

INSIDE 2019'S SUPERMARKET ART FAIR

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Stockholm Art Week doesn't actually kick off until April 9, but one of the best ways to get a head start on your festival is to head to Supermarket Independent Art Fair, which kicks off on the Thursday of the week before. Supermarket is the ultimate stop for everything international in Stockholm's art scene, with the fair bringing galleries from all over the world to its new home in Sickla this April. We had a chat with project

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directors Pontus Raud and Andreas Ribbung and project manager Alice Máselníková about this year's edition.

So first of all, apart from the venue change, what's new at Supermarket this year?

Alice: 2019 brings quite a few new items on our programme, which we are thrilled about and looking forward to presenting. Aside from regular exhibitors with exhibition booths at Sickla Front, this year for the first time we introduce 'Associate galleries' – a new collaboration with satellite spaces around Stockholm to further extend the experience of a vibrant artist-run event over the whole city. Six artist-run spaces joined for Supermarket 2019: Candyland, Detroit Stockholm, Galleri Majkens, Grafiska Sällskapet, Konstnärshuset /SKF and Tegen2. They will host a satellite gallery night on Friday 5th April. Another novelty is the first year of Supermarket Forum, a one-day networking event for exhibitors, professional networking participants and invited guests – curators, gallerists, art managers, institutions and art organisers from the contemporary Swedish art sector. Our aim with Forum is to allow the

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exhibitors to meet a variety of representatives from Swedish art scene, present their projects in depth and talk to other participants and guests within a simple framework focused on establishing new connections. During the day we also host a panel discussion on censorship in art around the world and performances followed by a public opening of the art fair in the evening.

How long is the process of putting together a Supermarket fair? What's the process for inviting and curating the selection of exhibiting artists?



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organise. We work basically all year

round in the project team, starting right after the end of every Supermarket. It gradually becomes more and more hectic as the art fair's date approaches. We also try to maintain our presence with quarterly newsletters and collaborative talks and presentations outside of the actual art fair throughout the year. The applications are divided into several separate sections: the open call for exhibitors usually opens in October, the open call for performance artists and speakers opens a bit later, in

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November or December as well as the applications to the Professional Networking Participants programme. It is a lot to go through, as each year we receive more and more applications. The selection process is done by us in the project team; sometimes we invite external selection board to help us out. The yearly theme serves as a framework for exhibitors and participants to think about, but we do not force anyone to follow it. One of the unique elements of Supermarket is that the selected exhibitors can show what they like: we do not impose any of our own visions upon them. However, one thing we try to alternate is the focus on different media, and we always like to see strong painting being presented, giving our project team bias as trained painters.

You've moved to Sickla for this year's edition of the festival. What was the reason for the change, and how are things going in the new home?

Pontus: We have an exciting collaboration with Atrium Ljungberg in a brand new-built house in Sickla. The first time we saw the room it felt really good and we knew that this was it. We like the certain charm that comes with

industrial spaces. The pillars, the side light and the raw concrete make it look a bit like a church. We are looking forward to sharing it with the exhibitors and witnessing how it transforms with their artworks. It will certainly take a lot of work to make the raw venue into an art fair, but it is definitely worth it! At the moment we are in full-speed preparation stage.

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This year's theme is 'Temporary Moratorium: All Allowed?' Can you expand on what that theme means for us a little?

Alice: The theme comes out of reflecting on the transforming nature of taboos in society, and more specifically in contemporary art. We want to raise questions of what the taboos of today are and how they influence artists and the art market. It is clear that once scandalous subjects such as sex or

nudity no longer stir up any reaction or contemplation in the audience. Taboos today have become more nuanced and suppressed, also very much influenced by what the market, politicians and media dictate. You can see a lot of conformist behaviour from the artists, where they rather abstain from voicing their opinions, in case they do not comply with current trends, in order to be saleable. In the art world we often like to believe that we are doing something groundbreaking, but actually, and unfortunately, the art bubble mostly succeeds in only addressing the persons already within it, and does not reach outside. In the same way, the concerns of the 'real people' mostly do not penetrate in contemporary art. In that sense, we have thought of the term moratorium, a space of temporarily postponed activity where the laws of the outside world do not necessarily apply in the same way.

There will be guests from 25 countries at this year's edition. Can you run us through some of the more exciting international guests, and maybe pick out a personal highlight or two?

Andreas: [Kalashnikovv Gallery](#) from

Johannesburg will show works by the controversial artist Ayanda Mabulu. His work, depicting satirical versions of powerful South Africans, has even got prominent politicians to consider whether Mabulu should be censored.



Pontus: The fair starts just after the upcoming Brexit, and we are happy to have invited two very different exhibitors from the UK. [Centrala](#) from Birmingham and [Turps Art School](#) from London. Turps is an artist-run art school founded several years ago by a group of painters, among others the YBA artist Marcus Harvey. In their education programme they investigate the breadth of ideas in contemporary painting. The Montez family is a fantastic initiative from Frankfurt and they host numerous performances in their exhibition booth, such as a musical performance Paganini vs Bach

by Puschan Mousavi Malvani, a classically trained violinist.

Alice: It is really difficult to choose favourites, given the number of exhibitors and their range of activities. But, for example, I am very much interested in hearing about the experience of A.C.S., a curatorial collective from South Korea, or [Liliput Galería Experimental](#) from Mexico, as the conditions they work in are so different to what we encounter in Sweden. I am also curious about the Polish gallery [Swojskije Tropiki](#)'s extravagant travelling caravan, who will transform one of the toilets at the art fair in their exhibition booth and possibly serve fermented cabbage juice to the visitors.

This year you're launching Supermarket Forum, a discussion space for artists. Do you think it's important for people in the art world to build contacts and relationships across borders, and do you hope the Forum will facilitate this?

Pontus: It is always important to broaden networks within the culture sector, especially today when freedom of expression and censorship can take place in so many different ways.

Facilitating connections, building new networks and strengthening already existing collaborations is one of the key ideas behind Supermarket. We are one of the major international events in the visual arts in Scandinavia and each of our exhibitors can give completely different stories about the work and life in their country or region to those we get to listen to here at home. It creates such a special environment of discussion, fun and new lasting bonds being built in a very short time span. You really need to visit Supermarket in order to experience this unique atmosphere. We try to make the most out of the experience for the exhibitors in our different programmes, and Supermarket Forum is one of them. We saw the need to connect the local with the global, that is, the local art scene with all our international exhibitors on a more thorough basis, and we have high hopes that the quite experimental format of Supermarket Forum succeeds in this.

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Have you noticed any trends in this year's exhibitors? Any themes or styles that seem to be very strongly present this year?

Pontus: I can feel a certain nervousness in the air. It might be the seemingly tougher political climate that we experience that also affects the exhibitors' opportunities for funding and mobility. The borders between countries have become higher and more difficult to cross. It is clear that this affects artists to meet each other.

Alice: I was happy to see more painting coming in this year in the exhibition proposals. It seems to be reemerging proud and strong.

Andreas: In recent years artists have often toyed with the concept of truth and created works with counterfeit facts, but with the current uncertainty

about what is true and false in times of disinformation campaigns and fake news, one gets the impression that it becomes pointless to work artistically in this direction.



What should visitors keep an eye out for?

Andreas: There is so much that the visitors need to keep an eye out for! You definitely should not miss out on the Talks & Performance programme, with presentations, panel discussions and performances scheduled every day, all day round – it never stops. Of course you cannot overlook the exhibition booths at the art fair, but it is always nice to take a bit more time to walk around, talk to the artists and get to know them. You will get a much better idea of the artworks like that too. The most important is that you come and soak in the fantastic atmosphere

with all its buzz and different art and artists running around everywhere.

Finally, what for you personally is the best part of Supermarket every year?

Alice: I think it is to see how all the parts finally fit together: the different programme items ready and scheduled, and all the exhibitors, artists and visitors gathering in one place and meeting one another. And for me personally it is to encounter face to face all these wonderful people whom I had been emailing with for months on.

Andreas: Communication with all the galleries from around the world, and then it is very nice to eventually meet in person!

Pontus: Pinpointing a special part is difficult as the whole art fair is a crazy and amazing experience. One can easily spend several days just meeting different artists.

Supermarket Art Fair, Sickla Front, Uddvägen 7, Apr 4-7. For more info see www.supermarketartfair.com

Photo: Cecilia Paredes, 'Both Worlds'



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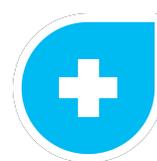
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