

# Nadia Hebson *Scène d'Amour*

17.3–15.5 2021

OPENING HOURS

Weds–Thurs 13–18

Sat 12–16

In *Scène d'Amour*, Nadia Hebson presents a multidisciplinary work which continues her exploration of artistic recuperation through intuitive forms. Issuing from the desire to consider alternate Painting histories in the present, over the last decade Hebson has evolved a distinct and idiosyncratic mode of working that merges the role of artist, scholar and curator to realise constellations of objects, apparel, paintings, prints and text that think through the legacies of older peers, whilst making Hebson's own subjective expression visible.

In *Scène d'Amour* the work of Swedish painter, writer, radical anarcho-eco-feminist Monica Sjöö (*b.*1931 Härnösand *d.*2005 Bristol) is presented alongside Hebson's own. In response to the conditions of this current moment and Hebson's own circumstance as a new mother, the exhibition, rather than offering conclusions, seeks instead to initiate dialogue around Sjöö's expanded legacy and the intimate relationship between her painting, graphic design, activism and matriarchal scholarship as well as her role as an early exponent of the Goddess movement. *Scène d'Amour* is intended as both an introduction and an opportunity to pay close attention: where Hebson's private comprehension of Sjöö's work can form.

In parallel with the exhibition, Hebson has invited artists, art historians, curators and colleagues/friends to share in company their consideration and responses to Sjöö's practice through public discussion and a screening. Over the course of the exhibition Hebson will realise new work and text in response to this concentrated period of exchange and contemplation, which will be installed sporadically throughout its duration.

Working obliquely with the legacies of women artists, Nadia Hebson has previously sought to comprehend the relationship between painting, biography, persona and clothing, most notably through a consideration of the work of artists Winifred Knights *b.*1899 *d.*1947 and Christina Ramberg *b.*1946 *d.*1995. In developing a form of subjective biography, Hebson has sought to ask how we undertake the recuperation of less considered artists' work through alternative gestures. Drawing on feminist literary touchstones, including the work of Christa Wolf and Carla Lonzi as well as *écriture féminine*, Hebson employs both empathy and subjectivity to suggest new forms of comprehension to explore the complexities of feminine experience through a consideration of older peers' 'expanded legacies'. Her paintings and constellations of objects are themselves an oblique form of scholarship and her writing moves parallel to the embodied forms of knowledge she produces.

Working against singular interpretations and towards associative and speculative elucidation, Hebson views her practice as a form of annotation, whereby art historical monologues are critiqued via multiple approaches including translation, transposition, appropriation and deliberate fabrication. In assembling a private lineage of female mentors Hebson has developed a mode of working that permits her to think through the work, lives and conditions of older colleagues. The breadth of work she realises reflects the varying modes of close attention she pursues.

Central to the evolution of Hebson's attitude has been the work and politics of art historian, critic and feminist Carla Lonzi and her experimental book *Autoritratto (Self Portrait, 1968)*. In the book, Lonzi collides interviews with Arte Povera artists, poetry and autobiographical detail to create a subjective, non-linear prose. The work signaled both Lonzi's break from the conventions of art history and the instigation of her radical dictum that women should strive to make visible their creative political subjectivity as unexpected subjects, outside of patriarchal or academic constraints. At the time of her death in 1982 Lonzi was working on a book in which she was 'in conversation' with a group of fifteenth century 'bluestockings'. This text foregrounds her notion of *resonance*: Lonzi defined resonance as a relationship that can be established between two or more women, who do not necessarily live in the same place or period of time, as a way of seeing one's own experience reflected in the experience of someone else, a form of mutual recognition. Hebson's practice is characterised by the same impulse. It also seeks to acknowledge and displace historicity through conversation, painterly intervention and contextual reframing. Exploring the on-going resonance of less considered artists in the present through self-reflexive means.

With these gestures in mind *Scène d'Amour* represents a reorientated perspective. Hebson's evolving body of work is shown alongside Monica Sjöö's paintings *God Giving Birth* and *Aspects of the Great Mother* and associated archival material, proposing a context in which work from differing historical moments can be brought into proximity to enact a process of critique. Hebson has worked across large scale print, sculpture, relief, fabric and painting to realise a body of work that considers the communicative possibilities of dress, (in)fertility, joy, annotation, autobiographical expression and the ongoing possibilities of Painting to explore complex emotional and psychological tensions through visually oblique means. The measured language of Hebson's paintings: low tone, considered palette, restrained marks which in totality suggest some kind of private ludic exchange, extend beyond the paintings to hold in concert the further collaged elements - wall prints, fabric, relief and sculpture - to realise a single work, within and amongst which Sjöö's paintings are then sited.

For Hebson, Sjöö's practice raises many questions, not least how a discernably traditional painting practice can lie at the heart of a complex, social and politically orientated form of working; a form that coheres around personal experience, self-expression and a conscious challenge to the established artistic dictums of the day (within Painting circa 1960s-90s - abstraction taking critical precedent over figuration). Sjöö's interconnected modes of working: painting, writing, activism and scholarship grounded in a subjective expression, mirror Carla Lonzi's own endeavours. Hebson is interested in the conditions of these womens' experiences and the radical gestures they enacted to make visible their creative political subjectivity.

# Moa Room

Anticlockwise from right hand side

*The Conditions (Yves Saint Laurent, 1976)*, oil on canvas, 2019-20, Nadia Hebson

*Autoritratto*, oil on canvas, 2019, Nadia Hebson

*Aspects of The Great Mother*, oil on board, 1971, Monica Sjöö

*The Conditions*, oil on canvas, 2019, Nadia Hebson

*Joy*, digital print, 2021

# Reading Room

*Fertility Complex*, oil on canvas, 2021, Nadia Hebson

Vitrines – left to right

Copy of pamphlet *Towards a Revolutionary Feminist Art*, Ann Berg, Liz Moore, Monica Sjöö, 1971, National Library of Australia online catalogue

Nadia Hebson's studio copy of Monica Sjöö's 1969 poster *Great Mother Sphinx* used as a starting point for the 2019 Kingsgate billboard commission *women are art schools*, Kings gate Project Space, London <https://www.kingsgateworkshops.org.uk/billboard>

Copy of *Matri-anarki*, 1978, Monica Sjöö, courtesy The Labour Movement's Archive and Library, Stockholm

Film

*Portrait*, (Monica Sjöö), 1977, 12.06 mins, dir. Jane Jackson

(Courtesy Jane Jackson)

Literature

*The Great Cosmic Mother - Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*, Barbara Mor and Monica Sjöö, 1987, published by Harper San Francisco

# August Room

*God Giving Birth*, oil on board, 1968, Monica Sjöö

*Joy* (Installation), digital wall print, balsa wood, fabric, marbled paper, egg tempera, watercolour, paper clay, balsa wood, 2021, Nadia Hebson

# Further links

Review of *The Great Cosmic Mother* by The Lit Review, A Black Mens Book Club hosted by #intoxicateduncles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4cpoBYI0L4>

Monica Sjöo talk, Women Spirit Rising May 2004, Bodmin, Cornwall, introduced by Maggie Parks, three parts, artcornwallvideo

Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0XfG4OLbfA>

Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7I7ZzFOCDi4>

Part 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLoKodSo-bM>



In order to provide for a safe experience of the exhibition in line with the current situation's social recommendations, we have limited the number of visitors to eight people at a time.

Our staff ensures that this is maintained and that visitors keep their distance. Please contact [info@m-i-n-t.se](mailto:info@m-i-n-t.se) to pre-book larger companies.

Mint organises exhibitions, study circles and happenings.

[www.m-i-n-t.se](http://www.m-i-n-t.se)

## CONTACT

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## MINT

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