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# Johan NOBELL

## Past - Present

8 April – 15 May 2023

We are proud to present a selection of old and new works spanning the last fifteen years by Swedish artist Johan Nobell.

*Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future  
And time future contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is unredeemable.  
What might have been is an abstraction  
Remaining a perpetual possibility  
Only in a world of speculation...*

*Burnt Norton I, T.S Eliot*

Between past and present exists a place. A place that exists only if we dare to look for it. Through his strikingly vivid surrealist aesthetics, Johann Nobell paints a place, located somewhere between the contradictory poles of dream and reality. Abstract and figurative elements blend where deep symbolism can be found, challenging latent inhibitions. Dream-like sequences, subconscious imprints and individual impulses serve to mix the unknown and intangible. Nobell's narratives depict hallucinatory dramas that are as wondrous as they are terrifying.

Here, where the Old World meets the New World, where the desire to establish a new reality based on rationality, reason and science is confronted with the irrational: a land in which new heraldic symbols are filled with speculation, with hocus pocus and occult kitsch. Older works, in pastel palettes, depict often barren lands, desolate deserts inspired by American mythology and geography, that give birth to new works focusing on specific details of the mutated and abstracted life-forms that have germinated and magically grown there.

Nobell is in transition, and often shifts from frozen surface detail to a larger narrative. In conformity with Swedish cosmology, he keeps close correspondence between the small details in man/nature and the larger overarching context. For this artist, the microcosm is somewhere to be discovered in the macrocosm and vice versa. The constant prevailing atmosphere of ambiguity and open-endedness invites us to interpret and engage with the works, old or new, on their own terms. Can we bear the reality of what the future might hold? The door to dreams is left wide open.

*... Go, go, go, said the bird: humankind  
Cannot bear very much reality.  
Time past and time future  
What might have been and what has been  
Point to one end, which is always present.*

*Burnt Norton I, T.S Eliot*

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Born in 1963 in Gammelgarn, Gotland, Sweden, Johan Nobell now lives and works in Stockholm. Nobell's work have been shown at Neuberger Museum of Art, New York; Gallery OMR, Mexico City; Galleri Hammarén Gothenburg; Anna Bohman Gallery, Stockholm; Pierogi Gallery Brooklyn, USA; Bendixen Gallery, Copenhagen; Dalslands Konstmuseum Upperud, Sweden;; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm among others.