

Markus Åkesson

*The Land
of the
Lotus-Eaters*



Da-End Gallery
19.10 - 30.11.2024

Markus Åkesson - *The Land of The Lotus-Eaters*

exhibition from the 19th of october until the 30th of november 2024

*"I was driven thence by foul winds for a space of nine days upon the sea, but on the tenth day we reached the land of the Lotus-eaters, who live on a food that comes from a kind of flower. (...) When they had eaten and drunk I chose [krinô] two of my company to go see what manner of men the people of the place might be, and they had a third man under them. They started at once, and went about among the Lotus-eaters, who did them no harm, but gave them to eat of the lotus, which was so delicious that those who ate of it left off caring about home, and did not even want to go back and say what had happened to them, but were for staying and munching lotus with the Lotus-eaters without thinking further of their nostos..."*¹

Homer's tale, in which Ulysses and his companions find themselves bewitched by magical flowers, has long inspired artists and thinkers. Today, the expression "eating lotus", when used figuratively, evokes memory loss. But beyond the myth, this passage raises a profoundly human dilemma: faced with the possibility of escaping the sufferings of existence, who would choose to return and face life's vicissitudes? Who, inversely, would be tempted by the sweetness of amnesia, accepting to renounce the world to which they belong?²

In echo of this quest for escape, Markus Åkesson has entitled his new exhibition *The Land of the Lotus-Eaters*. This theme, which he has been exploring persistently for several years, takes shape in his series *Now You See Me*, where figures, camouflaged by repetitive fabric patterns, are transformed into enigmatic figures, veiling their intentions and thoughts. In this way, the Swedish painter creates a silent space, imbued with mystery, where the boundary between the tangible and the imaginary becomes blurred. This artistic approach, which places him in a long tradition of exploring inner worlds and dreams, has its roots in his youth: contemplating the patterns on the wallpapers in his bedroom, he imagined secret messages and hidden stories, as if these drawings were already opening a door to an otherworld.

At Da-End gallery, Åkesson's work unfolds with hypnotic intensity. In this in-between world, some figures seem to be orchestrating mystical rituals in symbiosis with a nature that is both bewitching and disquieting, while others appear to be floating in parallel dimensions. Lush vines, evocative peonies and *Danse Macabre* embellish these canvases, sometimes drawing on ancient myths, each telling an enigmatic story. "In a misty undergrowth, a woman appears, hiding a bouquet of flowers behind her back. Motionless, her gaze lost in the void, she leaves us in a doubtful state: are these flowers a treasure to be preserved or a danger to be avoided?"³

Thus, in an enveloping silence, *The Land of the Lotus-Eaters* plunges us into the half-light of mysterious universes, where each motif reveals fragments of hidden realities, whilst each character confronts us with our own unconscious. In this realm of inner escapism, the boundary between forgetting and remembering becomes blurred, revealing a nagging question: can the soothing illusion of escape truly fill the abyss left by what's gone forever?

¹ Homer, The Odyssey, Samuel Butler, Based on public domain edition, revised by Timothy Power and Gregory Nagy., Ed.

² based on notes by Lene Madestam

³ based on notes by Lene Madestam



This Is A Dream (Peony Bouquet), 2024

47x70cm

oil on canvas

Danse Macabre (turquoise), 2024
110x80cm
oil on canvas





Insomnia (red), 2024
oil on canvas, 95x95cm

Land Of The Lotus Eaters, 2024
76x61cm
oil on canvas





Land Of The Lotus Eaters , 2024
145x80cm
oil on canvas

Markus Åkesson

Born in 1975 in Kalmar, Sweden. Lives and works in Nybro, Sweden

SOLO SHOWS

2024

The Land of the Lotus-eaters, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2023

"Open Air Exhibition" at Solliden Royal Palace, Öland, SE

"Weaver's Grove, The Oracle Bones", Berg Gallery, Stockholm, SE

2022

The Roses of Heliogabalus, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

The trailing moss and mystic glow (w. Ellen Ehk), Kosta Art Gallery, Kosta (SE)

Market Art Fair (w. Berg Gallery), Liljevalchs Konsthall, Stockholm (SE)

2021

Skogens Hjärta, duo show avec Ellen Ehk, VIDA Museum, Öland, SE

Now you see me, Berg Gallery, Stockholm, SE

2020

Strange Days, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2019

Insomnia, VIDA Museum, Borgholm, Öland, SE

Sleeping Beauty, Kalmar Konstmuseum, Kalmar, SE

Let me sleep through the night, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2016

The milk of human kindness, duo show avec Lucy Glendinning, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2015

VIDA Museum, Borgholm, Öland, SE

2013

The Woods, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

GROUP SHOWS

2024

Palace Garden, Ravinen Kulturhus, Båstad

Art Brussels, Berg Gallery + Cecilia Hillström Gallery, Brussels Expo, Brussels (BE)

Cabinet Da-End XIII, Galerie Da-End, Paris (FR)

2023

Serendipity, curated by Beautiful Bizarre Magazine, Haven Gallery, LI, New York (US)

Cabinet Da-End XII - The Moon and the Rabbit, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

Jubilee Exhibition in glass, (open air), Solliden Palace, Öland, SE

Faces Cachées, La Manufacture, Museum of Textile Creation and History, Roubaix (FR)

The Council Buildings Justus Lipsius, European Council, Brussels (BE)

Exuberance, Jonathan F. Kugel – Cabinet de Curiosités Contemporain, Brussels (BE)

2022

Print & Paint, Kasteel d'Ursel, Belgique

Le Jardin, miroir du Monde, Château du Rivau, Lémeré, France

Cabinet Da-End XI - Asile in Wonderland, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2021

Swedish Design Movement, avec Kosta Boda, Centre Culturel Suédois, Paris, France

Berg Gallery, Stockholm, Suède

2020

Cabinet Da-End X, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2019

Cabinet Da-End IX, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

Solliden Royal Palace, curateur : Galleri Kamras, Öland, SE

Galeristes, avec Galerie Da-End, Carreau du Temple, Paris, France

2018

Loup y es-tu ? Bestiaire et Métamorphoses, Maisons-Laffitte, France

La Fabrique Du Regard, Frances Fondation, Senlis, France

Cabinet Da-End VIII, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2017

Less is more, KIRK Gallery, Aalborg, Danemark

Krapperrups Konsthall, Höganäs, SE

Cabinet Da-End VII, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

2016

16th International Vilnius Painting Triennial, Vilnius, Lithuania

Galeristes, avec Galerie Da-End, Carreau du Temple, Paris, France

Vinterutställning, VIDA Museum, Borgholm, Öland, SE

Cabinet Da-End VI, Galerie Da-End, Paris, France

Markus Åkesson

Born in 1975 in Kalmar, Sweden. Lives and works in Nybro, Sweden

COLLECTIONS

Fondation Francès, France Jacques-Antoine
Granjon Collection, France The Swidish Glass
Museum, SE
The Swedish Public Art Agency, SE
Panevėžys, Lituanie Nybro Municipality, SE
Emmaboda Municipality, SE
Kalmar Municipality, SE
Linköping Municipality, SE
Walton Family Foundation, USA
The Lord James Palumbo Collection, UK
Annette & Peder Bonnier Collection, USA
Jonas & Helena Bonnier Collection, SE
The Alice L. Walton Foundation, USA

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

2019

When the leaves come falling down, Burial Chapel, Nybro

2016

Official Portrait of Chairman of the Municipal Board, Benny Johansson, Växjö
Municipality

2015

Portrait of The Bishop in Växjö Diocese, Jan Olof Johansson, Växjö Diocese

2014

Portrait of Olympic Medalist Sara Algotsson Ostholt, Nybro Municipality

2013

Minne, Retirement Home, Kalmar

2010

On the run, Förskolan Smedjan, Kalmar

2009

When the year was longer..., Färjestaden Elementary School, Mörbylånga

Sub Surface, Hanemåla BRF, Nybro

Four Themes, Ljungbyholm Elementary School, Kalmar

2008

Looking for nature, Nybro Town Hall, Nybro

2005

Fabel, Kristvallabrunn Elementary School, Nybro

AWARDS & GRANTS

2023

Beautiful Bizarre Art Prize, winner of RAYMAR Traditional Art
Award

2022

The Swedish Arts Grants Committee, one-year working grant

2018–19

The Swedish Arts Grants Committee, two-year working grant

2014

Barometern, Gota Media – Golden Feather

The Swedish Arts Grants Committee, one-year working grant

2009

Sydosten's scholarship



galerie@da-end.com