



Jens Fänge, *Antechamber*, 2026. oil, vinyl, pencil on panel and linen. 41 5/16 x 51 15/16 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

JENS FÄNGE *ANTECHAMBER*

April 24 - May 30, 2026

Perrotin New York is pleased to present *Antechamber*, an exhibition by Swedish artist Jens Fänge that features labyrinthine architectural settings populated by people, animals, and mannequins. In the artist's distorted interiors, walls collapse into one another, objects float in space, and recurring motifs shift meaning depending on their context. Across more than twenty new paintings, each work functions like a visual experiment, generating paradoxes rather than answers.

Fänge grounds viewers in familiar interiors that quickly dissolve into abstraction, feeling more like fragmented memories rather than solid spaces. Diagonal lines and blurred boundaries between figure and ground create unstable compositions that feel on the verge of collapsing, evoking fragility. The artist's protagonists shift between being controlled by their surroundings and asserting control over them.

The depth on Fänge's compositions is heightened by a complex layering process. Each work begins with a flat background, which the artist builds upon with materials including oil, vinyl, linen, and burlap. Appearing flat from a distance, there is a physical depth between the background and figures that evokes a relief or carving.

Throughout the exhibition, paintings lead into one another like scenes in a film or play. Doors and windows become portals or passageways, recalling the way dreams and memories distort reality. In *Kammerspiel*, a masked figure is split in half along the frame of a doorway, surrounded by disjointed elements—a chair silhouette, a bat, a floating mask—arranged like cutouts. The German title translates to “chamber play,” referring to a genre of theater drama that is characterized by intimate settings and an intense focus on character psychology.



Jens Fänge, *The Improvisatore (Hans Christian Andersen)*, 2026. oil, vinyl, linen on panel. 52 3/16 x 41 5/16 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Jens Fänge, *Diplomat*, 2026. oil, vinyl, copperplate, panel, linen. 15/16 x 37 3/8 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

The exhibition's titular work, *Antechamber*, depicts a disembodied horse in motion, framed by an archway, alongside a contemplative portrait gazing into the distance. Defined as a small room leading into another, Fänge's antechamber becomes an entryway into the psyche. The work draws inspiration from Nathanael West's surrealist novels *The Day of the Locust* and *The Dream Life of Balso Snell*, the former a satire of the dark underbelly of Hollywood during the Great Depression and the latter an absurd journey of a poet searching for meaning in what ends as a dream within a dream. Fänge employs West's nonlinear plot structures to create compositions that resemble a mind at work—analyzing, fragmenting, and reassembling.

A related work, titled *Locust*, is encased in a hand painted frame that extends the image into three-dimensional space. The locust is deeply rooted in biblical and agricultural contexts, often a symbol of destruction, divine judgement, or renewal. This spiritual lens is found in other works in the exhibition—such as *Exteriors*, *Sister Feelings Call*, or *The Sundays*—where halos illuminate figures, suggesting moments of mystical or subconscious realization.

Fänge is interested in the dichotomies found in fairytales, memory, religion, and history. In *The Improvisatore (Hans Christian Andersen)*, an image of the Danish author appears as a central figure. Known for fairytales that blend fantasy with poignant moral lessons, Andersen's 1835 autobiographical novel *The Improvisatore*

focuses on themes of love, loss, and self-discovery. Another work, titled *Lisboa*, is inspired by allegorical maps that depict human or animal forms, transforming accurate geography into symbolic narratives. The figures in the center of Fänge's painting are arranged in the form of an 1877 map of Portugal and Spain. Similar to Andersen's fairytales, these maps translate emotional experience into visual journeys.

Fänge's exhibition *Antechamber* reflects a natural human desire to make sense of reality, especially in an age of information overload. As children, we assume that adults possess certainty and understanding, yet this belief fades over time. Fairytales, dreams, and religion offer ways to interpret what often feels nonsensical. However, Fänge suggests that meaning may lie in ambiguity, proposing a space where uncertainty becomes a form of resolution.