

# GLADSTONE

Gabriel Coxhead, "Cecilia Edefalk/Gunnel Wahlstrand," *TimeOut*, January 6, 2012

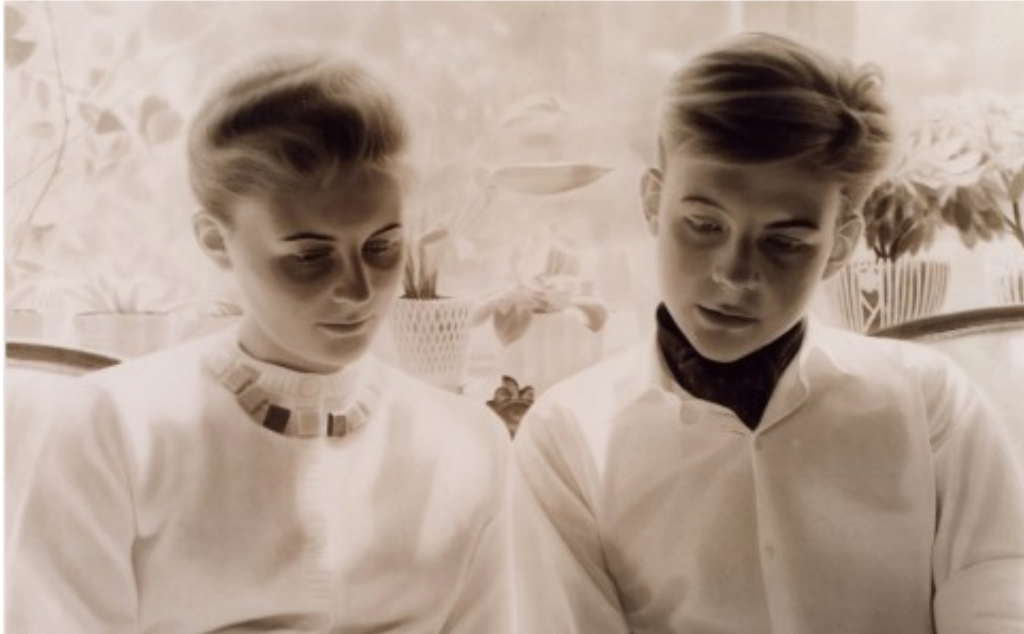
TimeOut

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## Cecilia Edefalk/Gunnel Wahlstrand

Until Sun Feb 12 [Parasol Unit](#), 14 Wharf Rd, N1 7RW [Full details & map](#)

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Gunnel Wahlstrand, 'By the Window', 2003-2004 - Michael Storakers Collection

If photographs evoke an inherent sense of homage or mourning - all those fleeting, vanished moments - then what about photorealist painting, which laboriously mimics the verisimilitude of photography? How then is the melancholy resonance of a photograph experienced once it has been repeated in paint?

Such are the sorts of questions and issues raised by Gunnel Wählstrand's epic reproductions of images of her Swedish family from the 1930s onwards, mainly centering around the figure of her father, who killed himself when she was one. Her father and aunt as children together, a family holiday to the coast, a passport ID photo - Wählstrand's photorealism is utterly astonishing, the result of an incredibly painstaking process of applying layers of progressively darker ink washes, so that even moments of wispy, photographic blur are perfectly rendered.

The idea, presumably, is of somehow slowing down the passage of time, of taking possession of these unfamiliar, familial moments. All of which is well and good, and Wählstrand certainly has an eye for hauntingly evocative scenes - yet it's often hard to get beyond a distracting awareness of her sheer technique. Partly, though, that's presumably the point: the endlessly frustrating surface-ness of images.

This questioning of images also extends to a second Swedish artist, Cecilia Edefalk, exhibiting on the ground floor. Large, wistful paintings quote from banal advertising imagery, or identically repeat content, or depict female identity as a sort of masquerade - sometimes, indeed, rather too literally.

Better is a series of works obsessively attempting to capture her nighttime experience of a statue of Venus, spookily glimpsed amidst garden foliage. Depicted according to differing exposures, sizes, angles, media, painting styles, even forms - the statue sometimes appearing armless, sometimes eerily not - the sense is of an image that exists somewhere between firm reality and the shifting, esoteric terrain of the imagination.