

LIGHT LINES: THE ART OF JAN GROTH, INGER JOHANNE GRYTTHING, AND THOMAS PIHL

An exhibition presents the work of three Norwegian artists whose simplicity and expressive vibrancy recalls the Scandinavian sublime



—Inger Johanne Grytting, *Untitled No. 12*, 2016; Jan Groth, *Maquette for Open*, 2017;
Thomas Pihl, *Untitled #4*, 2018

Light Lines: The Art of Jan Groth, Inger Johanne Grytting, and Thomas Pihl opens at Scandinavia House on Saturday, October 13. This new exhibition celebrates three Norwegian artists who have influenced and continue to influence one another with work that employs the power of the reductive, sharing close ties to the New York community, and representing three generations: Jan Groth (b.1939), Inger Johanne Grytting (b.1949) and Thomas Pihl (b.1964).

Considered the foremost Norwegian artist of his generation, Jan Groth has continuously explored the relationship between line and picture plane. Exhibited extensively throughout his career with major exhibitions including a large-scale retrospective at The Guggenheim Museum in New York, Groth's influence and presence has been widespread both in the Nordic countries and internationally. In his relationships with Grytting and Pihl, the artists share a combined interest in a minimalist, restrained, and conceptual language. Their three practices, however, are distinctly individual.

Jan Groth executed his first tapestries in 1961, an organic outgrowth of his drawing, which had moved from figurative to abstract. Considering drawing to be the foundation of his work, Groth uses very few lines to measure off a potentially infinite field — thereby molding space by implication. The drawings, sculpture, and tapestry on view are distinguished by a spontaneous energy, intimate emotion, and strong gesture, nowhere more apparent than in the wall drawings created on-site in the Scandinavia House Gallery.

Inger Johanne Grytting, a native of Norway who has lived and worked in New York for over 40 years, has exhibited in both the U.S. and Norway, most recently with retrospectives at the Northern Norway Art Museum and the Vigeland Museum. Her work, like Groth's, is imbued with the power of the individual line, with a movement and rhythm to her drawings that ranges from meditative to emotive. Similar to minimalist music, the systematic process and hypnotic pulsations of Grytting's work exert a unique power for the viewer. In the paintings of Thomas Pihl, an artist who works in both NYC and the West Coast of Norway, an interplay of light, time, color, and transparency create an intensity of experience. The eight works on view here, which are large, uniformly sized canvases, range from subtle neutrals to brilliant color, inviting a relaxation of the gaze in reaction to the over-stimulation of the contemporary world.

Each room in the gallery will be dedicated to one artist, enabling visitors to experience a body of work while creating connections to the exhibition and artists as a whole. Jan Groth will also present a site-specific drawing installation. The show is curated by Karin Hellandsjø, Director Emeritus of the Henie Onstad Art Centre, Norway.

WHEN: October 13, 2018 through January 12, 2019

WHERE: Scandinavia House
58 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016

**GALLERY HOURS
& ADMISSION** Tuesday through Saturday, 12–6 PM, free
Wednesdays, 12–7 PM, free

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Jan Groth (b. 1938, Stavanger) lives and works in Oslo and Dagali, Norway. Groth is considered a leading artist of his generation in Scandinavia, with numerous exhibitions in museums and institutions throughout the world. A resident of New York from the mid-1970s to 2000, Groth has, through his long artistic practice, exclusively and continuously explored the relationship between line and picture plane. Beginning with drawings executed with crayon on paper, leading to monumental tapestries made in collaboration with Benedikte Groth in Copenhagen. Since the late 1980's he has also brought the line into three-dimensional space with bronze sculptures that span the intimate scale of the drawings, to the monumentality of public works. Groth's pieces literally weave together the immediate with the gradual; the drawing on paper extracted in an instance is transcribed by a highly labor-intensive process into the structure of the tapestry. His artistic idiom can be described as restrained expressionism, with a profound sensibility wherein the line's seemingly seismographic recordings appear to visualize nuances and energies registered from within.



Jan Groth, *Sign III*, 1988, wool tapestry.

Inger Johanne Grytting's (b. 1949, Svolvær) artworks are akin to diary entries on her psychological states. According to the artist, she records the constant clash between her intentions and the adjustments she must make in response to the demands and obstacles of her environment. Her process involves probing inwards, where emotions and insights are translated into graphic expressions. Grytting moved from Northern Norway to New York City in 1972, where she resides today. For generations, her Manhattan studio has served as a meeting place for visiting Norwegian artists and intellectuals. Grytting also travels annually to the Northern region and in doing so has maintained her close ties to Northern Norway. Recent solo exhibitions include the Vigeland Museum, Oslo and Muriel Guépin Gallery, New York.



Inger Johanne Grytting, *Untitled No. 8*, 2016.

Thomas Pihl (b. 1964, Bergen) works in a minimalistic, conceptual language. His seemingly monochrome paintings comprise layer upon layer of diverse color; time is an essential aspect of his work. Color shifts from layer to surface, and activates the viewer as a participant in the artwork. Pihl was born in Bergen, Norway and educated in both New York and Oslo; he was an ASF Fellow in 2001, and splits his time between New York and the West Coast of Norway. He has exhibited in many solo, as well as group exhibitions throughout Europe and the U.S. His work is in many collections, including: Norsk Hydro, Det Norske Utenriksdepartement, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line Art Collection, Vass Collection, International Monochrome Painting, Norsk Kulturråd, Nordnorsk Kunst Museum, Tromsø, Kode - Bergen Kunst Museum, Bergen, Norway, H.M. Dronning Sonja, Nasjonalmuseet for Kunst, Oslo, Sparebank 1 Vest, Bergen, and Hunter College, City University of New York.



Thomas Pihl, *Untitled #9*, 2018.

THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION

The American-Scandinavian Foundation (ASF) promotes firsthand exchange of intellectual and creative influence between the United States and the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. A publicly supported American nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, ASF has an extensive program of fellowships, grants, intern/trainee sponsorship, publishing, and cultural activities. Headquartered in New York City, ASF has members throughout the United States, and alumni and donors worldwide.

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SCANDINAVIA HOUSE

Scandinavia House was created by the American-Scandinavian Foundation to promote the artistic and intellectual influence of the Nordic countries. As the leading center for Nordic culture in the United States, Scandinavia House offers enriching programs that illustrate and illuminate the culture and life of the Nordic countries. The diverse programs include exhibitions, film series, concerts and other performances, readings, lectures, language courses, and activities for kids and families.

For more information: scandinaviahouse.org | Facebook | Twitter @ScanHouse

To request visual materials and further press information, please contact:

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