

An abstract painting featuring bold, expressive brushstrokes in a palette of warm oranges, yellows, and greys, contrasted with cooler blues and greens. In the lower right, there are distinct, layered strokes of pink and red. The overall composition is dynamic and textured, with a sense of movement and depth.

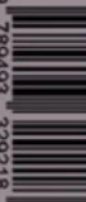
GALAXY BALLROOM
A DANCE WITH HILMA AF KLINT
JANICE MCNAB

JAP SAM BOOKS

In *Galaxy Ballroom*, Scottish/ Dutch artist and writer Janice McNab traces the influence of the imaginary *kurbits* flower in *The Ten Largest* (1907), a breakthrough work of early Modernism by Swedish artist Hilma af Klint. These paintings were barely known until recently and as she rummages rural archives for more information, McNab is also thinking about her own past. Moving between now and then, she responds to af Klint with a new set of paintings and an exploration of the way the climate emergency is producing new insights into the art of the past.

The stitched flowers that she sees repeated in af Klint's work came out of the Swedish countryside and pre-modern ideas of connection with land. They originally held a code handed down from mother to daughter. Suffragettes provided af Klint with the keys to its painterly transformation, making farmers and militants as essential to the artist's breakthrough as her more famous Spiritualist collaborators. McNab's own textile archive amounted to a single silk scarf that had belonged to her mother. The ten paintings of *Our Spectral Gardens* turn its 1950s design into distorted land-scapes full of cuts and holes. They were made as the artist was losing her mother to dementia. Repeatedly painting the scarf had become their last remaining tie. The loss of mind at the heart of *Our Spectral Gardens* is not her mother's however, it is environmental destruction and our shared bewilderment in the face of it.

McNab's archival work advances the research on a woman artist who was ignored for most of the twentieth century, but this book traces a wider inheritance. It is part of a growing focus on past ecological visions lost in our rush towards progress.



GALAXY BALLROOM
A DANCE WITH HILMA AF KLINT
JANICE MCNAB

JAP SAM BOOKS

FOR BETTY MCNAB
1933-2024

If I were an architect, an architect in love, I would redesign my body. Mail you the blueprints. Redraw. I'd move my blood lines to make rivers in places you would like to swim. I'd use my muscle to shore up hills; I'd use my ribs to pile bridges from here to there (delicate little bridges that would sail above my heart). I'd paint the interior of my skin with birds and light; my breasts would be two small mountains you would sleep between; my feet the boats upon which you flow through time; my eyes the mirror you most deeply crave; my two mouths the music that wakes you to a city you've always wanted to call home.

Anon.¹

When I was a child, a child in a Scottish village, I spent a lot of time looking at paintings with my aunt. She wasn't really my aunt, and they weren't really paintings, but a love of imagined worlds was born on these quiet afternoons. I can see now that we were looking at the sentimentally rural, but I did not see it then and I doubt my aunt did either. Her collection was from the second-hand shop and an old print of harvesting or soft light in the glen were the only mirrors of country life that working people in our community had. I can see now that these views neatly elided the insecurity and violence that agricultural poverty produced in our actual lives, but I was seven and the birds we traced as they flew through a skin of blue also flew through me.

Art is of value if it helps us to live. It does not move political conditions on the ground, but it can move how we feel about them and what we are able to imagine. I started making my own painted worlds after my aunt was gone. They were a place to go, a place I could build from my angle of the light. In time I would realise that not all views are born equal and that sharing my oily visions might be a waiting game, but my aunt had also explained that the light in painting was like the stars for indoors. She thought painted colours travelled as starlight did, from a place of creation often long gone and far away, straight through time to where we were, in her living room, looking. These childhood portals still glow in my mind, but I can see now that the light of the past also has black holes.

In the last decade, the light laid down by Swedish artist Hilma af Klint (1862-1944) has circumnavigated the globe. I recently saw one of her paintings reproduced on a pair of socks, but for a hundred years, almost no museum would put her actual paintings on a wall.² When I wandered through *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2018³ over half a million others had just done the same thing. Her great series, *The Paintings for the Temple*, was being belatedly recognised as a Modernist break-through and this exhibition had just broken the institution's attendance record. As the twentieth century had barrelled towards its idea of 'progress' however, historians had rejected the notion that these paintings were even art. This happened to the creative work of many women and people of colour, but as that same progress now returns us a toxic storm, the need for other voices, for a different angle of the light, has become insistent.

The most reproduced work within af Klint's series is *The Ten Largest*, 1907. As I sat among these huge panels in the museum, I felt the lifting joy of their unfurling colours, but I also felt the holes, an aspect of their light I was unable to see. Cultural objects accumulate the story of what they are as part of their social life. If they are not valued, this narrative accumulation does not happen, and if they survive at all, their light arrives as a material holder of a history still to be written. These century old brushstrokes are now going through a remarkable delayed socialisation, exhibited around the world, but they were not valued or exhibited in their own time, and the story of this work therefore has gaps.

The Ten Largest had been made in a period of intense industrial development and I wondered if this had more impact on the artist than had so far been recognised. Af Klint prioritised her religious beliefs in the notebooks she left, but tracing social connections and activities that she did not choose to write about permitted a different story, one of love and politics, to unfold. I found a life woven into an almost forgotten network of what we might now call feminist activism, of women working in Sweden but part of a wider web of people and ideas that spread across different countries, classes, and times. Their interconnected voices have been shouted out of the historical record, but these suffragettes, social reformers, and anonymous embroiderers created the web of activity that was the necessary support on which these paintings could be made.



Studio view, The Hague, 2024
Photo: Janice McNab

The Ten Largest are unique within the artist's oeuvre. They are part of her larger project, and tied to what came before and after, but they are also a singularly tumbling overflow of colour and light. A personal story lies at their core, but as part of an expansive idea about connection that embraces plants, animals, and land, and is tied to an ecological mindset held within Sweden's agrarian past. This was not seen in 1907, but it has become increasingly visible in our current time of environmental distress.

History is always also about the present. We filter the past through the priorities of our own time and as our world spirals into climate chaos, this angle of the light illuminates *The Ten Largest* in a new way. As I was writing, it also began to shine into my studio and the worlds I continue to build there. It came filtered through a 1950's scarf printed with flowers, and with my own thoughts about land. The scarf had belonged to my mother but the shadows of animals and birds that I painted through its patterns first rose through *The Ten Largest*, as the ghostly afterimages of anonymous embroideries.

As the violence caused by climate breakdown increases around us, re-imagining the connections between people and things has become a pressing need, and looking back to previously disregarded ways of living and seeing is one way we might interrogate the numb disconnection of the present. *Galaxy Ballroom* is a dance between now and then and the silk hills of my mother's scarf were painted to a tune that is both an elegy and a love song to a different, still possible future.





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Installation view *Hilma af Klint: Paintings
for the Future*, October 12, 2018-April 23, 2019,
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Photo: David Heald © Solomon R. Guggenheim
Foundation, New York

CIRCLES OF WOMEN



Hilma af Klint was born near Stockholm in 1862. *The Ten Largest* were painted between October 2 to December 7, 1907, when she was forty-five. They are part of a cycle of 193 works called *The Paintings for the Temple*, but unique within the series as they are painted in egg tempera, not oil, and on paper, not canvas. They are by far the largest paintings the artist would make (up to 328 x 240 cm each)⁴ and the lack of a clearly defined figure or horizon means they are also unique within the art of their time. They are a radical visual experiment created three years before Kandinsky is thought to have made the first abstract painting. Af Klint would later write that ‘the form is the waves,’ possibly meaning the curving compositional structure, and that ‘behind the forms is life itself.’⁵ She wrote of the series as defining a universal astral body, both male and female, in its journey through time. But what did that even mean, in 1907?

Hilma af Klint in her studio in 1895
Stiftelsen Hilma af Klints Verk
Photo: Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Until the mid-nineteenth century, most Swedes had lived in the countryside, and Hilma af Klint grew up in a Stockholm engulfed by the transformations of an intense, late industrialisation. Rapid population growth had led to painfully apparent ruptures in the social, economic, and political fabric, and a National Romanticism movement had emerged in response. Its intellectual roots had grown among disillusioned city dwellers who saw mediocrity and alienation in modernisation, and who looked to their recent agrarian past for a more heroic national identity. They saw this in tight-knit farming communities still in tune with natural cycles and people began to collect the clothes and handcrafts with which they defined these communities. Their approach was, however, a sentimental embrace of a hard past. Subsistence farming had developed within a strict class hierarchy of nobility, clergy, urban merchants, and peasantry. The distinctive rural clothing that was being collected had developed within the proscriptions of earlier sumptuary laws. These had dictated what each stratum of society could wear and the rural poor had had no choice *but* to wear the homespun clothes that National Romanticism then idealised, and which only became *folksdräkten* or ‘folk costumes’ in their eyes. This process of appropriation saw clothes become a motif of a whole raft of externally imposed values tied to authenticity, community, and the hand made.

By 1903, Swedish socialist Ellen Key (1849-1926) had developed a more critically self-aware appreciation of what the rural might have to offer the urban. In her seminal essay *Beauty in the Home*,⁶ and in her European lecture tours, she spread a revolutionary vision of a healthier and more ethical society, made possible by merging useful aspects of country traditions with progressive social ideas. She was primarily invested in improving working-class city life, especially for women and children, and her ideas embraced affordable industrial production. She urged her readers to find their own ‘everyday beauty’ in contemporary products that nevertheless reflected the utility and simple design of rural crafts. Her ideas were a practical democratisation of English arts and crafts, and similarly founded on an object’s usefulness, purpose, and expression of inner life. Ellen Key was controversial with some of her feminist contemporaries because of her emphasis on home life but this was in part a class issue. The women and children of the slums were not struggling for the right to work, but the right to stay home and have access to clean water and education. Many suffragettes came from financially stable backgrounds and intersectional privilege was not yet an idea with a name. Despite these divisions, Key’s thinking was highly influential. She would go on to write the still famous *Century of the Child*⁷ and her ideas about everyday beauty find a strange, thwarted life in present day IKEA.⁸

Ottilia Adelborg

Photo: Swedish National Archive,
public domain

Ellen Key speaks at a meeting of The
Women's Political Suffrage Association
(FKPR), Visingsö, June 20, 1915

Photo: Jönköping County Museum,
public domain

Ottilia Adelborg's 1904 diary

The Ottilia Adelborg Museum, Gagnef,
Sweden

Photo: Janice McNab



In the 1890's, Hilma af Klint shared a studio with one of Key's followers, the children's author and educator Ottilia Adelborg.⁹ In 1903, the same year that *Beauty in the Home* was published, Adelborg moved from Stockholm to Gagnef, a remote village of log cabins and farms in the Dalarna region that railroads had recently made more accessible. Ellen Key's aesthetic revolution was rooted in the life and decorative traditions of this area but many of these families were struggling. Working aged men often had to travel far away to find paid employment and women had become unusually self-reliant in terms of both farming duties and community life. Unlike others who moved to the countryside in this time of change,¹⁰ Adelborg was committed to feminist social reform. She collected historic clothing and handcrafts, but she also built a school where young village women were taught textile techniques by their elders and could earn a scarce cash income selling the lace they learned to make. A 1904 diary entry notes a visit from her friend.

February 7, Sunday. Hilma Klint(sic) left. She brought a lot of good companionship. We managed to work together very well. She talked a lot about Theosophy and Spiritualism, and some parts of that I do like, but I don't believe in the voices.¹¹

Towards the end of her life, af Klint would write that:

[Ottilia] was brave, preserving, strong and true. What has been the millstone round her neck was her orthodox being. In the next incarnation she must fight to overcome this. (November 11, 1935)¹²

PAGES 15 - 88 HAVE BEEN DELETED FROM THIS PREVIEW

Bridget Riley has written of painting as an act of translating ‘a text unknown even to yourself.’ An act that demands the ability to ‘learn to listen, because it is through a special kind of listening, a sort of “listening in,” that one learns how to speak.’⁸⁴ Hilma af Klint was ‘listening in’ and the words of H.P.B. and Annie Besant gave her a language to think about this with, but when I looked at her paintings through this lens, I was left with black holes, things I knew I was failing to see. The text that remains unknown to us is often right there however, and I found myself wondering if I might find a new angle of the light by tracing more about the artist’s everyday life. The words she left are filtered through her spiritual interests, but daily life is the text that really prints on us, and painting, as Riley is suggesting, can seep around the things we think and say. Tracing the artist’s deconstruction of the ambiguous *kurbits* pulled its waving branches into her idea of body and suggested a Daphne-esque merger within her ‘teeming nature.’ Embodiment became a mobile energy and her childhood knowledge of maps a blueprint for the formal experiment of removing perspective. This allowed inner life to become entwined, as image, with the encoded reproduction of the artist’s social and political commitments. Theosophy released her from the ‘millstone of the orthodox’ that she thought Adelborg carried, but I am arguing that she used it primarily as a tool, as it allowed her to unlock a deeper imagination of her historically situated experience. This re-writes the conceptual framework, the angle of the light with which these paintings can be seen. It suggests a world view closer to Liboiron’s ‘combined living spirit of plants, animals, water, humans, histories and events.’ Decoding it offered me access to depths in the artist’s work that I sensed but could not see before, and also cast new light into my studio. It released my own glancing body-lands, skins of paint in which the birds in blue skies that I carried from childhood could mix with my social and political now to become eco-fraught busted versions of Land.

Scottish poet Nan Shepherd (1893-1981) was, like Riley, a listener-in. *The Living Mountain*, written during and after the second world war, is a short memoir of walking in the Cairngorms. She called this ‘a traffic of love’ in which she ‘walked the body transparent’⁸⁵ criss-crossing the high plateau. This was not a privileged life. Shepherd was unmarried and worked as a college teacher in Aberdeen. The experience of losing her self-consciousness in the transparent feeling brought about by hard exercise and sleeping rough on the hills was a commitment to connect that has fundamental resonances with af Klint’s desire to break from a unitary imagination of self. Shepherd’s writing turns and meanders like the lines in the *View of Toledo*, finding words for ‘listening in’ to the energy she found in this intimacy. Af Klint painted a body transparent and might have recognised Shepherd’s insistence, as well as her difficulty in being heard. *The Living Mountain* was only published many years after being written, when the writer was eighty-four years old. In this extract, she describes wading into ice-cold meltwater that would have drowned her if she had slipped:

We had started at dawn, crossed Cairngorm about nine o’clock, and made our way by the Saddle to the lower end of the loch. Then we idled up the side, facing the gaunt corrie, and at last, when the noonday sun penetrated directly into the water, we stripped and bathed. The clear water was at our knees, then at our thighs. How clear it was only this walking into it could reveal. To look through it was to discover its own properties. What we saw under water had a sharper clarity than what we saw through air. We waded on into the brightness, and the width of the water increased, as it always does when one is on or in it, so that the loch no longer seemed narrow, but the far side was a long way off. Then I looked down; and at my feet there opened a gulf of brightness so profound that the mind stopped. We were standing on the edge of a shelf that ran some yards into the loch before plunging down to the pit that is the true bottom. And through that inordinate clearness we saw to the depth of the pit. So limpid was it that every stone was clear.

I motioned to my companion, who was a step behind, and she came, and glanced as I had down

Our Spectral Gardens
Rift, study, 2022
 Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij

the submerged precipice. Then we looked into each other's eyes, and again into the pit. I waded slowly back into shallower water. There was nothing that seemed worth saying. My spirit was as naked as my body. It was one of the most defenceless moments of my life.⁸⁶

Shepherd's goal was never to get to the top, she traced other routes, a process Merryn Glover has called an act of 'mapping, as Shepherd charts her journey into the depths of a landscape and seeks to know it.'⁸⁷ *The Living Mountain* was written in the 1940s and it also seems to record grief in the repeated circling silence of its days. The pit the poet describes in her naked encounter with the depths of Loch Avon, a body of water high and hidden, falls away inside of herself as steeply it does within the loch. The acceptance she describes a map of time as much as place.

When words or pictures are doing their creative job, they sensitise us to the experience of life. When Shepherd wrote of the mountain's merciless clarity, she described the shadow of a form that might hold her death. But that shadow is as unstable as it is in any art object. Some will not sense a shade that depends on the angle of the light, the position from which we look. When Hilma af Klint laid down her bodies of paint, she depicted the shadow of a form that might hold her love, but in the absence of a historical framework, this too could not be seen. Much creative work has been diminished by the perspectives of the past, but our wrecked planet is producing new criteria of looking. Coming to terms with climate reality involves grieving past illusions, and my own patterns of the past have now become paintings with repeated cuts and elisions. They are a tribute to historical others but they're also about living, in the absence of anything to hold onto with death. As we belatedly realise how interwoven all our lives are with the flayed body that is our 'brutal damaged world,' and we are wrapped ever more tightly by a blanket of pollution, the art with which we try to process this cannot only be requiems. We will also need a little joy.



The Evening Star

*Tonight, for the first time in many years,
there appeared to me again
a vision of the earth's splendor:*

*in the evening sky
the first star seemed
to increase in brilliance
as the earth darkened*

*until at last it could grow no darker.
And the light, which was the light of death,
seemed to restore to earth*

*its power to console. There were
no other stars. Only the one
whose name I knew*

*as in my other life I did her
injury: Venus,
star of the early evening,*

*to you I dedicate
my vision, since on this blank surface*

*you have cast enough light
to make my thought
visible again.*

Louise Glück⁸⁸

The Spectral Garden, 2022
Oil on linen, 120 x 150 cm
Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij





NOTES

- 1 Anonymous text handwritten on an architectural blueprint of a building that was never built. It was found by theorist Peggy Phelan in an archive of these well drawn dreams. I found it on page 22 of her book, *Mourning Sex*, Routledge, London, 1997.
- 2 Unknown works from the series *The Paintings for the Temple* were shown in The World Conference of Spiritual Science, London, 1928. The first large public presentation of her work was as part of *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, Los Angeles, 1986. The next major show was *Hilma af Klint – Abstract Pioneer*, at Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 2013.
- 3 *Hilma af Klint, Paintings for the Future*, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, October 12, 2018-April 23, 2019.
- 4 Almost exactly the height of Giotto's *Madonna Enthroned*, which the artist made notes on in a 1903 trip to Florence. See Julia Voss, *Hilma af Klint, a Biography*, trans. Anne Posten, University of Chicago Press, 2022, p. 142.
- 5 Hilma af Klint notebook HaK 559, p. 164, The Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm.
- 6 See Barbara Miller Lane, 'An introduction to Ellen Key's "Beauty in the Home"' in Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2008, p. 19.
- 7 Ellen Key, *Barnets å århundrade*. Stockholm, 1900. *Century of the Child* is available in English as a free Google book.
- 8 Frampton, K., 2008, pp. 33-58.
- 9 Adelborg's diary entry for November 4, 1899, reads: 'I now have access to my old studio in the afternoons, Hilma Klint and Anna Cassel have the mornings.' Ottilia Adelborg Museet, Gagnef. Trans. Lena Nordesjö, 2019.
- 10 Adelborg's diaries record regular contact with artists Anders Zorn and Carl Larsson, who both lived nearby.
- 11 Ottilia Adelborg, 1904 diary. Trans. Lena Nordesjö. 2019.
- 12 Voss, J., 2022, p. 132.
- 13 Hilma af Klint notebook HaK 418, p. 125, The Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm.
- 14 Georgiana Houghton's *Spirit Drawings*, created through the 1860s, are a beautiful example of the free expression that could come out of such practices. See Georgiana Houghton, *Spirit Drawings*, edited by Ernst Vegelin van Claerbergen and Barnaby Wright, The Courtauld Gallery, London, 2016.
- 15 https://theosophy.wiki/en/Objects_of_the_Theosophical_Society. Accessed November 10, 2018.
- 16 Helena Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Technology*, 1877. Despite extremely mixed reviews, the first edition sold out in ten days, and this was one of the most influential books of the nineteenth century. A footnote mentions Georgiana Houghton.
- 17 Blavatsky, H., 1877 version, introduction.
- 18 A. Besant and C.W. Leadbetter, *Thought-Forms: A Record of Clairvoyant Investigation*, The Theosophical Publishing House, London, 1905.
- 19 See Arthur Powell, *Astral Body and Other Astral Phenomena*, The Theosophical Publishing House, London and Adyar, Chennai, 1927. Accessed July 2023. <https://www.theosophy.world/sites/default/files/ebooks/Arthur-E-Powell-The-Astral-Body-1927.pdf>.
- 20 Sigmund Freud first coined the word psychoanalysis in 1896. *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900, but there is no evidence that Hilma af Klint was aware of his ideas.
- 21 For more information on this, see <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/annie-besant-the-first-woman-to-endorse-birthcontrol-1.3711113> - :~:text=Red Annie&text=Beginning as a women's rights campaigner, she quickly moved into journalism for the National Reformer.
- 22 See *Women's Spiritualist Drawing* in the Bruno Ducharme Collection, Centre Pompidou, Paris, summer 2023.
- 23 Hilma af Klint notebook HaK 556, p. 390, The Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm.
- 24 Iris Müller-Westermann, 'Paintings for the Future: Hilma af Klint – A Pioneer of Abstraction in Seclusion', in *Hilma af Klint – A Pioneer of Abstraction*, ed. Müller-Westermann with Jo Widoff, Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2013, p. 38.
- 25 Voss, J., 2022, p. 141.
- 26 Ida af Klint and Ottilia's sister, Gertrud Adelborg co-ran the Frederika Bremer Association for many years and were photographed in this role in *Stockholms Dagblad*, May 21, 1889. Bremer had been a Spiritualist as well as a women's rights advocate.
- 27 Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England*, University of Chicago Press, 2004 [1989] p. 4. Spiritualist was also a job for some women. Unlike many other European countries, Sweden had passed a law in 1870 giving women over twenty-five the right to legal adulthood, meaning they were permitted a profession. The law was a response to a population imbalance brought about by hunger, war, and religious intolerance, but a huge number of women in Sweden embraced the opportunity. It did not mean they could vote.
- 28 See Voss, J., 2022, Chapter 7.
- 29 Tessel M. Bauduin, *Seeing and Depicting the Invisible: On Hilma af Klint's Modern Art and Spiritual Paintings*, 2017. UvA Pure downloadable pdf. Accessed January 2, 2018.
- 30 Voss, J., 2022, p. 146.

31 A notebook entry from October 26, 1907, reads that 'She [Gusten] so gave herself over to desire that she must abstain to the last drop of blood.' (HaK 556, 394) Further notebook entries, and the artist's next series, *The Large Figure Paintings*, place it beyond doubt that this was an erotic relationship.

32 And they can be seen in many paintings by Karin Bergöö Larsson's husband, Carl.

33 Daniel Birnbaum, *Hilma af Klint: Visionary*, eds. Kurt Almqvist & Louise Belfrage, pub. Bokförlaget Stolpe, 2020, p. 17.

34 Voss, J., 2022, p. 144.

35 Hilma af Klint notebook HaK 556, p. 389, The Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm.

36 Hilma af Klint notebook HaK 555, pp. 3, 4, 31, 42, 60, 75. The Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm. In 1906, Brazilian countess Dina Alma de Paradedda committed suicide in Breslau, Germany. The autopsy revealed that her body was male and de Paradedda became a media sensation throughout Europe, as one of the first named transgender women.

37 *Julkappen*, Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning, December 1895 and December 19, 1902.

38 Now The Ottilia Adelborg Museum, Gagnef and home to her textiles, diaries, and other artefacts.

39 Adelborg's diaries record many such trips between 1903 and 1910. Ottilia Adelborg Museum, Gagnef.

40 See Clare Hunter, *Threads of Life*, Sceptre Books, London 2019, p. 98.

41 Wendy Woloson, *Crap: A History of Cheap Stuff in America*, University of Chicago Press, p. 4.

42 Exhibition information panel in *Dressing with Purpose: Belonging and Resistance in Scandinavia*, The Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, December 2021-February 2023.

43 S. Cramer, *Hilma af Klint: The Secret Paintings*, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 2021, p. 5.

44 Voss, J., 2022, p. 134.

45 Hilma af Klint was born in Karlberg Palace, just outside of Stockholm, on Oct 26, 1862. Her father partly educated her at home (Source: conversation with Johan af Klint, the artist's great-nephew, January 12, 2019).

46 Voss, J., 2022, p. 141 and HaK 555, pp. 93-94.

47 Photo in Swedish women's magazine *Idun*, 1905, issue 50.

48 Carrie Hertz, *Dressing with Purpose: Belonging and Resistance in Scandinavia*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2021.

49 See Voss, J., 2022, p. 132. Af Klint accepted a commission for an illustration of a water tower in 1898.

50 'Eco Fascism Revisited – Lessons from the German Experience' by Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier 1995, in Amitav Ghosh, *The Nutmeg's Curse, Parables for a Planet in Crisis*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2021, p. 223. Arndt lived for some time in Sweden.

51 Ghosh, A., *ibid.*

52 Ghosh, A., *ibid.*

53 HaK 555, p. 11. This comes from a later notebook in which the artist, working with Anna Cassel, would summarise the extensive notes that were produced in this intensive period of change.

54 Heinrich Hoffman, *Der Struwwelpeter*, 1845. The first English translation to use the title *Slovenly Peter* was the 1849 US edition. It has a long cultural tale and many of its stories are still to be found in contemporary comics and film.

55 1906. Hilma af Klint notebook HaK 555, p. 77, The Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm.

56 Thanks to Hedvig Ersman from the Hilma af Klint Foundation for tracing this. January 1906 reads 'Surdegen är genomsyrad.' HaK 555, p. 8.

57 Anna Franklin, *Midsummer: Magical Celebrations of the Summer Solstice*, Lewellyn Publications, St. Paul, 2002, pp. 13-25.

58 See Kirk Varnedoe, 'Nationalism Internationalism, and the Progress of Scandinavian Art', in *Northern Light: Realism and Symbolism in Scandinavian Painting 1880-1910*, The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, 1982, pp. 13-32, for an exposition on this tendency within Swedish art. Strindberg, Rydberg, Zorn were all key exponents.

59 Besant, A., 1905., p. 1.

60 Silvia Federici, *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism*, PM Press, Oakland, 2020, p. 125.

61 Jan Gordon, *A Step Ladder to Painting*, Faber and Faber, London, 1934, p. 206.

62 Georgiana Houghton, Anna Mary Howitt Watts, Camilla Dufour Crosland, Catherine Berry, Barbara Honeywood, Alice Pery, Jane Stewart Smith, Margaret Watts-Hughes, Alice Essington Nelson, Madge Gill, Josefa Tolrà ... to name but a few.

63 Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2021, p. 7.

64 <https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436575> . Accessed July 2023.

65 Ghosh, A., 2021, p. 39.

- 66 Ben Ehrenreich, *Desert Notebooks: A Road Map for the End of Time*, Counterpoint Press, Berkeley, 2020, p. 76.
- 67 Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, Penguin Books, 2020, p. 235.
- 68 Lara S. Franco, Danielle F. Shanahan, Richard A. Fuller, 'A Review of the Benefits of Nature Experiences: More Than Meets the Eye', *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 2017 Aug 1; 14(8):864. doi: 10.3390/ijerph14080864. PMID: 28763021; PMCID: PMC5580568.
- 69 RSPCA Science Group, Sentience Paper. Accessed October 15, 2023.
- 70 *Science Magazine*, April 22, 2016, Vol. 352.
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Biography

Janice McNab is a Scottish/ Dutch artist and writer. She was born in Aberfeldy, Scotland and now lives in The Hague. For over twenty years, her paintings have explored the psychological landscapes of overconsumption. Her writing has focussed on other women artists, especially their haunting relationship to art history, a voicelessness that also plays through her paintings. McNab's doctorate is from the University of Amsterdam. She was a 2022 Fellow of The Women's International Study Centre, Santa Fe, and is currently Head of the MA Artistic Research at The Royal Academy of Art, The Hague. She is represented by Galeria Fermay, Palma de Mallorca.

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