

PATRICIA TREIB

Simultaneous Armor

Opening: August 20, 2026, 17.00 – 20.00

Exhibition period: August 21 – September 26, 2026

Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 11.00 – 18.00, Saturday 12.00 – 16.00

Some of the oldest poems in the Anglo and Norse languages are riddles. They take an ordinary object – an onion, a crucifix, a key – and describe it in a new way, making it unfamiliar. The pleasure of these puzzles is not in being baffled but in being interested...the familiar objects come to life when you find a new way to see them. (In the poems, they often speak in the first person.) A new relation makes the subject reappear.

Patricia Treib's paintings are not riddles. There is no solution hidden in their mobile inky forms. The collection of works on view at Galerie Nordenhake, Stockholm, (August-September 2026) brings to mind that old art form because of the particular method through which Treib addresses her subjects. All the paintings she makes have an anchor in the real world – she begins with a picture, object, or found arrangement – and she looks at it seriously, over an extended period of time. She returns repeatedly to repaint it, discovering different visions of it with each new picture.

The anchors themselves are often small or apparently incidental views, because these are the subjects she gravitates towards. An icon depicts St George—but on his shoulder there are small patches of cloth, a helmet, bevelled leather and metal. An ancient, pleated marble sculpture stands on a tall concrete museum plinth—but below it, a little girl looks in the other direction, her soft toy tucked under one arm, her fist clenched. Two models pose on a vintage Simplicity pattern packet—but under their long draped sleeves, skewed elbows and arms mirror one another. There are also personal memories—of a grandmother sewing from patterns; a father repairing clocks in his small Midwestern shop during Treib's own early childhood.

In the paintings, bright, lively forms reprise the shapes of these origins, even as they come to a point at which they barely contain them. 'Saturated', a word often used to describe Treib's deep bright rinsed paints, holds a sense of fullness, of completion, together with a sense of over-fullness, almost drowning. The originary materials are powerfully evocative precisely because they are receded in memory or background – as a whispered aside is more intimate than a speech, or the hint of a body, glimpsed through clothing, is sexier than nakedness.

Treib's paintings extend towards that flooding presence. This is an exploratory process (she describes 'burrowing into' a source material or image) but also contemplative: a practice of devoting time. She creates small paintings and then larger. Sometimes pictures emerge in sequences; sometimes a work will stitch back over several previous versions of itself to draw directly from an earlier source. The larger works are made on studio floor. During long sessions, she paints forms one by one on canvas or paper, each form emerging in relationship to another, and another, in an unbroken flow. Her movements in the studio on that day remain traceable on her canvases, in swept brush-marks and fingertip squiggles.

When you look at her work you can follow those movements. She takes her time over the points at which the forms meet. She works at the boundaries so that bodies and spaces overlap, edge under, or merge into one another. Elsewhere, the distinction is crisp. This creates a mobile, weaving experience of the field, wherein points of conflict are also moments of connection and everything is always coming out of its depths. A red capital swallows the blue that enfolds it, like a dress, hanging on the clothesline, twisted into baffling bodymorphic shapes by the wind. Subject and medium animate one another, like the body in the dress that is made of thin air. Her paintings hover on the point of revelation – as though the clouds of colour are parting to expose a pale form that reveals itself to be...a pale cloud, hovering over bodies of colour.

- Text by Daisy Hildyard