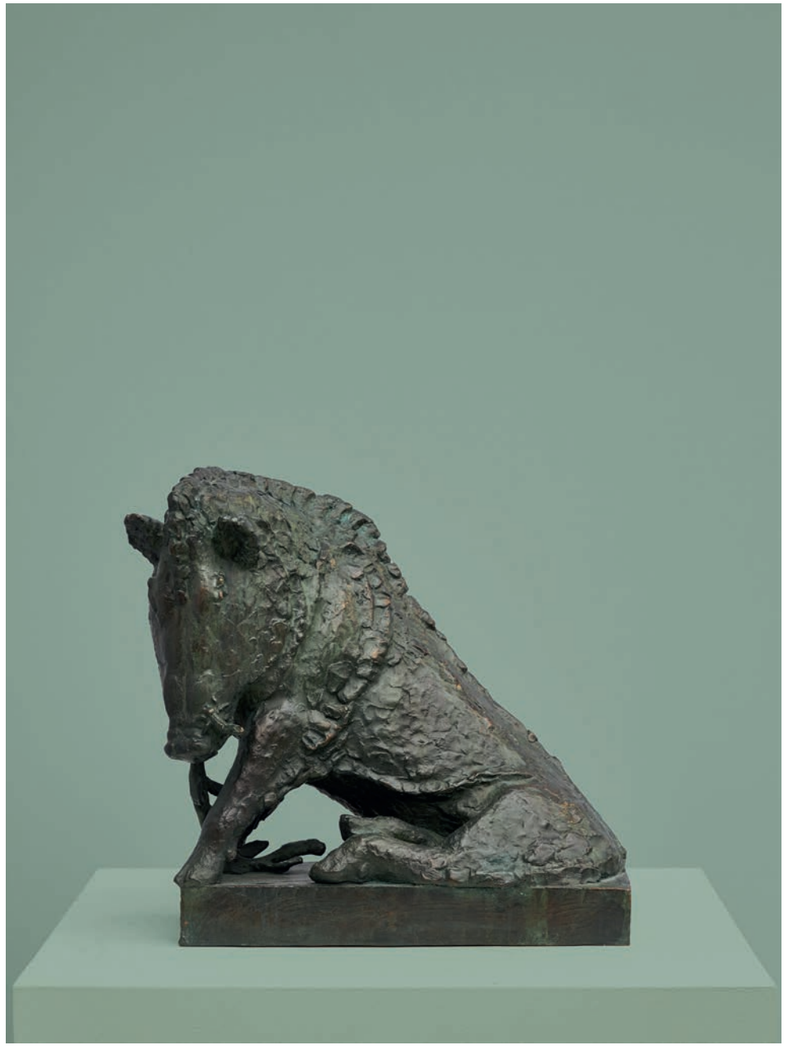
When Milles returned from his studies in France, there were many commissions awaiting him as part of the ongoing efforts to revitalise Sweden's public image. New monuments were needed, and ambiguous, mobile, and mutable things don't make good monuments. Instead, he took inspiration from stories, myths, and ancient Norse history. That would become Milles's unique, defining quality: his way of combining sensible, restrained classicism with a playful folkloristic undertone or rhythm to make something that was altogether novel at the time. We probably shouldn't underestimate the influence of non-European art, either. Just look at *Dansande Menad [Dancing Maenad]*, which could very well have been a depiction of the Hindu goddess Khali.

Carl Milles
Orfeus
1925-26
2 of 6
Bronze
220 cm

Carl Milles
Pojke från Martinique
1899
1 of 12
Bronze
100 cm



Carl Milles
Lilla najad
1916
3 of 12
Bronze
35 cm



Carl Milles
Sittande Vildsvin
1929
6 of 12
Bronze
42 x 38 x 17,5 cm

Carl Milles
Dansande Menad
1913
4 of 12
Bronze
70 x 50 x 25 cm

Cajsa von Zeipel
Sphinx
2021
1 of 3
97 x 90 x 150 cm

Cajsa von Zeipel

While scientists are now suggesting that we have actually entered the Anthropocene, the geological age when the global climate is mainly determined by human activity, we are also entering a completely different age, on a more existential level, in terms of how we define a human being. There's probably already some scientific term in use for this, but for our purposes, we can refer to it as hybridism. Any claim about who we are can be immediately fragmented into thousands of responses, each contradicting the preceding one. This age comes into view with great clarity as a result of our encounter with Cajsa von Ziepel's futuristic hero. In terms of body language, it's a recent, space age sibling of the famous *Dying Gaul (or Dying Galatian)* that was added to the Acropolis as a decoration around 200 B.C. This is a warrior too, with a machine gun for a helmet (or is it an outgrowth of some sort?), and limbs that range from skin to android, organic materials, prosthetics, and high-tech functional materials–all belonging to an individual whose gender is not merely indeterminate, but irrelevant. This is the face of a young person. The familiar attributes are plain to see: a pierced nose and air pods. Are they wounded, too, or are they simply biding their time, waiting for something that concerns them to happen? Time and time again, Cajsa von Zeipel has demonstrated great acumen in her interpretations of the approaches young people today are taking to facing their futures. Mysterious, raging, non-communicative, and anti-individualistic; they aren't supposed to make sense to us. All we can do is make room for them. Cajsa von Zeipel works in New York, and is represented at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Gothenburg Museum of Art, and in countless private collections both in Sweden and abroad, and her work is on display in public spaces all over Sweden.

Bysantinska hästhuvud

When you see this horse head, with its tensed withers, semi-open jaws, and flaring nostrils, you will immediately sense the warmth and strength of a living horse against your face. The breath of the throbbing nerve that lies at the core of Western art. You're literally peering Classical Antiquity in the eyes, gazing through a window to some unknown location in Ancient Greece. The original used for this sculpture of a horse is in Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice, and many who have visited the city might think they saw the four horses, or the "Quadriga", there. But what they saw was most likely the replicas that were made in the 1980s, which have been installed on the façade of the cathedral. The original horses, which are dated to around the first century A.D., are located inside the cathedral–and many fail to take the time to visit it when they're in the city of gondolas. The origins of the sculpture haven't been fully determined, but many experts point to the similarities between the *Horses of Saint Mark* and the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. The latter is also portrayed on one side of the Italian 50 Euro Cent coin.

How did this Venetian horse's head end up in Sweden, and how did Herman Bergman get his hands on the sketches? The story behind this is long, and complex, and less than fully verified, but it goes something like this: Art historians assume that the horse monument, which was actually made of copper, not bronze, was meant for the new capital of the empire, Constantinople, in the 3rd century B.C. It remained there, as far as it is known, until the 13th century, when power-hungry, expansionist Venetians arrived, stole them, and installed them on top of the Saint Mark's Basilica, which had been built around the year 800. Venice, with its extensive trade connections and wealthy merchants and aristocrats, remained a powerful city state until it fell to Napoleon, who stole the horses and moved them to Paris, where he displayed them next to the Arc de Triomphe.

After his defeat at Waterloo in 1815, the Austrian emperor made sure to see them returned to Venice, where they were reinstalled in their former location. They remained there until the 1980s, when conservators determined that pollution was causing so much damage to them that they needed to be kept indoors. That's where they've been ever since. It was business leader (Rottneros AB) and military man Svante Påhlson who first came up with the idea of acquiring replicas of the *Horses of Saint Mark* for his estate in Värmland (which Selma Lagerlöf based her fictional Ekeby on).

But a problem remained: you need access to originals if you want to make replicas! For some reason, which remains unknown, sculptor Eric Grate knew that the Glyptotek in Copenhagen had a set of the horses, and Herman Bergman was thus able to replicate the ancient masterpiece in his foundry during the 1930s. That must have given him a very special sense of pride! The same horses were replicated yet again by a later generation of Herman Bergman casters for the Blasieholmen square in Stockholm towards the end of the 1980s.

Bysantinska hästhuvud
1959
Controlled edition no. 3
Bronze
100 x 100 x 47 cm

Lena Cronqvist

These days, anybody who visits Slussen in central Stockholm is likely get lost and lose their bearing, at least momentarily. Nested among signs giving incomprehensible directions, bike paths that run right into pedestrian paths, dead ends, and the now completely unreachable waterfront, there is only one recent addition to the place that has any chance of bringing a smile to the face of a passer-by: Lena Cronqvist's group of bronze girls. No other material could feel as appropriate for these little powerhouses, who have become something of a trademark of this artist in recent years.

Lena Cronqvist, who recently turned eighty, attracts reverence and respect thanks to her creative enthusiasm and joy, which only seems to grow stronger as the artist herself grows frailer. Since the 60s, generations have been invited to follow her life as a woman, which she has portrayed with absolute frankness, omitting neither her loves, her mental illness, her motherhood, nor the loss of her parents. At first, they followed her through her paintings, but since the 90s, they have also been able to do so through her bronzes. Lately, she has brought the two disciplines together by adding colour to her sculptures. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the paintings have entered space, and taken on a third dimension? One of the girls is proudly clutching a sunflower, the very symbol of life and creation. The other is holding a parasol. What might that symbolise? Perhaps nothing in particular. It's readily evident that Lena Cronqvist is still inspired by the inherent miracles of creation and shapes. In the last few years, Lena Cronqvist has had major solo exhibitions and retrospective exhibitions at Liljevalchs konsthall and Waldemarsudde. Her paintings and sculptures are represented in the collections of all major museums in Sweden, as well as in a long list of significant private collections. Her sculptures are on display in public spaces all over Sweden.

Lena Cronqvist
Knäböjande flicka
2019
3 of 4
Bronze
92 x 35 x 60 cm

Lena Cronqvist
Flicka med två flätor med solros
2019
1 of 3
Bronze
104 x 40 x 50 cm

Lena Cronqvist
Flicka med klackarskor, rosett med solros
2019
2 of 3
Bronze
115 x 40 x 50 cm

Torsten Renqvist

Is Torsten Renqvist the most Swedish of post-war sculptors? At the very least, nobody else could ever express the same poetic stillness, defiance, and sincerity that he does. His sense of solidarity with the overlooked, the mediocre, and the ridiculous. Nobody has the same knack for capturing the majesty of an animal's movements, or the inviolable respect for nature's autonomy, as symbol of freedom or mirror of human attitudes and relations.

When measuring Torsten Renqvist (1924–2007) against his contemporaries, the most common points of comparison are writers: Stig Claeson (with whom he collaborated), and Gunnar Ekelöf. Renqvist, trained as a painter, was taught by Sven X-et Erixson (1899–1970) for a time. He was still a student when he first showed his lyric, informal painting –a descriptor used by the critics of the day to denote an intimistic form of expressionism that became highly popular in Sweden, where cubism and other more abstract movements had found it difficult to gain a foothold. However, in 1967, he gave up painting for sculpture. Starting off with steel, stone and clay he promptly went over to wood, drawing from Egyptian, Pre-columbian and Medieval sculpture. Many of his works were subsequently cast in bronze.

The exhibition features two of his beloved works, *Dansande flicka [Dancing Girl]* and *Avlägsen fågel [Seagull]*. The dancing girl is about the same size as Degas' famous ballet dancer from 1880, which is at the *Tate* in London. But Renqvists dancer is not on stage, nor is she subjected to the scrutiny of some fastidious dance teacher. The girl is based on a photography by Helen Lewitt of two kids playing flamenco-dancers in the mud of Harlem. Torsten Renqvist is represented in the collection of Moderna Museet, which holds more than 500 of his works, among them several of his major sculptures, paintings and works on paper.

Torsten Renqvist
Dansande flicka
1993/2020
8 of 8
Bronze
60 x 26 x 22 cm

Torsten Renqvist
Fågel
2021
3 of 3
Bronze
8 x 25 x 45 cm

Newcomer: Cecilia Edefalk's bird.

Cajsa von Zeipel's silicon original.

Den vilande jaktgudinnan Diana

This adorable head is one of the most beautiful sculptures we have in Stockholm, and it has an incredible history to boot. Its origins lie sometime in the mid-16th century, when King Henry II of France wanted to give his mistress, who he was enormously infatuated with, an exceptional gift. Her name was Diane, and apart from being beautiful and wise, she happened to be a duchess. What could be more appropriate than having the best sculptor of the time compose an allegorical portrait of the divine Huntress Diana, peacefully reclining in the light caress of a tall, slender hind? The result is captivatingly graceful and pastorally erotic. The creator of this masterpiece remains unknown, however. Even at the time, it caused such a sensation that it ended up in the Louvre, but it disappeared without a trace during the Second World War. It was so badly missed that the museum turned to one of the best foundries in Europe – Herman Bergman. There, it was cast in bronze from a replica from the Vatican's collection (the Vatican's ownership might surprise some, considering the erotic aura of the piece). A second copy was commissioned by art collector Svante Påhlson, who had also ordered a set of the *Horses of Saint Mark* for his country manor in Rottneros. Before it was installed there, it was put on show in Stockholm, which sparked such desire in the citizens of the city that the idea took hold that the city ought to own a copy of the piece as well. A donation from art patron Axel Hirsch made this possible, and in 1964, the sculpture *The Fountain of Diana* was unveiled on the shore of Djurgårdsbrunnsviken. There you go: a love story, a heist, and a happy ending – a perfect Herman Bergman story! Diana's head is a good example of Italian Mannerism, the late Renaissance style where rounded plasticity gave way to a more aristocratic, reductive expression, which won huge popularity as a result of the work of court goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini. Diana wears a modern take on an antique hair style, with soft curls and a pair of lips that are sultry enough to compete with any modern-era Diana–why not Beyoncé, for example?

Den vilande jaktgudinnan Diana
Controlled edition no. 1
Bronze
60 x 30 x 30 cm

Klara Kristalova

Klara Kristalova's playful figurines are not inspired by the classic Greco-Roman tradition, in which idealised bodies are anatomically depicted in marble or bronze. Her source is, rather, German Meissen, where the first successful chinaware manufacturing plant in Europe was established in the late 17th century. Porcelain was a luxury item at the time, and the material wasn't just used for manufacturing dinner sets, but also for a genre that would go on to become legendary and trendsetting in its own right: figurines. Since they were essentially status symbols rather than artworks, the forms chosen are freer, and the subject matters more mundane. Porcelain was no longer a material that was exclusively reserved for the highest levels of society–it was increasingly being used to depict shepherdesses, clowns, children playing with dogs, or young couples sharing intimate moments.

This playfulness and freedom has energised Kristalova, who went on to populate her own world with demi-girls, trollish beasts, and creatures that are neither flora nor fauna–but maybe both? This way, she manages to transform a seemingly harmless material, ceramics, into something both spooky and disturbing. Here, what used to be nothing but a charming bourgeois knickknack has taken on a life of its own, and gone on to do whatever takes its fancy. The stooping female figure is wearing a timeless outfit: a dress and red, high-heeled shoes. The unusual detail here is the fact that she is embracing a potted plant. Now, while a degree of attachment to a plant can certainly be normal in every way, this physical display of affection is uncommon. What we're viewing is a loving couple, essentially. Klara Kristalova recently had a critically acclaimed exhibition at the Carl Eldh Studio Museum, and is represented in Moderna Museet's collection, as well as many significant private collections.

Klara Kristalova
The Stick Girl
2021
2 of 3
Bronze
130 x 64 x 62 cm

Klara Kristalova
Lost
2011
3 of 3 + 1 AP
Patinated bronze
78 x 63 x 37 cm

Katrine Helmersson

Art history is rich in phallic imagery. There's not too much mystery about the fact that human beings are obsessed with reproduction and sexuality: it's rather essential for our existence, after all. However, the balancing act between hidden, formal symbology and immediate depictions of genitalia can be a controversial one. While the former might pass as a triumph obelisk, or an imposing pillar, the latter might well cause offence. Katrine Helmersson's *La Veuve* has become a classic since it was first shown in the early 1990s. Particularly, perhaps, when it was used as the cover image for author and literature professor Ebba Witt-Brattström's pioneering work *Ur könets mörker [Out of the Depths of Gender]* (1993), which is considered an essential contribution to modern feminist thought in Sweden today. *Veuve* is French, and means "widow", i.e., a woman who has lost her partner. The sculpture is just as ambiguous as the concept. An oblong, suspended, irregular, fleshy "pendulum", which has been worked by both fingers and mouth. The mouth is soft, just like a woman's genitals, but it is also toothed. It is the source of the imprints we see on *La Veuve*, both in the form of gentle nibbles and more violent bites, like where the tip has been bitten off. Is this a case of vengeance, self-defence, or aggression? Or, simply, a mere morsel of hunger and lust? Feminist discourse has evolved quite a lot since the 90s, partly thanks to the broadening of the definition of sexual minorities. But back then, thirty years ago, the issue at hand was whether female lust and visibility demanded space and a new language. The ambiguous, sensual, and universal shapes that Katrine Helmersson has borrowed from her own imagination and from non-European religious art manage to address subjects like lust, oppression, wild longing, and retribution with incredible accuracy, in a form that transcends both time and space. Katrine Helmersson is represented in the collection of Moderna Museet, and has recently installed a major artwork made of bronze at the Nya Karolinska hospital in Solna.

Katrine Helmersson
La Veuve
1991
4 of 6
Bronze
47 × 10 × 8 cm

All interior furnishing is from the 1950s. Klara Kristalova's wax original.

Lars-Erik Eriksson forming in sand.

Jens Fänge

If Jens Fänge had been a poet, his poems would have been rife with clever rhymes, bouncy lines, and unexpected metaphors. As it happens, he is an artist, and the poetry he works with involves using a bright sweet shop palette to create scenes reminiscent of carnival funhouse interiors. His touch is light, but never casual; humorous, but never without a sprinkling of darkness. His paintings consistently achieve the precise tone required to make them strange, enticing, unnerving, and yet, attractive enough to ensure the viewer will keep wanting more.

His sculpture *A Place in the Sun* is an obvious play with an object that is both an unfamiliar object in most Swedish homes and immediately recognisable as something fun and exciting that sets a celebratory and seductive mood: a hookah. This object is associated with Turkish coffee shops and various relaxing environments frequented by men all around the Middle East, all heavy with the scent of cinnamon and soothing bubbles. In Jens Fänge's interpretation, they are constructed from the absolute opposite of oriental elegance: objects that are far more reminiscent of modern Scandinavian ceramics, the kinds of things you'd expect from Stig Lindberg or Wilhelm Kåge, the restrained, tasteful Rörstrand designs. The sculpture doesn't form a cohesive whole: it simply accounts for its various components and the way they are piled on top of one another, like a sequence from Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*. It's most certainly poetic – and fun! Jens Fänge had a major exhibition at Bonniers konsthall in 2018, and is represented in the Moderna Museet collection, as well as many significant exhibitions both in Sweden and abroad.

Jens Fänge
A Place in the Sun
2020
2 of 5 + 1 AP
Bronze
120 cm

Kajsa Mattas

Kajsa Mattas is one of the most frequently commissioned sculptors of our time. It might be the clarity of her idiom and her universal imagery that has made her such a popular choice when works are commissioned for public spaces all over the country, including schools, churches, stations, and parks. A monkey parent caressing their monkey baby triggers emotions because of their resemblance to us. Her posture is uncannily humanlike, while still obviously retaining the natural poise granted by ever-vigilant animal reflexes. Human sophistication is counterbalanced by the long tail that is held below the wooden pillar. It signifies the animal, the non-human.

The inspiration for *Apor [Monkeys]* comes from Aesop's Fables, in which there is a tale of how when the king of the animals announced a contest to see who had the most beautiful offspring in all the jungle, even the monkey brought her wrinkly baby to show it off.

Kajsa Mattas's sculptures exhibit a streamlined idiom, which is simple and almost timeless. Her public works are on show at many locations in Sweden, e.g., Östra Ågatan in Uppsala, Slottsparken park in Örebro, Motala Church, and the gardens of Görväln House. She is represented at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, as well as other places. Kajsa Mattas received the Swedish Sculptor's Association's Sergel stipend in 2009. She is the recipient of a guaranteed state income for artists. Her portrait of previous prime minister Göran Persson has been on display in the Riksdag since 2014. Kajsa Mattas received the Prince Eugen medal in 2004, and, in 2020, she was awarded the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts Sergel prize, one of the most prestigious awards for sculptors in Sweden.

Kajsa Mattas
Apor
2008
2 of 8
Bronze
165 cm


VARTA
TROCA
ZER
ANNAS

The Bastard
By Paulina Sokolow

"Wetnurse wanted." This is how Herman Bergman (1869–1954) chose to begin his autobiographical notes sometime in the early 1950s. Those words introduce his foster mother, who would care for him and love him for the rest of her life. Herman was the result of an illegitimate liaison between officer Johan Adolf Berg and an employee, Fredrika Brostedt. The parish vicar registered his parents as "unknown". Their names are never mentioned in Herman Bergman's own account, which was never published.

Johan Adolf Berg was a distinguished member of society, a genuine pillar of the rapidly expanding city of Stockholm. He held stock in the *Aftonbladet* newspaper and was a close friend of Alfred Nobel. When Nationalmuseum opened in 1866, the quay that faced Skeppsholmen was modernised and tidied up as a result of Berg's professional acumen and entrepreneurial spirit. Berg was an art collector, and his collection is now kept at the Scheffler Palace. He was also a Captain of the Navy's Engineer Corps. However, this story isn't going to be about him.

Well, there is one more thing about him we'd like to add. Let's go back to an episode that occurred many years earlier, in November of 1854. A new statue was about to be unveiled. A group of military men in parade uniforms stand around king Oscar I in the chill air at Slussen, peering up at the large red cloth that conceals an equestrian sculpture of king Charles XIV John. The whispering and the scraping of shoes against the hard ground ceases suddenly, and the king steps up to pull the veil off. Nothing happens. The cover is stuck, and nobody knows what to do. Then, a young man, a lieutenant of the Navy's Engineer Corps called Johan Adolf Berg, advances. With determination, he draws his sabre, and with a single blow, cuts the fabric free, so that it elegantly drops to the ground, revealing the new bronze sculpture to all. The statue has travelled all the way from Münich, because there is nobody in Sweden who is able to execute casts of this sophistication. How to do it is a well-guarded professional secret, and always has been. Herman Bergman, Berg's future son, would change all that, though.

At the age of twenty-six, Herman Bergman founded his business: a fine art foundry on Roslagsgatan with hand-picked staff members and a furnace that was unlike anything anyone had ever seen this far north. In his notes, he gives his own account of how he got his hands on German and Italian business secrets in Berlin, when he took advantage of an unmonitored moment to literally crawl inside a custom-built furnace, the most private inner sanctum of the fine art foundry in Berlin he had worked for just a few years earlier.

By the time his company opens for business, he's already made his name as one of the leading experts of bronze casting. During his years abroad, mainly in Berlin, but also in Paris, he absorbed all the knowledge he could so that he could bring it back home to Sweden. As he was both recognised for his skill as a craftsman and a universally appreciated colleague and worker, he did not lack for opportunities. However, "I told them no, because I had been granted a stipend to learn more about the craft than others, so I could teach it once I returned home. Therefore, I owe it to my country, as an honest Swedish gentleman, to deliver on that promise to the best of my ability." This attitude manages to be typical both of him and of the 19th century Swedish mindset. The vision of Sweden as a land of promise, a hub of industrial design and innovation.

Herman Bergman's Fine Art Foundry has been around for 125 years now. Few Swedish companies have been in business that long while remaining true to their founder's original ideals, and while keeping their CEOs working as integrated members of the team and relying on them to communicate a corporate culture that relies ultimately on an accumulation of knowledge and a powerful ethos. It's hard to even find a bronze sculpture in Sweden that isn't stamped with the trademark H. Bergman. In this exhibition, the viewers will encounter this unique synthesis of artistic intention and craftsmanship up close, in all its incredible variety.

As the foster child of a poor family living on Nya Kvartersgatan–present-day Linnégatan–a part of Stockholm that at the time was still a rural district on the outskirts of town, with a drunkard for a stepfather and a loving, but illiterate and hard-working, i.e., absent, stepmother, his prospects weren't that bright, despite the secret financial support that the family received from his biological father. In his vivid notes, which are skilfully narrated, and seem to represent an attempt at an autobiography, Herman explains how he used to help his mother by making sure to be at the bakery at five o'clock in the morning, when they sold yesterday's leftover bread off at a discount. "It was all very well in the summertime, but it wasn't much fun in the whirling snow of winter. I would often rise very early in the mornings, to accompany her, and on countless occasions, I would take her basket, send her back to bed, and head off to the bakery on my own." Another memory he relates is how his mother did her winter cleaning and laundry every year, and serve him and his foster brother pancakes with raspberry jam–right off of the fragrant rugs!

His accounts paint a portrait of a bustling Stockholm, in which Humlegården was a rough neighbourhood, full of run-down restaurants catering to the thirsty, unsophisticated farmers from Roslagen, who came to the city to sell their produce. A perfect place for boys to play! Whenever they got their hands on some coins, they got to enjoy a particular delicacy: Snuslilla's toffee: "The pleasure it brought us made our eyes bulge. Even though we knew that this little hag Snuslilla, as everyone referred to her, used to stand over her stove, with her nose hanging down over the toffee pot, and allow her long nose to drip drop after drop of tobacco juice down into the pot, mixing it up in the toffee!"

Herman Bergman displayed no particular aptitude at all for any of the core subjects taught at his school. Today, he might have been diagnosed with ADHD or dyslexia. In his carpentry class, however, his efforts pleased his teacher, who encouraged him to seek further training, perhaps in fine art. Somewhere in the background, a plan had been laid out for the boy. His biological father was envisioning a military career for his secret son. This was one of the very limited options available to anybody who sought to climb the social ladder. As it happened, Johan Adolf Berg died suddenly when Herman was just 14 years old, and that door was suddenly closed to him, too. He had to leave school and find employment to help support his family. After this, a remarkable story follows:

Wherever the boy goes to work, he soon wins everyone's affection. One gig after another eventually leads him to take up a profession that looks like it will be his calling: millinery. He displays great skill, and by the time he turns thirteen, his employer concedes that he has nothing further to teach him. His subsequent encounter with a couple of shoemakers will come to define his path in a completely different way, however. The wife learns that Herman created wooden sculptures in his free time. She is moved by his talent for artistic creation, and encourages him to cultivate it further. Herman resigns his position and is recruited by Otto Meyer's zinc foundry, a relatively successful business in Stockholm that is undergoing a period of massive construction and development that would remain unrivalled until the whole downtown area was reconstructed a century later. Zinc pieces were used to decorate building fronts. Here, too, he soon wins himself a reputation, and quickly becomes a valued asset at the company. One day, he learns that Mr. Meyer is going to travel to Berlin for a study tour. He plucks up the courage, and asks to be allowed to accompany him.

The trip costs five hundred kronor, an expense that his foster mother and biological mother join forces to cover. That alone makes for a moving story, as two women of modest means do their best to gather the funds to support somebody whom they both have such unwavering faith in. Herman dreams of visiting the famous foundries on the continent, but this first journey only takes him to the more unassuming Zinc workshops. Bergman doesn't lose heart one bit. Even before the excitement of catching a glimpse of Kaiser Wilhem I with general Bismarck on a square in Berlin, he was firmly determined to return to the city at the first opportunity. But before that, Herman Bergman would become a famous man.

At some point during the 1880s, *Lund Cathedral* was being refurbished. One of the many repairs involved casting a new pair of doors in bronze. The originals to be used were the doors of the *Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore.* As usual, nobody in Sweden had the expertise required to recreate them in bronze–that would have to be outsourced from Austria. The entire Swedish team, which included Otto Meyer's firm, waited for the replicas of the originals to be made. Herman Bergman recalls how excited he was to get to see a master at work. The days passed, but no master of fine art casting appeared. They learn that he has suffered a bout of pneumonia, and a few days later, news of his passing reaches Stockholm. Work ceases, and frustration reaches a boiling point as the date announced for the reopening of the church draws nearer. Twenty-four reliefs are missing, all in all. As the days pass, a crazy idea germinates in the mind of 17-year-old Herman Bergman. He writes:

"After giving the matter sufficient thought, I decided on a bold approach! I went up to Mr. Meyer in his office, where he was seated, as usual, in his writing chair in front of the pulpit, spinning his seat around its iron swivel. The Master will see you now. After opening the door, I entered and stopped just inside, a little self-conscious, but I confidently removed my hat and held it in both hands. I opened my mouth to speak these words (I recall them as though it were yesterday): 'Mr, Meyer! I will cast those reliefs!' He spun halfway around, and stopped his chair to face me. 'You?'. 'Yes,' I tell him, 'I will do it!' 'Surely, you don't know how to do that?' 'No, I don't know, that's true, but I think I've figured out how to do it all the same!'"
And that was that.

Just 19 years old, Herman Bergman receives a stipend from the chamber of commerce, after receiving numerous recommendations from people he's never even met.

That's how strong an impression this teenager, who was raised by a poor, illiterate female labourer, had made. As a result of his success, his mother even found a reason to learn to read and write: she needed to be able to correspond with her beloved son, who was headed back to Germany. That's love for you. Armed with the skills he had gained during his last trip a few years earlier, he went back to look for work, and managed to find it, as his notes suggest, thanks to his good mood, physical strength, abstinence from alcohol, and audacity. Examples of the latter include circumventing the chain of command to contact owners directly, and claiming to already possess skills he may not yet have had, but did fully intend to acquire. When he returned to Sweden, he brought along so much industrial knowledge that it was almost a case of espionage, and after spending a few years working with others, he founds the Herman Bergman Fine Art Foundry, which soon receives a long list of orders. The construction boom is still in full swing, and, significantly, the ostentatious new royal theatre, Dramaten, needs a complete set of decorations. Naturally, this contract is secured by Herman Bergman.

Because of a legal dispute that had begun in the years leading up to 1909, Herman Bergman published a written defence of his past actions *(Konstgjutningens utveckling i Sverige [The Evolution of Fine Art Casting in Sweden],* Herman Bergman, 1910). The legal case revolved around a particular method that was patented in Sweden, and which the inventor Hugo Elmqvist was now accusing Bergman of having stolen. Charges were never raised in court, but his words from 1910 nonetheless afford us a revealing insight into Herman Bergman's self-image at the time:

"I must once more ask permission to recall the Djurgården exhibition of 1909, which made it evident to all that Swedish practitioners in a variety of fields related to art production and craftsmanship have not just caught up with the foreign masters, but have even attained a level of skill that their past role models are currently unable to rival.

/…/
I am also prepared to take as evidence that the work done at my facility has been satisfactory the fact that so many of our contemporary artists have such faith in myself and my work that they have entrusted their casting work to me. The days, then, when fine art casters must be recruited from abroad, are over, and this ought to be pleasing news not only for the artists and professionals who depend on our services, but for all true patriots. "

Herman Bergman and Carl Milles

"I have rather unfortunate experiences of working with foundries abroad."

As the purpose of this text, despite its objective-sounding, informative title, is to clear Herman Bergman from the accusations of plagiarism, the resulting tone is somewhat tendentious, and rather self-promoting. There is a handwritten dedication on the copy of the text that we found in a private archive: "For my little engineer Hemming Bergman, from Father. 12 December 1910." The text is also, however, a captivating account of the ongoing public discourse on art and craftsmanship, and of Sweden as an industrial nation. To help demonstrate his great respectability, Herman Bergman has recruited the young, but already famous sculptor Carl Milles. He gets to spend several pages of the text addressing the sensitivity of the relationship between an artist and their bronze caster, the many things that can go wrong (and the ones that have gone wrong, including fingers turning into knuckles, and so on), the difficulty of handing over control of the sensitive issue of patina to a craftsman, and his own great satisfaction with Herman Bergman's work–their collaboration began at the very beginning of the century, and continued until the production of the monument to Sten Sture in Uppsala. This entry opens with the passage quoted above, and soon continues as follows:

"What is it, though, that makes Herman Bergman's Fine Arts Foundry so in-demand among us artists?
Most importantly, he is an artist himself–a significant fact, the most significant of all. For if he were not sensitive to the things he is entrusted to make permanent, it would all be for naught."

Another section, which appears a little later, is perhaps the most interesting and character-defining of all:
"Bergman is an experimental nature; he did the brickwork and construction work on his own furnaces personally, and he taught himself about a variety of methods of patination. The latter have become particularly important in our age, as we so often hurry along the effects of the passage of time with acid treatments that give the material the most enchanting colours. His alloys are interesting, and he always has some new investigation or other to report on whenever you visit him."

Casting at the Herman Bergman Fine Arts Foundry

Making a bronze sculpture can involve the application of one of two techniques. They share in common their need for an original, which might be made of clay, wax, plaster, stone, or metal. The casting is usually done either with the *cire perdue* method (lost wax) or sand casting.

Bronze is one of the earliest families of alloys human beings produced. 5,000 years ago, the practice of casting objects began, and the *cire perdue* method was incredibly advanced at a very early stage. Moulds were initially used to create a variety of objects, mostly tools. In the 19th century, sand casting was invented, and the use of hardened sand or clay was introduced as it enabled easier moulding of large sculptures. The craft is performed more or less the same way today as it was then.

The plaster model made by the sculptor might be sawn into pieces, and placed in moulding sand. Prepared clay is placed around the model, to ensure it won't stick when it is to be removed from the mould later. Holes are made for different air passages, and for the molten metal to flow through on its way into the mould. On top, another layer of clay, and then, the lid is added to the mould, and the frame is flipped.

In the next step, the clay and the plaster model are removed. A precise imprint of the plaster model has been made. A layer of plastelina is applied, of an equal thickness to the bronze that will be applied.

An inner core of clay is made, in order to create the space within the sculpture, and is fixed in place with rebars. The plastelina is removed, and the fronts and backs of the frames are fitted together, preparing the mould to accept liquid metal.
Liquid bronze, which has a temperature of 1030–1100 degrees, is poured into the mould, and finds its way through a system of prepared runners. The bronze hardens, the frame is opened, and the sand mould is broken, and the bronze comes into view.

Once the sculpture has been cast, it is cleaned of all the runners that the bronze flowed in through, as well as any residue of sand and other materials.

After this, the different parts are assembled to form the sculpture, and the work is given the desired patina through the application of salts, acids, and other chemicals. The sculpture is cleaned in a series of successive stages, and is finally completely ready for delivery.

Thanks are due Per-Ulrik Bergman and Leif Schölin for our inspiring meetings, for the knowledge they shared, and for granting us access to a priceless body of source materials.

Carl Milles' works are still being made, seventy years after his death, here by Marie Kauppi.

Leif Schölin, CEO since the 1990s. Always with Sandy.

Sandy the dog.

Jesper Waldersten

How are we to define what makes art significant?
An experienced expert would probably claim that such significance cannot result from a single expression or work, but rather arises from an artistic persistence of sorts. The determination to test an idea over and over, and allow it to evolve one tiny, subtle step at a time, away from the public eye, in humble materials. This description is a great fit for Jesper Waldersten, whose cartoons began to appear in Dagens Nyheter about 20 years ago, back when reading news still involved physically handling printed paper. He gave us bite-sized slices of 21st century social commentary, expressed with such minimalism that each line seemed infused with hard-gained wisdom and restraint. He soon won the love of the public. However, the death of printed newspapers doesn't mean that we have lost our need for instant imagery that succinctly sums up the state of things–quite the contrary! Jesper Waldersten has since developed his repertoire, and now, he also works with painting and photography–and sculpture! His first public artwork, *Portvakten [Doorman]* has been on display on Djurgården since 2017. It is executed in a material that is every bit as impervious to the passage of time as all of his many drawings over the years. Or, as he put it himself when asked what makes a work timeless: "every rule of art has been ignored, just so you know!" In 2012, he published his book *Kent Waldersten – Lägg er inte i! [Kent Waldersten–Keep Out of It!]* in collaboration with the musical group Kent. In 2018, he had a solo exhibition at *Kulturhuset* in Stockholm, *Bröderna Lejonhjärta, Astrid Lindgren, Jesper Waldersten*, and in 2019 his solo show at Fotografiska in Stockholm, *Waldersten All Over*, was seen by over 100,000 visitors. In 2021, he had his first solo show at Cecilia Hillström Gallery where he presented new paintings as well as a sound piece featuring the voices of Pernilla August and Thomas Hanzon.

Jesper Waldersten
INIT
2020-2021
2 of 3 + 1 AP
Bronze
78 x 42 x 54 cm

Ester Eriksson

On Instagram, Ester Eriksson goes by “Esters rester” [Ester’s leftovers], and she spends her days as a Master’s student at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. Her path to art started out in comic artistry, and she has retained the childlike and hilarious approach she cultivated when she worked as a comic artist and children’s book illustrator. A card-holding member of the “sampling generation”, she borrows freely from pop culture, and has adopted Goofy’s loose-limbed, slightly confused, and stooped persona as her own in a long-running and ongoing series of comic strips narrating hilarious scenes from everyday life. Awkward relationships with men, the unpredictable cycles of hubris and self-loathing, and the self-understanding gained in therapy and derailed nights on the town. The dark undertone is ever-present. A few years ago, a new person entered the picture: her daughter. Now, the child’s point of view has become even more present, more sincere. The two have formed a team, using coloured pencils and all sorts of tools to paint and draw. In the book *Humlan Hanssons hemligheter [Secrets of Bumblebee Hansson]*, for which the text was written by Kristina Sigunsdotter, children are portrayed as mythological animal fables–different, but still safe and familiar. In Ester Eriksson’s new pieces, the characters have taken on a third dimension, and arrived in the world with the same natural assuredness as any of Carl Milles’s aquatic gods and naiads.

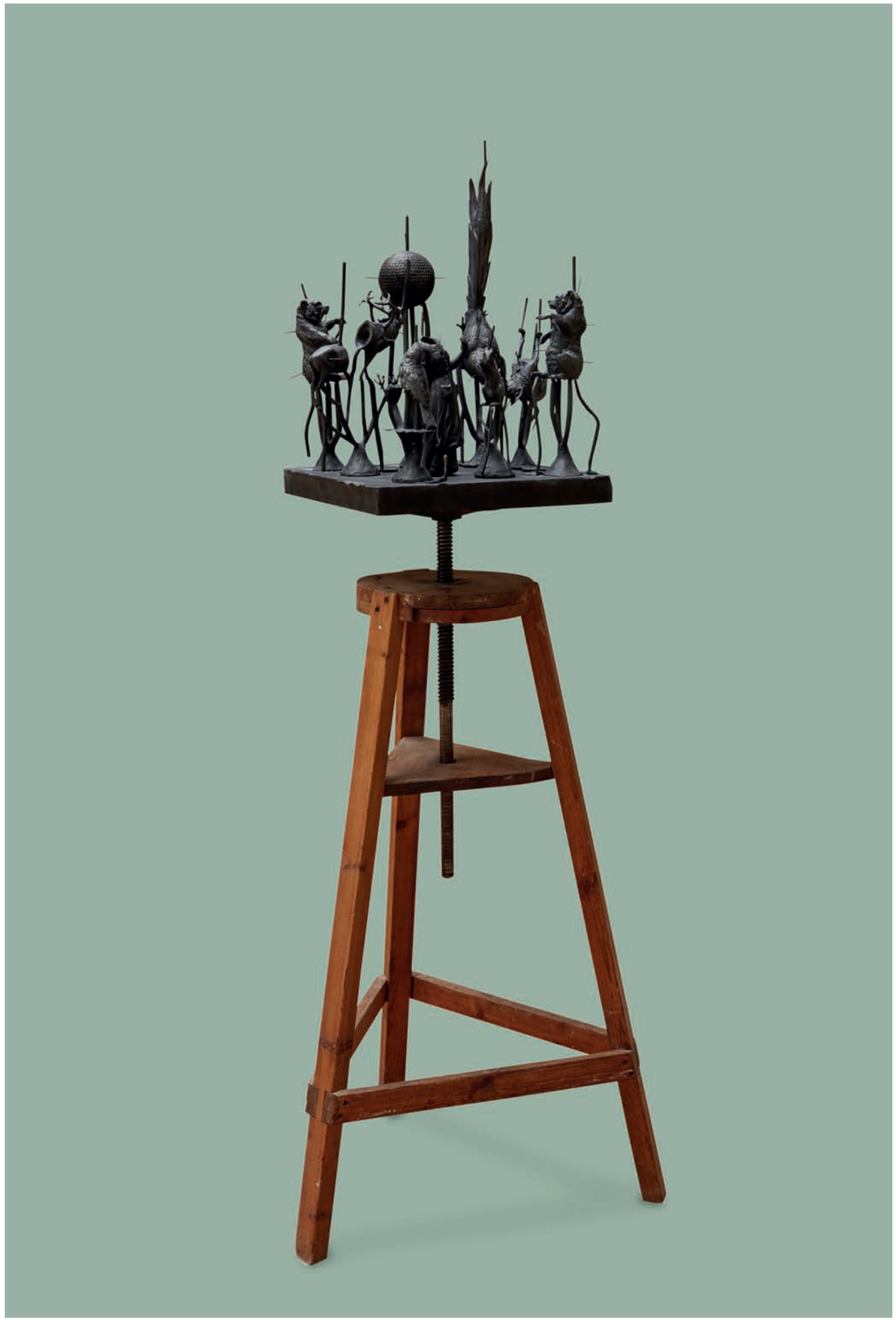
Ester Eriksson
BabyBat
2021
1 of 5 + 1 AP
Bronze
18 x 9 cm

Ester Eriksson
Visslaren
2021
1 of 5 + 1 AP
Bronze
22 x 30 x 9 cm

Ester Eriksson
Mamma
2021
1 of 5 + 1 AP
Bronze
43 x 20 cm

Ester Eriksson
BabyRagna
2021
1 of 5 + 1AP
Bronze
13 x 12 x 11 cm

Ester Eriksson
Långben
2021
1 of 5 + 1 AP
Bronze
10 x 10 x 11 cm



Denise Grünstein

How does one transition from a career as one of the most successful and influential portrait photographers in Sweden to an artistic practice in which one conjures entire environments, worlds, and installations into being? In Denise Grünstein's case, the answer probably lies with her background in drama. Her sense of theatre, scenery that oozes mood, and use of props to communicate meaning, combined with her past career as a set designer for Sveriges Television, have allowed her to refine her sensitivity to atmospheres into something altogether her own. The title of the work in the exhibition, *The Cast*, has dual meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the cast of a theatrical production, and thus to the odd gathering of figures on the turntable: bears, birds, rabbits, all looking like toy animals that have been fused to parts of dolls. They are all crowded up together in the limited space offered by this small, peculiar, stage. What's about to happen? Or is something already underway between these magical objects, something that human senses can't pick up on? Something in the air? However, the word cast is also a reference to casting as a means of fabrication, which might bring to mind the fact that the "real" objects are actually absent, and that the things we're looking at are bronze substitutes, ghosts, if you will, which remain connected to the casting process by the runners that she has chosen to leave in place like a set of magical umbilical cords, vessels that were once in immediate contact with the now absent objects. The stage is set! Denise Grünstein is represented in many collections, including those of Nationalmuseum and Moderna Museet. She has had several solo exhibitions in recent years, including two at CFHILL: *Casting (2018)* and *Nymphaea (2020)*. She has also made several royal portraits.

Denise Grünstein
The Cast
2018
1 + 1 AP
Bronze
165 x 38 x 38 cm

Bronze chasing by Marti Uitti, Resting Diana by Milles.

Martin Arvidsson working on a wax in the coldchamber.

Charlotte Gyllenhammar

The great monetary value of bronze makes it quite natural for it to be so predominantly used for important symbols. It is obvious from the very moment humankind mastered the use of bronze that its nature was thought to lend itself to being used for symbols of power, wisdom, piety, strength, virtue, or national unity. However, while bronze persists in its role as a bearer of meaning, our ideals are subject to change and, with that, our understanding of the things the symbols represent. An artist who is doing incredible work to establish a universal, new language of symbolism for the 21st century is Charlotte Gyllenhammar. A monument to Dag Hammarskjöld was recently unveiled, and what could possibly be more relevant in our time than having a man form the shadow of a child? This child, rather than simply appealing to our protective instincts, reminds us of our own origins, of the fact that we were once children ourselves, and that we are a mere journey away from those days. Gyllenhammar was also commissioned to make a memorial monument for Raoul Wallenberg in Gothenburg, which was unveiled by former UN General Secretary Kofi Annan. The first time a larger audience experienced her use of powerful symbols was back in 1999, when she suspended a dead tree, hanging upside-down, over the main shopping street in downtown Stockholm. People from another time and place would probably have responded with confusion, but a contemporary audience is more likely to make silent associations to uprootedness and alienation. In *The Spectator*, the shape of the body reveals that we are once again dealing with a child, albeit one who appears to be wearing some kind of space suit. Anybody who has been a parent in a country as cold as Sweden knows all about the cumbersome clothing we make our children put on before we let them out to play in the snow. The sitting child in its bulky overalls is sheltered by adult care.

We want so badly to shield them from the evils of the world, and tough beaver nylon certainly feels like it might be able to keep evil at bay. But the older the child grows, the more it will begin to protest against having to wear uncomfortable clothes, and any other well-meaning impositions we might make for the child's own good. Basically, we have to learn to set them free. Charlotte Gyllenhammar is represented in many major Scandinavian, European, and North American collections, including those of Moderna Museet, Stockholm, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., and Kiasma, Helsinki. Her works are also permanently installed at the Wanås Konst sculpture park. She has had several solo exhibitions in recent years, including at the Gothenburg Museum of Art and at Fotografiska in Stockholm.

Charlotte Gyllenhammar
The Spectator 1
2003
3 + 1 AP
Bronze
48 x 52 x 47 cm

Meta Isæus-Berlin

Nattlogik [Nocturnal Logic] was the title of Meta Isæus-Berlin's solo exhibition at Waldemarsudde a little over a year ago. It was a resounding success, both among the public and with the critics. The exhibition's title is also shared by the piece that she is showing in *1100 Degrees*: an almost-to-scale bed made from patinated bronze. Well, we shouldn't really call it a bed, because it isn't one. It's actually just the bedding, i.e., the textile parts that come closest to the body: the mattress under the sheet, the blanket, the duvet, the pillow, and the pillowcase. All these things are the very opposite of hard bronze, which has been hardened to survive both flesh and thread alike. In an interview, Meta Isæus-Berlin explained that she is "interested in the fragility of waking up, and the importance of caring for your inner life. It has to remain intact until the world outside requires you to emerge from your bubble, your wishes be damned. That's what waking up and having to live is like. I love living, but it's difficult, right? You awaken to the world. That's what it's like for all people…"

The title *Nattlogik [Nocturnal Logic]* evokes the idea of another kind of logic. Not the opposite to rational, but different from "day logic". The night, the in-between state of sleep and consciousness offer parallel or alternative cerebral routes, connections and conclusions. Hence the bed as a metaphor for intellectual portals.

The bedding in *Nattlogik [Nocturnal Logic]* seems completely new. It has never been weighed down or warmed up by anyone, and the creases from the folds are all intact. The scent of laundry detergent is hinted at by the whiteness of the fabric. The blue colour seems institutional somehow–perhaps this is a scene from a youth hostel or boarding school somewhere? In any case, it's neither a home environment, nor some place of ostentatious luxury or miserable destitution. It's just neat and tidy, basically. In her sculptures, installations, and paintings, Meta Isæus-Berlin focuses exclusively on the fundamental aspects of life and the rooms and shells we inhabit, whether they be water, clothing, or the micro-communities that arise between friends, siblings, or animal and human. Meta Isæus-Berlin's works are represented in the Moderna Museet collection and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in Helsinki, and she has executed public artworks on commission from Public Art Agency Sweden.

Meta Isæus-Berlin
Nattlogik
2018
3 + 1 AP
Bronze
196 x 80 x 15 cm

Cecilia Edefalk
Joy
2021
1 of 8
Bronze
7,5 x 9,5 x 4,5 cm

Cecilia Edefalk

The internal mechanisms of artists' minds are astonishing. How do they come up with all that stuff? Cecilia Edefalk has spent the last forty years of her career travelling a road that has taken her far beyond the boundaries of painting. While painting was where she started out, and remains the medium that she finds herself constantly returning to, she always approaches it in new ways. How might we describe her art in simple terms? It's as though she takes something from reality, disassembles it completely, and then reconstructs it from the bottom up, in an entirely new guise. It might be part of a tree, an advertisement, a photograph, a celebrity, or a religious idol. This represents a way for her to connect with something that interests or affects her strongly in some way or other. One could almost say that this process resembles the different phases of bronze casting: the positive, in which the form fills space, and the negative, in which the form has become a mere vessel for new, molten material. Small wonder, then, that she likes to work in the foundry, where the reproductive, inverted, and transformative phases are all translated into tangible materials: wax, sand, bronze… The dove looks like it was formed in the moment. It did not descend from something else; rather, it took form between her hands, as the wax was slowly warmed by the fingers that worked it. Occasionally, art can come into being this way, emerging directly from the body. Perhaps it is the act of listening that defines an artist, in that they search for and discover places and moments where there is life. Cecilia Edefalk's works are represented in all major Swedish collections, including that of Moderna Museet. In 2016, she had a solo exhibition at Bonniers konsthall.

Henrik Ekesiöö

While bronze is usually viewed as an exalted, revered material, Henrik Ekesiöö's sculpture presents a rather different take. On a grimy mattress with no sheet, a man reclines, practically nude. If he had been fully nude, that might have been acceptable. That would have been suggestive of the Olympic Gods, Donatello's *David with the mallet*, or Milles's *Poseidon*. This man, though, apart from being completely void of muscle and rather chubby, is wearing a minimal shirt that leaves him fully bare from the waist down. His head has slipped onto the floor, and you can almost hear him snoring. And what's that magazine he's left open next to himself? Pornography? Really? Is it acceptable for art to look this way, and is it acceptable for someone to elevate this unappealing subject by casting it in bronze? The answer to both these questions is yes, apparently: it's exactly what Henrik Ekesiöö has done. Whether the point is to make fun of sombre portraits of "important men" or, on the contrary, to elevate the laughable nature of humankind into a thing of value that needs to be on display, is left unresolved by the artist. In any case, the piece reveals the infinite expressiveness of bronze, and the contrast between flesh and that which has been cast into an eternal form. The sculpture is part of the series *Veckodagar [Weekdays]*, and the piece in question corresponds to the first day of the week: Monday. The series was shown at the annual *Vårsalongen* exhibition in 2020. Henrik Ekesiöö is a lecturer at the *Royal Institute of Art*, and works with sculpture, performance art, and installations.

Henrik Ekesiöö
Torsdag
2020
2 of 8
Patinated bronze
27cm

Henrik Ekesiöö
Lördag
2020
1 of 8
Patinated bronze
10 x 20 x 17cm

Henrik Ekesiöö
Söndag
2020
1 of 8
Patinated bronze
15 x 30 x 20cm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