

history, of production, work, and leisure.” This lush materialization, however, is almost paradoxical, as it emerges from the filling up of a void; it represents the absence of material.

—Eugenio Viola

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

STOCKHOLM

Jonas Dahlberg

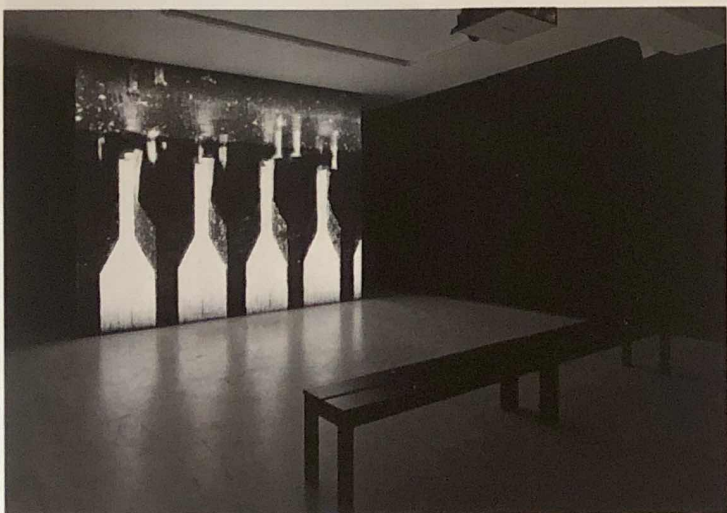
GALERIE NORDENHAKE

On July 22, 2011, the far-right terrorist Anders Behring Breivik, dressed as a police officer, detonated a bomb at the Norwegian Parliament building in Oslo, killing eight people. He then traveled to the island of Utøya, where the Workers' Youth League had a summer camp, and shot and killed sixty-nine people, wounding an additional sixty-six; the majority were teenagers. Swedish artist Jonas Dahlberg has been working on July 22 memorials in Oslo and Utøya, to be completed this summer. His recent exhibition “Diorama” made clear that he's been up to many other things besides, and yet it was impossible not to think of the massacre even while looking at his new gallery works, even if they have no obvious connection to the shootings.

With Breivik in mind, encountering “Birds,” 2015–, Dahlberg's new series of staged photographic portraits of common garden birds, is a strange experience. We see the animals close up, with an exceptional amount of detail—are we looking at these creatures through a rifle scope? The diorama, invented by Louis Daguerre in 1822, is often a staged scene of an exotic natural landscape, a by-product of colonial modernity. Can we compare this fictional representation of otherness with the one that Breivik developed for himself through Internet online forums? Or rather, do we dare?

The only other work in “Diorama,” a new video piece, *Music Box*, 2015, is quintessential Dahlberg, with its simultaneously nonsubjective and uncanny viewpoint and its construction, in black and white, of space through a mix of animation with the use of indexical, documentary-style images. *Music Box* evinces Dahlberg's ability to mediate spaces in unexpected ways; the piece is critical in that it makes its medium—video technology—visible in a way that doesn't make the

Jonas Dahlberg,
Music Box, 2015,
video, black-and-white,
sound, 26 minutes,
55 seconds.
Installation view.



story less seductive. The visual interest of this exploration of the inner life of a mechanical toy whose workings, once magnified, recall Chaplin's *Modern Times* but without human operators, stems not only from the blow-up effect of the large-scale video installation but also from the way it bends and subverts the conventional imaginary of mechanical movement and in so doing challenges common perceptions of the time and space of industrial production.

This never happened in earlier works, such as *Shadow Room*, 2011, in which Dahlberg made use of the construction of space in Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932) and Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia* (1983). Similarly, in *View Through a Park*, 2009, Dahlberg explored the journey from interior to exterior, public to private by moving from an apartment window through a city park and into another apartment across the park. In *Music Box*, what one is actually looking at it gradually becomes less and less clear, and after a while you begin to wonder if you are simply projecting meaning onto the sometimes very abstract imagery. The work oscillates between affirming the rationality of universal production (in the sequences in which we recognize the mechanics of the box) and negating it as soon as you start to see other things, as the power of imagination takes over. *Music Box* can therefore be read as an allegory of industrial capitalism, as it shows both the mystical and the rational in the autoimmunization of production. But I can't help relating my ability to read all kinds of strange things into these images to the paranoid way Breivik's universe must have been constructed—his ability to compose a self-consistent yet horribly deluded interpretation of his social reality.

—Fredrik Svensk

COPENHAGEN

Tiril Hasselknippe

BIANCA D'ALESSANDRO

Waist-high and not quite large enough to contain a person, four concrete objects punctuated the gallery floor. The exhibition title, “Tub,” suggested they might be containers. This viewer's thoughts strayed to sarcophagi, wells, or troughs—pulpits, even. The works themselves are each titled *Balcony*, and, given their imaginative fecundity, respectively subtitled with unnecessary artfulness: *residency*, *survival*, *supplies*, and *intersectionality* (all works 2015). Three of them appear as if severed from larger volumes, evoking some fictitious previous history as functional objects, or simply suggesting the way in which they might have been made. This fragmented quality gives one of them, *Balcony (intersectionality)*, a decidedly sunken look, its volume drooping slightly into the floor. The objects seem hyper-durable, like bunkers, yet they hover between disintegration and incompleteness. Smooth surfaces alternate with crumbling corners, rust stains, fiberglass tissue, and odd bits of metal. This is concrete at its most intractable. A spoonful weighs a ton. And it doesn't need *you*. Their contents: water and food coloring. Not a lot of it, just dregs at the bottom, as if they'd been left outdoors in a light shower of poison rain.

A building material increasingly consigned to twentieth-century architectural history, concrete is having an aesthetic moment. To a contemporary eye, there is nothing like a Brazilian cityscape to reveal its raw, material magic. In the German-speaking world, Thomas Bernhard turned it into a literary form in his eponymous 1982 novel. Under sodden Scandinavian skies, its artistic awakening has in recent years been foretold in installations by Lea Porsager and Rikke Luther. As for Hasselknippe's mute vessels, they hide a narrative bent: Think Adrián Villar Rojas sans figurative brouhaha. This is a kind of sculptural storytelling that sets worlds of inference in motion and makes the object's very ambience come alive.