

CAMPOLI PRESTI

Press release

Emily Sundblad

Promenade des Anglais

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Campoli Presti, Paris

Emily Sundblad's fast red monochromes were painted *en plein air* on a marble balcony of the Hotel Negresco, in Nice, overlooking the iconic *Promenade des Anglais*. Standing in the moldy footprints of Matisse, who painted these same views in 1919-1920, Sundblad notates the tough and weedy kitsch of palms like calligraphy. A sort of quick retinal alphabet or painted-out postcard. It's the summer of COVID19 and, from the clogged beach up to the secluded alcoholic villas in the hills, there's a faded-out, rotten *Cote d'Azur* glamour-feeling, timeless and indestructible. In 1983, The Hotel Negresco served as the backdrop for Elton John's "I'm Still Standing." Mme Jeanne Augier, the Negresco's owner who died last year at the age of 95, once told Bill Gates that purchasing the hotel would be well beyond his means. This moldiness has no price, she meant: a time zone inaccessible to a contemporary technocrat. Amanda Lear got it, and she's still living it. In Mme Augier's will, she stated that the hotel must always remain independently owned and most of her fortune was bequeathed to help the poor and animals in need. Her establishment was used as a makeshift hospital for the victims of the terrorist attack on *Promenade des Anglais* on Bastille Day, 2016.

These paintings are installed behind a glossy red door on which Sundblad has painted an orchid, evoking *allmoge* - the traditional Swedish 18th century farmer style of decorating utilitarian objects, often with floral motifs. Paintings of roses in plastic glasses, which hang in the downstairs gallery, were made with Edouard Manet's still life "Roses dans un verre à champagne" in mind.

Exiled from New York due to travel restrictions, Sundblad has been spending the summer of COVID19 in and around Nice. The works in the exhibition evoke this singular setting, hallucinating the ideal of a unique context from which art can be experienced and socialized. Leopards, a tiger and a monkey join Caroline Blackwood and self-portraits of the artist, hanging around an infinity pool with the Mediterranean hovering in the distance. Here, painting-time is as fast as jotting down notes and as slow as a summer that doesn't start or end. The problem is how to access contemporary experience and if we can ever find our way back to "now," as news of uprisings in the U.S. burn up the phone: is it also now in New York?

- John Kelsey

Assuming all art involves impersonation and collaboration, Sundblad is also a singer, actress, and co-owner of the gallery Reena Spaulings. The gallery, created in 2003, was named after Bernadette Corporation's collectively authored novel set in post-9/11 New York City about a fictional fashion-world "it girl", an idea of personhood now seeming as antiquated as that of the independently owned small business or art as romance.

Emily Sundblad (b. 1977, Dalsjöfors, Sweden) lives and works in New York. Recent exhibitions include Neu Galerie (2019); Xavier Hufkens (2017); The ALMANAC 14: Emily Sundblad, Ray Charles, Le Consortium, Dijon (2014); Absolut, White Flag Projects, St. Louis (2013); Emily Sundblad/Margaret Lee, Off Vendome, Düsseldorf (2013). Her work was featured in Double Lives, MUMOK, Vienna (2019) and was part of the Whitney Biennial (2014).

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