

MELK is proud to present Norwegian artist Ingrid Eggen and Swedish artist Erik Gustafsson at CHART 2021. Both artists are dealing with analog photography in a performative and gestural way that are beyond documentary narratives. With an intricate understanding of color and light they push the boundaries of contemporary photography, how we interact with images, and our understanding of the photograph as object.

grapple grasp

Gesture is one of the obsessions of modernity, it has been stated. Methods of studying, observing and archiving were put to use in science and art, for example, to build anthropological catalogues of human embodied knowledge and memory, or to boost efficiency in industrial production. Film and photography have been instrumental in this endeavor, as means to record, dissect, fragment, isolate, extract, slow down and store certain gestures from the flow of life. Eggen's project stands in continuation with and contrast to this tradition. Rather than capturing gestures that can be further honed for utilitarian and economic purpose, or that are already deeply encultured and engrained in our bodies, Ingrid Eggen seeks out the ones that are not. Thereby she partakes in the production of a new bodily language in order to reach beyond the optimizing and ordered organization of the body.

In her work, Eggen is interested in how living bodies develop new physical and psychological capabilities in response to changed living conditions, be they cultural, social, technological or environmental. A general ecological turn in contemporary philosophy and art resonates here, in which attention is directed towards the interrelations between organisms and their milieus. One can also see the works in *grapple grasp at Future Fair* against the more specific backdrop of an intensified formalization of hand gestures put in place by the influx of, and our quick habituation with, touchscreens in the last decade. Surely, gestures of the body and of the hands have historically been subjected to formalization and codification. Classical and Renaissance rhetorical treatises provided detailed guidance to orators regarding the rhetorical power of specific gestures. The Mudras of Buddhism and Hinduism provide an extensive catalogue of symbolic gestures of the hands and fingers used in meditation, ceremonies and dance, considered to release certain reflexes. In gang culture, hand signs are key identificatory markers. Indeed, body language and sensory perception is always culturally coded, as pointed out for instance by anthropologist Constance Classen. With touchscreens, however, this codification is of a different and highly intensified order, with tech companies patenting and securing corporate ownership to a rapidly increasing number of (touch) gestures. Thereby a highly formatted language of hand gestures is in development.

Ingrid Eggen (b. 1978, NO) is concerned with the body and its involuntary actions, the ones we deem irrational. These actions are on a par with affect theory: They turn us away from the rational and towards the notion that something more basic informs our actions, such as muscles, reflexes and instinct.

Recent solo exhibitions include MELK, Oslo (2021), Oslo Negativ (2021), The 9th f/stop - Festival für Fotografie Leipzig (2021) Fotografihuset at Sukkerbiten (2020), Noplace (2020), Sandefjord Art Center (2020), gallery Knipsu, Bergen (2018) and MELK, Oslo (2018). Eggen's work has recently been acquired by the National Museum in Norway, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, The The Henie Onstad Collection, Møller Collection Haugar Kunstmuseum, Equinor Art Programme and KORO.

MELK is an artist-run initiative for new Scandinavian photography located in Oslo, Norway. The initiative was founded in 2009 to raise awareness of the scene of contemporary photographers and the position of the medium today.

Through exhibition projects in-house, external curatorial projects, art fairs and publishing, MELK has worked with over 100 artists and curated 72 exhibitions.





grippel #1
2021
120 x 150 cm
Analog C-print
AP edition of 3 + 1 AP
\$6800



grippel #3
2021
100 x 120 cm
Analog C-print
Edition 2 of 5 + 1 AP
\$4800



grippel #5
2021
100 x 120 cm
Analog C-print
Edition 2 of 5 + 1 AP
\$4800



grippel #8
2021
114 x 140 cm
Analog C-print
Edition 3 of 3 + 1 AP
\$6800



grippel #9
2021
110 x 135 cm
Analog C-print
Edition 1 of 3 + 1 AP
\$6800



grippel #11
2021
100 x 120 cm
Analog C-print
Edition 2 of 5 + 1 AP
\$4800