

## Full Arch

by Katarina Sjögren and Jun-Hi Wennergren Nordling

(For the exhibition Full Arch at CRYSTAL November 11 - December 17, 2011)

In a new series of paintings on canvas and paper, Ditte Ejlerskov explores the relationship between attraction and madness, ecstasy and performance, sexual control and patriarchal power relations, through studies of the pose "full arch". A woman standing on her knees with an arched back, her sexual organs exposed. The pose is aimed at the gaze of the viewer and it signals both submission and control. The pose appears throughout art history, in depictions of religious ecstasy, demonic possession and in the pathological term "hysteria" as well as in contemporary popular culture, where female pop stars play with the borders between sexualised power and the objectification of the male gaze on stage and in videos. The fierceness, the staged ecstasy is at the same time is both alluring and a balancing act on the verge of insanity.

In Ditte Ejlerskov's paintings a complex study appears, where the physical pose and its double implications are repeated until they stand out as a practice of exorcism, a process of expulsion. The repeated act is at the same time the subject used throughout art history as a proof of the function of exorcism and the treatment for "pathological hysteria". The artist plays with the ideas of what contemporary demons the female pop stars are trying to exorcise with their poses and what is to gain in the staged performance.

Parallel to the studies of the pose there is the sadness and entrapment, in empty beds with messy sheets, women hiding behind closed curtains, couples turned away from each other on opposite sides of a bed. The alienation and loneliness that appears from the complicated balancing act between sexual power and diagnosed madness. The contrast between the woman on the stage and the woman behind the curtains that at a first glance appear steep but at a closer study seems to tell the same story.

In her works Ditte Ejlerskov refers to painting as a medium. She uses various techniques and aesthetic expressions, ranging from skilfully crafted figurative painting to pure studies of colour. She works with a constantly on-going exploration, where intellectual curiosity runs next to art history and popular culture. Together the various references create a subjective narrative, where the describing titles of the paintings contribute in creating a story in the shape of an exhibition. The image material is gathered from Facebook, the artist's own camera and from art history and popular culture.

Ditte Ejlerskov was born in Frederikshavn, Denmark in 1982. She lives and works in Malmö and is educated at Malmö Art Academy. Since graduating in 2009 she has had solo exhibitions at Elastic, Malmö, the Museum of Sketches, Lund and Larm Gallery, Copenhagen as well as appearing in group shows at Malmö Art Museum, Ystad Art Museum and Uppsala Art Museum and at several art fairs. Ditte Ejlerskov has received several grants and awards and 2011 she was shortlisted to the Carnegie Art Award for Denmark.

CRYSTAL

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