



Invitation

TO THE INAUGURATION OF "VÄXT" (PLANT/GROWTH), A WORK OF ART BY JOHANNA KARLSSON.
Supplementing Gunnar Nylund's "Djungeln vaknar" (Awakening of the jungle).



The artist

Johanna Karlsson

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www.gallerimagnuskarlsson.com/artists/johanna-karlsson

Programme

Date: Tuesday 4 February 2020

Place: Undervisningshuset (the Teaching Building), lower entrance hall

Address: Almas allé 12, Ultuna, Uppsala

13.00 Opening address and welcome

Vice-Chancellor Maria Knutson Wedel, SLU

Speech by Public Art Agency Sweden

Director Henrik Orrje

13.15 Inauguration

Closing address

Tuva Wrenfelt, chair, Joint Committee of Student Unions at SLU

Light refreshments



Music: Peace and quiet (Iskra, 1983)

Host: Tuva Wrenfelt, chair, Joint Committee of Student Unions at SLU

RSVP by Tuesday **28 January** to Teresa de Mendonça: teresa.de.mendonca@slu.se, +46 (0)72-516 0550



Two works of art in the entrance hall of Undervisningshuset (the Teaching Building) relate to SLU's research and our desire to leave a better world behind us. These two works are "Djungeln vaknar" (Awakening of the jungle) by Gunnar Nylund and "Växt" (Plant/Growth) by Johanna Karlsson.

Nylund's piece "Djungeln vaknar" was created shortly after the end of World War II. Joy at the prospect of peace and hopes for a better world inspired Nylund to create an image of paradise, an image with links to a long tradition in the history of art.

This work has a number of interesting features – such that can be seen in classic images of paradise, but also those that can be linked to the environmental work of today. The flour being ground is the production of our food, so central to humankind. The predator, taking water with its potential prey, is also part of the paradise tradition, but can be interpreted more broadly as our pursuit of functional ecosystems. The water has links both to traditional images of paradise and the environmental work of today.

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In Nylund's interpretation, paradise is in Africa, known today to be the cradle of humankind.

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The vegetation in Nylund's work is lush, showing part of the ecological cycle. Johanna Karlsson's work builds on and adds to this image in a significant manner. Her work can be seen as a symbol of a cycle with a clear boundary between the parts above ground, with branches, and the parts below ground, with roots. Like many other plants, the tree cannot function without its roots. The roots absorb nutrients and water, but also have invisible helpers in the form of fungi. These fungi use their thin threads to plough the ground, providing the trees with nutrients and water in exchange for sugar.

This seemingly austere work of art can be seen to symbolise the invisible, hard-to-grasp aspects of ecosystems. The parts above and below ground cooperate but also constitute an eternal cycle where death does not necessarily mean complete eradication, but instead continuation in a new form. Fear of death can be countered by knowledge of the fact that a functioning world can go on, provided we do not destroy it through ignorance and greed. Karlsson's work helps preserve Nylund's paradise.

The combination of these two works of art can provide inspiration for those of us who study, teach and research sustainable societies and ecosystems.

Freely adapted from Professor Urban Emanuelsson's thoughts on the two works of art.