



Jockum Nordström : For the Insects and the Hounds at the David Zwirner Gallery



Lauren Pennycott
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The internationally-celebrated David Zwirner Gallery has represented Swedish-born artist Jockum Nordström since 2000. After five shows in New York, *For the Insects and the Hounds* is his first solo show at the London gallery. Presenting a range of pencil drawings, paper collages and small sculptures, the show is spread across two porous rooms with a simple and clean curatorial aesthetic. Nordström's soft illustrative visual language has an eerie power behind it; despite pleasant and muted first impressions, the combination of the seemingly naïve techniques and, at times, ambiguous bordering on dark narrative, pushes this work into intriguing territory.



Graphite drawings and collages in particular convey a juvenile flatness; his figures are suspended in front of their background and appear motionless despite mainly being depicted in action. The materials rest upon one another lightly but are not visibly bound, highlighting the delicacy and vulnerability of the materials themselves. Cut-out characters, both hand-drawn and copies of figures from Renaissance portraiture are placed on thick, handmade paper in his collages.

The small blocks, embedded in their rectangular frames in the sculptural structures, are nestled cosily in their tessellating composition. Simple from the front, due to the curation the back was exposed so their complex and delicate constitution is clear. They are intimate and in some way personable, regardless of the architectural references.

Chalky pinks, pistachio and olive greens with browns and muddied grey pastels – Nordström's palette is reminiscent of water colours commonly found in children's books; hinting at the colour in real life and just enough to flesh out his dreamscapes. They are quiet childlike plays, scenes from a story or fable, except the subject is spiked with the activities of adulthood. The artist himself often refers to such works as "stills"; scenes with couples dancing and buxom women drinking, men in top hats and fields full of mythological and fantastic creatures.

Charming and captivating with its narrative, Jockum Nordström's work is finely tuned and *For the Insects and the Hounds* is a quiet and fascinating interlude.

★★★★★

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For the Insects and the Hounds is at the David Zwirner Gallery until 24th January 2015, for further information visit [here](#).