

Rita Lundqvist

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present a third solo exhibition with Swedish painter Rita Lundqvist, on view from January 5 through February 4, 2017. Epitomizing Lundqvist's mastery of enigmatic minimalist compositions fine-tuned through the past decades, these exquisite new paintings unfold as a series of discrete yet interconnected moments, at once absorbing the viewer into arresting psychological as well as narrative mysteries.

Executed with opaque washes of mossy greens, indigos, muted grays, or pale glowing yellows and often divided by a stark horizon line, the world Lundqvist's figures inhabit is one of subdued meditative hues and pure economic geometry. Reduced architectural or natural elements at times adorn the landscape—such as the creature-like plant in *Flowering Tree* that seems to be in telepathic dialogue with the wandering girl—adding a dreamy air of sublimity to the works' overall surrealist atmosphere. The figures are always meticulously rendered, each with his or her own thoughtfully assembled outfit and subtle facial and gestural expressions, implying a variety of personalities and myriad internal nuances. Together the works may well suggest the presence of one overarching story, as if each painting were an episode in a tale known only to the figures themselves. Meanwhile, each composition provides just enough mesmerizing and curious hints and clues, tempting the viewer to assemble their own narrative interpretation through close observation and careful contemplation.

Though small-scale and minimalist, Lundqvist's work achieves a unique balance between multitudes of art historical references. The picture surface's prominent two-dimensionality and powerful inter-figure and figure-ground relations resonate with the sophisticated performativity in early Italian as well as Northern Renaissance visual tableaux; the intuitive color fields—both supplementary and complimentary—recall modern suprematist abstractions; the vast desolate landscape and feel of suspension walk a similar precarious line between dream and reality as does surrealism, and the obscured narrative structure and elaborately depicted range of personas recall the whimsical naïveté of folk templates.

Rita Lundqvist lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden. She was elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts in 2000. The following year, she received the Barbro & Holger Bäckström Art Scholarship, one of Sweden's largest grants, and subsequently presented a solo exhibition at Malmö Konsthall that fall. Other important solo presentations include Liljevalche Konsthall in Stockholm (2010) and Norrköpings Konstmuseum in Sweden (1999). Her work was also included in the Carnegie Art Award for Nordic Painting, a traveling exhibition that opened at Arken Museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen (2001), and the Edstrand Foundation Art Prize at the former Rooseum (currently Moderna Museet Malmö) in Sweden (2000).