

**Jens FÄNGE**

*Cura,*  
*JENS FÄNGE*

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## CURA.



On the occasion of the exhibition *Inner Songs*, currently showing at Perrotin in Paris, Loïc Le Gall speaks with the artist about his latest show.

When I talked with Jens, we discussed about Brittany; it was a casual exchange and we shared about our lives and experiences. I realized that Jens knows well some part of this French region. He had come in his youth with his parents not as vacationers but because he was the child of an oceanographer. In my mind, it meant a lot. He came from a family of scholars but not - a priori - the one expects from an artist. It probably had to involve a different way of thinking. The difference is made in the construction of his works. Each arrangement is like a scientific hypothesis, a probability. Multiple stories are probable and can be imagined. It might be commonplace to write this today, but Jens, as an artist, daily experiments, like a scientist.

LLG: In 1912-1913, George Braque and Pablo Picasso produced the first pictorial collages. This recent technique in the history of art is intimately linked to politics, developing in all the arts from drawing to photography and, of course, to literature and music. You are doing collage, how do you feel about these roots?

JF: I don't really look at references. I'm aware of the past but I'm trying to avoid this strong connection or a link with a specific artist. I think that as an artist I « steal » more than I pay a tribute to someone. The only recent very clear reference is to Aalto, the Danish designer. I included a chair in one of my paintings and I used his name in the title to be fair (!). I was interested especially in a sanatorium he made in Finland [The Paimio Sanatorium, 1929-1933]. Aalto wanted to make the architecture itself part of the healing process. I really like the idea to consider the design or the architecture as a tool. This opens up many other possibilities for art.

LLC: And the question of the collage?

JF: In the early XXth Century, the context was very different; everything was political. If I started to make assemblage and collage, it was, first of all, a practical thing. Earlier, I was doing more traditional works - oil on canvas. I started to catch some figures that I cut before. I played with and moving them before deciding to fix them. I like to keep an open-minded spirit while constructing the composition. The collage is a tool. Making cut-outs allows me to take care more of the perspectives of painting. I like also to create a distance with the perspective in the background.

LLG: Some artists digest their own works. Meaning they use certain patterns and shapes over and over again. This is not new, Caravaggio did that in his time. However, in your work, I have the impression that it is closer to what Franz West was doing. His forms multiplied, he became his own pastiche. You proceed, it seems to me, in the same way.

JF: I like to include paintings in my paintings. That allows me an artistic freedom; I can play around, I extend the subject to some personal references. I can add some images that I can't dare to do in a proper way, as a main painting. I pretend « I didn't paint this one, it's just a decoration or done by some unknown painter! ». I have to admit that my fantasy is not infinite and therefore I accept to copy myself sometimes. I like to change the circumstances and to shift memories.

LLG: Is it a way to play with your own style?

JF: I like the laid back and force between figurative and abstract. I'm trying to catch tension between these two, a kind of conflict. Because with this state of mind – I mean this unclear mental atmosphere – I can keep going.

LLG: What is your relationship with the public? On the one hand, you seek to monopolize the attention by painting works within your works, on the other hand you put the visitor in an ambiguous situation of « character-forming part of the work itself »?

JF I'm sometimes doing big installation. I use big wallpaper with motifs and I hang paintings in a new way. It's a kind of theatre stage. The scale of the installation follows the space of the show. Doing the hanging is an important moment. I'm using different parts of my brain and my heart to link the space and the body of my works. I feel like a director. However, the theatre requires dramas or stories and my works can't go from A to Z. I'm just providing possibilities.

CREDITS

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