

BEAU TRAVAIL

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Goldin+Senneby with Anna Heymowska
and White Arkitekter (Josefin Norén Almén & Teodor Losman Nädele)
9/5/26 - 23/5/26

"We met because Marie introduced us, as we say in German, by falling with the door into the house: "You four have so much in common, you should meet up!" Which we did, one morning in Brooklyn, in a hotel lobby. I still think of it, and even though I can't even locate it in the city, I have it memorized as a comfortable vacuum.

Simon and Jakob have been working together as a duo for over 20 years, Selina and I for 16. What does it mean to collaborate with someone for this long, to share everything with another person, indefinitely? I sometimes find it dizzying – too much at stake, too fragile, too dependent. Losing myself in someone else and yet having my independent life, always with the other in mind. Slowly building and sharing a third thing, our art. Sometimes I like to think about all the art that is made at an early stage in an artist's life, the process of working and abandoning and working again as one builds one's grammar, and how it might take duos twice as long to travel that path.

At the hotel, we talked about how artist duos recur throughout art history but are always treated strangely, as something akin to a person and a half, more or less cohering to standard conventions regarding the artist, but always posing the threat of a bit too much friction. We always yearned for a companion duo with whom we could share experiences, or even just talk about the practicalities of collaborating. While multiple, conflicting responsibilities is a universal condition of social being, romantically involved duos are often able to "consolidate" multiple responsibilities into a single basket. One of the similarities Marie may have had in mind, as she crashed into the building, might have been that Selina and I and Simon and Jakob are decidedly unconsolidated, needing and needed by not only each other.

Almost exactly a year after we first met in the hotel, we met for the second time in a living room in New York, where they read excerpts from their forthcoming novel and shared stories of how a painting and a sculpture they had brought had come into being. Simon and Jakob introduced themselves. After all, in a duo, you always have to clarify who is who. Are you the rat or are you the bear? Are you Fischka or Fuschka? Two cats, one prone to running across the street without thinking, the other carefully plotting before making a move; an allegory we've cribbed from another artist duo, de Gruyter and Thys. In our hotel meeting with Simon and Jakob, we'd also discussed each of our respective "types" in each of our respective duos, and how, while the differences between Fischka and Fuschka might be admired from the outside, they are in practice some of the most challenging things to negotiate.

At their reading, as Jakob introduced their respective roles in their duo, he noted Simon's tendency towards incessant speaking as Simon was quietly mouthing the words of the script. I remember the sparkle in both of their eyes as they pulled this trick. I also know the feeling of planning something together with Michèle and then carrying it out in an effortless way, not simply because you planned it, but because you've been working together for so long that you can just feel the other person. Even without looking, you can do it together.

Simon and Jakob frequently open out beyond their duo, giving roles to other participants, working with other producers, aware of themselves as a part of larger frameworks which precede and define us. Their work as a duo, and their collaborations beyond it, bucks the possessive individualism incessantly forced upon all of us, that we are each alone on an island, and instead acknowledges dependency as a necessity of being.

There are four sculptures in *MAKING AN ENTRANCE* made collaboratively with Anna Heymowska and a ramp made with Josefin Norén Almén and Teodor Losman Nädele. They have taken door closers, standard features in public buildings that frequently impede wheelchairs, and put them in a motorized interaction with one another, each arm pushing and pulling in negotiation. They have taken stones which have been removed from buildings as part of accessibility modifications, and elevated them with custom crutches and mobility supports. A long, winding ramp serves as an access path for these sculptures, constantly revealing itself as built up, standing in provisional tension with the grounds of the gallery. The length and scale of the ramp asserts itself, in an almost Brechtian way, not as strictly infrastructural but instead as an epic stage. A stage for the works, pulled from the background, unwilling to recede back into it."

-Michèle Graf & Selina Grüter