

TOWARDS THE HISTORY OF SURREALISM BOREAL;

– a reasoned chronology in three parts
of surrealist initiatives and some parallels
in Sweden (with outlooks to its neighbouring countries)

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Part 2

Scattered clusters of exceptional voices 1951-80
– Desperately keeping the flame of a radical sense of poetry alive,
remembering and trying to reinvent

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Overall introduction

In brief

This is a contribution to the historiography of surrealist activities, and when such are scarce, surrealist influences and parallels, in Sweden, but extending to the neighboring countries of northern Europe.

It has been divided into three chronological parts, of which this is the second. All parts have this “overall introduction”, and the concluding references.

For a serious discussion of basic concepts and delimitations, which did not fit in here, please read the accompanying pdf “Defining/delimiting surrealism”.

It is also important to note that this pdf lacks images entirely and it is strongly recommended that the reader actively browses the Internet, or in the cases where such are available, art books, to see examples of art of discussed artists.

The pdf is searchable but only with the aid of a commented index will this search function become useful also for those who don't know exactly what they are looking for; such an index is forthcoming.

Purpose, scope and technicalities

The history of surrealism in Sweden remains not entirely unexplored but a characteristically vague story, not yet turned into a highly respectable academic enterprise, probably due to its peripheralness in several respects. A few works of general overview are available (von Holten *Surrealismen i svensk konst* 1969 focusing on pictorial arts, and more recently Söderberg (ed) *Ögats läppar sluter sig, Surrealismen i svensk poesi* 1993 focusing on written poetry), being sympathetic, certainly conveying a defense more sentimental than militant, though rich and largely adequate, but neither thoroughly researched, innovative, very systematic or intellectually challenging. In general works of surrealism, in the few cases where their coverage actually is broad also spatiotemporally, there is usually a somewhat fragmentary presentation of glimpses from Sweden, either by Edouard Jaguer, by von Holten or by José Pierre (in the latter case, the data probably largely emanating from von Holten). There are a few academic papers of minor circulation (Parès, Moberg, Sjölin, Forshage) which include more information, but apart from that, only scattered works dealing with particular artists or writers and not particularly with surrealist ideas and certainly not surrealist collective activity or surrealist organisation.

Personally, I was researching the topic a lot during the early 90s, but grew tired of it, especially since I had no good idea of a form to present it all in. With modern techniques it has suddenly become possible to make this available without involving publishers and reproductions

(reproductions of artwork of most of the mentioned artists can be traced on the internet, copyrighted or not). On the other hand, I no longer have the time to complete the research and write up such a big project. Which suits me fine, as I am far more interested in making all of this available for anyone who would be inclined to pick it up and take it forward in some substantial sense, than by claiming it as a merit of my own.

This chronology is not the history of surrealism in Sweden. It is rather just a systematic presentation of some of the central classes of data with comments. Some people may think that this is the same as writing history, but I would certainly disagree. Writing history does not merely require thorough empirical data and a little thinking; it actually requires a lot of thinking and also some systematic methodology.

In the absence of this, what we have is little more than a commented chronology, probably nerdy enough to have little entertainment value to the cultural audience, and thus useful primarily for those who want to find sources of inspiration for their own activity (though inevitably also for those who might want to address these issues from academic viewpoints, within a sympathetic or a hostile framework).

What I planned to do when I was working with the project, beyond what is presented here plus a slightly deeper focus on some authorships and artistships, was:

1. a broad historic background concerning the conditions in Sweden, the general social-socioeconomic-political stage this country presents and the specific forms of social, cultural, organisational institutions and habits available; the understanding of which in at least some superficial form would be important to understand the motives involved in the reception and the indigenous origins of any kind of surrealism, as well as its different forms in different periods of time,

2. a thorough attempt to characterise the ingredients of surrealism on an objective plane, as well as the specificity of its historic forms and the cultural bonds innate to it, which would be necessary to systematically recognise what may be culturally different and genealogically unrelated parallel or related activities (so called parasurrealism, or sometimes quasisurrealism, or surrealizing (*surréalisants*) activities or works, which we usually acknowledge on an intuitive basis in the most obvious cases),

3. an attempt to broadly chart and understand the interactions between different fields or level of organisation and infrastructure in the relevant areas; political organisations, intellectual organisations, cultural organisations, amateur research organisations, cultural workers trade unions, art schools, publishing houses, printers, gallerists, etc.

Having said this, it might still be necessary to point out that I do not believe there is such a thing as a “Swedish surrealism” distinct from surrealism on the whole, while I still think it is a very interesting subject to investigate in what way surrealism has appeared, appealed, transformed, and developed in this particular context. Surrealism is one, but it will necessarily look a bit different considering what cultural characteristics and traditions it gets implanted with (and against).

I focus on indigenous surrealist activity and participation by people in or from Sweden in the international surrealist movement. In this discussion I also include neighbouring movements, more or less objectively surrealist, such as Phases, Cobra, the two situationist internationals, etc.

Apart from this I also mention various attempts to introduce surrealism in Sweden, and various artists and writers with a particular interest in, and/or particular affinities with, surrealism.

I also mention activities in the neighbouring countries, especially Denmark but also others (Norway, Finland, Iceland, Estonia, Poland) – but for countries other than Sweden I lay no claims whatsoever to completeness. And of course for Sweden too I hope there will turn up remarkable works and isolated outsiders, as well as information on historical meetings and attempts with surrealist games and experiments, that I have no idea about yet...

(Denmark is usually slightly more substantially treated than Sweden in the standard works about surrealism, but there is no comprehensive overview of the history of Danish surrealism. Regarding Finland most of my information comes from Timo Kaitaro's French-language overview in Kirstina, V & Jacob, P (ed): *Clavier affectif. Vingt poètes finlandais au regard du Surréalisme* 2003, as many other sources are linguistically inaccessible to me. Regarding Norway there isn't much to say and the meagre historiography in *Uroen og begjaeret: surrealisme i Skandinavia 1930-1950* (Okkenhaug ed, Bergen kunstmuseum 2004) confirms this. About Iceland, Estonia and Poland, available data is all just a few scattered crumbs too. But of course there might be sources I don't know of.]

The way I mention events that are not explicitly related to surrealism; particular works in literature, art, film, music etc which feel in some sense relevant, is not in any way complete. It has some systematics to it, but it has big holes, and obviously reflect the author's main interests and biography: focusing on written poetry and music more than visual arts for example, and mentioning humour and children TV shows particularly from the 70s and 60s, etc. Beyond this, there are several areas which are even less systematically treated, which would probably prove to somehow include some of the most important forms of strictly objective (non-subjective that is) surrealism had an analysis of such an objective form been carried out; I am referring to various radical undercurrents in political organisation, in science, and perhaps more than anything else, in passionate or innovative crime. An ambitious study from the viewpoint of intellectual history would involve the two former, but other historiographic methods will have to be employed for the latter.

Nevertheless, the method involved in the present work is rather different for the three different parts.

For the old days, 1924-50, there are several historiographic sources available, and thus fairly complete coverage, including journals, books and exhibitions and fairly detailed reception history. On the other hand, at least for the early part of this period, there have been very few people around to ask questions about what actually happened, and even from the later period memories have gotten more or less vague and the possible informants have started dropping off one by one and not many remain.

For the intermediate years, 1951-80, sort of desert years in terms of indigenous activity, I have fairly good coverage of journals and books, but less of newspapers and exhibitions. A lot of oral information has been possible to upbringing.

For the current period, 1981- , I focus on the indigenous surrealist activities in which I have been participating myself. Here the ambitions of the account turn rather contradictive. There is only casual coverage of journals, newspapers and exhibitions. Mostly I rely on my own experiences and archives and on continuous discussions with the persons involved. This is because I think the most interesting thing to do is to make an overview of the activities for evaluation and mediation of experience, but as this is an ongoing process and this chronicle is

obviously not the best forum for a plaidoyer in still – or not yet – controversial questions, I still focus on the unambiguous traces, printed works, public performances and general directions, ambitions and turns. A lot is not said, regarding the detailed movements of people (in and out of the group as well as travelling) and detailed activities and functioning of the group, which might be undesirable or uncomfortable for the sense of autonomy of the group, for juridical reasons, or in some cases for personal integrity. For this reason, it will be obvious, even within the course of this section, that the account will start out as fairly detailed and gradually turn increasingly sketchy.

In order to enhance (or perhaps create an illusion of) readability, I have distinguished between more central parts (central events and the main points of critical discussion) and more peripheral parts (more of bibliographic details, suggestions of possibly relevant phenomena in the periphery, events in neighboring countries, etc) by putting the latter in a smaller font.

Technical note: After extended doubts whether to refer to my own actions under my name or under a first person pronoun, I have finally settled for the former, not in order to detach myself from such actions and lay claim to a dispassionate objectivity in the chronicling, but more in a general antihumanist vein – we no longer believe in the unified integrative individual, the person committing those acts and the person chronicling them is in an important sense not the same person. As Friedrich Schlegel once wrote: “It would be desirable for a transcendental Linnaeus to classify the different selves and give them a very careful description, if possibly with illuminated copperprints, so that the self philosophizing wouldn’t all that often be confused with the self philosophized.” And this is more or less what has been realised since, in the advances of modern antihumanism by, say, Rimbaud, Nietzsche, Freud, Jakobson, Breton, Lacan, Levi-Strauss, Luca & Trost, Audiberti & Bryen, Blanchot, Foucault and Deleuze (not necessarily additive but here placed in a chronological order nevertheless).

Overview

Historical point of departure

At the commencement of this story, Sweden is on the periphery of European capitalism, but the forefront of its social security and social peace. Social democracy reigns on all levels of organisation of life. Protestant state church and a very large percentage of atheists still upholding christian rites. A lot of heavy industry, but at the time only halfway urbanised, more or less non-industrialised agriculture and forestry dominating the larger part of the country. The only continuous source of immigrants is Finland, which was once the non-privileged far provinces of larger imperial Sweden and since then retains many of the characteristics of a former colony; people from other parts of Europe come only with the second world war, and from other parts of the world much later. A general high level of education; at the time everybody learns German as a second language, but often also English or French or both (later English and German switch places here). In terms of cultural import there are parallel strands of francophilia, germanophilia and anglophilia. Germanophilia soon becomes unpopular in many circles because of political implications, and americophilia begins to overcompass them all, bearing modernist and popularcultural implications because of its strong association with cinema and jazz. Modernism gets some attention with european cultural imports, and thus depends a lot on the journal and newspaper correspondents, and the art students, sent away to either Paris, London or Berlin dependent on which of the -philias they subscribe to.

Geographical conditions

But let us take one step back to some elementary geography.

Sweden is a long country in North Europe, together with Norway making the Scandinavian peninsula, with a shared mountain range (old and not very high) as a backbone. It has a short marine west coast at a corner of the North sea, and a long brackish east coast in the Baltic. Together with Finland, on the other side of the Gulf of Bothnia (but also with an extensive land border in the north), the Scandinavian countries make Fennoscandia. Very close to south Sweden but part of the main European landmass and thus with water inbetween it and Scandinavia is Denmark, and together with Iceland far off into the north Atlantic, this makes up the Nordic countries (– with the Norwegian islands of Jan Mayen and Svalbard (Spitzbergen), the Danish Færøyerne (the Faeroe islands) and politically also the huge Greenland (which has some autonomy versus mother Denmark but also American settlements, and which geographically, geologically and biogeographically is a part of North America and not Europe)). In different times, there have been various friendly and non-friendly contacts with the other countries surrounding the Baltic sea; Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany.

Of the other nordic countries, Denmark and Iceland have always been distinct from Sweden, but Norway was forced into a union 1814-1905, and Finland was a region of Sweden through centuries up until 1809, still displaying very much a colonial structure where Swedish is an official language along with Finnish in spite of being talked primarily (but not solely) by a small upperclass minority, descendants of former rulers. The areas on the south side of the Baltic have once been colonised by Sweden too, but that was very long ago and does not affect present culture, except when the then Baltic Soviet republics claimed it in their fight for independence from mother Russia.

The whole of Sweden was recently glaciated and is therefore rich in lakes and other young landforms, and most of the country is on solid granitic bedrock covered with glacial till, but

several minor regions, particularly in the south but locally even up in the mountains, have younger sedimentary rocks and richer soils. Sweden is divided into a rather large number of provinces, which can be grouped for overview into three regions: Götaland, Svealand and Norrland. Götaland is south Sweden, very roughly coinciding with the nemoral zone (with broadleaved forest), having a lot of agriculture, but also much industry and forestry. It includes the semi-large cities Malmö and Göteborg, the peninsula of Skåne, the west coast, and the Baltic islands Öland and Gotland. Svealand, usually called the middle part of Sweden in spite of being rather far to the South (with boreonemoral forest, a broadleaved-coniferous mix), is dominated by Stockholm, with forestry and industry and some agriculture (but much less than the south), and historically important mining. Norrland makes up the northern two thirds of the country (mostly boreal, pure coniferous forest, the taiga, but also treeless alpine habitats and furthest to the north even some tundra), with no larger cities and in a European perspective extremely sparsely populated. Mostly based on forestry and almost no agriculture, but of course also industry, and even some mining having survived to this date, it also includes the mountains and the home area of the traditionally nomadic reindeer herders of the sami people.

It may seem ridiculous that I am repeating this school geography lesson, but material conditions are important, and I would like to stress that for modern mentality Sweden has been much divided into a dominant Stockholm culture and an almost equally important Skåne culture. Many proponents of the southern cultural milieu localpatriotically claim its independence from the Stockholmish rest of Sweden, preferring to refer to its past as a part of Denmark, claiming on the basis of these historical reasons as well as the geographical proximity of København to be more European and less provincial than the Stockholm official Swedishness; well, mostly such claims are made from the industrial city Malmö and the academic town Lund in the southwest, while the rest of Skåne is mainly agricultural. And as a rival candidate of independence visavis Stockholm, the west coast region with the second largest city Göteborg, usually also claims such wider outlook because of being the traditional port for trade with England and the rest of the world.

Also in the history of surrealism in Sweden there is usually one Stockholm and one Skåne side to things, and occasionally a little west coast side. In the 30s most things happened in Stockholm, but things were starting to move in Malmö, and there was a strange subdominance to the west coast smalltown Halmstad not far from Göteborg. In the 40s & 50s Stockholm and Skåne represented distinct centra, with Lundkvist, Laaban, Kriland, Fahlström, Söderberg, Odysse etc in Stockholm and Imaginisterna in Malmö; and Nemes and his pupils in Göteborg. In the 60s and the 70s the pattern remained, Skåne receiving new centers with Kalejdoskop in Åhus and Drakabygget in Örkelljunga. And also the commencement of organised surrealism in the 80s took place in both: with Dunganon in Skåne and Surrealistgruppen in Stockholm.

What happens in part 1

In the 1920s surrealism made some impact in Sweden through reverberations in travellers, mostly art students who had gone to Paris. But for most of them it is only in the 30s that their own work starts reflecting similar lines of investigations, and people start acknowledging the label surrealist for themselves. To most however, surrealism does not really appear as a distinct movement, but mostly as the most advanced part of general modernism, so the major part of all this interest is decidedly eclectic. There are some contacts with the surrealist movement in France and England, but most of all with that in Denmark, which is equally eclectic, and the Swedish and Danish surrealists work a lot in collaboration. They even work hard to find some representatives in

Norway and Finland to make it an all-nordic collaboration, but the Norwegian and Finnish contacts are a lot less active. The major names in Sweden are the poets Ekelöf and Lundkvist, the poet-draughtsman Dahlberg, the sculptor Grate, and the painters in Halmstadgruppen, especially Mörner, E Olson and Thorén. Most activities are centered around the journals *Spektrum*, *Karavan*, the nordic *Konkretion*, and the Danish *Linien*, around the “literary salon” of Jaensson & Dahl, the Dalarö collective, and around exhibitions in København 1935, London 1936, Lund 1937 and Paris 1938.

During the war, most people who were involved in surrealism in Sweden in the 30s soon go on to other types of questions, but instead there arrives a generation of war refugees (Nemes, Laaban, Weiss, Freddie, Bjerke-Petersen, Møller-Nielsen etc), and Lindegren makes great impact as a poet. Surrealist-oriented painters form the shortlived Minotaur group, out of which the Imaginisterna group is formed, centered in Malmö (Svanberg, Hultén, Österlin).

After the war modernism takes over mainstream culture, and as surrealism is one of the major pillars of it, it already seems established and/or outdated to many. Several journals present surrealist poets and artists and sometimes surrealist questions 1948-50. Imaginisterna are active in Skåne, but in Stockholm there is an informal collective surrealist activity, which partly is a Stockholm section of Imaginisterna, partly Ilmar Laaban writing very advanced surrealist criticism and tutoring the new overenthusiastic surrealist poet Öyvind Fahlström, and partly the collaboration by Laaban, Kriland and Freddie around the surrealist exhibition Expo Aleby 1949. Several other surrealist poets surface, and Nemes influences many of his pupils at Göteborg artschool Valand with fragmented insights from surrealism.

What happens in part 2

But then much less happens for decades. Surrealism seems quite domesticated as a necessary part of modern art and modern poetry. It is mostly single poets and artists on the fringe who discover that it could be far more than that. During much of the 50s though, Skåne remains a rather dynamic center where Imaginisterna joins the Cobra and then Phases movements, and provides one of the major organisation points for art-brut-inspired art and lyrical abstraction in Europe with their journal *Salamander* and their Galerie Colibri. But Svanberg has left the group to become a loudly praised favourite of the French surrealist group. In Stockholm the young poet Lasse Söderberg encertains the presence of surrealism in the group Metamorfos, and Laaban & Fahlström collaborate on the weird journal *Odyssé*. Söderberg moves to France and meets the French group, which is also frequented by the Swedish art historian Ragnar von Holten.

In the 60s various elements of surrealism becomes popular with painters again, in parallel and partly conflict with several other currents: a neo-Dada revival, the resurrection of revolutionary politics, and a scholarly retrospective interest in surrealism. The cultural journals do write a lot about old and contemporary surrealism, especially the leading art journals *Konstrevy* and *Paletten*, and in connection with this Breton’s manifestoes and other cornerstones of surrealist theory is translated into Swedish for the first time. Laaban remains the representative of Phases, and von Holten of French “official” surrealism. The Danish and Swedish post-Cobra artists involved in the Situationist International set up office in Drakabygget, Örkelljunga (Skåne), and soon the movement is split in two halves so that the Swedish colony becomes the world headquarters of the Second Situationist International. New important names are the poet Lars Norén and the painters Thea Ekström, Uno Svensson, Roj Friberg and Sven-Erik Johansson, but there are a lot of others.

When the 68 movement is safely institutionalised in the 70s, surrealism seems mostly to be an issue for stately museums and other institutions, but many artists keep on with a more or less surrealist “style”. As von Holten is involved with the faction disbanding the French surrealist group in 1969, a major international liquidationist exhibition is held in Stockholm 1970, followed by an exclusively Swedish one in Västerås 1977. In Skåne on the other hand, new surrealist-friendly journals are launched, *Kalejdoskop* in pictorial art and *Tärningskastet* in written poetry. Some surrealist inspiration is found in the artists and writers around *Kalejdoskop* and elsewhere but the major newcomer of the decade is perhaps humorist Claes Tellvid (Ejdemyr).

What happens in part 3

In the 80s for the first time groups that are explicitly part of the international surrealist movement form in Sweden. First it is the nordic collaboration “Surrealister i Norden” (SIN), for the Swedish part organised by Tony Pusey, an emigré of an English surrealist group. This activity is centered in Skåne and close to the Drakabygget (along with strong Danish and Icelandic contributions and less significant Norwegian and Finnish ones); publishing the journal *Dunganon* and holding an international surrealist exhibition in Sjöbo 1986. In Stockholm a youthful group comes together under the name of *Surrealistgruppen i Stockholm* (the surrealist group in Stockholm). The latter immediately gets involved in international organisational issues, closely allied with the supposedly “orthodox” surrealist group in Chicago and others; while *Dunganon* is an important pole in the anarchic “dissident” surrealist network. The group in Stockholm publishes *Nakna läppar* (and its shortlived followers *Kvicksand* and *Kristall*), tries having a Bureau of Surrealist Research, and frantically try out all other aspects of surrealist life and experimentation. Of the old surrealists Kriland joins the group, and later Laaban, while also Hillarp, Söderberg and others get in touch. A splinter group is active for some years as *Agamexpeditionen* (the Agama expedition), reuniting with *Dunganon*.

The Stockholm group keeps up close contacts with the European surrealist groups, to begin with particularly with the groups in Paris and Prague, then with a new group in Leeds. It diminishes in size (publishing *Mannen på gatan*) and then grows again and cultivates its contacts with artists, intellectuals and activists within the country (with the extrovert journal *Stora Saltet*), at the same time growing more explicitly critical and provocative towards much of the international movement. Through this sudden extrovertness the Stockholm group finds a large number of contacts within contemporary “unintelligible” poetry, musical improvisation, occult studies, anarchism, and publishing enterprises. Very little surrealist activity in Skåne. Exile members of the Stockholm group form a surrealist nucleus in New York. Side projects are for example the live poetry group *Köttkropp*, several musical groups, the surrealist comic book *Diabolik*, the publishing house Vertigo, alchemy studies, etc. Acknowledged surrealist poets are mostly Aase Berg and Eva Kristina Olsson (both in the group), but on his side also Söderberg revives his feelings for surrealism in a cluster of books.

After the publishing of the anthology *Lucifer* many longstanding and relatively well-known members of the Stockholm surrealist group leave for cultural careers or for the shadows, and the group assumes a more underground approach, making the fanzine *Lösdrivaren* and a number of pdf publications, as well as blogs. In its vicinities the loose artists group Styx is formed, under the aegis of which most public activities of the members of the group are then carried out. International collaborations keep on, and become intimate with the English surrealist group SLAG. Exile members of the Stockholm group form nuclei in both Nagoya, Japan and Szczecin, Poland.

Part 2: Scattered clusters of exceptional voices 1951-80

– Desperately keeping the flame of a radical sense of poetry alive, remembering and trying to reinvent

Nodes: “Bauhaus Situationniste”, Eivor Burbeck, Cobra, *Drakabygget*, Thea Ekström, Roj Friberg, Ingemar Gustafson, Ragnar von Holten, CO Hultén, Imaginisterna, Sven-Erik Johansson, *Kalejdoskop*, Ilmar Laaban, “Metamorfos”, Lars Norén, *Odyssé*, “Phases”, Carl-Fredrik Reuterswärd, *Salamander*, “Surrealism?”, Max Walter Svanberg, Uno Svensson, Lasse Söderberg, Claes Tellvid etc

1951-59 The asphyxiant decade

Fall of Rixes and Cobra

The two international, surrealist-dissident groups Rixes and Cobra both walk into their graves in 1951. Cobra has managed to make several exhibitions and a few journal issues before. A Danish issue of the journal is planned but never finished. Newcomers from the nordic countries include: from Sweden Svanberg, from Denmark Uffe Harder, Ivan Malinovski, Jørgen Sonne and others.

Imaginisterna, *Salamander*, Colibri

Imaginisterna have their first group exhibition in Stockholm 1951. Bertil Gadö, just arrived, claims to be a surrealist in the exhibition catalog, and soon considers himself to be specifically a surrealist rather than an imaginist, thus quitting the group. He adheres to German surrealist Edgar Ende’s minuscule-peripheral-shortlived association “Internationale Vereinigung der Surrealisten”, perhaps participating in their exhibitions in Germany 1952, but then disappears from the public eye, for decades. His painting has some of the naïve lyrical abstraction of the collective Imaginist style, but most of it is far more of a traditional mild figurative surrealism with odd constellations of objects, sometimes very effective and even uncanny, but very often not avoiding neither the decoratively abstract nor the naïve realistic in both simple idyllic and banal dystopian directions.

Leaving early like Gadö, Gudrun Åhlberg abandons the group when she divorces Kriland. Svanberg, in 1952, distinguishes between “true Imaginism” (his own) and the more abstract painting of his fellow Imaginisterna members in *Paletten*, but the rupture is not yet completed. Imaginisterna exhibit in Malmö and Göteborg the same year, with Brauner, Lam and Pedersen as invited guests.

But then in 1953 Imaginisterna exhibit in Paris. Jaguer writes “Trajectoires scandinaves” in Lebel’s *Premier Bilan de l’art actuel*, which also serves as catalog preface. The French surrealist group see the show, and François Valorbe reviews it favourably in *Médium: Informations sur-réalistes*, but the French surrealists are primarily impressed with Svanberg, who takes the opportunity to break all bonds with Imaginisterna. The latter continue their collaboration with all the postcobra/ lyrical abstraction/ pre-Phases artists. Wifredo Lam writes a poem about Malmö.

“Image förlag” presents Rimbaud’s *En tid i helvetet* translated by Lång and illustrated by Hultén 1953.

So Svanberg defends his exclusive right to the word Imaginism which he had for a long time used about his own personal vision as opposed to ordinary surrealism, and about his friends in the group with the same name as long as they stayed rather close to his vision. But he was now

disappointed with their development, and took the chance to come along with the French surrealist group, in spite of their certified "ordinary surrealism" if there was one. At this point, Hultén works hard to confine the term Imaginism to the remaining group and by implication to the international abstract-surrealist current, and also to deny Svanberg's right to it.

Graphic artist Bertil Lundberg joins Imaginisterna in 1954, making frottage effects in copper print. Around this time, Kriland loses almost all of his surrealist inspiration as he turns to alcoholism and to illustration-advertising drawing jobs under the influence of his new wife, so very little is seen from him in the later Imaginisterna manifestations.

Hultén is still going in several directions, but most of his work is typically cobraish.

A nearby artist who is associated with Imaginisterna but never joins is Alan Friis, strongly marked by influences of Klee and Svanberg.

There are also poets in Malmö. Ingemar Gustafson and Göran Printz-Påhlson are the most interested in surrealism and the international art scene among them. Together with several other Skåne poets they play surrealist games and publish the results in *Vox* 1954. They also take part in an extended sense of Imaginisterna when the journal *Salamander* (Salamander) is launched 1955. This is an important international journal in the Phases/post-Cobra movement (alongside *Ellebore*, *Boa*, *Edda*, *Il Gesto*, *Documento Sud* and *Phases* itself, all with a largely shared set of contributors). Editors are Gustafsson, Hultén, Laaban and Printz-Påhlson, with for example Jaguer and Götz as official correspondents. In the first issue Duchamp, Luca and Hantaï are presented; in the second Matta; all including several essays, poems and colour reproductions. Hultén also runs the "Galerie Colibri" in Malmö, exhibiting artists within this sphere; the imaginists, Fahlström, Uno Svensson, and internationally Bryen, Lam, Matta, Herold, Buchheister, Götz et al. The third and last issue 1956 presents Lam and Hayter, plus Fahlström, and additional images, and the last exhibitions at the "Galerie Colibri" take place in 1957. A further issue was planned focusing on American art, but was not assembled.

In 1957, Imaginisterna disband.

In 1958 Printz-Påhlson publishes his essays *Solen i spegeln*.

The decade's most beautiful Swedish book, Allhem's edition of Rimbaud's *Illuminationer* with Svanberg's images (translations Lång) was originally planned for Image förlag and is a sort of a post-Imaginisterna production when it finally appears in 1957.

The Metamorfos group

In Stockholm there is a new young neorimbaudian poetry group called "Metamorfos" (Metamorphosis) which is first seen in public in 1952. The group includes surrealist Lasse Söderberg, famous rimbaudian-pathetic character Paul Andersson, and (later surrealist poet and defender) Björn Svante Nordenborg.

However, a new journal with the same name which advocates "neoromanticism" 1952 is not really the organ of the poet group. Only Nordenborg is seen in the journal, which displays a thick soup of christian mysticism and philosophical idealism. (The journal is shortlived but revived in the 70s as the literary journal of Swedenborgianism and anthroposophy!)

In a series of small poetic volumes, more closely knit to the group, Lasse Söderberg publishes his first poetry volumes *Anteckningar till ett eko* (Notes to an echo, 1952) and *Landskap med kvinnor* (Landscape with women, 1953), Paul Andersson *Ode till okänd konstellation* (Ode to unknown constellation, 1952), *Elegi över en förlorad sommar* (Elegy over a lost summer, 1953). Plus, Özkök & Söderberg make an anthology of modern Turkish poetry

1953. Ragnar von Holten makes his first public appearances as illustrator of some of these volumes, but with no visible link to surrealism yet.

Already 1954, the group cancel their small series as most of them have gotten contracts with big publishers. They present themselves in the literary journals, and they publish the anthology *Sex unga lyriker*. Söderberg makes a surrealist selfdeclaration in *Lyrikvännen*. Also *All Världens berättare* devotes a section to the group, next to an excerpt from Fahlström's and others' unpublished Sade translations. Then Söderberg moves to Paris.

After 1954, contributions from members from the group are in several journals, but particularly in the new journal *Upptakt*, where Söderberg provides much interesting material. Another fringe journal project, of even larger surrealist interest but with very loose ties to the group, is *Odyssé*. In 1955, remnants of the group produce only one issue of a journal, *Tribun*, which includes interesting translations of Malagassy poetry but not very exciting material beside that. Then finally in 1959 yet another shortlived journal is put out by people in the vicinities, *Kentaur*, largely idealist "neoromanticist" but also including absurdism and anarchism; but nothing very interesting.

In partly the same circles is another remarkable young poet, who has later been included in some surrealist anthologies without very good reason, Tomas Tranströmer.

***Odyssé*, Fahlström, Laaban**

Dag Wedholm (a more or less mad fringe figure of the Metamorfofos group) launches the small journal *Odyssé* (Odyssey) in 1953. The editor seems to give his surrealist-minded collaborators free hands. The first issue includes presentations of Michaux and Prévert. The several issues of *Odyssé* from 1954 collect a broad and bizarre material; including Fahlström's unreserved eulogy to Sade, other criticism and poetry by Fahlström and Laaban, the science-fiction-madman Sture Lönnerstrand, translations by (and often essays on) Artaud, Duprey, Desnos, Duchamp, Picabia, Schwitters, Jarry, and Sade. The last issue in 1955 includes Laaban's anagram poems, and poetry by Ingemar Gustafson, plus translations of Schwitters, Cros and Michaux.

Öyvind Fahlström had continued writing based on surrealist methods for some years, but without publishing. The results from this activity are in fact mostly lost today, such as his major poetry collection with the same name as the long poem "Det stora och det lilla" (The big and the small), his "surrealist chronicle play" "1-Hål, 2-Hål, 3-Hål" (1-hole, 2-hole, 3-hole) and his radio play "Katterna åto fåglarnas blod, särskilt Ludvig, och det utan att röras" (The cats ate the blood of the birds, especially Louis, and that without being moved).

But at the time of *Odyssé* he has moved on from his lonely-heroic-surrealist position and is investigating verbal permutations, collage and various other more or less concretist experimental techniques. In *Odyssé* he publishes his manifesto for concrete poetry "Hätilla ragulpr på fåtskliaben" (Hipy papy bthuthdth thuthda bthuthdy) which includes very interesting ideas along with overenthusiastic technicalities, and the poems he publishes in *Odyssé* (and a few in an even smaller magazine, *Paravan*) are traces of this. They usually remain intensely poetic in spite of the various mathematical-linguistic operations he imposes on his text. Most of the texts from this period, including his most well-known long poem "Det stora och det lilla", are published much later as *Bord*.

Failing to find publishers for his concretist poetry just as he did earlier with his surrealist writings, Fahlström now focuses on visual arts, particularly after inspiring meetings in Italy and France on a journey 1952. In 1952-53 he works with his 12 meter long drawing "Opera", which becomes a drama of the fate of groups of signs, he starts making collages with nonfigurative but

recognisable elements from comics, and he works with the big painting “Ade-Ledic-Nander 2” with its world of interacting signs 1955-57. He explains this direction as “Signifigurative sign painting” when he exhibits in 1955. It is mostly as a sign painter he participates in Phases and other international connections, and acquires some public recognition even in Sweden. He also retains, but less intensely, his own interests in surrealism and in Sade, which sometimes glimpses forth in the criticism he writes for the newspaper *Expressen* and the art journals *Paletten* and *Konstrevy*. Notable is his extensive report from the prosecution in France of Pauvert for his Sade edition (*Expressen* 1957).

Ilmar Laaban publishes *Rrosi Selavisti* in 1957, a collection of anagrams, palindromes and verbal puns in many languages. And just like Fahlström, Laaban also works as a critic for *Expressen*, bringing up Sade, Breton, Jean & Mezei, Audiberti & Bryen.

MIBI, SI & Phases

Internationally, out of the remnants of *Surréalisme-Révolutionnaire*, *Cobra* and *Rixes*, new movements are formed.

Danish abstract-surrealist Asger Jorn lives in Italy and there organises the post-Cobra movement “Mouvement pour un Bauhaus imaginiste” involving surrealists Jaguer, Matta and others, starting in 1953, in close collaboration with the parasurrealist Italian Nuclearist movement of Enrico Baj.

In Paris, Edouard Jaguer forms the international surrealist artist network “Phases” in 1954, and already the first year several people contribute from Sweden to its exhibitions and journals: Gustafson, Hultén, Kriland, Laaban, Österlin; joined the next year by Fahlström, Söderberg and Carl-Fredrik Reuterswärd. As already mentioned, the movement’s journals are several and have a shared pool of contributors – edited in different places in the world they all have a distinctly internationalist outlook; especially *Phases* and *Ellebore* in Paris, *Edda* in Brussels, *Salamander* in Malmö, *Boa* in Buenos Aires, but also the Italian Nuclearist journals *Il Gesto* and *Documento Sud*.

At a conference in Italy 1957, Jorn’s “Mouvement pour un Bauhaus imaginiste” fuses with the French lettrist movement and some even smaller European avantgarde movements to form the Situationist International. Except Jorn, no nordic people are present at the time.

50s Swedes in Paris

Fahlström visits Paris 1952, perhaps meeting mostly the ex-Rixes artists, Clarac-Serou and Serpan. In the earlier part of the same trip, he had been in Italy meeting Capogrossi, which becomes a revelation to him, and his idol Matta.

Imaginisterna’s Paris show 1953 detaches Svanberg, who becomes a favorite painter of Breton and the Paris surrealist group, while the remaining imaginists continue their collaboration with the surrealist dissidents, soon mostly found in Phases network.

An issue of the French surrealist journal *Médium: communication surréaliste* in 1954 is called “Numero Svanberg” as he is the principal illustrator of it; in it Breton has written a “Hommage à M W Svanberg”. Svanberg exhibits in the surrealists’ gallery “L’ètoile scéléé” in Paris 1955, is included in the group’s journal *Le Surréalisme, même* 1956, and in 1959, he is the only nordic contributor to the big international surrealist exhibition “Eros” in Paris. A text by him is also included in the catalog, translated by Lasse Söderberg and his French wife Janie Varades, who will later come to Sweden. Fahlström is in Paris to see the exhibition, as he reviews it in *Expressen* 1960. Lundkvist is there too, and Söderberg, who sees the exhibition with him, offers to take him to meet the surrealists, but he isn’t very enthusiastic and declines.

Svanberg’s impact is remarkable, as he immediately becomes one of the foremost painters for Breton and the French group, and therefore of their (at the time rather detached) sense of international surrealism. The distinctiveness of his vision, the entirely mythological (non-artistic) content of his painting, the similarities with ancient art as well as the best of schizophrenic and other outsider art, and his obsessedness with woman as a mythological creature, are all things which exactly corresponds to the preferences and needs of the postwar French group. But they

also make the connection, strange for Svanberg himself, that the mythology and the woman exalted would be those of viking culture, giving it all a slightly kitschy exotic boreophilia aspect. Obviously, none of the French know anything about old Norse culture, but they create a vision of it based on Svanberg's paintings and on sloppy analogies with their local Celtic past, which many of them are very enthusiastic about for the moment. So Svanberg's highly personal vision becomes for them typical of a northern Celtic culture, which is both falsely identified with Vikings and entirely imaginary.

Another Paris exhibition is the 1955 "Paroles visibles" a big show of poet-painter collaborations, with a strong Phases-surroundings element, including Gustafson with Hultén and Laaban with Fahlström.

Lambert Werner meets with the Paris surrealist group but stays a loner. His development is rather parallel to that of the Imaginists, with more figurative surrealist canvases in the first half of the decade, and more of lyrical abstraction in the second half.

Visiting Sweden in 1954, Tristan Tzara publishes a small essay on Apollinaire in translation in the Swedish radio-listeners journal *Röster i Radio* [which is seemingly never published in French and missed in his *Oeuvres complètes*]. Christian Dotremont extends his boreal journeys all the way to Lapland in 1956.

The surrealist poet of the Metamorfos group, Lasse Söderberg, moves to Paris 1955. He meets with the surrealist group, and decides not to embrace surrealism wholeheartedly. When he gets visits from Swedish friends, like Ingemar Gustafson and Sun Axelsson the first year, he is nevertheless happy to do surrealist games with them. His book *Akrobaterna* with an original cover by Matta is his last remarkable piece for a long time.

Another Swedish surrealist hangaround in Paris is art historian Ragnar von Holten, who attends meetings with the surrealist group from 1957, and manages to impress both Breton and Jaguer with his scholarly expertise on Gustave Moreau. In 1959 von Holten takes with him to Breton his own new friend but Breton's old acquaintance the sculptor Eric Grate, who has recently gone back to investigating forms of imaginary creatures, plant fragments, bones etc.

Also the surrealist-oriented painter Uno Svensson lives in Paris, and he joins visiting CO Hultén to yet another trip to Hauterives.

Other 50s poets

A new surrealist poet in Malmö, associated with Imaginisterna and leaning towards absurdism, is Ingemar Gustafson, publishing his first book as *Andra riter* (Other rites) in 1951. Then follows *Bumerang* (Boomerang, 1952) and *Den hemliga metern* (The secret meter, 1955) and a slow switch from absurdism to mysticism, while he actively collaborates on *Salamander* and *Phases*, as well as other international journals in the vicinities.

In Stockholm, Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd appears, a trickster in poetry and visual arts alike. His nonsense poetry, a kind of non-lyrical automatism, is superficially similar to Fahlström's concretism but immensely more lighthearted. With his collections *Abra Makabra* (1955), *Angående disciplinen ombord* (Concerning the discipline on board, 1956) and *I lagens namn* (In the name of the law, 1957) and his participation in Phases, he becomes a favorite of Jaguer's, and a collection in French, *Concernant la discipline à bord*, is published in 1959 under Phases's own imprint.

Another poet who sets out from surrealist-like positions, soon moving on to other directions in her own writing but retaining her affinity with surrealism, is Sun Axelsson (who was playing

surrealist games with Söderberg and Gustafson in Paris in 1955); her first book is *Mållös* (1959), where some of the poems display a poetically rich desorientation.

Entirely forgotten but a remarkable surrealist poet is Eivor Burbeck, who publishes her *Skrattmåsens legeringar* (Alloys of the black-headed gull) in 1954, jerking fantasies without sense of order, rather automatist-absurdist, often inspired by paintings.

Nya Valand

Nemes, while teaching on Valand art school, seems now to be doing mostly vast areas of strangely floating doodles, and often engages in public decoration jobs of sometimes unlikely dimensions, letting the doodles roam big walls in Lysekil 1952, Göteborg university 1955, etc. Then he quits at Valand 1955 and returns to Stockholm and to focus on his own painting, which leads to him developing a more informal-abstract painting.

(Another person quitting a heavy teaching assignment and returning to his own art is Eric Grate, who had been the professor of sculpture at the Swedish art academy for a long time, and now starts slowly reinvestigating imaginative forms.)

In 1953 several of Nemes' pupils start exhibiting together, and in 1958, they are all together under the name "Nya Valand". In 1955 they had made a celebration publication for their teacher, with contributions also from Laaban and Lindegren.

Actually more or less all of Nemes' pupils learnt something about creating haunting pictorial space and poetic interplay among doodles or baroque furniture. The only one to come out as a subjective surrealist, far more so than the teacher, is Sven-Erik Johansson, with his monumental boscheries. Hardy Strid made playfully provocative collages and got involved in Bauhaus Situationniste. Acke Oldenburg was weaving hypnotic worlds of suggestive colour waves, and Gunnar Larson kept doing diffuse haunted interiors. Others only occasionally or in their early period visited such worlds: Lennart A:son took it in the direction of expressive satire, Leif Knudsen towards obsessively decorative art brut, Leif Ericson accentuated the childish forms in the floating doodles, Bengt Olson organically animated interior shadows, Ulf Trotzig mats of rhythm. Et cetera. Even the most notoriously realist painters among them created strange atmospheres: Jörgen Zetterqvist darkly portraying dolls and corpses, Denis Steen the hidden world of epiphytes.

Life and politics

The 50s is really the age of the cold war and triumphant capitalism and consumerism. Booming industry, introduction of television, cars become available to everybody, plans for Swedish atomic bomb defense. Even less than in other countries, Sweden seems to have libertarian currents. The two absurd alternatives of the cold war seems to obstruct even minds that could be expected to be clearer. To the one side we have rallying for example the supposedly anarchosyndicalist trade union SAC, which gets involved in homophobic campaigns as well as cultural front efforts for the explicit defense of western values (!). To the other side lean many superficially "independent" leftist celebrities, including Artur Lundkvist, who is active in the Soviet-animated parts of the international peace movement, works hard to defend both the Soviet Union and China (and also for example the Soviet invasion crushing the Hungarian revolt) and accepts the Lenin prize in 1958. (With this he becomes one of the major public proponents of the so-called "third position", allegedly independent of the two sides of the cold war!) One small point of light towards the end of the decade is that the anarchosyndicalist youth organisation again launches a journal with a radical debate and a lot of creative material, *Zenit*, in 1957.

Involved authors include Svante Foerster, Björn S Nordenborg from Metamorfo, Annakarin Svedberg and Birgitta Stenberg.

Nonsense

In 1957, poet Bertil Pettersson and humorist Lasse O'Månsson begin their radio show "Blå tummen", characterised by low-key nonsense, black humour, cutups.

In an equally nonsensical and experimental but often far more provocative vein of humour, the architecture students in Stockholm produce their journal *Blandaren*, sometimes really good, but also imprinting the association between nonsense and harmless student jokes in the public. Among the founders and early contributors are artists Hans Nordenström, Pontus Hultén (later art bureaucrat) and PO Ultvedt. Ultvedt already is building nonsensical machines and collaborating with Jean Tinguely who does the same in France.

There is also a much more popular, and much more noisy, commercial "crazy" humour which rests on slapstick and simple puns but occasionally spill over into potentially poetically working nonsense, in some of the revues, films and songs of Povel Ramel and his circle, and of Nils Poppe.

Additional literature of the 50s

Oddball Sture Lönnerstrand, who earlier had published some poetry of a distinct Nazi taste, makes an equally tasteless but far more poetic achievement with his mad psychoanalytic-primaltherapy incestuous-bloodmystic poem *Den oupphörliga, incestuala blodssymfonin* 1951, before he becomes an unremarkable sciencefiction writer (and a collaborator in *Odyssé*). Also the recently drowned Gösta Oswald's posthumous *Rondo* and *Christinalengender* show a certain poetically fruitful madness.

Erik Lindegren rarely publishes poems, and *Vinteroffer* (Winter sacrifice, 1954) is his last collection. Folke Dahlberg continues his eremitic nature-romantic writing with his forest book *Tiveden* (1952), *Lustvandrare utan trädgård* (1953) and *Roende* (1956). From Artur Lundkvist's rapid flow of books none are very interesting, but perhaps *Liv som gräs* (1954) could be mentioned. Also Maria Wine publishes a number of poetry collections, occasionally somewhat interesting.

Bertil Schütt has turned into a own brand of poetically fruitful absurdist tall-story teller. His shortstories *Tio dyrkar* (Ten picklocks, 1952) are beautiful, and *Bottennapp* (1958) and *Dödssynderna* (1959) are not bad.

Peter Weiss' writings turns increasingly boring, and mostly he is involved in avantgarde film, but his paintings remain interesting and he makes remarkable collages as illustrations to the first two volumes of an edition of *Tusen och en Natt* (Arabian nights) 1958.

Additional elsewhere in the 50s (film etc)

The French surrealists indulge in cineasm this decade. In this they inevitably acknowledge some contemporary and some historical Swedish filmmakers. In the classic 1951 "Voyez... Ne voyez pas..." declaration, Benjamin Christensen and Mauritz Stiller are on the recommended side. Kyrö's groundbreaking (and very inclusive) *Le Surréalisme au Cinéma* 1953 discusses them further, but also Viking Eggeling, Arne Sucksdorff for his poetic documentaries, Greta Garbo, the imbecile comedy of "Casinogänget" (he did not hit head on there), and the three contemporary directors, Ingmar Bergman, Alf Sjöberg and Arne Mattsson. [I have cited this from a later edition of the book and cannot say which of these may not have been present in the 1953 edition.] Alf Sjöberg's "Fröken Julie" (1951) is indeed a classic of poetic drama, as is Ingmar Bergman's "Det sjunde inseglet" (1957).

Peter Weiss becomes active as an avantgarde filmmaker. From a series of interesting experiments called "Studier" the most significant is "Hallucinationer" (Hallucinations, 1952) focusing on falling-asleep hypnagogies. He also makes a deliric Faust story with his "Ateljéinteriör" (Studio interior, 1956) and finally a full-length poetic exploration of the city in "Hägringen" (The mirage, 1959). During this activity he writes a monograph on *Avantgardefilm* 1956.

Stockholm's museum of modern art, Moderna Museet, opens in 1956, and the first exhibition is *Guernica*. In 1958 the museum remembers Viking Eggeling. Then in 1959 there is a Matta exhibition.

Of the modernist composers, Bo Nilsson emerge as the one which seems most experimental in a direction relevant to surrealism. He also makes compositions based on texts by Fahlström and by dead 40s-ism icon Oswald.

A remarkable loner emerging in the weekly magazines of the 50s is Swiss-born cartoonist Hans Arnold, who creates a personal universe of horror themes in a cute style.

Additional in the journals and books of the 50s

A new literary journal, typically named after the decade, *Femtital*, becomes shortlived and not very interesting, but it includes Ingemar Gustafsson in its first volume 1951, poetry by Alfons and translations of Ferry and Jarry in its second.

A more interesting journal with regular contribution by Söderberg and a serious interest for international poetry in general is *Upptakt*, which includes poems by Söderberg, Reuterswärd and Gustafsson and translates Greek surrealists Elytis and Engonopoulos in its first volume 1955, an essay on Breton by Söderberg, plus translations of Paz, Celan and Oquendo de Amat 1956, really good poetry by Burbeck, and also Reuterswärd, and Söderberg surveys of contemporary French and Spanish poetry, translations of Lambert and Bonnefoy 1957.

A new journal which becomes longlived concentrating on poetry is instead *Lyrikvännen*. 1955 Söderberg and the Swedish 30s poems of Munch-Petersen, 1956 interesting poetry by Söderberg, Gustafsson, Dahlberg and Bertil Pettersson, 1957 Dahlberg, Reuterswärd, Bjerke-Petersen, presentations of Rimbaud and Majakovskij, 1958 more Rimbaud, plus Michaux and others, 1959 still Reuterswärd and Gustafsson.

In *Konstrevy* presentation of Calder (1951), interesting essays by Knutson, Fahlström, Jorn and Laaban, and much about Dalí (1952), about Imaginisterna and the Nemes pupils in Göteborg (1953), von Holten about Lam and Nash about Pedersen (1955), Fahlström plus old Ernst collages with some of Wyss's psychoanalytical interpretations (1956), about Riopelle, Arnal and Matta (1959). In *Paletten* about Fahlström and Nya Valand plus a presentation of Wols 1958, von Holten about Grate 1959.

In *BLM* Paz is presented 1958. In *Ord och Bild* Fahlström presents Olivier Herdiès 1959.

Wine and Lundkvist makes an anthology of love poetry, *Lågor för Eros* 1955. The weird Marxist critic, Soviet spy and pornographer Per Meurling from Lund's *Clarté* of the 30s writes a Sade biography.

Lambert publishes French translations of Ekelöf *Tard sur la terre* and Lindegren *L'Homme sans voie* 1952. In 1956 he makes a French anthology of *La poésie suédoise contemporaine* (including Lundkvist, Martinson, Ekelöf, Lindegren).

Book translations: Gracq: *Vid Syrterns stränder* and Prévert: *Ord* 1952, *Apollinaire i urval* 1952, a couple of books by Herbert Read, Dylan Thomas and Henri Michaux.

In Denmark

Steen Colding stands out as the pole of surrealist continuity in Denmark, active in the various Cobra and surrounding initiatives in the early 50s, but also in for example *L'Age du Cinema* close to the French surrealist group, and then very much in Phases. Still, it is Uffe Harder who is the first official Phases correspondent, but his poems are far less interesting from the surrealist viewpoint as far as I have seen, just like those of Ole Sarvig from Cobra, and those of Jørgen Sonne, etc etc. But of course also Wilhelm Freddie remains active.

In Iceland

Svavar Gudnason is the first Icelandic artist to make a connection with surrealism, if only through his participation in Cobra, but he is living in København at the time.

In Finland

Kalevi Seilonen publishes more or less surrealist poems in *Proosarunoja* 1959. Lars von Haartman writes several surrealist poems 1954 [unpublished as far as I know]. Two new Finnish painters which are later said to be surrealists are Juhani Linnovaara and Seppo Arina.

50:s discussion: Suffocation

In a sense, the 50s represent the death of surrealism in Sweden after a short boost 1948-50, with some surviving activity extending for a few years, mostly due to the activities centered around Hultén in Malmö. The activities in Stockholm silently falls asleep as Kriland and Fahlström turns elsewhere, Söderberg prefers Paris, and Laaban, yes what is he doing really?

Lundkvist is clearly a father figure of Swedish surrealism, raising the urge for competition as well as disgust in many newcomers. In Lindegren it has been suggested that his distance from surrealism was kept up primarily because he couldn't stand Lundkvist after their initial collaboration, and even found Breton far too Lundkvist-like. In Söderberg, the relationship is

necessarily more complex since Lundkvist actually had a relationship with his mother Irmgard Pingel when Söderberg was a child.

But Sweden is not particularly bad off in an international perspective. After the explosion of surrealist groupings in the late 40s, most die off or turn elsewhere rather quick, and all of the developments seeming alive are more or less just consequences of the late 40s blooming.

1960-69 A resurrection, but of what?

International

It is quite obvious that there is no indigenous surrealist movement in the nordic countries at this time, only local representatives of international layers within that movement. Except for one or two poets, a growing number of more or less surrealist-inspired painters, and if not counting the activities of the Bauhaus-situationniste, then a list of international surrealist initiatives which somehow involves a minor representation from Sweden gives a full picture of the consciously surrealist activity in the country. On the other hand there are a lot of other developments, in popular culture, politics and even literature and art which may be relevantly parasurrealist or objectively surrealist.

As André Breton dies 1966, the trio of Legrand, Pierre and Schuster step forward as his successors in leading the French surrealist group. von Holten is particularly close to this group, and discussions that have been kept up for some time about arranging an international surrealist exhibition in Sweden are continued.

In 1968, the French surrealist group react against the plans to have an international surrealist exhibition at the state-owned Moderna Museet, which feels like mingling with the king, the Nobel prize and what not. It is decided that von Holten and José Pierre shall arrange an exhibition of surrealist painting which is explicitly *not* an international surrealist exhibition, with aid but not active involvement by the rest of the group, thus apparently escaping all moral obligations.

Finally in 1969, the Paris surrealist group cracks from internal contradictions and dissolves itself; its leading circle makes a coup and proclaims historical surrealism dead, banning the word from usage about contemporary activities. von Holten is close to this group, and the preparations for an exhibition in Stockholm are intensified.

More details on the international scale

As a result of a major collaboration between Phases and the “official” surrealist movement, the nordic contribution to the International Surrealist Exhibition in New York 1960 is larger than usual: Freddie and Svanberg as surrealists and Fahlström and Reuterswärd as belonging to Phases. The latter but not the former also sign the tract “We don’t EAR it that way” protesting against Duchamp’s inclusion of a religious painting by Dalí in the exhibition.

The same year, the French surrealist group collect as many “hommes de lettres” signatures as they can to a declaration against Jean Cocteau, “Qui après Paul Fort?”; of the 300 signatures 3 are Swedish: Lundkvist, Reuterswärd, Söderberg.

In 1961 there is a small International surrealist exhibition in Milano, including Svanberg. In the 1965 International surrealist exhibition in Paris, only von Holten and Svanberg participate from Sweden, no one from Denmark.

Bédouin, J-L: *Vingt ans du Surréalisme 1939-1959*, Paris 1961 in its survey of international surrealism mentions Svanberg and Imaginisterna. A French surrealism dictionary, by Pierre 1966 clearly concentrating on painting only, presents Swedish surrealism under four entries: Fahlström, Halmstadgruppen, von Holten, Svanberg; surely with von Holten providing the information.

Also in 1961, Svanberg exhibits in Paris with contributions from nine members of the French surrealist group to the catalog.

Swedish visitors to Paris, beside resident Söderberg and parttime resident von Holten, include Peter Weiss, meeting the surrealist group 1962 and losing all faith in surrealism, CO Hultén again the same year; he has visited Hauterives several times over the years but this time he brings a film camera and makes a Palais Ideal film; von Holten's friend the critic, novelist and soon Lautréamont translator Carl-Henning Wijkmark, Reuterswärd, and of course Svanberg. In 1964 Svanberg visits the Paris surrealists for the first time, in the company of von Holten and

Söderberg, receiving a grand homage. 1968 he is there a second time, this time with Helmer Lång as his interpreter.

von Holten's Moreau monograph is published 1960, prefaced by Breton, and 1962 he publishes his first collection of newspaper art criticism focusing on surrealism, *Imaginär verklighet*.

Wifredo Lam marries Swedish artist Lou Laurin 1960.

Eric Grate raises some attention, including among the surrealists, exhibiting in Paris 1963.

In 1967 the surrealists and a lot of other European artists are invited by Lam to a huge cultural festival in Havana, and a large mostly French group heed the call (and are mostly gratefully positive to the Castroist regime); Swedes coming along are Söderberg, Özkök, Weiss & Palmstierna (and Laurin is already there). In an issue of their journal *L'Archibras* the same year, the French surrealists give grades to Weiss' Marat-Sade play.

José Pierre is the one in leading trioka who regards it as his task to continue Breton's unique eye of discovering, appreciating and commenting artists. In this capacity he gives Reuterswärd place in the French surrealist journal *L'Archibras*, and as an appendix to an interview (during the big crisis when the group was breaking up) he gives a very long list of contemporary surrealist artists, paraphrasing Breton's formula for pointing out predecessors in the first surrealist manifesto: "NN est surréaliste dans le XX". However Pierre's characterisations lack all imagination, and his selection is quite indiscriminate. From Sweden he includes Fahlström, Reuterswärd, Svanberg and Ultvedt.

60s poets: Norén, Nordenborg

At the same time circa 1961, Lasse Söderberg more or less loses his interest in surrealism (his poetry becomes accordingly less interesting), Öyvind Fahlström moves to USA (he returns to Sweden in the summers, but his writings mostly investigate other types of questions than surrealist concerns), and Ingemar Gustafson converts to Catholicism (and changes his name to Leckius). Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd puts out his *På samma gång* (Simultaneously) in 1961, and in 1964 his last poetry collection, little more than a concretist joke, *Prix Nobel*. Laaban publishes nothing. The position as Sweden's only surrealist poet is open.

The one grabbing it is an occasional mental patient writing a manic poetry fluctuating between serene beauty and a collaged frenzy which resembles that of Fahlström but more deeply aggressive and anxiety-ridden, Lars Norén. His first books are partly seemingly conventional, *Syrener, snö* (1963) and *De verbala resterna av en bildprakt som förgår* (1964), then become distinctly stranger in *Inledning till Schizz* and *Inledning no:2 till Schizz* (Introduction to Sketch, and Second introduction to Sketch, both 1965) and blossom in the paranoid-sadist collage-automatist *Encyklopedi* (Encyclopedia, 1966, illustrated by von Holten) and *Stupor* (Stupor, 1968). In 1968, he tries a novel, *Salome, Sfinxerna* (Salome, the sphinxes).

One more remarkable surrealist book appears this decade, more isolated. Björn Svante Nordenborg; *Journal över resa utan dykardräkt* (Journal from a journey without diving suit, 1966) is a small volume of a lauréatian journey by the former Metamorfos poet, in a limited edition and appearing almost out of the blue (but he had given an introduction to surrealism in 1963 in the anarchosyndicalist *Zenit*).

Eivor Burbeck publishes poems dedicated to Arp in *Lyriskvänner* 1963. Fahlström makes a few poems and paintings around 1960 reminiscent of his surrealist inspiration, but then returns to other types of preoccupations.

All the 60s artists

Svanberg is the favorite of the French group, but Grate returns, and a new generation stands in the hallway. The latter often have some affinities with some sense of "pop surrealism", as a current in international surrealism, a perhaps unnecessary term to collect the different ways of more or less playfully adjoining very discrete elements with bright colours and strong contours, of which some are more of naïve-art-brut-styled and some are more realist-objectfetishism-styled.

For Eric Grate, after continuing his mildly imaginative 50s sculpture and making a large number of statues for Swedish cities of them (and exhibiting them in Paris 1963 with a catalog introduction by von Holten), he take a deep dive in suggestive forms for a short period 1966-67 returning to Paris, eating mostly fish and mostly sculpting forms based on the fish bones. In 1968, a small book appears about them, *Från Esox trädgårdar* (From the gardens of Esox), with text by von Holten.

Svanberg is mostly making collages, crowding elements of his personal sense of beauty against painted backgrounds. This now also includes images of porn models, and according to the legend it was Benayoun in Paris who suggested to him the usefulness of *Playboy* magazine for collage. A big book about his graphic art appears in 1967, and there are many exhibitions. Svanberg is becoming a very widely popular artist with the general Swedish public, and simultaneously the art world turns against him, many of them largely because his worship of woman and his pornographic elements are considered antifeminist – but also because he is a difficult egocentric and because he signs large numbers of posters which are often then sold as original graphics.

Also Endre Nemes turns to collage, and collage painting, and in the process strongly renews his surrealist inspiration, partly coming close to the so-called “pop surrealism” which many painters in the French group and in Phases were practising at the time, but usually with a particular baroque-ness of his own in colours and overloadedness. Both Svanberg and Nemes start collaborating with leading Swedish textile artist Edna Martin, who makes gobelains of their works.

Sven-Erik Johansson keeps developing his crowded Bosch spaces. CO Hultén seems stuck in his less imaginative cobraist abstract style, but recurringly with a sense of overflow and bird presence; a 1964 solo exhibition is entirely dedicated to the theme of Facteur Cheval. Then in 1968 his paintings are suddenly invaded by rhinoceroses and monolithic globes, signifying a blossoming interest in other parts of the world.

Others seem further from surrealism: either nothing interesting or nothing at all is seen from Kriland, Åhlberg, Österlin, Weiss, Uno Svensson [for some of them, surely due to inavailability of information]. Gadö continues but largely away from both company and the public eye.

Well, Erik Olson of Halmstadgruppen still claims to be a surrealist, but most people don't believe him, and he usually says that catholicism is surrealist too...

von Holten makes drawings/collages, sometimes as book illustrations. He also exhibits in 1966 with Ulf Rahmberg at a commercial gallery in Stockholm, with catalog texts by Norén and Laaban.

One of the old geometrical-concretist painters, Karl-Axel Pehrson, suddenly turns to imaginative art as he takes his entomologist hobby more seriously and starts inventing and sculpting various amazingly-shaped beetles.

Among the explicitly political artists, Ulf Rahmberg and Lars Hillersberg share a root in letting a raging-erotic automatism parallel their political anger. Lena Svedberg is more of a master of grotesque satire, and Marie-Louise DeGeer-Bergensträhle make disgusting-naïve-fetishistic interiors. They all collaborate on the satire journal *Puss*. Gösta Gierow is pictorially in the vicinities, with glimpses of poetic furor as well as automatically-based morphological fantasies, but not involved in the explicitly political connections.

Several other artist display a renewed interest in mediumistic aspects, Thea Ekström and sometimes Albert Johansson in an art-brut-like ritualistic way, Zoltan von Boer in a totally

different way in his uncanny medieval-style portraits. Bert-Johnny Nilsson is perhaps in similar domains as the latter, but with more varied motives, usually haunted interiors. Perhaps we can regard as unwanted nightmare visions Roj Friberg's uniquely uncanny photorealistic apocalyptic pictures, always with a strong sense of desolation regardless of whether monsters, corpses or morphological distortions inhabit them.

Gerald Steffe is popsurrealist in the art-brut-like style, with iconic animals and faces in bright colours, very strong contours. Steffe together with von Boer and Gierow make up the Ibis group. The Ibis group exhibit in København 1967, and they meet there the surrealist-oriented artist group Passepartout, which has a both a gallery and a journal of their own. When the Danish group cease their activities in 1970, the members join the Ibis group instead.

But still others are (rightly or wrongly) included in the recurring listings of "young surrealist artists" in the journals this decade; most of them with some sense of "pop surrealism", often mere juxtaposition of stylized-realistic elements. Christer von Rosen, Mats Loosne, Jan Manker, Mats Ergon, Hans Hamngren and Bert Berg are mentioned. The more established artist Olle Kåks, with his playful combinations of everyday-realist elements and morphological contorsions, is not but could well have been. The same is true for KG Nilsson, known for his map morphologies, Ulf Gripenholm with threatening landscapes and doll portraits, Sverker Broström, whose paintings are overloaded with art-history references but nevertheless leading to strange atmospherics, and several others. Draughtsman, assemblagist etc Roland Klang was acknowledged by José Pierre. And Hans Arnold remained active primarily as a magazine and book illustrator, and the weird atmosphere in many of his pictures are often among the earliest experiences of explicitly surrealist emotions in a generation of swedes in the 60s and 70s.

From 1963, two shopwindows in the old town of Stockholm "Galleri Två Fönster" function as a gallery focusing on these new surrealist-oriented painters, run by Jan Hannerz and Ulf Rahmberg.

An indication of how important these surrealising efforts were on the Swedish art scene, if anyone is interested in that, is that in the (surrealist-themed) biennial in Sao Paolo 1965 Sweden is represented by Svanberg, Grate and Rahmberg, and that when the Swedish authorities exhibit contemporary Swedish art in Paris 1968, among only five representatives, Svanberg is included, along with the probably-not-surrealists-anymore Reuterswärd and Fahlström and the surrealist-if-José-Pierre-decides Ultvedt.

The real split in the international

The Danish and Swedish post-cobra painters in the Situationist International, led by Jorn's brother Jørgen Nash, put up headquarters at the big farm or small village Drakabygget near Örkelljunga in Skåne 1960. The farm is renovated with Jorn's money allegedly to house his "Institute for comparative vandalism" project, by Nash and his Swedish wife Katarina Lindell. Nash and Lindell participate in the SI conference in London this year, while Jorn silently retires from the movement.

The Situationist International conference the following year is held in Göteborg. Swedes involved are Ansgar Elde, Staffan Larsson, Lindell, Nash, and Hardy Strid from Nya Valand. Serious contradictions surface between the mostly French social theorists and the mostly nordic and German artists in the movement.

The first issue of the "Bauhaus Situationniste" journal *Drakabygget* appears 1962 (named after their home village, the name of which means Dragon building), mostly including polemics, including the manifesto "Nicht hinauslehnen!" against the central committee of the Situationist International; beside Jorn, Nash and Lindell, we see here for the first time the English-Danish situationist artist Gordon Fazakerley. The brawl splits the movement in two halves; "Bauhaus Situationniste" forms the "Second Situationist International" together with the German artists of the "Spur" group and the eclectic international network around Paris-edited *Situationist Times*. The only major personality in the splinter group is Jorn (or at least the only capable theorist and the only one with a solid surrealist past), who already officially retired, and who appears in *Sitationist Times* (edited by Jacqueline de Jong, his then

girlfriend) only under pseudonym, wanting to give an impression of being above the petty brawls. In the art world, the new group is launched with the exhibition “Seven rebels” in Odense and Göteborg.

The only nordic person (and the only artist) remaining in the Situationist International is Dane J V Martin, who starts the journal *Situationistisk Revolution*. The new Scandinavian section of the Situationist International (which consists of Martin plus briefly Peter Laugesen) hosts a situationist exhibition in København “Destruktion af RSG-6” 1963. In 1965, in connection with organisation of a resistance camp against a NATO mobilisation, Martin’s house is blown up, accidentally by an overzealous activist visitor according to the courts, intentionally by a police provocateur according to Martin.

Drakabygget #2-3 appears 1963, about the forming of the Second Situationist International. A couple of people turn up who become more or less famous as founder Bauhaus-situationnister but who were never in the Situationist International; especially the the Danish art dilettant and filmmaker Jens-Jørgen Thorsen but also the Swedish painter Carl Magnus. The issue also contains a lot of material about the prosecution in Germany of their German comrades the “Spur” group and the renewed seizing by the police of Freddie’s “obscene” 30s works – the Bauhaus-situationnister almost seem to draw the naïve conclusion that artists are the historical avantgarde, that it is modern art that is the major threat against cold war capitalism, and thus the defense of the freedom of expression which is the most radical and most important political strategy.

At this point, it is clear that Jorn’s institute plans will not reach fruition, and the situationist farm at Drakabygget is transformed into an open artists’ commune-workshop where most of the artists connected with the Bauhaus-Situationnister come to stay for shorter or longer periods.

In 1964 the group hosts a big pacifist conference on Ven island, in which among others famous police novel writers Sjöwall & Wahlöö participate. They also have a situationist film festival in Örkelljunga, contribute with a scandal to a churchly art conference in Uppsala, and construct a major massmedia hype with mystifications surrounding the decapitating of the famous mermaid statue of København. *Drakabygget #4-5* appear in 1965, including the manifesto for situationist collective painting “Co-Ritus” and materials about the little mermaid affair.

The Situationist pamphlet from the upbuilding of the 68 situation in France, “On the misery of student life” in 1966, is immediately translated and distributed in several languages including Swedish and Danish. The Strassburg affair from which this pamphlet comes is one of the major events in the academic environment leading up to the student side of the may 68 revolt. The text, like Vaneigem’s and Debord’s books which appear in 1967, clearly points out the absolutely radical ambitions of the situationists, and the fact that the most important arena for the revolt is everyday life and its forms. In a certain sense, the nordic Bauhaus situationists are in line with this in their insistence on the fundamental importance of artistic creativity, especially when spontaneous and collective, but on the other hand, they clearly deviate from it when turning away from urbanity, theoretical critique, suspiciousness against the function of art in modern society, and direct confrontations in general; thus becoming pioneers of the “green wave” and “alternative culture” rather than active forces in the events leading up the occupations, riots and strikes of ’68.

The Swedish group mostly involved at the time in theoretical critique and practical agitation of this absolutely radical and everydaylife based revolt, is probably the anarchist group Libertad in Göteborg, with connections to the minuscule scandinavian SI section.

Konstrevy and Paletten turn to surrealist art

If there is a strong element of reborn surrealist elements in Swedish painting this decade, it is even more so with the major art journals. In 1960 *Konstrevy* gets a new editor Karin Bergquist-Lindegren (married to Erik Lindegren) and opens up more to material of surrealist interest; while *Paletten* under Folke Edwards is equally surrealism-friendly. Both journals make sudden turns away from surrealism in 1968, *Konstrevy* suddenly becomes very rigidly marxist and more hostile towards surrealism; *Paletten* instead turns towards information theory and psychedelics.

Paletten has a special issue of more or less contemporary surrealism, “Metamorphoses of Surrealism” in 1960 where Dotremont, Jaguer, Svanberg, Edwards himself and Gustafsson write about Imaginisterna or Cobra, and Laaban and Nemes write about surrealism in general, together with a very rich material of pictures. *Konstrevy* has a more retrospective surrealism issue in 1967, which for the first time translates Breton’s 1924 manifesto and several other fundamental theoretical texts. It also includes a Swedish surrealist historiography by Mörner, and there is a surrealism enquiry, where most respondents are just joking; Norén and Reuterswärd supposedly from an informed staintpoint, but you can’t tell with the artists (soon to become leftist musicians) Tore Berger & Leif Nylén, and Olle Kåks is surprisingly positive.

There are also a couple of overviews of “young surrealist painting” in the journals. First Åke Daun (later ethnologist) presents the Surrealist shopwindow gallery in Gamla Stan in *Konstrevy* 1964, listing quite a number of supposed surrealist artists. Next year, music journalist Ludvig Rasmusson gives an longer overview of “young

surrealist painting” in Sweden (taking up von Holten, Rahmberg, Steffe, von Boer, Ekström, Albert Johansson). von Holten angrily replies that his use of the word surrealism is vague and eclectic [nevertheless, the selection of painters is only slightly more inclusive than von Holten’s own]. 1967 it is *Paletten’s* turn to have a similar presentation, by the editor Folke Edwards, focusing on the politically radical Hillersberg and Rahmberg, but also Friberg, A Johansson, Bert-Johnny Nilsson, Hans Hamngren and Bert Berg. His text is called “De otäckä” (The nasties), which next year becomes the name of an exhibition in Lund, collecting most of these artists plus others in the vicinities, including Uno Svensson.

And there is a very strong element and occasionally even dominance of that which is interesting from a surrealist viewpoint in the general material of both journals.

Konstrevy reviews the 1959 international surrealist exhibitions, and writes about Oppenheim, Michaux, Wols and others 1960, Fahlström presents Schröder-Sonnenstern and writes about signs, a Leif Sjöberg writes about utopian architecture including Kiesler, and also Richter, Eggeling, Duchamp and Rauschenberg are presented, as well as Albert Johansson 1961. Throughout 1962 Ulf Linde presents his translations of Duchamp’s notes for the big glass; the journal also includes Laaban on Nemes, plus Gironella, Lambert, Svanberg, Lambert Werner and others. 1963 much material about the Swedish-Danish Bauhaus-Situationniste artists, plus Jouffroy about Lam, von Holten about d’Orgeix, and presentations of new more or less surrealist-oriented painters Christer von Rosen, Ulf Rahmberg and Lars Hillersberg; 1964 Sun Axelsson presents Baj, von Holten writes about the Bomarzo park, beside the presentation of the shopwindow gallery, and 1965 Ludvig Rasmusson’s big article and von Holten’s polemic. 1966 perhaps nothing particularly worth mentioning, and then 1967 the special surrealism issue, plus Hans Johansson presenting Uno Svensson, and in 1968 before the shift Norén about Roj Friberg, Hillersberg, Manker, von Holten about Bellmer, Delvaux.

In *Paletten*; 1961 about Hultén, Dubuffet, Pollock, Ernst, Moore, Duchamp and Tzara, 1962 lots of material about Danish surrealists, plus Arp, Schwitters, Bertil Lundberg and Strindberg’s old experiments with chance in art; 1963 Sven-Erik Johansson, Jorn and Kiesler; 1964, a lot of Bauhaus-Situationniste including Constant’s New Babylon and Thorsen about Cobra, plus a presentation of Roj Friberg and a text by Svanberg; 1965 more about Svanberg and Bauhaus-Situationniste, then less remarkable material until Folke Edwards big presentation of Swedish surrealist art in 1967.

1968 and after: almost nothing. Lasse Söderberg reports from the 1967 Havana cultural festival in *Konstrevy* 1968, and in 1969 there is some polemics connected with a big exhibition at Moderna Museet placing surrealism (classical surrealism) and Dada in relation with contemporary social revolt, under the name “Poesin måste göras av alla! Förändra världen!”; here someone called Anders Lönnbro well defends surrealism.

1968

Throughout the 60s runs a process of radicalisation, of protest and of curiousness towards other aspects of life than those satisfied by consumerism. The reawakening of radical political movements is just as much a sign of this as the renewed interest in surrealism is. Much political-economic-social reform improves the life conditions, social welfare and daytoday democracy (a small but significant example is when authoritarian pronouns are abandoned in the “you-reform”!). The particular events marking the ’68 revolt in Sweden are not very interesting; merely representing the culmination of that movement of general radicalisation, of noisy student protest and perhaps of popular participation in confrontative demonstrations through the protests against the Vietnam war. At the same time it represents in broad terms a boost to the currents of psychedelia and new age, the beginning of a period of important labor strikes, a new beginning for the anarchist movement, and the starting point of new social movements such as the women’s movement and the environmental movement, and also the antipsychiatry movement and the radical pedagogics movement, as well as the pacifist movement and a broad flora of competing communist sects of all tastes. It is also a starting point for the commencing merging of many such currents into a broad sense of “alternative culture” as well as their effective integration into institutions.

In 1968, the Duchamp scholar and later art bureaucrat Ulf Linde, very much involved in *Konstrevy’s* surrealist issue and allegedly personally acquainted with Breton, decides he has to

counter the vulgarities among his newbred marxist students with a solid lecture series about surrealism.

Perhaps a surrealist faction of the '68 movement is the artists around the journal *Puss*, which combines weird satire, frantic dystopic visions, fairly simple political subversion and black humour. Editors are Carl-Johan DeGeer and others, while we have already mentioned as artists Lars Hillersberg, Ulf Rahmberg, Lena Svedberg (soon dead) and Marie-Louise DeGeer-Bergenstråhle.

A lot of other artists are hyperradical while working hard to be outsiders, and more or less freaking out in paranoid fantasies, psychedelics and/or mad performances, but usually without a trustworthy imaginative element to it. Öyvind Fahlström is the leading one, but there is also Kjartan Slettemark, Carsten Regild, Rolf Börjlind, Åke Karlung, Elis Eriksson, Sture Johannesson and many others, all primarily interested in getting their playful theatrics, rants and propaganda recognised as art.

But the "Libertad" anarchist group in Göteborg (Bengt Ericsson, Ingemar Johansson), is perhaps the most advanced in the country in terms of modernist radical politics (in the sense of integrative and everyday-life-based as well as confrontative and analytical, in line with the old surrealist efforts and the recent situationist and autonomist ones). They publish *SKIT-tidningen* (1968) and *Röda skrattet* (1970), write about the situationists in *Brand*, and compile the anthology *Anarkisterna i klasskampen*, spanning from classical anarchism to contemporary situationists, the british modernist-anarchist-situationist-surrealist group *Heatwave* and the modernist-radical current in general. They also take contact with the Situationist International, but hesitate to enroll – Ericsson officially appears as a member of the scandinavian SI section in the Danish journal *Situationistisk Revolution*, but Johansson never does. A sister group starts in Stockholm in 1969 under the name "Gyllene flottan" (the golden fleet).

Absurdists, neodadas, pataphysics, concretists and performance

In the early 60s, a circle of students in Stockholm share a deep interest in surrealism (with Torsten Ekbom, Magnus Hedlund, Claes Hylinger, Olle Orrje). The mentioned will all soon become writers, but all in a humoristic vein quite different from surrealism, but with occasional sparks of inspiration across the ditch.

Also as a long shot from surrealism, Öyvind Fahlström's experimental poetry from the 50s becomes the guiding light of a young generation of "concretist" poets, mostly busy with mere formal problems and superficial scandal, but also working hard to develop multimedia art combining poetry with electronic music, avantgarde film, neo-Dada performance, game theory, popular literature, and occasionally dance and theatre.

Fahlström's concretist poetry from the 50s is published in 1966 under the title *Bord* (the title is the Swedish word for Tables, but in Fahlström's vocabulary it means something completely different) and around the time he also makes new permutations of his old writings, but he does not write new poems. His writings deal with different things. Rather important is his radio poem (text/sound composition) "Fåglar i Sverige" (Birds of Sweden) from 1963, a very suggestive vertigo of semantic investigations including a new language based on onomatopoeical transcriptions of bird sounds and its philosophical consequences. In the same vein is his book *Minneslista (till Dr Schweitzers sista uppdrag)* 1964. Then he turns to political themes, making the radio play series "Den helige Torsten Nilsson" and a series of theatre plays about American and Swedish political conspirations and riots, funny and provokingly speculative, but of very little real political or poetic value. At the same time he has left conventional painting for variable "game paintings" usually consisting of large numbers of movable elements representing celebrities or politically fetischist objects, with magnets attached, or with heavy bases as ordinary boardgame pawns, or floating around in aquaria. This very much still involves comics imagery. His film "Du gamla, du fria" is a classic and very funny story about 60s activism, including the *Puss* circle. He also writes some political texts, which are mostly psychedelically naïve, but it is rather remarkable that he could publish something like his "Det extatiska samhället" in the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, where he suggests that with careful social engineering Sweden could become an ecstatic society with sex and psychedelic drugs for all. Of course this is regressive, but a regression from what?

Within the concretist circles in Stockholm, the journal *Rondo*, and then *Gorilla*, are published, with some interesting material. A collective novel is published 1964 under the pseudonym Peter Husberg, *Bröderna Casey*. One of its authors is Torsten Ekbohm, who also makes the rather remarkable novel about a machine writing crime novels, *Signalspelet* 1965. Of the other concretist writers, perhaps poets/musicians Bengt-Emil Johnson and Åke Hodell are the ones to carry their experiments beyond mere formalities. (While for example Mats G Bengtsson brings his pure formalities into objective madness occasionally paralleling surrealism in his obsession with Lewis Carroll, modern physics etc.) Beside the electronic music scene Fylkingen, Moderna Museet becomes the center for concretist and neodada activities in Stockholm, including in 1964 an exhibition of image-poems and a series of “New-York-evenings” with performances by Fahlström, Rauschenberg, Cage and others.

PO Ultvedt, the *Blandaren* machine artist, keeps on in a joking and playful manner, which appeals to at least José Pierre in France. Ultvedt collaborates with Elis Eriksson, an ex-sculptor wanting to become an outsider artist, who makes strange mixed-media-works and mythologises his everyday life. Erik Dietman, living in Paris, in another notorious multimediajoker artist without too serious content.

Again, Artur Lundkvist stands up for good old modernist values and launches a major attack on concretism. Of course he is a conservative old fart, but none of the concretists can give a satisfactory answer to his question “are these problems really important?”.

In Lund, there is more of a pure nostalgic neo-Dada current rather than concretism. Most of this is not very interesting, but Benkt-Erik Hedin occasionally writes interesting poems, and at least it makes Bengt Höglund and Hedin translate a thick book of Arp’s poetry *Fågel och slips* (1964).

Hylinger and Hedlund (and others) in Göteborg start a new literary journal *Komma* in 1966, where concretist fad for information theory gets a more philosophical side with an interest in not only structuralism but the then new current of poststructuralism, and also a more classical sense of absurdism.

For this classical sense of absurdism, Bertil Schütt keeps publishing his stories, *Den feta nöden* (1964) and his best shortstories *Inhemskt* (1967). And the first book by PC Jersild, in 1965, is a remarkable rabelaisian novel, *Calvins resa genom världen* (soon he becomes one of Sweden’s most famous and most boring novelists).

A major event is when Mikael Meschke at Marionetteatern stages a Ubu production, with lifesize puppets by internationally leading pataphysic artist Franciszka Themerson in 1964. At that time, the first Jarry book in Swedish is just published (Cavefors).

Different parts of this neodada/performance nexus are also involved in the international Fluxus movement. Notable is the local Fluxus artist Bengt af Klintberg, who is working with urban legends, and very soon also makes this his academic career in ethnology and becomes famous for it. There may be a surrealist side to the legends, but not to his attitude towards them.

Popular humour

50s lowkey nonsense radioshow “Blå Tummen” continues. Lasse O’Månsson is also the editor of the Swedish translation of *Mad Magazine*, but more importantly he makes a partly similar and partly much more adult and darker magazine on the side, *Hjälp!*, which includes genuine black humour and a lot of parasurrealist cartoons, photostories etc. In 1967, Pettersson & O’Månsson make a *Blå Tummen* book, and around the time the show is cancelled, and *Hjälp!* soon follows. But the architecture students’ *Blandaren* lives on.

Student humorists Hasse Alfredsson & Tage Danielsson start spreading their jokes to the general public in 1961, with a long series of revues, soon also films and records. This does involve a good deal of absurd theatre, partly of an obvious surrealist interest, including Alfredsson’s improvised “Lindeman” monologues, but also a very typical “feelgood”-ness or social-peace-timidity (they do claim to be politically radical and practise a lot of mostly mild political satire).

Going much further on the “feelgood” (and imbecility) side are the popular psychedelic absurdist TV-shows by Ardy Strüwer and Lasse Åberg during the second half of the decade. The nonsense humorists from the 50s continue as well (the Povel Ramel circle and Nils Poppe) but the nonsense genre is somehow crowned by the singer Thore Skogman, whose deliric banalities are not even considered humour but simple popular music.

Of course much of what Fahlström and the concretists do is remarkably similar to all this popular humour, but their works are considered art and therefore confined to a more narrow cultural audience.

Music

Everybody listens to jazz in Sweden too, a lot of people see a particular local nature romantic jazz current in the softly experimental folk jazz of Jan Johansson and Lars Gullin. But the country is also part of an international scene. In 1960 John Coltrane and Miles Davies (still together) make legendary gigs at Stockholm Konserthuset. In 1962, legendary free jazz saxophonist Albert Ayler starts his career temporarily living in Sweden. One of the inventors of

free jazz, Don Cherry, actually moves here, and also teaches the Swedish musicians musical improvisation and experimentation in a major workshop in Stockholm 1967, where most of the dynamic musicians take part, including those that had been playing with Ayler, and the odd autodidact Frippe Nordström. In 1969 English voice-improviser Phil Minton lives in Sweden and makes his first record.

But this decades also sees the advent of rock-based experimentation and psychedelia. The first two Swedish progressive rockbands, both appearing in 1967, are Baby Grandmothers and Pärson Sound, soon merging into International Harvester and getting lots of company.

Ilmar Laaban turns to music criticism. From the early 60s on, he is a regular contributor to the journal *Nutida musik*, focusing on modernist composed music. Laaban's writings deal with on one hand tracing the musical activities of poets like Michaux, on the other hand sensibly and intelligently defending modernist aesthetics in music, favoring Bo Nilsson among others.

Of course some of Fahlström's and the concretists' activities could be discussed as music as well. There is an experimental radio show "Nattövning" which among other things broadcasts Fahlström's "Fåglar i Sverige", but also several other concretist poets as well as concrete music and soundscapes in general.

Moderna Museet in the 60s

Throughout the decade, Moderna Museet actually plays an active part in art. It was a gathering point for the concretists, it receives a huge Duchamp collection as Duchamp chooses to sign Ulf Linde's meticulous copies of most of his works. Of course a number of exhibitions are interesting from a surrealist viewpoint. Klee, "motion in art" including several surrealists (1961), big Arp exhibition (1962) Strindberg (that precursor of some of surrealist automatism and objective chance practices), Pollock, Fautrier (1963), the Fahlström and others New York evenings, plus Hundertwasser (1964), Kandinsky (1965), Dada, and a huge sculpture by Niki de Saint-Phalle "She", plus Appel and Kienholz (1966), Lam, Oppenheim, Heartfield, Magritte, Hausmann, plus Danish surrealists (1967), Hasior (1968) and in 1969 Ernst plus the big surrealism&dada-68 revolt analogy "Poesin måste göras av alla! Förändra världen!" (Poetry must be made by all! Transform the world!). Very often the catalogues are edited by Karin Bergquist-Lindgren, who was also the *Konstrevy* editor.

Also Lund gets an art hall, taking initiatives regarding surrealist art, with a big Grate 1960, a big Svanberg 1962, a collective exhibition of the "young surrealist painting" under the formula "De otäcka" in 1968, and one including foreign artists too under the theme "Fantastisk figuration" (Fantastic figuration) 1969 – the latter also shown in Göteborg.

Additional poetry of the 60s

Dahlberg's last collections of poems *Segel* (1960) and *Sjöförklaring* (1962). Gustafson's *Ravin av ljus* (1960) at the time of his conversion, with some poetry left or not? Obviously his catholicism is of the guiltfully brooding type, which does not go along well with poetry. Unlike Birgitta Trotzig, with her catholic fleshy, image-rich, burningly ambiguous poetry. Peter Weiss also develops boredom and guilt in his "engaged" writing, still occasionally hitting something poetically fruitful dynamic, mostly of hypnotic pain, such as in *Skuggan av kuskens kropp* (1960, though published in German already 1952) and *Diagnos* (1963) and in his famous *Marat/Sade* play (1966). Artur Lundkvist keeps spewing forth books, now usually with a deliberate lack of composition, just a haphazard mixture of reflections and prosepoems, perhaps *Drömmar i ovädrens tid* (1962) could be mentioned for its many dream motives. Sven Alfons' *Ängelens bild* (1961) includes much beautiful poetry, including unmistakably Arpian tones.

Jazz-bohemian novels is also something new, such as those of Sture Dahlström *Änglar blåser hårt* (1961) and Svante Foerster *Klasskämpen* (1964), at least the latter with certain sense of new sensibility (and anarchist commitment).

An isolated little volume: Bo Hjalmar Fagerström: *Bidronning här är min tunga* (1967), an odd nietzschean lyrical fantasy. Odd is also naivist outsider and occasional mental patient Ingemar Willgert, mostly in his drawings but also his writings.

A few films

Some of the commercial directors of the 60s are also quite experimental or strongly atmospheric-poetic. Perhaps foremostly Mai Zetterling, with her "Älskande par" (1964) and even more the uncanny-dreamy psychoanalytic horror tale of an upperclass young man revolting against his revolting family background "Nattlek" (1966).

Arne Mattsson makes a long series of crime stories, more or less Hitchcock paraphrases but with a genuinely strange atmosphere; but before this a more typically surrealist (buñuelian-paranoid) film about a night watchman falling in love with a mannequin, "Skyldockan" or "Vaxdockan" (1962).

And Ingmar Bergman makes his violent "Jungfrukällan" 1960.

Jazz-absurdist Sture Dahlström makes an allegedly surrealist short with his “De förstenade basfiolerna” 1967 or 68.

Deaths and Beginnings of boreohistoriography

The study of local surrealism becomes interesting in academic connections; first with Kjell Espmark’s defense in 1964 of his thesis about Lundkvist including his early relationship with surrealism, *Livsdyrkaren Artur Lundkvist*. Lundkvist responds with publishing his memoirs, *Självyporträtt av en drömmare med öppna ögon* (Selfportait of a dreamer with eyes wide open) in 1966. In 1967, the entire higher seminar in art history in Lund focus on the history of Imaginisterna, producing several papers and a big retrospective exhibition. Of the students there, Hans Johansson later becomes an associate with various surrealists and a translator with a surrealist focus. Jean-Clarence Lambert writes a memoir book of his visits in Sweden, *La Paix Dorée* (1968), including a “petite anthologie de la recente poesie svedoise” with Söderberg and others. Octavio Paz had already earlier done a similar anthology of the classic Swedish modernist poets (his introduction is translated into Swedish in *BLM* 1962). Stellan Mörner had also tried to summarise the history of Swedish surrealism in *Konstrevy*’s surrealism issue 1967.

Even the presentations of current “young” surrealist painting in the art journals clearly emerge as a part of this eagerness for retrospection, as does von Holten’s collecting his newspaper criticism.

A lot of people from the first generation of surrealists die. The whole movement is of course shaken by Breton’s death in 1966; but locally in a quick row Dahlberg and Fahlström (1966) and Lindegren and Ekelöf (1968) disappear. As Ekelöf was in the Swedish Academy, who is more suitable to take his empty chair than Lundkvist, thereby confirming his old age?

And then in 1969, Ragnar von Holten’s *Surrealismen i svensk konst* (Surrealism in Swedish art) appears, painting in broad strokes a general history of surrealism in Sweden, informedly but anecdotally, focusing on the most well-known artists from Grate to Fahlström but also mentioning several others and having a sketch about the 60s to bring it up to date. Also the short chapter on precursors is inclusive, beside those already wellknown in this capacity, Swedenborg, Almqvist, Hill, Strindberg, he also importantly claims CA Ehrensverd, and less importantly Bernt Notke, Jean Louis Desprez and Hjalmar Bergman.

The most beautiful books of the 60s

But I would say, in spite of Holten’s local surrealism history and beautiful Svanberg and Grate books, that the most beautiful books of the 60s are not art books but a couple of anthologies representing a heroic quest for seeing clearly and gathering impressive bouquets of untimely or poorly known heavy, heavy poetry.

First of all, the shortstory anthology *Fantastika*, edited by Lars Bjurman and published by Cavefors 1964, with collaboration of the most advanced translators including Laaban. With drawings by Ragnar von Holten, it tells a long story of the fantastic tale in French literature, from Cyrano de Bergerac through the centuries over Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Jarry, to contemporary surrealists; Ferry, Pieyre de Mandiargues, Mansour.

Then the landmark anthology of classic surrealist poetry, *Vithåriga revolvrar* 1966, presenting a big dose of Breton, Péret, Char, Eluard and Tzara in translation by Åsa Scherdin-Lambert and Lundkvist, and with a cover by Max Walter Svanberg. The poems in Swedish guise are beautiful, often more lyrical and romantical than the originals (for good and bad).

And finally a more anonymous little anthology without pictures, ambitious layout and pedagogical information, a thin and knife-sharp book of Latin American love poems, *Vargen som föds av kärleken* 1968, dominated by surrealist poets, translated by Lundkvist and Manina Torres.

Erotica, Arcana

We all know now that the 60s is also the supposed triumph but actually only commercialisation and spectaclisation of a “sexual revolution”. Even if pioneer days pornography is far less streamlined and effectivised than that of today, and thus may seem a lot more human, sometimes more playful and occasionally even quite poetic, the area probably does not merit a big study effort.

Perhaps on the literary side the convergences are easier to point out: The literary scandal of the year 1965 is that a publishing house in Malmö begins the anthology series *Kärlek*, with pornographic shortstories by more or less

famous Swedish writers. Throughout the series, which is published until 1972, occasional lyrical or challenging stories are included. In 1967, a strange *Encyclopedia erotica* (ed Joseph Lo Duca, an obscure French art collector affiliated with the surrealists) appears in two volumes, very poorly translated from French, with obvious surrealist inspiration (and even contributions?) and a lot of involuntary absurdism due to the translation.

And in 1968, after some small editions mostly selected and tidied for conventional pornographic purposes, the first “literary” Sade edition in the country is published. At the same time, the old unpublished Sade translation of Fahlström and Kriland is rediscovered, and Ilmar Laaban and Jan Ivarsson sets out to revise the rather poor translation. An odd publisher is interested, Arcana editions, based in Paris, run by an Estonian and publishing books in Swedish; in 1968 releasing Marcuse’s *Eros och civilisation* in Jan Ivarsson’s translation and Edgar Morin’s *Tidens anda* in Laaban’s, but the publishing house is ruined before the Sade edition becomes reality.

Additional in the journals and books of the 60s

We have already seen much of this. Other things that could be mentioned are what was interesting in the concretist’s *Rondo*; poetry by Fahlström, Benkt-Erik Hedin, Anders Lidén and a very young Lars Norén, theory by Artaud and Abel, also translations of Ball.

In the journal *Zenit* (during the decade switching from an eclectic cultural-political anarchosindicalist journal to the rather boring theoretical organ of the “new left”) presentations can be found of Césaire, of Read’s philosophy, and even (by old Metamorfose poet Nordenborg) sympathetically of surrealism, all in 1963. In 1966 Söderberg writes about Lam and about Breton.

In 1962, Ekelöf makes a revised edition of his old *Fransk Surrealism* anthology from 1933, with an aggressively hostile new introduction but some new translations (poems by Tzara and Péret and the “Un chien andalou” scenario) and a special issue of *Lyrikvännen* presents additional translations. Also a remarkable isolated issue of *BLM* 1965 is full of translations of surrealist poetry (Breton, Dotremont, Duprey, Jouffroy, Lambert). Otherwise *Lyrikvännen* publishes poems by Svanberg and Lambert. Other books from that source is a thick Rimbaud anthology, *Dikter och Diamantprosa* (1965), an incomplete and unsatisfactorily translated edition of Lautréamont, and the *Vithåriga revolvrar* and latin american love poetry anthologies mentioned above. Also Söderberg translates Latin American surrealists, in Finland-Swedish journal *Horisont*.

Other great books: Arp *Fågel och slips* 1961, Picasso: *Åtrån fångad i svansen*, and for those so inclined, Ulf Linde’s speculations about Marcel Duchamp, Dalís memoirs, Trotskij’s *Litteratur och Revolution* including Breton’s & Trotskij’s 1938 manifesto, and Jarry and Sade mentioned above. Also some Nezval, Pieyre de Mandiargues, Paz, Queneau, Ionesco, Schehadé, Prévert, Read, Michaux, Cortazar; some indication of the interest in more or less surrealist literature, but even more of the growing volume of books printed in the country in general.

An obscure publishing house in Helsingborg has licensed a whole series of French art books, the “Histoire générale de la peinture” where many surrealists collaborated, beautiful and full of interesting documents, but poorly translated. In the series, José Pierre has written the volumes about Surrealism, about Cubism and about Dada & Futurism. Lambert wrote that on Abstract Painting, and Bounoure that on American painting (pre-columbian that is, of course). Less obviously of surrealist interest but still written by surrealists are the volumes on Romanticist painting (Flamand) and Renaissance painting (Legrand).

It should also be noted that two Swedish photographers are famous for their portraits of surrealist, and other, writers and artists – it is Lütfi Özkök the poet, and Christer Strömholm, who in his huge photographic production also includes successful invocations of Alvarez-Bravoan raw street poetry, Rayian female nudes, and weird objects.

In Denmark

Steen Colding and Georg Broe organise the group “Surrealisterne” in 1966 for the main purpose of regular surrealist exhibiting. Participants are Arnel, Broe, Colding, MA Hansen, Harbøe, Hillingsøe, Mickelborg, C Svennson, with more or less obvious connections with surrealism in their painting but mostly none outside painting. Even more eclectic is a vaguely surrealist artists group called the Passepartout group (Boberg, Brauge, Johansen, Madsen, Saietz, Severin, Sørensen). On his own side, Freddie remains active.

Finn Hermann compiles the surrealist anthology *Aktuel Surrealisme*, obviously in close collaboration with the French surrealist group, and in that sense an equivalent of the Swedish Spektrum anthology of the 30s. In comparison to that, Herrmann’s anthology is much larger and also broader, focusing on poetry but also including a substantial section of polemical or theoretical texts. To this date, this is the most substantial anthology of surrealism in translation in any nordic language. The poetic texts range from the 20s French classics (Aragon, Artaud, Breton, Crevel etc) over subsequent newcomers from different corners of the world (Césaire, Chazal, Heisler, Luca, Magloire St-Aude, Moro, Nougé, Paz, etc) to the most active at the time (Cabanel, Legrand, Mansour, Pieyre de Mandiargues, Schehadé, etc). The critical texts range from Breton classics to several pieces from recent journals and

from the catalog of the 1965 international surrealist exhibition L'Ecart absolu. However it is very remarkable that the international scope of the journal is the current limited outlook of the French group, with only some remarkable individuals from outside France, and strikingly, only one single contributor from the nordic countries, which is Wilhelm Freddie, represented with his entire collected lyrical production of three small poems... Hermann appears to be a openminded art critic with radical political views, but I have not been able to find much information about his personal relationship with surrealism and his other possibly surrealist activities, except that he participated in a Dutch surrealist exhibition in Velp 1967. Speaking of translations, Uffe Harder and Torbern Brostrøm translate classic French surrealist poetry into Danish in *7 franske digtere* 1962, and Jørgen Sonne translates Lautréamont in 1969.

In Iceland

A very peripheral association is that Icelandic pop artist Erro participates in a collaboration with French ex-surrealist JJ Lebel and some Italian parasurrealists on a big "collective antifascist painting" 1960. In Italy this is.

In Finland

An anthology including a good dose of French surrealist poetry in Finnish translation appears 1962, Aale Tynni's *Tulisen järjen aika*. Lars von Haartman finally publishes poems in 1961 as *Reseskildring*, which does not include his most surrealist exercises but is quite readable, with a rather pompous tone mixing plump nature observations, pathetic rhetorics, classic mythology and some daring images. Without claiming to make a hypothesis of influence, these poems can be characterised as "Erik Lindegren with dashes of Karin Boye and Harry Martinson". Other written works which have been suggested to have some congeniality with surrealism are radio drama by Pirkko Jaakola, and poems by Väinö Kirstinä, Kari Aronpuro and Marja-Liisa Vartio. Linnovaara and Arina keep on in visual arts, still without any explicit connections to surrealism.

1970-1980 Not more than this came out of it

In international surrealism in 70s

In the very internationally directed French “antiliquidationist” surrealist journal *Bulletin de Liaison surréaliste* nothing is mentioned about Sweden. Dutch surrealist Vancrevel makes a survey of international surrealism in 1970 and knows about nothing from this spot but cites a bunch of names in Denmark (Colding, Freddie, Harder, Heerup, Hermann, Jorn).

The Phases network is internationally augmented these years by certain flourishing parts of the surrealist movement, but in the new issue of the journal (as far as I know) only one scandinavian participates: good old Freddie.

In the French liquidationists’ journal *Coupure* there is an obvious presence of Swedish ingredients, or at least of Moderna Museet.

Then in the major gathering of forces which is the huge international surrealist exhibition in Chicago 1976, there is a good nordic representation, through the Danes (Broe, Colding and Gudmundsen) and through Phases. Only Swedes are Svanberg and Uno Svensson, but there are loads of Danes: Arnel, W Andersson, Broe, Colding, Christiansen, Gudmundsen, Hansen, Mickelborg, Mortensen, Røssing, Thomsen; furthermore Norwegian Tor Ulven, Finn Juhani Linnovaara and Icelander Alfred Flóki. Works of many of these are reproduced in the exhibition catalog or in the book-size companion journal *Arsenal* number 3.

Two years after, in an international surrealist exhibition in Milwaukee, no Swedes are included but Arnel and Hansen from Denmark and Flóki from Iceland [this selection seems very haphazard and might consist of those works not yet returned from the Chicago 1976 exhibition...]

In a fairly ambitious late journal from a group of French artists of the “liquidationist” followers’ camp, J-M Goutier’s *Discours* in 1979, Ragnar von Holten participates.

Surrealism?

The surrealist exhibition in Stockholm long planned in the now disfunc French group finally takes place in 1970, but as it is arranged by von Holten in close collaboration with the “liquidationists” and a few others from the disbanded French group, surrealism is presented mostly retrospectively and the exhibition is entitled “Surrealism?” with a question mark. Nevertheless it is an important exposition of surrealist art, and its catalog an important surrealist anthology. The organising committee contains, beside von Holten; Pierre, Silbermann, Télémaque, Toyen, Tovar and Matta. Exhibiting Swedes are Philippe Collage, Thea Ekström, Eric Grate, von Holten himself, CO Hultén, Albert Johansson, Gösta Kriland, Lars-Gösta Lundberg, Stellan Mörner, Endre Nemes, CF Reuterswård, Max Walter Svanberg, plus old works of Erik Olson, Folke Dahlberg, Adrian-Nilsson, and acknowledgments of the local heritage from Hill, Swedenborg, Ehrensward. The catalogue also includes translations of old surrealist poetry as well as a few more recent texts (Schuster, Klapheck, Tovar, Télémaque, Pierre) plus loads of images of course.

A similar exhibition is held the following year in Köln under the name “Der Geist des Surrealismus”; exhibited Swedes are Ekström, Grate, von Holten, LG Lundberg, Nemes. The same year Holten & Pierre mounts a big Nemes and Grate exhibition in Prague and Bratislava, and in 1975 one of Svanberg and Grate in Paris. In connection with the latter, José Pierre writes a big monograph on Svanberg, *Max Walter Svanberg et le règne féminin*.

Kalejdoskop

The major novelty in the 70s regarding surrealism in Sweden is the art journal and publishing house *Kalejdoskop* (Kaleidoscope) in Skåne smalltown Åhus (most famous for Absolut Vodka), started by Sune Nordgren 1975, eclectic but largely focusing on surrealist art. The journal and books collect whatever is left of Swedish surrealist artists from the 50s and 60s, investigates new artists and includes a cluster of new surrealist-oriented artists and critics. If in the 60s most

Swedish surrealist artists could be traced in the pages of *Konstrevy* and *Paletten*, during the 70s they are found in *Kalejdoskop*.

One of them is Sune Nordgren himself, mostly a collagist working with the good old element of surprise. Throughout the 70s he makes small books with poet Thomas Kjellgren, remarkably poetic small books reminiscing of children's book but distinctly desorientating; *Inhemsk resa* (Inner journey, 1972), *Utmarker* (Outlands, 1973), *Slagrutemännen* (The divining-rod men, 1974), *Collage* (Collages, 1977). Kjellgren is an enthusiastic student of art brut, and he also publishes a poetic volume focusing on Wölfli, *Sankt Adolf och Tystnaden* (1975).

Another important newcomer in the *Kalejdoskop* circle is Claes Ejdemyr (soon Tellvid) in Borås, publishing a book of collages on *Kalejdoskop* in 1977, *Piraterna i kinesiska sjön* (Pirates in the Chinese sea) and then one of surrealist cartoons, *Sju års olycka* (Seven years misfortune, 1979). He is also a poet (publishing poems in *Lyrikvännen* 1980), and in the 70s he often collaborates with his brother Mikael Ejdemyr.

Two people come out in *Kalejdoskop* as surrealist-oriented photographers, critics and art historians in Lund. Of the two, Torsten Weimarck is more into modern theory and Jan-Gunnar Sjölin more into classical close reading. Both make notable classic surrealist photography, Weimarck's presented in the 1976 volume of the journal and Sjölin's in 1980.

Two immigrant surrealist artists whom we also see is the Italian Franco Leidi, with his classically fetishistic gymnastics hall interiors (often in the pages of the journal from the start 1975, plus own volumes with his graphics and drawings), and the French collagist Philippe Collage (illustrates Ilmar Laaban's translations of Belgian surrealist Gronier's *Förledet eller Ensamheten*).

Ragnar von Holten is active in *Kalejdoskop* too, presenting various surrealist artists in the journal, and also making a series of books; one about Bellmer in 1978 (with poems by Lars Norén), one about Thea Ekström in 1979 and one about Gösta Kriland in 1980.

A number of special issues of the journal are also of special surrealist interest. First of all, the issue on outsider art/ art brut, "Särtingar i konsten" 1978 presenting all the classics (Cheval, Wölfli, Rodia, Schröder-Sonnenstern) along with some less well-known and even a couple of Swedish examples (all from Skåne: Jeppa Olsson's house, Nils Nilsson's relief, Karl-Göran Nilsson's castle, various intern's drawings and sculptures at St Lars hospital's museum), much of this presented by Nordgren, Kjellgren and old Ingemar Leckius (previously Gustafson).

Another remarkable special issue is about "modern art in Africa" 1977, edited by CO Hultén, including the Moçambique surrealist painters. Then quite regularly there are special issues of "Poem & Image" pairing poets and visual artists, often with some translations of old surrealist stuff along with new material by the impressive group of journal collaborators.

Surrealist artists popping up in the pages are, beside the already mentioned Leidi, von Holten and Hultén, and Nordgren, Weimarck and Sjölin, also Bertil Lundberg, Uno Svensson, Bert-Johnny Nilsson, Thea Ekström, and von Holten's new find the objectmaker Gunnar Frössén, and of foreign contemporary or recent surrealists Toyen, Télémaque, Pierre, Pieyre de Mandiargues, Bona, Ehrmann. Also the Bauhaus-Situationnistes are occasionally seen in the pages.

The last remnant of the official art journals' surrealism interest is seen in 1970, with Lasse Söderberg's presentation in *Paletten* of surrealist painters in Skåne as "post imaginit" (Uno Svensson, Bert-Johnny Nilsson, Bengt Böckman), plus a presentation of the surrealist-oriented "Ibis" group (Zoltan von Boer, BJ Nilsson, Gerald Steffe), and a little about Svanberg, Friberg, etc. There is a minor surrealist enquiry in *Konstrevy*, where Roj Friberg fiercely attacks realism.

Old artists

Most of the older artists keep on working with what they discovered or rediscovered in the 60s; like Nemes, and Svanberg (though now physically unable to do anything but collage).

Grate continues with bonebased forms, but now also take a special pleasure in arranging found natural objects into object landscapes – he even makes a book with such landscapes and small poems about them, *Barbariska landskap* (Barbarian landscapes, 1976).

CO Hultén with his recently discovered rhinoceroses and monoliths develops the African track and reaches a new consistent style, depicting confrontations between lascive jungle growth and displaced geometric-architectural elements.

The exotism of this (but not the conflict) is interestingly similar to the entomological fantasies of Karl-Axel Pehrson.

Kriland is returning not to health but to sound spirits, and picks up his automatic drawing, frottage and decalcomania where he left it in the early 50s. He also starts writing, and much of his drawings and writings are equally frenetic imaginative-aggressive.

A sudden and strong comeback is made by Gudrun Åhlberg, now exhibiting magnificent collages, almost always building up landscapes with naked bodies, geological formations, decalcomania elements and very strong colours. On top of this, the titles of the pictures are very often poems.

Another kind of return is Sven Alfons, who was a surrealist draughtsman in the 30s but since then mostly had been active as a poet and an art historian with interests only casually crossing those of surrealism. From the earliest 70s he takes on painting, and develops a world of haunting overloaded still-lives in old natural cabinet tradition with a consistent ambiguity as to what is alive or dead, two- or threedimensional, all in dizzying and sometimes trompe-l'oeil layers rather than realistic perspective. He keeps his distanced sympathy towards surrealism and insists that his paintings has more in common with Arcimboldo than with any modernism.

70s poetry

The 70s have yet a new wave of rimbaudian poetry groups. Their major poetic voice is Bruno K Öijer of the Vesuvius group, with his first book *Sång för anarkismen* (1970); then *Fotografier av undergångens leende* (1974), *c/o Night* (1976) and *Spelarens sten* (1979). Quite interesting is also Leif Elggren in the same group, publishing poetry and drawings as *Nervsystem* (1976). Less pathetic, and in the beginnings more seemingly interesting, were perhaps Per Lindberg and Ernst Brunner.

Lars Norén is mostly already far less surrealist in his poems; *Solitära sånger* (1972), *Kung mej och andra dikter* (1973), *Dagliga och nattliga dikter* (1974) and *Nattarbete* (1976). Of course there is a certain relapse into the obsessed in the poems he contributes to Ragnar von Holten's Kalejdoskop book about Bellmer (1978). Laaban publishes few or no poems but starts investigating sound poetry or text/sound compositions.

Lasse Söderberg gets a temporary slight flashback of surrealist inspiration when he writes poems for pictures of Uno Svensson: *Undrens tid* (Time of wonders, 1974). Lundkvist is inspired by Bosch in his *Lustgårdens demoni* (1973) and by Facteur Cheval in his *Fantasins slott och vardagens stenar* (1974), but mostly just as motives among others to fill up this endless flow of books.

Jørgen Nash makes a big book of poems in 1976, *Rebellen i vårt röda blod*. He also writes some absurd novels.

Peter Weiss still occasionally treats interesting subjects in his plays, but he is mostly working with the big novel suite *Motståndets estetik*, which can put anybody to sleep in its boring obsession with guilt and stalinism, and which hardworking literature historians has interpreted as composed as a big layout of his abandoning his faith in modernism and specifically surrealism.

Anne-Marie Berglund appears with her shortstories and sometimes poems, imbued with a paranoid-everyday-lyrical atmosphere and a focus on nonsentimental eroticism; *Luftberusningen* (1977), *Mellan extas och fångenskap* (1978) and *En ödets gunstling* (1980).

More scattered showers: Lütfi Özkök's poems *Utanför* (1971), Gunnar Harding's francophile fantasies in *Guillaume Apollinaires hemliga liv* (1971), Lennart Sjögren's remarkable sea poem *Havet* (1974), a heavy investigation of poetic knowledge in Göran Sonnevi's *Det omöjliga* (1975), the artist Margareta Renberg's *En tatuerad dams memoarer* (1975).

Then in 1980 Gunnar D Hansson's *De dödas traditioner* and Katarina Frostenson's *Rena land*, which are supposed to be in the beginning of a particular 80s style, supposedly characterised by heavily intellectual, poststructuralist-inspired, purely linguistic-formal poetry, but in fact most of the famous proponents of this style write phenomenological-sensory-imaginary explorations which often will qualify as genuine poetry from a surrealist viewpoint.

The most central books

The definitive Swedish *Maldoror* is published by Cavefors 1972; translated by Carl-Henning Wijkmark and illustrated by Ragnar von Holten.

René Coeckelberghs (Belgian Trotskyist publisher in Sweden) puts out two small books by Breton in 1971, *Surrealismens manifest* and *Surrealismens politiska ståndpunkt*, translated by Lars Fyhr. Finally!

Then only somewhat later, art historian Gunnar Qvarnström in 1973 publishes a big anthology of classic modernist manifestoes, *Moderna Manifest*, where classic surrealist manifestoes get two volumes, dada and italian futurism one, plus one introduction volume. Included are the surrealist manifestoes again and several other fundamental theoretical texts from the 20s and 30s, with some focus on art theory but a very broad picture on the whole (Aragon, Eluard, Péret, Tzara, Dalí, Giacometti, Magritte and some de Chirico), some of them picked from *Konstrevy's* surrealism issue 1967 [notably some of them were credited to Linde then, but in revised form to Qvarnström and Höjer]. He also presents the project in *Lyrikvännen* along with several new translations of old surrealist poetry by Söderberg and others.

At this point now suddenly a full image of the width of the surrealist project is available in Swedish, when it is from an entirely historical viewpoint.

In connection with these central texts, one more volume should be mentioned. In the Coeckelberghs poetry series "Tuppen på berget" with much good stuff, in 1977 appears Eluard/Breton: *Den obefläckade avlelsen* (translated by Jan Berg, not only an old *Salamander* contributor but also a professor in logic!).

Life and politics

So many of the radical awakenings of the 60s get implemented into reform and new lifestyles, and indeed institutionalised, throughout the 70s. There is a strong relaxation, liberalisation and democratisation of social forms, of morals and habits, of creativity and of style. One product of this is that the huge field of alternative culture and experimentation with new ways of organising everyday life remains a liberally available alternative rather than a movement of resistance and confrontation. Of course the capitalists and social democratic bureaucrats remain in power, and

some confrontations are produced, significantly by feminists, environmentalists and pacifists, and perhaps more importantly by labor strike waves. The revolutionary left, wherever not sucked up into official functions, is mostly tied up in sectarian quarrels and party building (including the Trotskyists), except for the two significant factions of those attracted by urban guerilla warfare (even though the few spectacular deeds in Sweden were orchestrated by Germans) and the majority of the anarchists instead training themselves in non-violence with a lot of street theatre, acrobatics, music, antipsychiatrist therapy and consensus techniques. Much smaller are the situationist-inspired groups and the dying old traditionalist anarchists.

More on absurdism and pataphysics

The 60s taste for absurd stories keeps up. In the case of the Göteborg pataphysics, Claes Hylinger and Magnus Hedlund, it even seems like an entire mild campaign of weird literary humour, with the anthologies *Den rasande grisen* 1971, *På spaning efter den gris som flytt* 1974 and *Patafysisk antologi* 1973, and a scattered series of radio programs “Absurt, sa räven”. Hylinger also develops his own mild and attentive everyday absurdism in *Dagar och nätter i Paris och Göteborg* (1975). Hedlund is more experimental and more hardcore absurdist in his books, such as *Rök utan eld* (1977).

Bauhaus-situationist activism can be combined with absurd storytelling, as Jørgen Nash demonstrates by putting out *Galgfågeln* (1977) and *Pistolen* (1980).

Old absurdist Bertil Schütt retells most of his old weird stories and now claiming them to be his autobiography, in *En skuggboxares memoarer* (1972) and *Får jag lov att föreställa mig* (1974). Seeming like a slightly more modern and less surrealist disciple of Schütt, jazz novelist Sture Dahlström relaunches masculinist-absurdist-modernism with *Gökmannen* (1975) and *Den galopperande svensken* (1977).

Two more isolated books working hard to be as absurd as possible, and thus fluctuating between truly poetic nonsense and boyish-boring logical somersaults, are the shortstories *Berättelser kring slentrianen* by Bertil Pettersson (the poet who was in Blå Tummen) 1971, and the novel *Frasgördeln* by Olle Orrje (of the same 60s gang as Hylinger & Hedlund) 1976.

Tårtan

The most offensively poetic TV series of all in Sweden is probably the legendary “Tårtan” of 1973, by director Håkan Alexandersson and scenographer Carl-Johan de Geer (from *Puss*). It is a children’s show about three unemployed seamen by chance finding themselves taking over a bakery, and their insurmountable clumsiness in learning how to bake and be nice to customers. The characteristic low-key disgusting provocations and psycho-analytical humour of this creator team embodies a particular low-materialist absurd poetry, which later becomes known as “kitchen sink surrealism”. (Alexandersson later joins some surrealist activities.)

The next year “Tårtan” gets a followup by the even more odd and less successful series “Doktor Krall” about a veterinary receiving as patients domestic animals with odd conditions.

Bauhaus-Situationnistes

The Drakabygget workshop lives on, but fails to produce an issue of their journal during the 70s. After the dissolution of the Situationist International in 1972, Danish painter JV Martin (the Scandinavian section of the SI) returns to his dissident friends, and the Bauhaus-Situationniste including Martin write a manifesto for a “Situationist Antinational” in 1974. The artists in the group keep appearing in art journals and have exhibitions, but far less of spectacular interventions and happenings. The only major affair they produce during the decade is when a sister workshop to Drakabygget is founded in Ubbeboda near a diabase quarry, and has to close down when expected to conform to official regulations – which of course is interpreted as an important step in the conspiracy against free expression, and vociferously protested against.

Additional artists

There is also a continuation of the 60s “pop surrealism” where realist techniques sometimes produce haunting atmospheres, leaning either towards photorealism or towards naivism, both often motivated with some sense of social documentary leftism. There is no need here to list the most famous Swedish 70s artists just because of striking ambiguities here and there. But among them Jan Håfström could be mentioned as one trying to integrate as much as possible of time, dream, life and death as well as various specific problems addressed by surrealism in a visually striking way.

Far more on the playful side there are imbecile and therefore partly enigmatic scenes by Margareta Renberg (also a poet), Bo Trankell and Tommy Östmar. They are part of the collective “Konstnärslaget”, as is the object painter Kjell Andersson also spreading out in other interesting directions. A more timeless and enigmatic pictorial surrealism is found in Linda Lysell’s work. Known as a surrealist, but in a very decorative style, was Karl-Gustav Thulin.

In the particular 70s vein is also the already mentioned Leif Elggren, and with him as a stepping stone we reach back to Franco Leidi, more obviously removed from everyday experience.

Then the naivistic-mexican nightmare scenes with political themes in scrapeboard done by Petter Zennström. Perhaps even more striking are the cartoonlike undergroundish simple psychadelic fever transformations and juxtapositions of Ivar Södergren. These are also two of the artists which make occasional issues of *Dödens nyheter*, along with Jörgen Melanton, making more realist-70ish naive-haunted interiors. Also Richard Årlin and Stig Danielsson make such strange enigmatic-realistic scenes. Undergroundish-cartoonlike is also the feminist painter Kristina Abelli Elander, more brut-naivistic Channa Bankier. Another artist recently acknowledged is Agneta Geijer, committing suicide in her early 20s and leaving behind a mountain of haunted drawings.

Stretching out in another direction we find the enigmatic-dissolving interiors of Harald Lyth, and several painters looking so maddeningly close into the texture and matter of the material that they can’t help investigating synesthetics, charting automatic landscapes and poetic reverie; Lennart Aschenbrenner, Håkan Rehnberg, the already mentioned Kjell Andersson, and also Lars Olof Loeld who openly acknowledges this as a path to alchemy. Another way into the secrets of nature could be the arp-style fossil configurations of Nils G Stenqvist.

Austrian-born photographer Otmar Thormann is clearly surrealist-inspired, documenting strange meetings of objects, often with animals involved.

Humour, children, comics

A presentation of Swedish underground comics can be found in *Paletten* 1970, of which Clarence Bergquist and Per Svensson seem inspired by surrealism. Odd underground comics continue through the decade, undergroundly or sneaking into commercial magazines or into more or less official art. Much of the more politically radical or experimental-absurd-humour stuff is published in the political magazine *Etc* (notably including Lars Hillersberg and the first published things by his then assistant, John Andersson, along with countryside absurdist Ulf Lundkvist and others), and by the end of the decade there is something of a comics revival when *Etc* is joined by punk fanzines, by the talent-hunting magazine *Svenska Serier*, by the independent comics anthology *Mammut* and by *Galago*, the latter a longlived magazine for contemporary Swedish comics, along with material of general confusion, humour, poetry and subversion (in the two latter, the ones most insistent on poetic nonsense, poetic rage or poetic haunting are Joakim Pirinen, Olle Berg and Ulf Frödin).

The Alfredsson and Danielsson circle, Sweden’s leading commercial comedians, continue with revues and “Lindeman” improvisations, but notably make quite a number of films. The emblematical and possibly best one is “Äppelkriget” 1971 with all the necessary ingredients for a popular feelgood cosy-radical comedy; environmental conflict, innovative heroes triumphing over evil (German) capitalists and misled bureaucrats, nature romanticism, sorcery and trolls, a mad inventor, rabelaisian humour, unity and social peace in the village, banal lovestory. Viewed out of its unifying peacemaking context it will appear as quite fascinating. A perhaps dynamic fairytale update is Per Åhlin’s animation/film hybrid “Dunderklumpen” set in the exotic Jämtland mountains from 1974. Then in 1975, Åhlin with Danielsson makes the definitive statement of philanthropic socialism in Sweden with the animated “Karl Bertil Jonssons julafton” which Swedish TV still broadcasts every christmas. The circle also make a more controversial political comedy about prisons, “Släpp fångarne loss, det är vår” (1975); and after that a new load of superficial surrealist connections are made in their comedy biography of Picasso, “Picassos äventyr” (1978).

But more interesting is the odd puppeteer Staffan Westerberg, creating disturbing worlds with small everyday objects, finger puppets, and a quiet, genuine madness. In 1975 he goes on to a slightly larger format and makes the epochal TV series “Vilse i Pannkakan” which is an infantile-anticapitalist-surrealist fantasy over the world in a pancake.

Not a children’s film but an interesting fantasy over children/adult relations is Mai Zetterling’s “Månen är en grön ost” (1977).

Music

In 1970 the first Swedish free-improvisation group starts, under the name Iskra (not to be confused with the English group “Iskra 1903” starting the same year!). The most longlived and well-known group, Lokomotiv Konkret, comes along 1975.

1970 is also emblematic as the year of “Gärdesfesten”, a big music festival in Stockholm of most of the progressive-psychedelic-leftist bands in the country. Notable bands from around this time are experimental-folkish-psychedelic Träd, Gräs & Stenar; Arbete & Fritid, Archimedes Badkar, Samla Mammans Manna; absurdist-leftist Gunder Hägg (later Blå Tåget) (consisting of older artists from the concretist-structuralist circles); and secretive toyinstrument lyrical absurdist Philemon Arthur & the Dung. Soon, the experimental rock groups fall back into the shade, and the term “progressive music” becomes intrinsically associated with leftist propagandist music, usually distinctly regressive and simplicistic in musical terms. With the punk wave comes a loud opposition to this current, but typically in an approximately equally simplicistic musical form.

A few years after the arrival of punk, there is a kind of postpunk explosion in 1980 with a wealth of more or less experimental bands, including Dom Dummaste, Cosmic Overdose, Cortex, Blago Bung, to mention those with an obvious inspiration from surrealism first; while more of parallel interests can be seen in Kräldjursanstalten, Boojwah Kids, Commando M Pigg, Homo Sapiens, Plast, Terminalpatienten etc (several of these are more based in 70s progressive rock than in developments spreading out in all directions from punk. Among them are also several which are more of electronic or industrial groups). At the same time remnants of most of the 70s folkish-experimental-progressive groups merge into Bitter Funeral Beer Band (also including Don Cherry).

Ilmar Laaban is very active writing in *Nutida Musik* throughout the decade, again focusing on musical activities of classic modernists (Duchamp) and the defense of contemporary Swedish modernist composers and executors (Nilsson, Naumann, Welin, Grandert), and in his music criticism (much more than his art criticism) pick up a strong influence from poststructuralist philosophers such as Deleuze and Lyotard.

Tärningskastet

Lasse Söderberg has now moved back to Sweden, staying in Malmö, and together with Lars-Håkan Svensson he starts the poetry journal *Tärningskastet* (Throw of dice) 1976, partly as a literary companion to the artistic *Kalejdoskop*, but with a lot cheaper/simpler appearance and, worse, a largely retrospective focus. Most issues focus on some old master of Swedish or international modernism, with some surrealist focus in the selection. Usually, one issue appears every year. The first issue contains Lundkvist, Lambert and Caillois and is illustrated by Sune Nordgren. In 1977 focus on Perse, but also Schehadé, Pieyre de Mandiargues, and poems as well as images by Svanberg. In 1978 focus on Leckius and Duprey, illustrated by Hultén. In 1979 focus on Lindegren, illustrated by Grate.

Other 70s journals and books

Lyrkvännan often includes material of interest. In 1972 interesting poetry by Söderberg, Lundkvist and Norén. Through 1975 the magazine pursues some “esoteric” (newagey) interests transecting surrealism including creation myths and the Tibetan book of death, Swedenborg, madmen’s art and the dream. In 1976 Norén, Öijer, translations of Schade, and uninspired surrealist-style drawings by Agneta Gussander. In 1978 an issue with new translations of old cubist and dada poetry; also Söderberg, Öijer and a presentation of Schehadé. In 1979 translations of Paz and Elytis.

Except for what has already been mentioned from the art journals: *Paletten* 1970 Svanberg, Friberg, Haglund about Matta, 1971 Laaban, alchemy and “primitive art”, 1973 Laaban presents Picasso’s poetry.

The Finland-Swedish literary journal *Horisont* occasionally presents interesting things, such as Artaud and Celan 1972, Char and Bataille 1974, Artaud again 1977. The various royal academies of arts jointly publish *Artes*, very official but rather often with interesting material, about Picabia and Raine 1976, a long Miró interview, plus Holten about Moureau, also about Brauner, Clair etc 1978, Sade and Elytis 1979, Elytis, Bonnefoy, Paz and Michaux in 1980, and the same year Östen Sjöstrand writes a long essay about Breton (along with Paz’s) and translates “Ode till Charles Fourier”.

A wonderful anthology of Czech and Slovak poetry, *Tingens rätta namn*, including several surrealists 1970. Poetry anthology *Fransk poesi 1910-1970* including a lot of old French surrealists, and a basic Césaire volume as *De underbara vapnen*, both 1974. Eluard: *Smärtans huvudstad*, and Dalí: *Dolda ansikten* 1975. Plus a few volumes of Bonnefoy, Paz, Thomas, Michaux. And Allais.

Lacanian psychoanalyst Iréne Matthis and Jungian novelist/film director Marianne Ahrne write one book each in 1980 about their meetings with a schizophrenic man and his world, *Orden som fängslar oss* and *Äppelblom och ruiner*, respectively, both remarkable books.

Other gravediggers: academics, nobel prizes and retrospectives

Historiography of Swedish surrealism make some advances, first with Ingemar Moberg’s 1970 seminar paper in literature history about the history of surrealism in Sweden in the 20s and 30s “Surrealismen i Sverige, isteg och

mottagande 1925-39”, which is very important in sorting out all the early reactions to surrealism in the press. The same year Kjell Espmark makes another literature history piece: *Harry Martinson erövrar sitt språk* discussing Martinson’s relation to surrealism. The following year Bengt Landgren gets his PhD with an Ekelöf thesis: *Ensamheten, döden och drömmarna*. In 1978 a book on Eric Grate by von Holten & P Grate. And then 1979 a French (!) doctoral dissertation continues the charting of the reception and early initiatives of surrealism in Sweden; Jean-Louis Parès’ “Influence du Surréalisme dans la Poésie suédoise des Années trentes”. von Holten’s 1980 book on Kriland is to some extent (but not entirely) retrospective.

In a new surrealist dictionary by José Pierre in 1973, Swedish surrealism is presented under the entries of: Le groupe de Halmstad, von Holten, Suède, Svanberg.

A big retrospective of Swedish surrealist art “Fantasins Frigörelse” opens in Västerås 1977 (travels to some other places). Included contemporary artists are Ekström, Friberg, Grate, von Holten, Hultén, SE Johansson, Kriland, Nemes, Oldenburg, Torfrid Olsson, Rahmberg, Svanberg, Åhlberg; historical Adrian-Nilsson, Bjerke-Petersen, Dahlberg, Fahlström, Freddie, Jonson, Lorentzon, Löberg, Møller-Nielsen, Mörner, A & E Olson, Thorén, Weiss. The catalog is prefaced by Lundkvist and von Holten.

Other academic books: Espmark: *Att översätta själen* (1975) on modern poetry from Baudelaire to Breton. In 1978 art historian Elisabeth Haglund publishes her thesis, a psychoanalytic study of Brauner’s paintings, and Brita Wigforss writes a study of Breton in *Radix*. The next year, the latter academic in the same journal joins the weird academic debate on which psychologist had the major influence on surrealism [the fact that Freud is very much present in Breton’s writings, that the surrealists everywhere claim that the idea of surrealism is built on Freud, and that this is quite obvious to anyone, does not worry the academics, who each pick some other psychologist to claim as the psychology source for surrealism: Jung, Janet, or as in Wigforss’ case Taine.]

With Lundkvist in the Swedish academy, the Nobel prizes slowly turn towards the surrealismophilic, with Aleixandre in 1978 and Elytis in 1979.

Large amounts of exhibitions, mostly but not entirely retrospective, of surrealist art at the Moderna Museet and at various commercial galleries, particularly the newcomer Galerie Bel’Art in Stockholm. Museum: for example Kertesz, Nevelson, Wölfli, several Reuterswård, and a big Fahlström retrospective 1979; commercial: Matta, Biasi, Ernst, Tanning, Maddox, Saura, Tovar (some of them prefaced by Laaban or von Holten).

New activities in Denmark

So, Vancravel mentioned several Danes in his overview 1970, and there are far more contributing to the International Surrealist Exhibition in Chicago 1976. The larger part of these however is the painter group “Surrealisterne”, who finally in 1977 finally have to admit that their name is misleading, and they change to “Cirrus” (Andersson, Arnel, Broe, Christiansen, Colding, Hillingsøe, Kaas, E Mortensen, Nielsen, B & H Nystrøm, Røssing, EI Sørensen). But Broe and Colding also keep up their surrealist network, and they are already joined by a new surrealist activist and poet, Ulf Gudmundsen, who published his *Fuglemanden Gora* in 1973 with contributions by his mentor Colding and the Icelandic surrealist artist Alfred Flóki. The Passepartout painter group ceases its activity in 1970, but meet the Swedish surrealist artist group Ibis, and the Danish circle assumes their name (Boberg, Brauge, Siefert, JF Sørensen) at least for an exhibition 1971, prefaced by Finn Herrmann (and appears to be the latter’s last public appearance in a surrealist-related connection).

In Norway

Painter and poet Tor Ulven in the International Surrealist Exhibition in Chicago 1976 was the first Norwegian artist in an international surrealist exhibition ever. He is an associate of Phases, but later invited to surrealist collaborations he emphatically denies to have anything to do with surrealism! His paintings and poems remain interesting though.

An even more remarkable Norwegian poet publishes her first volume 1978, the north Norwegian peasant wife Ellen Einan with condensed automatic poems allegedly guided by spirits.

Then in 1979 the Norwegian surrealism anthology is published (edited by Fløgstad, Gundersen, Heggelund and Lie), a heavy piece trying to make up for the silence up to then, including mostly prewar French surrealism with notable exceptions for Paz and Zürn, and with a particularly good representation of female surrealist poets. The same year a Norwegian literature history thesis by Fauskevåg about Sade and surrealism triggers some discussion, both in Norway and Sweden.

In Iceland: Medúsa

Iceland has a Phases associate and a surrealist painter in Alfred Flóki, collaborating with Danish surrealists, and participating in the International Surrealist Exhibitions in USA in 1976 and 1978.

Then a surrealist group starts on Iceland 1979 called “Medúsa”, animated by Sjón. Most members are poets, activities focusing on scandals, exhibitions, publications; older icelandic artist Flóki is associated, but most members of the group are also into rock music (KUKL and subsequently The Sugarcubes) and later famous singer Björk is on the fringe of the group. They have a couple of exhibitions in 1980.

In Finland

Also Finland now has a single Phases associate and representative in the International Surrealist Exhibitions, Juhani Linnovaara, also sympathetic towards surrealism but not very knowledgeable nor very engaged. Seppo Arina remains without surrealist contacts, but the connection occasionally gets pointed out, as is also the case for the famous kitsch painter Seppo Similä. The poet Väinö Kirstinä translates the surrealist manifesto into finnish 1970, and Kari Saviniemi writes about surrealism in Finland, while Ahti Susiluoto writes a long Breton paraphrase.

1951-80 discussion: Now how much of all this is actually surrealism?

I have to repeatedly emphasise that most of what I have been discussing regarding these three decades is not certainly surrealism but possibly marginal/parallel phenomena that need an interpretation to be evaluated in this context, and thus remain highly controversial in the sense that it would be equally possible to argue for their inclusion or exclusion based on different criteria.

If it seemed rather clear that there was an indigenous surrealist activity in the 30s, albeit a very eclectic, doubtful and confused one; and the beginnings of a more coherent and far less eclectic one in the 40s; still the three decades of 51-80 really don't show any such activity. There are some collective efforts in the early part of this period, which is to a large extent just the continuation of the 40s initiatives before they quite die, and some informal, diffuse and mostly ephemeral rallying points afterwards, but nothing which would obviously fulfill any criteria. Whatever has been clearly surrealist in this country during this time, has been so by association with international surrealism (which is, of course, also the easiest criterion to apply for surrealism on the whole). Let us take a look who were surrealists from this viewpoint.

Very few Swedes can possibly be called surrealist organisers in any sense for this period. The one who is most closely collaborating with the French surrealist group, and most obviously caring to promote, represent, and create networks among surrealist-inspired artists in Sweden, is Ragnar von Holten. In his case though, his own surrealist commitment and his own creative works tend to end up as mere small anecdotes in the shade of his big and enthusiastic professional engagement, curating retrospective exhibitions and writing histories, writing catalog prefaces and acting as an intermediary between artists, gallery owners and buyers, advising art collectors including Breton himself, etc. Von Holten is clearly more of a surrealist entrepreneur than a surrealist, even though he admittedly is both.

In the same sense a spider in the web, but with Phases and other perhaps more dissident parts of international surrealism, is of course Ilmar Laaban, who is laying rather low though. The main organiser in Skåne remains CO Hultén, who is indeed very active, but again only in the dissident parts of international surrealism and not even clearly associating the activity with the word surrealism.

Again in Paris, doubtful or even resentful about surrealism for his own part but happy to remain a point of contact and to act as an intermediary, is Lasse Söderberg. Then there is of course Jørgen Nash, a true organiser of artistic-politic activism in the vicinities of surrealism, but without any direct contact with the explicit surrealist movement. There was also Bertil Gadö, who became quite isolated as he tried to become the representative of a peripheral branch of international surrealism. As possible candidates we should also consider Ulf Rahmberg and Sune Nordgren, certainly not struggling for the cause of surrealism but providing practical rallying

points for all kinds of surrealist-related work in the shape of the gallery “Två fönster” and the journal/publishing house *Kalejdoskop*, respectively.

And so, the ones with an objective association with the surrealist movement, with von Holten, Laaban, Hultén or Söderberg as intermediaries; are Svanberg and Grate; and mostly through Phases Fahlström, Reuterswärd, SE Johansson, I Gustafson, U Svensson, Österlin, Herdiès; possibly a few others. Lundkvist rarely jumps back into being a contact of the movement. Kriland, Åhlberg and Hillarp are out of sight for most of the period. Contacts, though usually not very rewarding ones, are also taken by Lambert Werner and Peter Weiss.

Then we could discern another layer on our way towards the periphery, one of people who are not themselves associated with international surrealism but guilty by association through collaborations under somehow surrealist auspices with any of those four spiders in the web; there we have Nemes, Norén, Leidi, Mörner, Rahmberg, B Lundberg, Axelsson, Özkök (many of which were also brought along to meet international surrealists at some occasion without there being much record of it nor further collaboration). Somewhere there we should also introduce a subcategory for the most important figures first showing up in *Kalejdoskop*, Nordgren, Kjellgren, Tellvid. More isolated but still important to mention would be perhaps Burbeck, Hillersberg, Ekström, Nordenborg, Friberg, Gierow, BJ Nilsson; I really can't draw the line rigidly here in the absence of explicit criteria.

On the whole, there is some good poetry and art here, there are some efforts to investigate the phenomenology of imagination, there are a few considerable efforts in increasing the knowledge about surrealism, surrealist works, surrealist history and surrealist prehistory; but there is not surrealism in the sense of an integrative project linking all kinds of creative investigations in a radical framework transforming everyday life.

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- and shit, yes, this is a long term project so communications with a lot of people have provided information or perspective to it; in the shape of discussions or interviews with and/or letters from many, perhaps most, of the participants who were not dead in the early 90s, and most of the enthusiastically interested, and a few researching into transecting areas;

many of these particular themes have been recurring topics of discussion with John Andersson, Carl-Michael Edenborg, Jonas Ellerström, Timo Kaitaro, Ilmar Laaban (†), Niklas Nenzén, Kristoffer Noheden, Tony Pusey, Lasse Söderberg,

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