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Djurberg & Berg: A Relationship Saga

by Johanna Graflund

A thesis submitted in conformity
with the requirements for the
Master's Degree in Art Business
Sotheby's Institute of Art

2022

12,005 words

Abstract

Djurberg & Berg is one of the most famous artistic duos in today's contemporary global art market. This thesis will pinpoint crucial relationships and important career milestones that helped them achieve international recognition and success. As this thesis argues, one of the most important relationships is with Moderna Museet. Moderna Museet is a well-renowned top-tier museum that brings legitimacy to the artists it shows. As a government-funded museum, it is responsible for promoting Swedish art, and artists can not go unnoticed.

Along with Moderna Museet, the duo has established vital support from major institutions such as the Fondazione Prada and Julia Stoschek Collection, among others. These relationships are thoroughly analyzed in this thesis. Creating and sustaining relationships with influential patrons and institutions in the art world has been crucial for Djurberg & Berg's careers.

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Introduction

Sweden has an abundance of artistic creativity, and like in many other countries, talents often go unnoticed. Coming from two small cities in Sweden, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg are among the most well-known contemporary artists in the global art market today. In this thesis, I want to analyze milestones in Djurberg & Berg's careers that were important in becoming the globally successful duo they are today. This thesis does not aim to comment on any artistic qualities but focuses on the relationships involved in Djurberg & Berg's careers.

I find previous information lacking on becoming a giant, global phenomenon in the international art market when originating from a far north European country. While being a small country, a few internationally renowned artists originate from Sweden. Claes Oldenburg, Hilma Af Klimt, and Klara Lidén are among the few that prove the possibility of Swedish artists to become globally successful. However, because of the limitations of this thesis, I will only focus on Djurberg & Berg and their essential steps in building their career as a duo.

Analyzing critical moments in Djurberg & Berg's careers, it became clear that they connected with influential people who were crucial for Djurberg & Berg to become internationally successful. Therefore, this thesis will research Djurberg & Berg's connections and relationships they made throughout their career and how these relationships helped them develop as artists. A few successful interviews were conducted with associates from Zach Feuer Gallery and the Julia Stoschek Collection. Having first-hand input from other institutions involved in Djurberg & Berg's careers would have

made this thesis more versatile. Unfortunately, the Fondazione Prada, Moderna Museet, Acute Art, Lisson Gallery, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, and Gió Marconi Gallery never responded to my inquiries.

This thesis is divided into chapters thoroughly analyzing critical connections and relationships supporting Djurberg & Berg. I will try to pinpoint predominant milestones such as early gallery representation, institutional support, curators, museums, directors, art patrons, et cetera.

The first chapter works as an introduction to Djurberg & Berg. I will explain their biography and artistic style and briefly mention a few key milestones in their career.

The second chapter will thoroughly explain some of their important artworks. Then, the chosen works will be described and analyzed to demonstrate their significance. All artworks are in major collections of some of Djurberg & Berg's more influential supporters.

Chapter three aims to pinpoint the overall reception of Djurberg & Berg. I interviewed their first American gallery, Feuer Gallery, which gave me insight into how well Djurberg & Berg were received in their early career. A short section will also discuss the importance of critics and curators. This chapter will also analyze whether or not the award at the Venice Biennale should be considered Djurberg & Berg's breakthrough.

In chapter four, Moderna Museet will be introduced. This thesis aims to analyze and prove that the support from Moderna Museet was critical in shaping Djurberg & Berg's careers. More specifically, I want to analyze Moderna Museet's importance in promoting Swedish artists and how it applies to Djurberg & Berg. This chapter also

provides historical background on Moderna Museet's obligations as a government-funded museum. Furthermore, this chapter devotes a section to Djurberg & Berg's survey exhibition at Moderna Museet in 2018, an important milestone in their career.

Chapter five covers other important relationships and institutional backing Djurberg & Berg received. This chapter will focus predominantly on Djurberg & Berg's gallery representatives, the Fondazione Prada, and the Julia Stoschek Collection.

Chapter six analyzes Djurberg & Berg's secondary market and its effect on their career. Djurberg & Berg recently became the most expensive contemporary artwork sold in Sweden, and this chapter will analyze if and how it affected their auction market.

A conclusion of the information provided throughout this thesis is conducted in chapter seven. This thesis proves the importance of building sustainable and long-term relationships with influential people at prominent institutions in order to become an internationally successful artist.

Chapter 1. Introduction to Djurberg & Berg

Dreamlike, whimsical, erotic, and surreal are words often used to describe the art by the artistic duo Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg. By creating animated worlds containing Djurberg's objects mixed with Berg's sound, they built their artistic repertoire around the themes of lust, exploitation, and fear in the aesthetics of a fairytale. While their work is often surreal and somewhat challenging to grasp, they often convey humorous ways to tell a story. Moderna Museet, an important institution in Djurberg & Berg's careers, which this thesis will return to, describes their works as "*feverish daydreams about role play and desire, with comedy and darkness, set to hypnotic music.*"¹

Djurberg & Berg, both from Sweden and born in 1978, met in Berlin in the early 2000s. They began working together in 2004 and have since created artworks by combining animation, sculpture, and sound, connecting with the viewer's subconsciousness and taking the art world by storm.

Nathalie Djurberg describes her childhood as very creative, with a mother who was very supportive.² For example, Djurberg often made animals or other objects out of wet toilet paper, which she dried on the radiator in her childhood home.³ Djurberg, when she went to art school in Gothenburg, only 16 years old, later discovered she had a talent for making clay models and that it came naturally because of the similarities to the wet

¹ Moderna Museet, "Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg; A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air," accessed September 1, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/en/exhibitions/djurberg-berg/>.

² Germano Celant, *Nathalie Djurberg, Turn into Me*, (Milan: Progetto Prada Arte, 2008), 51.

³ *Ibid*, 51.

toilet paper she used to play with.⁴ Djurberg received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Malmö Art Academy in 2002. She is making clay sculptures and video animations in the stop-motion technique. Although Djurberg spent five years in art school, she learned the technique of stop-motion and animation herself.⁵

Hans Berg is a self-taught musician and the sound producer for their artworks. Berg primarily creates electronic music. Berg also works a DJ. The music Berg creates for the animations is vastly different from the music he makes for himself as a DJ, though they sometimes can overlap.⁶

The duo began working together after being connected through a mutual friend. The same friend suggested Berg could help create the music for Djurberg's animations since Djurberg felt she could not produce the desired music on her own.⁷ In addition, Berg was very intrigued by her animations and felt a need to create music for the animations.⁸ Since Djurberg and Berg both learned their crafts through trial and error, they discovered a unique collaboration in which they were able to both evolve and create art together.⁹ At the beginning of their collaboration, Djurberg was very strict about the music and how it should sound. However, as the duo progressed, Djurberg realized the final result would improve if Berg was given more freedom over the music.¹⁰ Berg is not

⁴ Ibid, 52.

⁵ Dodie Kazanjian, "Wicked Fairy Tales," *Vogue*, November 2008, 310.

⁶ Celant, *Turn into Me*, 191.

⁷ Louisa Elderton, "The delights of Undirected Minds; Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg," *Elephant*, Issue 33, Winter 2017-18, 170.

⁸ Lyn DiCiero, "Secrets lurk down garden path," *The West Australian*, February 25, 2016, accessed September 5, 2022, <https://thewest.com.au/news/secrets-lurk-down-garden-path-ng-ya-137644>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Elderton, "The Delights of Undirected Minds," 170.

solely trying to understand or interpret Djurberg’s feelings for the films but will bring his own perspective of the work into the music.¹¹ From the beginning of their collaboration, the process often started with Djurberg creating the clay models and animated videos. After Djurberg finished her creations, Berg would produce a matching soundtrack. After becoming increasingly interested in the relationship between audio and animations, the duo created a number of works in which Berg produced the music first. Djurberg then created the animations based on the music. An example of this is “The Black Pot.” The project solidified that the music could play a central role in the artworks, something important to Berg.¹² Djurberg & Berg had a period in the early 2010s, experimenting more with abstract art than their earlier figurative storytelling. As their work became more abstract than before, the music became even more important. Berg believes the music creates a physical aspect to their work in which he can create a mood or environment that influences the interpretation of the whole work.¹³ Berg describes the music as a journey adding to Djurberg’s creations.¹⁴ Both Djurberg and Berg agree that the music adds another layer to the claymations, and both of their input is equally important since it adds complexity to their work.¹⁵

Early in their careers, Djurberg & Berg completed a three months long artist-in-residency program at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles from August until October

¹¹ Celant, *Turn into Me*, 190.

¹² Stehanie Bailey, “Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg Dig Deeper in Shanghai,” *Ocula Magazine*, February 23, 2022, accessed October 20, 2022. <https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/nathalie-djurberg-and-hans-berg-dig-deeper/>.

¹³ Giulia Gemini, “Interview with Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg,” *ATP Diary*, October 4, 2018, accessed September 28, 2022, <http://atpdiary.com/djurberg-berg-mart-rovereto-2018/>.

¹⁴ DiCiero, *Secrets lurk down garden path*.

¹⁵ Bailey, *Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg Dig Deeper*.

2008. The program is designed as long-lasting inspiration for the artist completing it, and Djurberg said it would “*inevitably affect their work in unanticipated ways.*”¹⁶ The program helped them further their artistic creativity, and they were specifically fascinated by the nature in California, which stood in stark contrast to both the tiny villages of Sweden and the city of Berlin. For example, Berg found new inspirations, evolving his sound during the residency. He found samples and sonic differences all around the area, but most profound was his experience of comparing the two sister cities at the Mexican border, Mexicali and Calexico. Berg found significant differences between the cities, which inspired him in his music-making.¹⁷ In addition, Djurberg found inspiration from the flora in California, which is visible in “The Experiment.” (Figure 2.)

Shortly after finishing their residency program, Djurberg & Berg were awarded the Silver Lion for Best Young Artist at the Venice Biennale 2009 for their artwork “The Experiment.” The award is considered a major breakthrough for the duo.¹⁸

Since then, Djurberg & Berg have maintained a promising career with many important solo and group exhibitions worldwide, including The New Museum in New York City, The Garage Center for Contemporary Culture in Moscow, and many more. In addition, the duo is represented in public collections such as the Fondazione Prada in Milan, the Modern Museum of Art in New York City, and Moderna Museet In

¹⁶ Hammer Museum, “Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg,” 2008, accessed September 1, 2022, <https://hammer.ucla.edu/artist-residencies/2008/nathalie-djurberg-and-hans-berg>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Moderna Museet, “Introduction Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg,” accessed September 1, 2022. <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/en/exhibitions/djurberg-berg/introduction-djurberg-berg/>.

Stockholm, to only name a few.¹⁹ Currently, in 2022, they are represented by Gió Marconi Gallery in Milan, Lisson Gallery in London, and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York and Los Angeles.

Djurberg & Berg are also often included in contemporary art auctions worldwide but appear mostly at auctions in Stockholm, Sweden. According to Artprice, most of the duo's auction results are registered to the auction house Bukowskis. Bonhams recently acquired Bukowskis. Bukowskis is one of the largest auction houses in Sweden and the leading auction house in the Nordic region.²⁰ Djurberg & Berg also hold the record for the most expensive contemporary artwork ever sold at auction in Sweden. The work, "Crocodile, Egg, Man," hammered at 16 million SEK (\$1,544,229) at Bukowskis in 2020, the premium not included.

More recently, in 2021, the duo ventured into making art in Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality in collaboration with Acute Art.

Events and institutions are only briefly mentioned here, they will be discussed in-depth later, and this thesis will return to their importance in Djurberg & Berg's careers.

¹⁹ Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, "Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg," accessed September 1, 2022, <https://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/artists/35-nathalie-djurberg-%26-hans-berg/>.

²⁰ Bukowskis, "Intag till kommande auktioner pågår just nu - Sälj till Bukowskis höga priser," accessed September 1, 2022, <https://www.bukowskis.com/sv/results>.

Chapter 2. Important works

This chapter will explain a few of Djurberg & Berg’s important works and why they should be considered significant. The artistic qualities of Djurberg & Berg will not be analyzed. As this thesis will surround important institutions’ support in Djurberg & Berg’s careers, the works discussed in this section will all belong to major collections.

Moderna Museet’s collection of Djurberg & Berg consists of four works acquired between 2005 and 2019. The first work the museum acquired was “Florentin.” Finished in 2004, the same year Djurberg & Berg began working together. The work was exhibited in their first solo show at Moderna Museet in 2005. The video, 3:36 minutes long, depicts a man in a suit playing, at first cheerfully, with two small girls. The man is lifting one of the girls, who puts her dress over his head, making them fall. The man gets angry and is about to punish them for their behavior. The video instead takes a turn when the girls find a bat and, in return, start beating the man, who ends up crying and bleeding, all accompanied by cheerful and frantic music. This video is a prime example of Djurberg & Berg’s works, where the original victim gets her revenge in the end. A storytelling Djurberg & Berg often keep coming back to in their works. Djurberg explains that every character in her animations is often oscillating between being the victim and the perpetrator. “Florentin” is a perfect and early example of this.



Fig. 1. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, “Florentin,” film still. © Zach Feuer

Another one of Djurberg & Berg's more important works is "The Experiment," for which they received the Silver Lion at the Venice Biennale 2009. As the Silver Lion award is regarded as a turning point in their career, "The Experiment" is extremely important in their repertoire and future careers. The curator of the Venice Biennale 2009, Daniel Birnbaum, specifically chose artists to do something experimental and believed this work would "*stun the world.*"²¹



Fig 2. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, "The Experiment," installation view, Venice Biennale, 2009. © Zach Feuer

The artwork consists of mixed media such as installations, claymation, video, and music. It contains three videos; "Greed," "The Forest," and "Cave." In "Greed," naked women tear each other apart while three religious men watch them. In "The Cave," a lone woman dismembers herself in a cave, and "The Forest" depicts a woman trying to get

²¹ Sara Ullberg, "Birnbaum skapar världar i Venedig," *Svenska Dagbladet*, June 4, 2009, accessed September 20, 2022. <https://www.svd.se/a/ec575678-fef1-39db-84e3-bfb533a712b3/birnbaum-skapar-varldar-i-venedig>.

away from her male perpetrator. Droning and ambient music composed by Berg accompanies all videos. At the Biennale, the three-part videos were shown in a dark, overgrown garden with flora resembling genitalia and internal organs. The videos from “The Experiment” is today in the collection of The Julia Stoschek Foundation, one of the largest private collections of contemporary art focused on time-based media. According to Tate, time-based media refers to art dependent on technology, including video, slide, film, audio, or computer art.²² Stoschek has also been on the board and committees at the Museum of Modern Art PS1, The Whitney Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. “The Experiment” should be recognized as one of Djurberg & Berg’s most important works not only for receiving an award but also for being in the collection of a major art patron.

Another essential patron is Miuccia Prada at the Fondazione Prada. The Fondazione Prada will be discussed in depth in chapter five, but it also deserves to be mentioned in this chapter. The Fondazione Prada held Djurberg & Berg’s first major solo exhibition, “Turn into Me,” in Milan in 2008. The show later traveled and was exhibited at Prada Transformer in Seoul in 2009. “Turn into Me” was grouped after a few large installations, and the first time Djurberg & Berg did three-dimensional works for an exhibition. Large-scale exhibitions like “Turn into Me” are often impossible for artists to put together by themselves. Artists often lack the resources and need additional support

²² Tate, “Art Term; Time-Based Media,” accessed September 28, 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/t/time-based-media>.

from a more prominent institution such as the Fondazione Prada, which on average, commissions two artists a year to do a large exhibition at the foundation.²³

In an interview with Germano Celant, the curator of the exhibition “Turn into Me,” Djurberg expressed being terrified of doing large installations rather than showing her works on a simple monitor.²⁴ Djurberg often speaks about her need to feel uncertain and intimidated during her work process. If she feels safe in knowing what to create beforehand, there is no need for her to pursue the work.²⁵ Being terrified of the project: the exhibition is a telling sign of Djurberg pushing herself to create the show with the support of the Fondazione Prada. This exhibition and its artworks should be considered important, being the first time Djurberg & Berg did a large installation with three-dimensional works. The exhibition contains individual works, but Djurberg and the curator, Celant, believe the elements interact with one another. Djurberg has stated that she was pleased with how the connections between her film and the objects in the exhibition felt evident. In the exhibition brochure, Djurberg is cited: “*I have never succeeded in letting one image stand for itself. That is why I enjoy animation as a medium. In Milan, at the Prada Foundation, I felt like I did that, managing one image - or one structure - stand for itself.*”²⁶

One of the larger works the exhibition was grouped after, “The Prostitute” (2008), showcased one of Djurberg & Berg’s recurring themes; the naked female body with

²³ Michael Kimmelman, “The Patroness,” *The New York Times Magazine*, March 23, 2008, accessed October 1, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/23/magazine/23prada-t.html>.

²⁴ Celant, *Turn into Me*, 162.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 162.

²⁶ Celant, *Turn into Me*, exhibition brochure.

emphasis on sexual invasion and penetration. It depicted a giant sculpture of supersized female genitalia, which the visitors had to peer and walk through in order to view the video inside. A clear homage to Niki De Saint Phalle's famous "Hon" sculpture, shown at Moderna Museet at the exhibition "Hon - en Katedral" in 1966. "Hon" is one of the most famous exhibitions ever held at Moderna Museet.²⁷ Djurberg has explained that she drew inspiration from "Hon" in making the Prada exhibition.²⁸



Fig 3. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, "Turn into Me," installation views, Fondazione Prada, 2008. © Zach Feuer

On the premiere night of "Turn into Me" at the Fondazione Prada, the video "The Prostitute" was shut down for undisclosed reasons.²⁹ As Djurberg & Berg often touch on topics that are not easily comprehended and might trigger the viewer, their artworks are not always met with praise. The next chapter will discuss the reception of Djurberg & Berg in the art world.

²⁷ Moderna Museet, "Att Minnas: Hon - en Katedral," accessed October 2, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/sv/utstallningar/att-minnas-hon-en-katedral/>.

²⁸ Kazanjian, "Wicked Fairy Tales," 346.

²⁹ Ibid, 309.

Chapter 3. Reception & Recognition

The reception of the duo's work has not always been that of praise. Early in Djurberg's time at art school, one of her professors said to her to even stop with her painting.³⁰

Djurberg & Berg's first solo show in the United States appeared April 14 - May 27, 2006, at Feuer Gallery in New York City. Nine works were exhibited, and the exhibition received mixed reviews. Cecilia Alemani, an Italian curator, based in New York City, chose for Artforum's "Critics' Pick" to describe the show as "*too many pieces, oddly displayed, although "the works coalesce as a parable of the human condition."*"³¹ The same show was credited "*short and intensely barbed videos*" by Roberta Smiths, the co-chief art critic for The New York Times. Smiths, however, continues to describe the works as "*their contents a kind of darkened so manic that it almost turns light, helped along by the cheerful music of Mr. Djurberg's collaborator, Hans Berg.*"³²

In a more recent review by Ann McCoy, artist, and writer for the Brooklyn Rail wrote a review of the exhibition "One Last Trip to the Underworld" at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery. The exhibition was held in 2019. McCoy stated, "*Djurberg and Berg present the problem without any vision for a solution.*"³³ She continues: "*Djurberg and Berg give us*

³⁰ Ibid, 310.

³¹ Cecilia Alemani, "Critics' Pick," *Artforum*, 2006, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.artforum.com/picks/nathalie-djurberg-10914>.

³² Roberta Smith, "Art in Review; Nathalie Djurberg", *The New York Times*, May 19, 2006, accessed September 1, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/19/arts/art-in-review-nathalie-djurberg.html>.

³³ Ann McCoy, "Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg: One Last Trip to the Underworld", *The Brooklyn Rail*, Issue Dec 19-Jan 20, accessed September 20, 2022, <https://brooklynrail.org/2019/12/artseen/One-Last-Trip-to-the-Underworld>.

neither beauty nor hope to transport us forward. I pray other artists will step in so this will not be the last trip to the underworld.”³⁴

As this thesis aims to analyze the specific steps in Djurberg & Berg’s careers, it is important to remember that the opinions of curators, professional critics, and major institutions have strong influence on how art is accepted, appreciated, and valued. The reviews quoted above seem to be of less importance today, and a review would seldom impact artists’ careers.³⁵ In addition, Jerry Saltz, Senior Art Critic at New York Magazine, once said: “*at no time in the last fifty years has what an art critic writes had less of an effect on the market than now.*”³⁶ The power a critic holds today is mainly to influence readers whether or not to visit a gallery show.³⁷ While interviewing Zach Feuer, founder of Feuer Gallery, he remembers an immediate positive response from visitors to his gallery, followed by good press coverage as well as a large number of sales.³⁸ Feuer’s recollection adds to Saltz’s theory of the diminishing influence of art critics.

In contrast to critics, museum curators have strong influence on artists’ careers.³⁹ Djurberg & Berg received a lot of praise from the curators they worked with. For example, Germano Celant, former Curator at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City, Artistic Director at the Fondazione Prada, and author of the book “Nathalie Djurberg, Turn into Me,” compared Djurberg’s art with the works of Oskar Schlemmer, and Paul Klee, the masters of early 20th Century but states that Djurberg and Berg are

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Don Thompson, *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 209.

³⁶ Ibid, 210.

³⁷ Ibid, 210.

³⁸ Zach Feuer, e-mail message to author, October 5, 2022.

³⁹ Thompson, *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark*, 215.

“*more transgressive, aggressive and cynical.*”⁴⁰ Massimiliano Gioni, Curator of the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City, compares the duo with Paul Chan, Urs Fischer, and David Altmejd.⁴¹ Gioni links them all together through their elements of folklore and fairytale-esque artworks.⁴²

As curators actually decide what will be shown at museums and prominent institutions, their influence should be significantly considered in obtaining recognition in artists’ careers. One specific curator has been identified as vital in Djurberg & Berg’s success saga: Daniel Birnbaum, curator of the Venice Biennale in 2009.

Analyzing Djurberg & Berg’s breakthrough, many believe it to be the Silver Lion award at the Venice Biennale in 2009. For the artists showcasing at the Venice Biennale, it can significantly impact their career by helping them land a prominent dealer and, ultimately, higher selling prices.⁴³

While 2009 was a breakthrough year for Djurberg & Berg, especially in the public eye, this thesis will point to the fact that many major institutions acquired works well before the Venice Biennale. Therefore, analyzing the timing of the purchases is of interest in order to really pinpoint the duo’s breakthrough.

Many institutions or art organizations do not display when exactly they acquired the artworks, but some offer open access to acquisition dates. For example, Moderna Museet bought its first work by Djurberg & Berg in 2005 and its second work in 2006.

⁴⁰ Kazanjian, “Wicked Fairy Tales,” 309.

⁴¹ Ibid, 345.

⁴² Ibid, 345.

⁴³ Olav Velthuis, “The Venice Effect,” *The Art Newspaper Magazine*, June 2011, accessed September 1, 2022, http://www.velthuis.dds.nl/art%20newspaper_biennale%20effect.pdf, 22.

The Rubell Museum, an extensive private collection of contemporary art in Miami, has ten works by Djurberg & Berg in its collection at the time this thesis is written in 2022. The museum offers acquisition dates on four works, which were all acquired between 2005 and 2006.⁴⁴ The Solomon Guggenheim Museum in New York held a group exhibition, “Family Pictures,” in 2007 featuring works from the museum’s permanent collection, where Djurberg & Berg were included. While the museum does not reveal an exact date of acquisition, one can assume it took place before the exhibition was held in 2007, as the museum only exhibited works from its permanent collection.

Djurberg & Berg have also exhibited at prominent museums and institutions before 2009. For example, in 2005, Djurberg & Berg held their first solo show at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden. This thesis will later argue that this exhibition marks a significant milestone in their careers and, therefore, will be discussed thoroughly in the following chapter. In addition, Djurberg & Berg exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art PS1, New York City, in 2006; the group exhibition was called “Into Me / Out of Me.” Other group exhibitions include the Museo d’Arte Contemporanea Roma, the British Museum, Tate Modern, and the Berlin Biennale, et cetera. In addition, Djurberg & Berg also held their first solo exhibition at the Fondazione Prada in 2008. Being included in the major collections mentioned, Djurberg & Berg received a stamp of approval from the art world and should thus prove that the duo had institutional backing well before the award at the Venice Biennale in 2009. The Silver Lion award did, however, achieve public recognition for their work.

⁴⁴ Rubell Museum, “Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg,” accessed November 20, 2022, <https://rubellmuseum.org/nml-nathalie-djurberg-hans-berg>.

Daniel Birnbaum, the curator at the Venice Biennale, also played a vital role in developing Djurberg & Berg's careers. As this thesis will focus in-depth on specific key relationships that shaped Djurberg & Berg's careers in becoming the successful duo of today, it will become clear that the opinions of a few major supporters are critical. Birnbaum is one. The next chapter will be dedicated to analyzing the relationship between Djurberg & Berg, and Birnbaum. Birnbaum did not only select them for the Venice Biennale but later became director of another important contributor to Djurberg & Berg's success: Moderna Museet.

Chapter 4. Moderna Museet

Moderna Museet was founded in 1958 with a brand new vision of a museum containing new art collections created by living artists, something non-existent at the time in Sweden.⁴⁵ Ultimately, it became the center for new art in Stockholm and an important global institution. Moderna Museet has one of Europe's most renowned modern and contemporary art collections. Pontus Hultén, who became director in 1960, was arguably of great importance for the museum's success and the institution of today. Some even argue that Hultén was one of the most influential persons in the museum art world of the 20th Century.⁴⁶ After his time as director of Moderna Museet, Hultén went on to establish the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle in Bonn, and Jean Tinguely Museum in Basel.

Hultén worked at the Moderna Museet from 1958 until 1973 and built the museum's collection from the beginning. Hultén worked closely with artists during his time as director. Hultén exhibited many world-renowned artists like Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns long before becoming the mega artists they are today. Their gallerist, Leo Castelli, who represented a majority of the emerging pop artists at the time, worked closely with Hultén to make exhibitions of said infamous artists at Moderna a reality. Castelli saw the commercial opportunity of the artists he represented but lacked support from his American clients.⁴⁷ Castelli believed the artists he represented needed a

⁴⁵ Moderna Museet, "Historia," April, 2015, accessed September 4, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/sv/2015/01/04/historia/>.

⁴⁶ Daniel Birnbaum et al., "Pontus Hultén," *Artforum*, February 2007, Vol 45, No 6, accessed October 5, 2022, <https://www.artforum.com/print/200702/pontus-hulten-12381>.

⁴⁷ Titia Hulst, "The Leo Castelli Gallery," *Archives of American Art Journal*, Smithsonian, 2007, 18.

European stamp of approval before his clients in America would appreciate and ultimately purchase their works.⁴⁸ If Moderna Museet hosted exhibitions, it would bring the legitimacy Castelli needed, even though the museum was a long way from the art scene in New York City.⁴⁹ Moderna Museet held the exhibitions “4 American” (1962) and “American Pop Art – 106 forms of love and despair” (1964), and the first solo show in Europe of Andy Warhol in 1968. At the time, when said American artists stood at the beginning of their careers, showing them at Moderna Museet was not, however, entirely given. Moderna Museet had to advertise and provide information on the unknown American artists for the Swedish public. The audience needed to understand why they should visit the museum to see these unknown artists. Hultén often spoke about duty and the importance of public trust Moderna Museet should uphold to always, and only, show objects of interest for the Swedish public.⁵⁰ This relationship with the visitors based on trust of being a knowledgeable museum was, and still is, essential. This trust-relationship to the people brought certain legitimacy to the artists the museum chose to exhibit.

Today Moderna Museet has a solid position as a top international museum, and its collection contains 140,000 works.⁵¹ Being this grand institution gives the museum the opportunities to experiment with artists and artworks to exhibit and acquire for its collection. Moderna Museet has built a solid foundation since the beginning, which helps when trying to tie artists to it. Very few artists would say no to hosting an exhibition at

⁴⁸ Ibid, 18.

⁴⁹ Claes Britton, *Pontus Hultén; Den Moderna Konstens Anförare* (Stockholm: Albert Bonnier, 2022), 169.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 170.

⁵¹ Moderna Museet, “Årsredovisning 2020,” accessed September 6, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/05/moderna-museet-arsredovisning-2020.pdf>, 14.

the museum, and most who would decline have other commitments instead.⁵² However, everyone is at least interested in having a conversation with Moderna Museet, which often leads to almost endless opportunities for the museum to continue developing its position and collection.⁵³ By using strategic acquisitions combined with generous donations, Moderna Museet has achieved a collection of major modern and contemporary international and Swedish artists.⁵⁴ Since Moderna Museet has become the center for 20th and 21st-century Swedish art, local and domestic artists naturally have an important place in Moderna Museet's collection. The "Swedish Section" of the collection consists of 4000 works, and other Nordic artists bring an additional 400 works to the collection, resulting in the world's finest collection of art from the Nordic region.⁵⁵ The importance of Moderna Museet acquiring a Swedish emerging artist's work, or works, is often fundamental to said artist's career. Daniel Birnbaum, former director at Moderna Museet, believes the museum should be considered a catalyzer for new and emerging artists.⁵⁶ Since Moderna Museet holds one of the world's finest collections of modern and contemporary art, it is undoubtedly a statement when it acquires an artwork from an emerging artist, as the museum must believe it will fit in the collection. Recent studies show that institutions that successfully promote their new, emerging artists can be a

⁵² Göran Jonsson, "Konstnästorn om skuggorna från historien," *Dagens Industri*, November 15, 2018, accessed October 15, 2022. <https://www.di.se/weekend/konstnästorn-om-skuggorna-fran-historien/>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Moderna Museet, "Årsredovisning 2020," 6-7.

⁵⁵ Moderna Museet, "Om samlingen," accessed September 25, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/sv/samlingen/>.

⁵⁶ Daniel Birnbaum, Ann-Sofi Noring, "En större värld kräver en kulturpolitisk satsning," *Dagens Nyheter Debatt*, August 25, 2017, accessed September 7, 2022. <https://www.dn.se/debatt/en-storre-varld-kraver-en-kulturpolitisk-satsning/>.

potential launchpad and drive growth to that artist's career.⁵⁷ A theory Moderna Museet has proved true for decades.

Since the museum's beginning, the collection of Nordic art has constantly kept growing. The museum has received funds from the Swedish government earmarked to buy works by Swedish artists in order to preserve Swedish art history. In addition, as Moderna Museet is a government-funded institution, it has obligations to develop the art scene in Sweden. The government's role in running Moderna Museet will be discussed in the section below as it is important to understand the museum's obligations and how it is affecting its business and, ultimately, Swedish art.

4.1 The Relationship Between Arts and Politics

Today, the Swedish government is heavily engaged in its country's culture and works towards an inclusive approach where everyone is able to participate in cultural activities and share the experiences of cultural activities.⁵⁸ During his time as director of Moderna Museet, Pontus Hultén played an important role in widening public access to art in the 1960s. Before Moderna Museet, the art scene in Sweden was considered high-brow and only accessible to a small portion of the public. Because of this, Hultén was considered a political and controversial figure.⁵⁹ Hultén had a vision that art should be an important aspect of developing Sweden. Hultén carried a vision that art should play an

⁵⁷ Clare McAndrew, *The Role of Cities in the US Art Ecosystem* (Zurich: UBS, Arts Economics, 2022), 9.

⁵⁸ Regeringskansliet, "Mål för kultur," accessed October 15, 2022, <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/kultur/mal-for-kultur/>.

⁵⁹ Abdul Hibombo, "Han revolutionerade museivärlden: Unikt experiment," *Svt Nyheter*, August 15, 2022, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://www.svt.se/kultur/pontus-hulten-i-helfigur-i-ny-biografi>.

important role in the development of Sweden. With Hultén at the helm, Moderna Museet took lead on this discussion and in turn, pivoted the Swedish art scene, resulting in a more accessible, but also more political art scene during the 1960s and 70s. Moderna Museet was heavily responsible for the intensified and expanded cultural sector in Stockholm during this time.⁶⁰ By exhibiting new art forms including videos, performative art, theater, literature, et cetera, Hultén aimed to have more people involved in the art.⁶¹ Moreover, the museum extended its opening hours, along with welcoming children into the museum.⁶² The initiatives were, however, met with resistance from artists, journalists, and critics.⁶³ Nevertheless, according to Hultén, the audience attracted by the new initiatives was large enough and pleased with the museums initiatives to present a wide range of artists and art forms. Ultimately the opposition did not bear that much weight for the museum.⁶⁴ The political relationship between Moderna Museet and the Swedish government was relatively good, even though the turbulent times. The government did not involve itself in the decision making rather let Moderna Museet decide on acquisitions and exhibitions separately.⁶⁵

The cultural debate also brought discussing on the importance of art in building the Swedish society and the impact of art on day-to-day life. The concept of speaking of art in regard to science, measurable numbers, and social importance all became politics during the 1960-1970s. The view of cultural policy was broadened and was seen as a

⁶⁰ Olle Granath, Monica Nieckels, *Moderna Museet 1958-1983* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1983) 47.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 7.

⁶² *Ibid*, 154.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 154.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 39.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 53.

means of extend democracy and increase equality in our society.⁶⁶ In review, it also became important to see culture as a dynamic and independent force within society. Similar discussions are still relevant today and the government is heavily engaged in the art scene of today. More recently, the government has taken an active approach to the cultural sector. It is difficult to talk about politics in the art world without mentioning the recent Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 totally disrupted the art market and was followed by a period of unprecedented crisis for all parties involved in the market.⁶⁷ This thesis will not venture into the depths of the effects caused by the pandemic, as it has been discussed widely before. However, in context to the political landscape in Sweden in regard to culture, it deserves a brief mention. A recent study carried out by the Swedish Government's Institution of Cultural Analysis shows that the cultural sector was one of the most affected by the pandemic.⁶⁸ Covid-19 affected the Swedish cultural sector with three initial and severe problems: 1. A decrease in cultural activities, 2. Loss of income and other economic consequences, 3. Increased uncertainty about the future of our culture.⁶⁹ It was followed by an increase of nearly 26 % in government funding and costs in 2020 compared to the year before. It is the biggest increase since they began to register the cost of the cultural sector in 1998.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Statens Offentliga Utredningar (SOU), "Tjugo års kulturpolitik 1974-1994 (1995). En rapport från Kulturutredningen 1995:85," accessed September 12, 2022, <https://lagen.nu/sou/1995:85#S1>, 67.

⁶⁷ McAndrew, *The Role of Cities*, 24.

⁶⁸ Myndigheten för Kulturanalys, *Kulturanalys 2022* (Stockholm: Taberg Media Group, 2022), 40.

⁶⁹ Myndigheten för Kulturanalys, "En översyn av pandemins effekter inom kulturområdet," April 4, 2021, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://kulturanalys.se/publikation/en-oversyn-av-pandemins-effekter-inom-kulturomradet/>, 7.

⁷⁰ Myndigheten för Kulturanalys, *Kulturanalys 2022*, 34-35.

A recent study stated that it has been easier for public institutions compared to private to survive during the pandemic, even in times when they had to remain closed because they are not as dependent on admissions since they will still receive government funds and aid.⁷¹ Instead, closing down, the Moderna Museet took the opportunity to preserve and manage its collection instead of tending to visitors. As a result, Moderna Museet made parts of its collection digitally accessible. One example of this is the museum's live guided tours of its collection, "Soffvisningar," on Facebook. The viewers could partake in live tours online and interact with the guide. While the museum had to remain closed, its collection became accessible online by relocating the museum's resources but still working towards its obligations as a government-funded museum.

In 2021, Moderna Museet received 25 million SEK (\$2,411,565) in aid from the Swedish government to support the arts and artists during the Covid-19 pandemic. An additional 25 million SEK was also allocated to the Swedish Public Art Agency with the same purpose of supporting the arts as Moderna Museet. The additional funding from the government enabled an increase in purchasing artworks and supported the infrastructure of the Swedish art scene during the crisis. The Public Art Agency bought 500 new artworks from 300 Swedish artists, and Moderna Museet acquired 372 artworks from 169 artists.⁷² Looking at these numbers, it is clear that Moderna Museet acquired more expensive artworks from fewer artists than the Public Art Agency. One explanation for this is that the two institutions operate differently. The Public Art Agency mostly focused

⁷¹ Ibid, 43.

⁷² Moderna Museet, "Svenska förvärv," accessed September 15, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/sv/utställningar/svenska-forvarv-2021/>.

on buying art that was easily placed for public enjoyment in the public sphere while Moderna Museet bought works to fit and extend its collection.⁷³ Even though the two institutions differed in their approach, it was a welcomed relief during a difficult time. The director of Moderna Museet, Gitte Ørskou, said it created “*an opportunity to add nuance to art history through important new acquisitions.*”⁷⁴ Ørskou continued to explain that it was important for the museum to have a broad spectrum when deciding what to acquire. Most of the artists the museum acquired work from during the pandemic were born in Sweden and also actively working in Sweden. However, there were exemptions. One example is the Iraq-born artists Mohammed Sami, from whom Moderna Museet acquired two paintings. Sami sought refuge in Sweden as a result of the war in Iraq. Sami now lives and works in London, England. An important question raised regarding the Covid-19 acquisitions is: who counts as a Swedish artist and thus deserves the tax-funded aid. When looking at the different acquisitions, a clear reasoning is not evident and the answer could be open for interpretation. Moderna Museet explained that the Swedish art scene consists of artists from many different countries and cultures and that the boundaries of participation are not restricted to artists only born and active in Sweden.⁷⁵ For the length of this thesis, I will not venture further into how the pandemic affected the Swedish art scene. this. But as a reminder, it is important to notice the complex question of what is regarded as a Swedish artist today when the art world is so globally connected.

⁷³ Statens Konstråd, *Coronasamlingen* (Stockholm: Livonia Print, 2022), 142.

⁷⁴ Moderna Museet, “Svenska förvärv 2021 färdigställt,” October 1, 2022, accessed October 5, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/sv/2022/01/10/svenska-forvarv-2021-klart/>.

⁷⁵ Moderna Museet, “Moderna Utställningen 2018,” accessed October 4, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/sv/utstallningar/modernautstallningen-2018/>.

When analyzing Moderna Museet's acquisitions, it is clear that it focused on purchasing from emerging artists, even if the collection as a whole consists of works ranging from the 1960s to 2021. Ørskou explains that the museum always had been taking risks by buying from young artists, and she is hopeful it will pay off in the future.⁷⁶ Being at the forefront and buying emerging rather than established artists has been the museum's strategy since its beginnings. The strategy gives the museum opportunities to buy artworks for a more affordable price. According to Birnbaum, it is a hard task to extend the museum's collection with its limited financial resources.⁷⁷ Most of the major museums in Sweden are government-funded, and the cultural sector is over all reliant on aid from the government rather than funds coming from private initiatives or organizations.⁷⁸ However, in addition to receiving state funds, Moderna Museet also depends on private donations and initiatives to enhance its collection. The museum does have a few supporting associations which help contribute to the museum's current collection. For example, "Klubb Moderna," has donated 250 works to the museum since the 1950s and donates approximately 1 million SEK (\$96,021) every year for acquisitions.⁷⁹ To continue, "The American Friends of Moderna Museet" is also a U.S. §501(c)(3) public charity, which enables tax-deductible gifts in the United States to

⁷⁶ Karin Grundberg Wolodarski, "Historiska satsningen: Museet har miljonshoppat 373 nya verk under pandemin," *Dagens Industri*, February 5, 2022, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.di.se/nyheter/historiska-satsningen-museet-har-miljonshoppat-373-nya-verk-under-pandemin/>.

⁷⁷ Rikard Ekholm, "Intervju med Daniel Birnbaum," *Konsten.net*, February 8, 2011, accessed September 29, 2022, <https://konsten.net/intervju-med-daniel-birnbaum/>.

⁷⁸ Myndigheten för Kulturanalys, *Kulturanalys 2022*, 49.

⁷⁹ Moderna Museet, "Om klubb Moderna," accessed October 6, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/sv/om-museet/moderna-museets-vanner/om-moderna-museets-vanner/>.

support Moderna Museet. It was founded in 2007 and has since then donated work from Arthur Jafa, Louise Bourgeois, and Cindy Sherman, among many others. The work “On Fire” by Djurberg & Berg was donated in 2010 by the American Friends of Moderna Museet. The generous donations speak for the museum’s support even on an individual level. Together with government funds, the museum receives sufficient support to accomplish its obligations and stay relevant for artists while creating interesting exhibitions for the audiences.

4.1.1 Obligations

Being a government-funded institution, Moderna Museet has clear obligations and regulations it must follow. For the length of this thesis, every regulation will not be discussed. But, the following section will explain the the museums current goals, focus and responsibilities. Foremost, the museum’s mission is to collect, preserve and display all different genres of art from the 20th and 21st Centuries. Moderna Museet must also make its collection accessible to the public. To continue, the museum should also work towards artistic and cultural renewal and promote understanding and interest for today’s art. The museum must conduct international exchanges and cooperations and continue to develop its leading position as a cultural institution.⁸⁰ Moreover, the museum has a responsibility to work towards Swedish artists being represented globally and included in

⁸⁰ Sveriges Riksdag, “Förordning (2007:1177) med instruktion för Moderna Museet,” November 22, 2007, accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-20071177-med-instruktion-for_sfs-2007-1177.

big biennials around the world. One example is the Venice Biennale, which Moderna Museet account as the best platform for showing contemporary art.⁸¹

These requirements help to understand why Moderna Museet is at the forefront of supporting emerging Swedish artists and making them a successful launchpad; it is simply required of them as a government-funded institution.

4.2 Djurberg & Berg at Moderna Museet

Djurberg & Berg have held two solo exhibitions at Moderna Museet and have been included in seven group shows. The first solo exhibition, “Den 1:a på Moderna: Nathalie Djurberg”, (translated to “The 1st at Moderna Museet; Nathalie Djurberg”), was in 2005. “Den 1:a på Moderna” was a series of exhibitions for contemporary art, where the vernissage occurred on the first day of the month. The series ran from 2004 until 2008 and included artists such as Klara Lidén, and Thomas Ruff, among others.

Djurberg & Berg’s second solo show in 2018, “A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air,” will be discussed in depth in a separate chapter later in the thesis.

Zach Feuer at the now closed Feuer Gallery worked with Moderna Museet a few times during the years when the gallery represented Djurberg & Berg. Feuer believes that Moderna Museet held a key role in building an audience in Sweden, which was important for Djurberg & Berg to further build upon to become internationally successful.⁸² Similar to what Hultén once believed, the audience and the public trust for the museum’s ability

⁸¹ Moderna Museet, “Årsredovisning 2020,” 17.

⁸² Zach Feuer, e-mail message to author, October 5, 2022.

to display interesting artists and that it will bring legitimacy to the artists. Because of this; showing and acquiring Djurberg & Berg, Moderna Museet should be considered vital in building the local foundation for their careers.

4.3 A Director's Decision

When analyzing Djurberg & Berg's careers, it becomes evident that Daniel Birnbaum was crucial in developing the relationship between Moderna Museet and Djurberg & Berg. Initially, Birnbaum was the curator of the Venice Biennale in 2008, the same biennale where Djurberg & Berg received the award for most promising young artists. After the Venice Biennale, Birnbaum appeared as number four on ArtReview's list 2009 of the most influential people in the contemporary art world.⁸³ The list reveals the massive influence Birnbaum had at the time. Being the curator, Birnbaum selected Djurberg & Berg to be included in the exhibition, which speaks for his importance of the duo's career. Birnbaum's relationship with Djurberg & Berg continued long after the biennale as Birnbaum went on to become the director of Moderna Museet between 2010 and 2018. Being the director of Moderna Museet, he had a great influence on the Swedish art scene as well, which correlates with Djurberg & Berg's early careers. As director, Birnbaum was outspoken about the importance of tying emerging artists to the museum since it often lacks the financial resources to enhance its collection in other ways.⁸⁴ Birnbaum believed that the Moderna Museet's collection was strong in terms of art from

⁸³ ArtReview, "Power 100: 2010," accessed October 3, 2022, <https://artreview.com/artist/daniel-birnbaum/>.

⁸⁴ Ekholm, "Intervju med Daniel Birnbaum."

the 1960s but lacked in art from recent decades. It was something he, as director, worked towards changing.⁸⁵

Birnbaum believed the early success of the museum could be credited to the personal relationships that Hultén build and maintained with the artists during his times as the director in the 1960s.⁸⁶ Hultén's strategy of developing relationships has since the museum's beginning inspired succeeding directors in the years to come, and for example, Birnbaum regarded the idea of working closely with the artists as important for the museum. As a strategy to develop the museum, Birnbaum believed that the museum should be beneficial for the artists rather than vice versa, and that the dialog between museum and artist was ultimately essential.⁸⁷ Birnbaum believed it was vital to tie the most influential artists of our time to the museum and find ways to collaborate with the artists and audience in mind.⁸⁸ To manage this, Birnbaum often visited art schools and studios to stay à jour with the current times and experience relevant artistic forces. It speaks for the active approach Birnbaum took in his leadership during his time as a director of Moderna Museet.

After receiving the award at the Venice Biennale, which Birnbaum curated, it was only logical for him to continue working with them when becoming director of Moderna Museet. It is clear that Birnbaum was instrumental in building a long-term relationship between Djurberg & Berg and Moderna Museet, consolidating the importance of the museum in Djurberg & Berg's careers. As previously stated, Moderna Museet should be

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

considered important for Swedish artists in general in regard to international recognition. Moderna Museet helps build a foundation for emerging artists, and it brings legitimacy to the artists it exhibit. It also applies to Djurberg & Berg. Being seen as a catalyzer for emerging artists, showing and including Djurberg & Berg in exhibitions multiple times allowed the duo to explore new and different contexts by themselves and with other artists, which would be of importance for their careers as well. Therefore, Moderna Museet must be viewed as an important platform for Djurberg & Berg.

4.4 Djurberg & Berg's Retrospective

In 2018, Moderna Museet hosted Djurberg & Berg's largest and most comprehensive exhibition, with works ranging from the beginning of their careers to newly made. The exhibition is called "A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air," drawing a parable of how Djurberg & Berg reflect on their artistic careers after almost a decade: "*an inner voyage through chaos and confusion.*"⁸⁹

The exhibition was produced by Moderna Museet, and after being on display from June until September 2018, it traveled on to Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea Di Trento e Roberto in Italy (MART) followed by to Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany. Ann-Sofi Noring, deputy superintendent at Moderna Museet at the time, explained that traveling exhibitions like this are a good measurement of the international interest of the works exhibited by Moderna Museet. It also speaks of the

⁸⁹ Moderna Museet, *Djurberg/Berg: En Resa Genom Träsk och Förvirring med Små Glimtar av Luft* (Stockholm: Hatje Cantz, 2018), 21.

quality, and recognition Moderna Museet is trying to uphold as a global museum.⁹⁰ In regards to the traveling exhibition, Djurberg and Berg played a big part in putting Moderna Museet in a global context.⁹¹ The collaboration with Schirn and MART is a result of this.



Fig 4. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, installation views, Moderna Museet, 2018. © Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

The exhibition consisted of numerous sculptures and animations with sounds, and installations from almost two decades the duo has worked together. It was grouped around their bigger installations, “The Experiment” (2009), “The Potato” (2008), and “The Parade” (2011).

⁹⁰ Antonia Nessen, “Dold konst fram i ljuset,” *Antonia Nessen*, 2013, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://antonianessen.com/filter/Daniel-Birnbaum/Dold-konst-fram-i-ljuset-Intervju-med-Moderna-Museets-ledardduo>.

⁹¹ Moderna Museet, “Årsredovisning 2018,” accessed October 13, 2022, <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/03/mm-arsredovisning-2018.pdf>, 3.

Alongside their previous artworks, the exhibition also presented new, never shown work, for example “Dark Side of The Moon,” which has belonged to Moderna Museet’s permanent collection since 2019. For the exhibition, Djurberg & Berg also produced and displayed their first Virtual Reality (VR) work, “It Will End in Stars.” The work takes the viewer on an immersive journey inside a dreamlike landscape. The work was created in collaboration with the VR & Augmented Reality (AR) production company Acute Art. Acute Art allows contemporary artists to create their art in new digital mediums such as VR, AR and Mixed Reality. Since 2019, the director and curator of Acute Art has been Daniel Birnbaum.⁹² Birnbaum is responsible for finding artists willing to try to create their art in VR and AR as their medium.⁹³ Other than Djurberg & Berg, Acute Art has produced works by Anish Kapoor, KAWS, Tomás Saraceno, and Marina Abramović, among many others. After the traveling exhibition, the work “It Will End in Stars,” was exhibited at the Julia Stoschek Collection (JSC) in 2020 as a long-term collaboration between Acute Art and the JSC.

Moreover, Daniel Birnbaum, who was still the director at Moderna Museet when the exhibition, “A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air,” occurred, wrote in the preface of the exhibition catalog and thanked all parties involved for making this traveling exhibition possible. Birnbaum specifically mentioned Gió Marconi, Lisson Gallery, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, and the Fondazione Prada for their generous support in lending their artworks for the exhibition.⁹⁴ As a joint effort, Moderna

⁹² Acute Art, “About,” accessed November 1, 2022, <https://acuteart.com/about/>.

⁹³ Jonsson, “Konstnestorn om skuggorna från historien.”

⁹⁴ Moderna Museet, *Djurberg/Berg: En Resa*, 13.

Museet was able to host the most comprehensive survey exhibition of Djurberg & Berg.

It proves that the support from several different institutions were instrumental to Djurberg & Berg's success. The next chapter is dedicated to the support Djurberg & Berg received from these other institutions.

Chapter 5. Other Institutional Backing

5.1. Gallery Representation

As previously mentioned, Djurberg & Berg are represented by Gió Marconi Gallery, Lisson Gallery, and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery. Obtaining gallery representation must be considered a turning point and an important milestone in Djurberg & Berg's careers. The importance of a great dealer is often considered one essential step for artists to become successful. Moreover, dealers who promote their new artists play a valuable role in their careers.⁹⁵ Dealers hold significant power in discovering new artists, and their support will determine the artists who will be shown or not. Through gallery representatives, the artists can be seen by a larger audience, and their artworks purchased by serious collectors.⁹⁶ Artists who fail to find gallery representation within a few years after graduating are unlikely to become successful.⁹⁷ Djurberg received her Master of Fine Arts in 2002, met Berg in 2004, and by 2005 they had their first solo show at Gió Marconi Gallery.

Djurberg & Berg have praised their first gallery, Gió Marconi Gallery, for its importance for their success.⁹⁸ During the early years, when Djurberg & Berg were rather unknown, interest from dealers was low. Therefore, Djurberg & Berg were grateful for the opportunity of being represented by Gió Marconi Gallery.⁹⁹ Now, Djurberg & Berg

⁹⁵ Alan Bowness, *The Conditions of Success: How The Modern Artist Rises To Fame* (London: Thames & Hudson UK, 1990), 39.

⁹⁶ Thompson, *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark*, 42.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 42.

⁹⁸ Pontus Silfverstolpe, "Frukost med Nathalie Djurberg och Hans Berg," *Barnebys Magazine*, May 14, 2016, accessed September 1, 2022, <https://www.barnebys.se/blogg/frukost-med-nathalie-djurberg-och-hans-berg>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

describe their relationship with Gió Marconi Gallery as a family.¹⁰⁰ Gió Marconi Gallery is a private gallery based in Milan that works with contemporary artists worldwide. Gió Marconi Gallery held its first exhibition in 2005, and collaborating over an extended period with the same gallery provided Djurberg & Berg with great support.¹⁰¹ Caroline Corbetta introduced Gió Marconi to Djurberg & Berg.¹⁰² Corbetta was the curator of “Momentum - Nordic Festival of Contemporary Art” in Oslo in 2004. The festival included Djurberg & Berg’s largest group exhibition at the time. According to Djurberg, Corbetta liked their work and convinced Gió Marconi to show them.¹⁰³ It resulted in Corbetta curating the exhibition “Why Do I Have This Urge to Do These Things Over and Over Again?” at Gió Marconi Gallery in 2005. Since then, Gió Marconi Gallery has hosted four solo exhibitions representing Djurberg & Berg, as well as the latest exhibition, “The Soft Spot,” with Djurberg & Berg in 2021.

In 2006, Djurberg & Berg held their first gallery exhibition in New York City at Feuer Gallery. Feuer Gallery, which no longer exists but was a contemporary art gallery representing, for example, Dana Schutz and others, in addition to Djurberg & Berg. Zach Feuer saw their work “Tiger Licking a Girl’s Butt,” which attracted him to work with them.¹⁰⁴ Feuer describes their work as filled with: “*Humour, darkness, an amazing physicality and ability to touch on very taboo subjects in an accessible way.*”¹⁰⁵ After

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Stefano Casciani, “We are not Two, We are One,” *Domus*, February 23, 2011, accessed September 16, 2022, <https://www.domusweb.it/en/interviews/2011/02/23/we-are-not-two-we-are-one.html>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Zach Feuer, e-mail message to author, October 5, 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

seeing “Tiger Licking a Girl’s Butt,” he contacted the duo and offered them a show at his gallery in New York.¹⁰⁶ Being represented by a successful gallery gave Djurberg & Berg an opportunity to be active in New York City, which is often a crucial aspect of becoming successful as an artist. The United States remains the center of the art world, and New York City dominates the scene with institutions and exhibitions and is considered the “*global headquarters*” of the art



Fig 5. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, “Tiger Licking a Girl’s Butt,” film still.
© Zach Feuer

market.¹⁰⁷ A recent study revealed that High Net Worth Collectors preferred to attend shows or other art-related events in New York City compared to any other city in the United States.¹⁰⁸ It demonstrates the gravity of the New York art scene and, therefore the importance of Djurberg & Berg being represented by the Feuer Gallery in New York City. Feuer Gallery held its last exhibition with Djurberg & Berg in 2013 and closed permanently in 2017.

As of 2022, in addition to Gió Marconi Gallery, Djurberg & Berg are being represented by Lisson Gallery in London and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York City and Los Angeles. Lisson Gallery has had four solo exhibitions and one group show since its inauguration in 2014. Tanya Bonakdar Gallery has held two solo exhibitions since

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ McAndrew, *The Role of Cities*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 3.

hosting the first in 2019. The latest exhibition at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, “Pancake Moon,” is currently running from November 2022 until January 2023, in Los Angeles. It is Djurberg & Berg’s first solo show in Los Angeles since completing their residency at the Hammer Museum in 2008.

In addition to exhibitions, the galleries help support Djurberg & Berg by being a sounding board for their ideas, providing practical solutions along with providing financial support.¹⁰⁹ The galleries often also select Djurberg & Berg’s works to be promoted at international art fairs such as Art Basel and Frieze.

In conclusion, being represented by multiple galleries in different cities helps Djurberg & Berg to cultivate global exposure and maintain a steady stream of exhibitions worldwide.

5.2 The Fondazione Prada

Almost any talented artist will attract at least one or two important collectors early in his or her career.¹¹⁰ In this thesis, personal relationships of great importance for Djurberg & Berg have been analyzed. The following section is dedicated to Miuccia Prada, who has been a major supporter of Djurberg & Berg since the beginning of their careers. Miuccia Prada and her husband, Patrizio Bertelli, are on the ArtReview “Top 200 Collectors-list” in the world, making them extremely important in the art world and hence to Djurberg and Berg as well. In addition, Miuccia Prada appears as number 36 on ArtReview’s “Power 100, 2021” list, where ArtReview ranks the most influential people

¹⁰⁹ Silfverstolpe, “Frukost med Nathalie Djurberg och Hans Berg.”

¹¹⁰ Bowness, *The Conditions of Success*, 39.

in the art world.¹¹¹ Miuccia Prada has been a patron of Djurberg ever since their first exhibition, “Turn into Me,” in 2008, and their dialog with each other has been constant since that exhibition.¹¹² Having early backing from an influential person and the relationship between patron and artist is key in developing Djurberg & Berg’s careers. According to Zach Feuer, the Fondazione Prada was a turning point in Djurberg & Berg’s careers. Feuer believes the Fondazione Prada’s support enabled a new level of international notice.¹¹³ Since the Fondazione Prada has multiple venues for its exhibitions, Djurberg & Berg are allowed more global platforms for their art. The Fondazione Prada has hosted three solo exhibitions with Djurberg & Berg and included them in two larger group shows. Most recently, in November 2021, the duo showed “A Moon Wrapped in Brown Paper” at Prada Rong Zhai in Shanghai. The show brought together sculptures and videos from early 2000 to 2019. The Fondazione Prada funded the exhibition, a display of the institution’s ongoing support of the duo.

To continue, in 2022, Djurberg and Berg designed a jewelry collection for the Fall/Winter



Fig 6. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, installation views, Prada Rong Zhai, 2021. © Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

¹¹¹ ArtReview, “Power 100: 2021,” accessed October 15, 2022, <https://artreview.com/power-100>.

¹¹² Miu Miu, “Miu Miu: A Remedy - Nathalie Djurberg / Hans Berg Miu Miu Jewels Project,” July 27, 2022, YouTube video and text, accessed September 29, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXcPVvAYhUc>.

¹¹³ Zach Feuer, email message to author, October 5, 2022.

collection from Miu Miu, a brand founded by Miuccia Prada. The collection is named “A Remedy,” and inspiration for the pieces comes from Djurberg & Berg’s work “A Thief Caught in the Act.” The duo brought their dreamlike aesthetics to the jewelry, and when opening the jewelry box, music composed by Berg would play. Jewelry design is an entirely new art form for Djurberg & Berg, branching out from what the duo is familiar with and famous for. It ties in with Djurberg’s need to be uncomfortable in her creative process and her strive for something new. The collection proves that the support provided by Miuccia Prada gives Djurberg & Berg opportunities to broaden their artistic vision, working with new mediums.



Fig 7. Metal and resin earrings.
Designed by Djurberg & Berg for
Miu Miu. © Prada



Fig 8. Resin Necklace. Designed by
Djurberg & Berg for Miu Miu.
© Prada

Based on the information provided in this section, this thesis will argue that the support of the Fondazione Prada, and ultimately the relationship with Miuccia Prada, was, and still is, fundamental for the development of Djurberg & Berg’s careers.

5.3 The Julia Stoschek Collection

Other support can be found in Julia Stoschek, as previously mentioned. Stoschek is currently ranked 43 on ArtReview's "Power 100" list, which speaks of her importance in the contemporary art world.¹¹⁴ Aside from being on the board of many top-tier museums, Stoschek founded the Julia Stoschek Collection (JSC) in 2002 with a mission of collecting, conserving, and presenting time-based art.¹¹⁵ Artworks from the collection are presented in two different exhibition places in Düsseldorf and Berlin. The JSC actively builds long-term relationships with galleries and artists and lends its artworks to other institutions' exhibitions.¹¹⁶ Having an active approach by lending artworks to other institutions' exhibitions proves that the support of JSC contributes to Djurberg & Berg's careers. The JSC collection helps to bring wider accessibility to the artists for a larger audience.

The first two works the JSC acquired by Djurberg & Berg was "The Mother" and "We are not two, we are one." Both animations were created in 2008 and bought by the JSC the same year. Then, in 2009, the JSC acquired "The Experiment."¹¹⁷

The first time the JSC exhibited Djurberg & Berg was in 2014, when the JSC presented the work "The Experiment" in a solo show. Further, the duo has also been included in two other group shows. The first group show, "Turned on," held in 2015, showcased the contemporary part of the collection. The second group show, "Generation

¹¹⁴ ArtReview, "Power 100: 2021."

¹¹⁵ The Julia Stoschek Foundation, "About us," accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.jsc.art/about-us/>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Andreas Korte, email message to author, October 28, 2022.

Loss,” celebrated the 10th anniversary of the JSC. More recently, as a long-term collaboration between the JSC and Acute Art, the JSC provided a space for the VR and AR works produced by Acute Art. As a result of the collaboration, the JSC showed Djurberg & Berg’s work “It Will End in Stars” at the showroom in Berlin in 2019. Andreas Korte, Head of Exhibitions at the JSC, remembers the work as very innovative. They had to use a special motion sensor to allow users to grab and hold objects inside the virtual reality.¹¹⁸ Even though the JSC has experience displaying VR, the experts at Acute Art made the collaboration beneficial for the JSC, and Korte believed the collaboration was successful.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 6. Secondary market

According to the Swedish auction house Bukowskis, Djurberg & Berg are one of the most sought-after Swedish artists right now.¹¹⁹ As previously mentioned, Djurberg & Berg hold the record of the most expensive contemporary artwork sold at auction in Sweden, “Crocodile, Egg, Man.” It depicts a clay sculpture of a man and a crocodile on top of an egg. The sculpture is from the video “I am Saving this Egg for Later,” exhibited at the Garage in Moscow in 2013. This chapter will examine this record sale in 2020 and analyze Djurberg & Berg’s secondary market.

Researching the secondary market of Djurberg and Berg through databases like Artnet and Artprice can be somewhat confusing due to the fact that Djurberg & Berg is sometimes divided into two different sections. Sometimes

when a sculpture is up for auction, it is only cataloged as Djurberg, and other times it is cataloged as both Djurberg & Berg. This confusion might be explained by, at the beginning of Djurberg & Berg’s collaboration in 2004, the duo worked under the name “Djurberg.” However, Djurberg quickly became ashamed when the audience did not acknowledge the impact Berg’s music had on the works.¹²⁰ In an interview, the duo stated



Fig 9. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, “Crocodile, Egg, Man.”
© Artnet Worldwide Corporation

¹¹⁹ Bukowskis, “388: Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg,” accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.bukowskis.com/sv/auctions/631/388-nathalie-djurberg-hans-berg-whale-in-armchair-fran-worship>.

¹²⁰ Anna Mikaela Ekstrand, “Post-Breakup, Artist Duo Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg Present Their Most Intimate Exhibition,” *Cultured Magazine*, November 4, 2021, Accessed October 14, 2022, <https://www.culturedmag.com/article/2021/11/16/post-breakup-artist-duo-nathalie-djurberg-and-hans-berg-present-their-most-intimate-exhibition>.

that they were met with a lot of resistance from most people when wanting to add Berg's name.¹²¹ They were told it might cloud the brand already built and how it would be easier to advertise and ultimately sell more works if focused on a single individual rather than both of them.¹²² While there are many examples of very successful duos, such as Gilbert & Georges, and Christo & Jeanne-Claude, it is more common to work alone as an artist. Nevertheless, Djurberg & Berg decided that while they work in different mediums, ownership and authorship would be shared between them.¹²³ Furthermore, they officially added Berg's name. The art market has since displayed troubles crediting both for their work. Even when receiving the Silver Lion, the announcer forgot to mention Berg's name, but Djurberg was quick to underline his importance to their work.¹²⁴ However, in recent years, Bukowskis, the dominating auction house where Djurberg & Berg's works are sold on the secondary market, has started to catalog even the sculptures of both Djurberg & Berg. To conclude, this thesis does not make any distinction between artworks cataloged as only "Djurberg" or both "Djurberg & Berg." If the work was created later than 2004, when the duo started collaborating, this thesis will assume that the work is, or should be credited to both Djurberg & Berg as they share the authorship.

When analyzing Djurberg & Berg's secondary market on Artprice, it becomes evident that the mixed media sculptures result in the highest prices at auction.

Interestingly, even as Djurberg describes her puppets "*as rubbish*"¹²⁵ when she is done

¹²¹ Moderna Museet, *Djurberg/Berg: En Resa*, 157.

¹²² Ibid, 158.

¹²³ Bailey, "Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg Dig Deeper."

¹²⁴ Biennale Channel, "Nathalie Djurberg - Venice Biennale 2009," 2009, YouTube video, 2:07, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzI7a4oeJj8>.

¹²⁵ Celant, *Turn into Me*, 165.

with the animation, the sculptures are the most sought-after on the secondary market. As the puppets, or sculptures, have lost their meaning to Djurberg & Berg, after the artwork is finished, need to let it go in order to create new ideas that will take its place.¹²⁶ Because of this, Djurberg & Berg do not collect the puppets themselves, but if they believe the puppets could have meaning outside of the animation, they sometimes save them or hand them off to their galleries.¹²⁷ As a result, many of the sculptures on the secondary market have a provenance from Gió Marconi Gallery, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, or Lisson Gallery.

When the sculpture “Crocodile, Egg, Man” sold in 2020, at the duo’s world record price of 16 Million SEK, it received strong publicity. Many involved in the Swedish art market had opinions, and many questions about the sale were raised.¹²⁸ Lena Essling, the curator of “A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air” at Moderna Museet in 2018, says it is exceptionally high for contemporary art.¹²⁹ The “Crocodile, Egg, Man” had previously been acquired at Gió Marconi Gallery in 2012 for 40,000 EUR by the later anonymous seller.¹³⁰ According to Lisson Gallery, Djurberg & Berg’s artworks are priced from 300,000 to several million SEK, depending on size, material, et cetera.¹³¹ The estimate at Bukowskis was set to 300,000 - 400,000 SEK,

¹²⁶ Ibid, 190.

¹²⁷ David Neman, “Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg lever i sin konst,” *Dagens Nyheter*, May 17, 2016, accessed October 15, 2022, <https://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/nathalie-djurberg-och-hans-berg-lever-i-sin-konst/>.

¹²⁸ John Falkirk, “Spekulationer kring rekordförsäljning: Så här brukar det inte gå till,” *Dagens Nyheter*, November 15, 2020, accessed September 20, 2022, <https://www.dn.se/kultur/spekulationer-om-rekordforsaljning-sa-har-brukar-det-inte-ga-till/>.

¹²⁹ Falkirk, *Spekulationer*.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

which only amplified the questions when the hammer fell on 16 million SEK. For example, Claes Moser, a Swedish art market expert and art dealer, and Björn Wetterling, owner of Wetterling Gallery, described the sale as odd because of the big difference between the estimate and hammer price.¹³² Although the big difference in prices, Georgina Adams, an art market expert, says that final prices that do not correlate with the auction house's estimates are not unusual. Adams continues to state the circumstances of Djurberg & Berg's successful careers and that it simply was a "good work" by a well-known artist duo, which explains the high final price.¹³³ According to Louise Wrede, Specialist in contemporary art at Bukowskis, it is very unusual for a Swedish contemporary artist to reach these prices at auction. Wrede continues to explain that Djurberg & Berg's exhibition at Moderna Museet in 2018 helped to raise awareness and interest in their work, which, according to Wrede, could explain the high hammered price.¹³⁴ It is common for museum exhibitions to add value for an artist. A solo show at a prominent museum can increase the value of the artwork by 50-100%.¹³⁵

Interestingly, such a high price, along with the publicity, could assumingly affect the price and value, and other works by Djurberg & Berg should therefore massively increase. A high final price at a public auction is often a sure way to increase the value of an artist's work.¹³⁶ When analyzing artworks on auction succeeding 2020, the prices of

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Gunnar Bolin, "Är konstmarknaden immun mot Corona?" *Sveriges Radio*, December 9, 2020, accessed October 15, 2022, <https://sverigesradio.se/avsnitt/1616597>

¹³⁴ Andrea Valderrama, "Nytt Svenskt konstrekord - Skulptur såld för 16 miljoner," *Sveriges Radio*, November 11, 2020, accessed September 28, 2022, <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7597319>.

¹³⁵ Thompson, *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark*, 134.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 221.

Djurberg & Berg did slightly increase. It still appears that the sculptures are the more sought-after. However, no other work is close to the 16 Million SEK “Crocodile, Egg, Man” sold for. The Contemporary Art auction at Bukowskis occurs two times a year, and following the record auction, they offered three works by Djurberg & Berg in their spring auction in 2021: two videos and one sculpture.

Because of the medium used, the sculpture “Whale in Armchair” from the video “Worship” makes a more interesting comparison to “Crocodile, Egg, Man.” The video was exhibited at Lisson Gallery in 2017 and the

Moderna Museet exhibition in 2018. “Whale in Armchair” hammered at 1,900,000 SEK (\$183,480), not including premium. At the Contemporary Art

auction 2022 in October, Bukowskis had one more sculpture from Djurberg & Berg, “The Brain Has Corridors (Diamond Dog).” The estimate was 800,000 - 1,000,000 SEK, and it



Fig 11. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, “The Brain Has Corridors (Diamond Dog).” © Artnet Worldwide Corporation



Fig 10. Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, “Whale in Armchair.” © Artnet Worldwide Corporation

hammered at 820,000 SEK (\$79,186), premium not included. After the record price in 2020, Pontus Silfverstolpe, Swedish art market expert and founder of Barnebys, believed the record sale in 2020 gave the Swedish contemporary art scene a real validation. He also believed Djurberg & Berg’s artworks had been undervalued for a long

time but that it was beginning to change.¹³⁷ However, other works offered at auction are, as this section has presented, far from the record price of 2020. Although, by analyzing the estimate, it is clear that the prices of Djurberg & Berg's sculptures have increased slightly since 2020. Depending on the number of bidders that are interested in a piece, final prices at auction can fluctuate heavily and are, therefore, not a solid base for analyzing an artist's secondary market. Analyzing the estimates set by experts makes a more compelling comparison of how Djurberg & Berg's secondary market is developing, resulting in higher prices.

¹³⁷ Barnebys, "Världsrekord för Djurberg & Berg," November 10, 2020, accessed September 28, 2022, <https://www.barnebys.se/blogg/varldsrekord-for-djurberg-och-berg>.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

There are many necessary steps for an artist to take to become internationally recognized. This thesis has tried to analyze these milestones more in-depth, applied explicitly to Djurberg & Berg. After exploring different aspects of their careers, such as important artworks, gallery representation, institutional backing, and the secondary market, Djurberg & Berg developed essential relationships, which were instrumental in their success saga.

This thesis has identified and focused on one crucial supporter, Moderna Museet. Being the internationally renowned museum it is, Moderna Museet must be seen as a catalyzer of the emerging artists it decides to exhibit. Working closely with artists and maintaining relationships has been a key strategy since Hultén became director of the museum in the 1960s. The museum has since then brought legitimacy to the artists it exhibits. Furthermore, Moderna Museet is government-funded and obligated to promote Swedish art and support the local art scene; this thesis argues that the support from Moderna Museet should be viewed as vital to Djurberg & Berg's careers. Moderna Museet hosting the first solo show of Djurberg & Berg in 2005 should be considered the first significant milestone in their careers. The early support from the museum solidified a local audience. The local support is also recognized as significant by their former gallerist Zach Feuer. In addition, by continuously inviting Djurberg & Berg to group shows, Moderna Museet allowed them to be exhibited amongst other artists in new, interesting contexts. Furthermore, it enabled a solid foundation for Djurberg & Berg, which was important in developing global careers and becoming internationally successful.

After analyzing Djurberg & Berg's careers through Moderna Museet, it became evident that they worked closely with Daniel Birnbaum. As the director at Moderna Museet from 2010 until 2018, he had much influence over the institution and simultaneously the beginning of Djurberg & Berg's careers. In addition, Birnbaum was the curator of the Venice Biennale 2009. Being the curator, Birnbaum selected them for the biennale, where they received the Silver Lion award, which by many is seen as their international breakthrough. This thesis tries to argue that Djurberg & Berg already had their breakthrough before the Venice Biennale since many renowned institutions already acquired them for their collections and showed support before 2009. However, the award helped them receive broader recognition and should not be understated. It is unarguably a vital milestone in their careers. Receiving the award at the Venice Biennale, which Moderna Museet previously stated to be the best platform for showing contemporary art, should prove that Djurberg & Berg became one of the most important artistic duos in the contemporary art world. As stated before in the thesis, it is only logical for Birnbaum to continue working with Djurberg & Berg when becoming the director at Moderna Museet, especially after being so outspoken about trying to tie the most influential artists of our time to the museum. As director, Birnbaum managed to continue the legacy of Pontus Hultén and his vision for Sweden in the 1960s and 70s. Both Hultén and Birnbaum tied emerging artists to Moderna Museet, creating symbiotic relationships that globally advanced not only the museum and its artist but the entire Swedish art scene. Djurberg & Berg is *the* perfect example of this.

Therefore, being the curator of the Venice Biennale and following director of Moderna Museet, Birnbaum was undeniably a vital person in shaping and influencing Djurberg & Berg's early careers. It is noteworthy that Birnbaum still continues to work with Djurberg & Berg today. After Moderna Museet, Birnbaum became the director of Acute Art and continued to work with Djurberg & Berg. Working with Acute Art allowed the duo an opportunity to express their art in new ways with VR and AR technologies. It also shows the ongoing support of Birnbaum. As this thesis has proven the close relationship between Birnbaum and Djurberg & Berg, it is evident that maintaining this relationship helped shape Djurberg & Berg's careers.

Interestingly, Birnbaum collaborates with Julia Stoschek in showing Djurberg & Berg's first work in VR. This thesis has also pinpointed Stoschek as one of the more prominent patrons of Djurberg & Berg. To continue, as an outspoken mission, the JSC also tries to develop long-lasting relationships with other institutions by lending artwork from its collection to others. By doing this, the JSC works actively in promoting Djurberg & Berg at the same time as building long-term relationships that are beneficial to the collection. This support from a very influential person such as Stoschek should be seen as important in Djurberg & Berg's careers. The importance of being included in one of the world's most prominent time-based art collections should not be understated either. Major collections are essential to the recognition artists need to succeed. Being included in the JSC gives Djurberg & Berg legitimacy and a stamp of approval in addition to Moderna Museet's.

As it became clear in this thesis, the success of Djurberg & Berg can not only be credited to the close relationship with Moderna Museet. Djurberg & Berg developed several relationships that were crucial in their careers. In addition to Moderna Museet, Miuccia Prada is crucial. As previously stated, the contact between Djurberg & Berg and Prada has been constant since their first exhibition. Providing Djurberg & Berg the opportunity to exhibit at Fondazione Prada as their largest exhibition at the time, and the first time duo did three dimensional works for an exhibition, it is clear to see how the support from Prada helped Djurberg & Berg develop in their artistic style. To continue, Fondazione Prada can also realize additional global platforms since the foundation has multiple venues at its disposal. Being able to exhibit globally helps to develop a larger international recognition which was crucial in continuing Djurberg & Berg's successful careers. Compared to Moderna Museet, which helped create the first local support, the Fondazione Prada brings other valuable opportunities. This was also recognized by Zach Feuer, who believed the Foundation Prada led to a new level on international notice. To continue, most recently Djurberg & Berg had the opportunity to express their art in a new medium for their jewelry collection, "A Remedy" from Miu Miu. The opportunities enabled by the support of the Fondazione Prada speak of the importance of Miuccia Prada. This thesis argues that her support is significant for Djurberg & Berg.

In addition to Moderna Museet, the Fondazione Prada, and the JSC, which has been discussed previously in this concluding chapter, Djurberg & Berg's gallery representative are also crucial. Feuer Gallery, Gió Marconi Gallery, Lisson Gallery, and

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery have all helped to shape Djurberg & Berg's success. As established in chapter five, gallery representation is vital for artists' careers.

The combined support of these institutions and individuals must be seen as crucial in creating the successful artistic saga of Djurberg & Berg. When analyzing the relationships in Djurberg & Berg's careers, it is fascinating to expose how small the art world is. This thesis investigated the support Djurberg & Berg received. However, it is equally interesting to analyze how well these institutions collaborate in regard to Djurberg & Berg. All parties identified as important work closely together in supporting Djurberg & Berg. For example, this became evident when Birnbaum, as the director, formally thanked the three galleries and the Fondazione Prada for their support in making the survey exhibition, "A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air," possible. Furthermore, working towards promoting Djurberg & Berg on different platforms allows them global exposure, which is crucial in becoming internationally successful.

In addition, it is noteworthy that Louise Wrede, the expert in contemporary art at Bukowskis, said that it was possible that the exhibition, "A Journey Through Mud and Confusion with Small Glimpses of Air," at Moderna Museet helped receive the record price at auction in 2020. There is no proven correlation between the 2018 exhibition at Moderna Museet and the following price increase of Djurberg & Berg's secondary market, though it seems plausible. While prices and valuations did increase after the record sale of "Crocodile, Egg, Man," no artwork has come close to the 16 Million SEK price since. When analyzing the following auctions, the record price

seems rather unique, with current prices for Djurberg & Berg's sculptures being around 1 Million SEK. Regardless, if the exhibition only marginally affected auction prices, such a comprehensive exhibition at a renowned museum must be considered essential for their careers.

To conclude, based on information provided throughout this thesis, the relationships between Djurberg & Berg and influential persons or institutions must be seen as key to their successful careers. The crucial relationships that have been identified and investigated must all be considered important. It is impossible to rank which one is more important than the other. It is not relevant to compare the support received by a gallery compared to a museum or other institution because they work differently.

However, as this thesis focuses primarily on Moderna Museet, the fact that Moderna Museet has obligations to support Swedish artists while simultaneously being a renowned institution of modern and contemporary art needs to be more emphasized. Moderna Museet is unarguably a key supporter and platform for Djurberg & Berg, bringing local support, legitimacy, and worldwide recognition to their work.

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