



Gallery Steinsland Berliner proudly presents:

## **Fredrik Åkum – *B-B-B-Bootlegs***

25<sup>th</sup> March – 15<sup>th</sup> April

**Opening night: Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 5 – 9 pm**

In preparation for Fredrik Åkum's third solo exhibition at Gallery Steinsland Berliner, we did a short interview with the artist to give you an introduction to the exhibition.

### **Who is Fredrik Åkum?**

Fredrik Åkum is born in 1987 in Kristinehamn, Sweden. He graduated with a MFA from Valand Academy in 2013 he work and lives in Gothenburg. We most recently could see his work at the Gothenburg Museum of Art, *B-B-B-Bootlegs* will be his third solo exhibition at the gallery.

### **Where do you find your inspiration to paint?**

I think painting has become my way to start to work around an idea or a concept. It's where I feel that I have some control, a broad range of knowledge but also a wide spectrum where I can fail. Even though I often start out with painting in my process; it's not always where the final artwork ends up. But I somewhere need to start with the painting to realize that – no, this should be done as an installation, or as a sculpture, or as a textile work, a publication etc.

Also visiting exhibitions of course, to stand in front of a physical painting, it very often makes me want to paint as well, I guess I'm always stressed about sitting too much by a screen. Even though sitting by the screen gives a lot of urge to work with painting as well; my master's thesis at Valand Academy was about finding a digital reproduction of a Matisse painting, and then travel to see it, to see if the digital reproduction was better than the original.

### **How does your working day look like?**

It varies, the last 7 months it's been early mornings and late evenings with approximately one day a week for rest. Depending on which project I'm working on I'm trying to plan my whole week. I try to have at least one day planned with more pragmatic moments, where I for instance stretch canvases, work with priming, sketches and source material rather than paint. Before I start to paint I often want everything around me done, so I can have continuation and focus around the painting process. But in general there's more than one project started on, so it always varies.

### **What can we expect from *B-B-B-Bootlegs*?**

The exhibition *B-B-B-Bootlegs* at Gallery Steinsland Berliner mainly consists of three bodies of work. There will be a couple of paintings from the *Shirt* series, which is a series of paintings that started off in a personal photograph. This has since been a process more about departing from the photo, on how to work in repetitions and mimic the paintings themselves, try to find a gesture or try to research one's intuitions

within limits. There will be a series of *Xerox Dust* paintings, which all has their starting point in the dust of copy machines. I will also show a part of the ongoing series *Carvings* that started to work with in 2014.

**We recognize the pattern in your paintings, could you tell us more about that?**

Most of my work kind of relates to an earlier work, I think of it as making bootlegs of the work itself. Every time you repeat something you lose something, but also get something new out of it. If I start out with a photograph as a source for a painting, for example, my aim is for the work to end up in an autonomous state, where you don't need to be aware of the starting point, the photograph. I like to think of the photograph as a frozen moment of something that has happened, the painting seems to me to be the opposite. There is also a quality in the loss of information when there has been a great amount of repetitions; it gives a void for the viewer to fill in.

**In the series *Xerox Dust*, do you actually paint dust?**

The series *Xerox Dust*, and *Riso Dust* comes from my work around copy machines and scanners. When you scan something with an open lid, without something on the flatbed, you often get a black square because the objective doesn't scan anything, and it doesn't catch light. This happened several times when I was scanning objects that didn't fill the whole glass surface. Finding these dust particles in high-resolution images, I started to work with them instead of the actual objects. From that I started to scan nothing, more and more. I've done paintings with this enlarged dust in various sizes, often referring to the scanner's glass sizes. For each painting I've done a new attempt to mix black or the lack of light, most often with oil paint, without using black. As a reference to a digital color scape: RGB. That's why these *Xerox/Riso Dust* paintings are dark in various blue, green tones. I had a conversation about these paintings with the writer Sara Michaëlsson and Magnus Haglund, and pointed out the similarity to the John Cage work *4:33*, which is 4 minutes and 33 seconds of silence. Saying that even if there is silence, there is a recording of dust falling on the microphone.

**Where did you find the inspiration to do the *Carving* series?**

I started to work with the *Carvings* series three years ago. I was in a green house, looking closely on a tree trunk which had flat bark, where I found old, tiny carvings; messages, scribbling's. They had healed so to speak, they were un-readable and almost abstract. I found it interesting as some of these trees became like public slow growing drawings, since the letters and the meaning often was distorted by the tree itself it became something else than letters. Since then I started to photograph carvings in trees wherever I went and used these photographs, or parts of them, as source material for the series *Carvings*. In the first paintings I also paid as much attention to the bark itself as the cuts, and stayed true to the colors and textures. But in *B-B-B-Bootlegs* it's a selection of the more minimalistic paintings, where it's more about the paint itself, and the carvings. The series has evolved besides the *Xerox Dust* paintings, with monochrome re-takes in the paint's color schemes.

**Which other artists inspires you?**

I would say that varies day-by-day, I try to stay open to most art I encounter. Recently I've been very interested in Sigmar Polke's raster paintings, Luc Tuymans, Raoul De Keyser, Simon Hantaï, Tauba Auerbach, Ida Ekblad, Eddie Martinez, the recent work of Katherine Bernhardt and Jana Schröder.

*B-B-B-Bootlegs* will be open until 15<sup>th</sup> April.

Text by: Hanna Wörman

**GSB/Gallery Steinsland Berliner** was conceived in 2008 by Jeanette Steinsland and Jacob Kampp Berliner in Stockholm, Sweden. Its prior intent was to showcase and present emerging as well as established artists. We constantly strive to promote our artists internationally, while taking a high level of pride in incorporating all aspects within the art world from performance to paintings.

Additionally, GSB takes part in the on-going socio-political discussions appearing on the art scene. For further questions please e-mail the gallery at: [info@steinslandberliner.com](mailto:info@steinslandberliner.com)

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