



ANTON HENNING

SEP 7 – DEC 9, 2012

ENGLISH

**Dear Visitor,**

Magasin 3 continues its signature tradition of introducing a contemporary master to our public. We are delighted to open our new season with German artist Anton Henning, someone Magasin 3 has followed with great interest for many years. We showed him in mini-format in 2010 as part of an exhibition from the collection titled *Thrice Upon a Time*, but now the time has come to properly show the breadth and remarkable creativity that Anton Henning possesses.

Discussions regarding the significance of painting usually follow various cycles. Sometimes one hears of a rekindling, other times painting is declared dead. At best, such claims are intellectual games or aberrations. We all know that the main focus of thousands of visual artists is the prepared canvas and that much is told 'best' by painting, and Anton Henning is a master of the medium. However, like all significant artists, Anton's work spans many disciplines. Not only will we be seeing his painting from various periods, but also his sculptures and one of his salons.

With exceptional support from the artist, the exhibition's curator Richard Julin, studied a comprehensive archive. Richard had access to everything, and it is rare to be given such a free hand. We are extremely grateful for the support provided to us by Anton Henning and his assistants. Our gratitude also extends to several generous lenders and the invaluable contribution of Ingela Toa Henning.

Magasin 3 has chosen to create a gigantic *Gesamtkunstwerk*—total work of art—where we encounter all the challenges inherent to contemporary visual art.

Welcome!

David Neuman  
Museum Director

## Anton Henning

### *Too much Skin, Taste & Turpentine*

During the preparations for Anton Henning's exhibition at Magasin 3, I made several trips to the artist's studio in Manker outside Berlin. In one of our conversations, I described him as "a conceptual painter with too much talent." That made Anton laugh heartily, as he often does. In those initial encounters with his art, I was struck by its power and the obvious mastery of the actual painting itself. The first, visual impressions possibly obscure the ideas, the layers of meaning and references that become apparent to those who take more time to enter his world.

Appetite, taste, curiosity, experiences, life and desire seem very apt keywords in the life and art of Anton Henning. He is not afraid to offend nor to please. Born in Berlin in 1964, Anton Henning addresses history, art history, the materiality of the works and the context of our times in his art. Many references to art history emerge, as well as his own visual imagery, reused and illuminated from various angles. With a wide scope, Anton Henning 'devours' our collective past and present, digests them and produces a whole that is so much greater than the sum of the separate works.

*Too Much Skin, Taste & Turpentine* is the largest exhibition ever produced in the 25-year history of Magasin 3 in terms of the number of works by a single artist. Together with Anton Henning I have made a selection that highlights his current position with work from 1990 to the present day. Several paintings are completely new and come straight from the studio.

The exhibition takes place on two floors. The upper gallery includes a large salon that provides the total Henning experience. Here one can step into a world of paintings and sculptures and become a part of the work. And when standing outside the salon, one has the opportunity to watch the actual viewing itself: the eye follows others in the space looking at the art. The lower, larger gallery shows

a variety of paintings and sculptures and films that complement this introduction of Anton Henning's art for a Scandinavian audience.

The exhibition includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, collages and videos. The paintings in the exhibition have a specific emphasis on nude figures. Anton Henning repeatedly revisits the image of the body, in series that reference nudism in Nazi Germany, in a long series of self-portraits, and in abstractions and variations of originals from art history. His art has many associations with art history and he refers to artists such as Gustave Courbet, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Francis Picabia, Marcel Duchamp, Hans Arp and other Modernists and more contemporary artists too.

It feels great to finally present Anton Henning's art in Sweden. There is no other artist who so masterly plays with our contemporary culture and art history alike. I feel that it is nearly impossible to capture his multilayered art in words and that the exhibition we've created is really the best 'text' about it. This is where you will live the total art experience and enter into the world of Anton Henning.

Richard Julin

Deputy Director and Chief Curator

## Drawing and collage

*Portrait No. 305, 2010*

Charcoal on paper, 82,3 x 68,5 x 4,5 cm

Anton Henning's inspiration is just as likely to come from a mid-19th century painting as from a contemporary magazine, but his work is not simply a nostalgic repetition of the past. He brings to it a contemporary playfulness, continually experimenting with several techniques in a variety of media, and often revisits drawing and collage.

It is in Henning's early drawings that we encounter the "Henning" for the first time. This constantly recurring shape, named after the artist himself, resembles a three-leaf clover. The "Henning" represents something magical, a sense of something far greater that lies beyond human comprehension.

In Henning's early work, we also see a keen interest in the human body—its shape and shapelessness. *Picasso Painting* depicts Pablo Picasso, a significant role model for Henning, in his unmistakable black-and-white striped shirt. Picasso's cubist style creates a human body of fractured geometric shapes, a distinguishing style that Anton Henning adopts and develops into his own idiom.

The humor of Marcel Duchamp can also be found. In 1919 Duchamp drew a moustache on a postcard of the Mona Lisa and titled the work *L.H.O.O.Q.*, an abbreviation that, when pronounced in French, jokes about her sexual desirability. Henning takes it one step further in his work *Untitled* and makes it even more explicit.



*Untitled*, 1991  
Oil on canvas, 102,3 x 81,5 cm



*Picasso Painting*, 1991  
Oil on canvas, 102,3 x 81,5 cm



## Interior

*Interieur No. 455, 2009*  
Oil on canvas, 222 x 191 x 8 cm

Anton Henning creates a complex interweaving of references in his paintings of interiors. These often depict empty, ordinary rooms, reminiscent of stage sets. Henning shows a strong affinity with Henri Matisse in terms of his composition, perspective, rich patterns and choice of intense colors. Just like Matisse, Henning's own paintings appear within his canvases. In *Interieur No. 502* the central focal point is a photograph of Théodore Géricault's painting *Homme nu à mi-corps* from 1820 that is affixed to the canvas. Two paintings hang on either side of the photograph: one is a landscape of Manker near Berlin, the other shows a sculpture. Both are earlier works that can be found in the exhibition.

Henning often lets shapes and architectural lines merge into one another. Sometimes the lines are so intertwined that the interior becomes abstract and appears to be purely decorative patterns as in *Interieur No. 455*.



*Interieur No. 502, 2012*

Acrylic and photo print on canvas, 267 x 204 cm  
Courtesy Collection Bastian



*Manker 21.06.2010 II, 2010*

Oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm





## The Salon

Anton Henning makes the two-dimensional interiors in his paintings materialize in the form of an architectonic space—the salon. It is installed facing the window paintings in which one can discover the exhibition's title: *Too Much Skin, Taste & Turpentine*. The salon is part of a carefully orchestrated experience with furniture of his design and his paintings adorning the walls. Just as in Henning's painted interiors, his interest for meta-perspective is evident here. In his world, the salon is a stage where you can see and be seen, by both the paintings and other visitors. In so doing Henning animates his exhibition and creates a situation that poses questions about the viewing of art and treads the line between representation and reality. Voyeurism is a consistent theme in his work.

Downstairs Henning alludes to the traditional 19th century Salon, where paintings were tightly hung frame-to-frame, floor to ceiling. The Salon was a forum full of heated debates and intrigues where artists and society figures discussed art and culture. It influenced society and public opinion, and was an important place for the development of modernist avant-garde. The seminal moment for modernism was in 1863, when the jury refused work from an unusually large number of artists, including Manet, Renoir, Sisley, Cézanne, Pissarro and Courbet. In reaction to protests, an alternative salon *Le Salon de Refusés*, was quickly approved by Napoleon III. Held simultaneously, it made an immediate impact by displaying art that sharply contrasted the officially sanctioned academic painting. It became the artists' own arena and a significant stage for revolutionary and innovative modernist movements.

Anton Henning poses similar questions about art in relation to established conventions and pushes the boundaries of "what you can do" concerning both presentation and content. In many ways, Henning goes against the stream—just like the artists of former times.

*MASTERdote AntiSINGER, 2010*

Installation view Haunch of Venison, London  
Courtesy the artist/Haunch of Venison, London

*Oktagon für Herford, 2005*

Installation view MARTa Herford, Herford  
Courtesy the artist/MARTa Herford





## Pin-ups

Anton Henning constantly challenges “good taste” especially with his numerous nude portraits called “Pin-ups.” Some refer to Germany’s turbulent history and cultural legacy, while others cite the nudist culture that flourished during the 20s and 30s. Part of a health movement, it advocated that the naked body should be surrounded by sunshine, water and fresh air to nurture physical activity and a lifestyle closer to nature, in contrast to the increasing industrialization of society. However, versions of the movement and its vision were integrated into the politics of the Nazi party and the resulting propaganda promoted an Aryan ideal and an excessive adoration of the body in combination with a nature-romantic craze. Surprisingly the most popular books under the Third Reich, besides *Mein Kampf*, were photography books by Kurt Reichert and Hans Surén that showed naked people doing gymnastic exercises in the great outdoors. Presumably, the popular photography books served a more voyeuristic purpose too, something that passed without comment.

Anton Henning reveals this nudist culture with paintings made directly from Kurt Reichert and Hans Surén’s photographs, but he adds subtle details that change the meaning of the painting, a glittering earring, a tattoo in the form of a “Hennling,” or a squiggle on the horizon. In *Pin-up No. 59* a sunbathing woman, originally one of Reichert’s photographs from 1939, is portrayed with a pair of sunglasses and headphones. Even in his collages, made from photo-books and magazines of the period, Henning adds humorous titles that reveal the difference between intention and effect.

Henning paints his *Pin-ups* in varying degrees of abstraction and figuration. *Pin-ups* from 2012 are depicted more expressively and violently, reminiscent of Francis Bacon’s paintings.

*Komposition mit Pin-ups No. 1, 2011*  
Oil on canvas, 181 x 120,2 cm  
Courtesy Collection Horn



*Pin-up No. 59, 2002*  
Oil on canvas, 141 x 126 cm



*Pin-up No. 169, 2012*  
Oil on canvas, 160 x 130 cm  
Courtesy the artist and Upstairs Berlin, Germany



## Video Work

The conceptual point of departure in Henning's work is most apparent in his videos. In *Voilà* he uses ice as the canvas for his abstract lines. Similar to the surrealists' automatic drawings, the brushes are replaced in these video works by ice skates. The random result produced as he skates is similar to the collages of Dadaist Hans Arp, who used chance as an artistic method, as an antidote to, and criticism of that era's traditional regard for the artist's sovereignty and technical skill. Marcel Duchamp also integrated chance into his works as a significant factor in their inception.

Henning is extremely aware of and open about his artistic references and methods. The video work *Ruppinian Caviar* is an ironic commentary on tradition and superiority. The rarest Russian caviar of all, which comes from the white sturgeon, is called Imperial Caviar. Historically, it has only been available to Persian royalty and to the Russian Tsar and his court. For the title, Henning switched the word "Imperial" for "Ruppinian," which is the name of a small lake in Manker, near his studio. Henning indicates with a clear gesture its relationship to the regal, playfully using the expensive caviar as an ice-hockey puck.

*Ruppinian Caviar*, 2009

Video, ca 1 min, 6 sec

*Voilà*, 2009

Video, ca 2 min, 22 sec



## Still Life

*Portrait No. 309, 2011*  
Oil on canvas, 119,8 x 99,8 cm

The still life genre has a vast tradition in art history. Since the artist had more time when painting a still life than a portrait, it was expected to show greater skill and painterly use of light and shadow. The composition and choice of objects often carry a religious or allegorical message and depicted objects were usually symbolic of life, beauty and desire, as well as the contrary: decay and death. Since the 17th century, still lifes were very popular in Flanders, the Netherlands and Germany and therefore are close at hand for Henning. The genre was also explored by 20th century avant-garde artists such as Picasso, Braque, Matisse, and their predecessors Cézanne, Monet, Gauguin, Manet and van Gogh.

A large number of Henning's paintings are various flower arrangements aptly titled *Blumenstilleben*. Entire bouquets of flowers are portrayed with a few swirls of bright colors à la Henning. He also portrays a variety of fruit, oranges and lemons—traditional symbols of mortality—and more explicit vanitas motifs, such as a skull in cubist style. Most contemporary artists avoid the still life, but Anton Henning embraces even this forgotten genre.



***Blumenstilleben No. 175, 2004***

Oil on canvas, 220,5 x 188 cm

Courtesy Private Collection, Berlin, Germany

***Blumenstilleben No. 397, 2008***

Wood, resin, paper, shellac, 90 x 78 x 90 cm

Wooden pedestal, 60 x 80 x 60 cm

Painted pedestal, 20 x 76 x 56 cm





## Portraits

*Portrait No. 312, 2011*  
Oil on canvas, 130,7 x 100,7 cm

Henning's portraits are an extensive and varied part of his artistic work. The shift between the abstract and the figurative is particularly noticeable as he appropriates many styles: Romantic, Cubist, Dadaist and Surrealist.

Henning's unorthodox blend of high and low and his claim to artistic freedom is reminiscent of Francis Picabia, the French artist and poet, who together with Marcel Duchamp and Hans Arp, founded Dadaism. Picabia constantly reinvented himself and never stayed with one art movement for any long period of time, just like Henning himself. Picabia also challenged the establishment with kitschy paintings and nude portraits. Francis Picabia is Anton Henning's constant companion. Just like his predecessor, Henning is an artist who doesn't follow established tastes. *Pin-up No. 124* is a loving homage to the former master's *Danse de Saint Guy* (1919–1920), or as the work was later titled *Tabac-Rat* (1946–1949). In true Dadaist spirit, Picabia's ironical work consists of only an empty frame and taut string, while Henning fills in the contours with pink paint on a canvas shaped as a naked woman.

Henning's abstract portraits in the exhibition are shown together with *Pin-up No. 141*, a readymade of the painting *Woman in a Fur Coat*, by the Italian renaissance painter Titian (1488–1576). Titian was called "The Sun Amidst Small Stars" by his contemporaries and his influence on Western art has been enormous. In signing his name on this painting made by a copyist, Henning intends it as an act of veneration, not only towards Titian but also towards Marcel Duchamp.



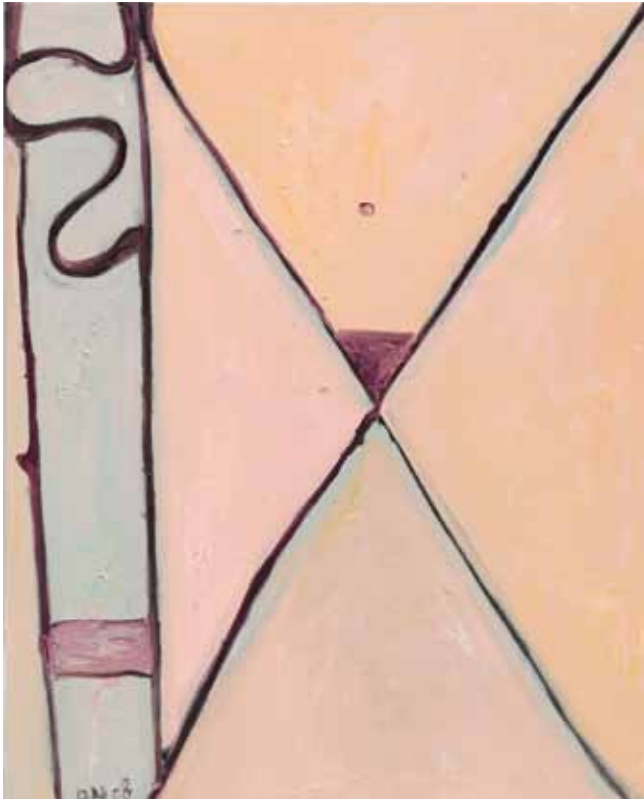


*Pin-up No. 124, 2008*

Oil on canvas, 100 x 79,7 cm

*Pin-up No. 141, 2009*

Oil on canvas, 121,5 x 90 cm



## Sculpture

Anton Henning's sculptures embody line and form. He uses both traditional materials, such as bronze and marble, and contemporary materials including epoxy, lacquer, paper, steel and nickel silver. The sculptures can represent figures, abstract lines or a floral still life. In a suite of sculptures from 2007, *Stehende No. 3*, *Portrait No. 224 (mit Juwelen)* and *Liegende No. 3*, he experiments with new techniques and materials, including those used in the automotive industry, which transform the sculptures into shiny objects. The abstract and minimalist style clashes with the sculptures' iridescent lacquered surface. The works that lie or stand are slightly twisted.

Downstairs, a large number of sculptures are on display, surrounded by paintings hanging frame-to-frame on the walls. The paintings frame the sculptures, which have a variety of shapes and styles. Together, a sort of sculpture landscape is created, which you can carefully walk through in order to see everything. In this way, the act of seeing is once again in focus and you become aware of your own body's movements. Clearly, Henning is playing with the respective possibilities and limitations of painting and sculpture. Occasionally, a motif from a painting reappears as a sculpture and vice versa. They coexist and enrich one another.

Liv Stoltz

THIS SPREAD:

***Blumenstilleben No. 400, 2008***

Wood, resin, lacquer, fluorescent color,  
57 x 76 x 77 cm

White wooden pedestal, 90 x 90 x 55 cm

***Liegende No. 3, 2007***

Bronze, wood, granite, 47 x 177 x 100 cm  
Granite slab, 3 x 170 x 80 cm

Wooden pedestal, 110 x 176 x 86 cm

Painted pedestal

NEXT SPREAD:

***Portrait No. 224 (mit Juwelen), 2007***

Wood, resin, lacquer, necklace  
187 x 140 x 95,5 cm

Wooden pedestal, 15 x 128 x 90 cm

***Stehende No. 3, 2007***

Wood, resin, lacquer, 251,5 x 43 x 37 cm

Wooden pedestal, 20 x 54 x 50 cm





## Biography

Anton Henning was born in 1964 in Berlin. He lives and works in both Berlin and Manker. His work has been shown in numerous institutional solo-exhibitions including Mamco, Geneva (2012); Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh (2011); De Pont Museum, Tilburg (2009 & 2002); Kunsthalle Mannheim (2009); Wilhelm-Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen (2009); Gemeentemuseum Den Haag (2008); S.M.A.K Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (2007); Museum Haus Esters, Krefeld (2006); MARTa, Herford (2005); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2005); Kunstmuseum Luzern (2004); Kasseler Kunstverein, Kassel (1998); White Columns, New York (1995); University of Oklahoma, Museum of Art, Norman, Oklahoma (1990).

His work is included in the collections of museums such as Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Remagen; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Berlinische Galerie, Berlin; De Pont Museum for Contemporary Art, Tilburg; Frieder Burda Museum, Baden-Baden; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag; Krefelder Kunstmuseen, Krefeld; LA County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm; MOCA, Los Angeles; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; National Museum of Art, Osaka; Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main; UCLA Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

## Colophon

**Exhibition curator:** Richard Julin

**Museum Director:** David Neuman

**Deputy Director/Chief Curator:** Richard Julin

**Curator:** Tessa Praun

**Curator Program and Education:** Sara Källström

**Curatorial Assistant:** Liv Stoltz

**Registrar/Assistant Curator of Collection Research:** Bronwyn Griffith

**Exhibition Coordinators:** Erika Magnusson, Tove Schalin

**Assistant to David Neuman:** Katja Finkel

**Chief Technicians:** Christopher Garney (utställningar), Thomas Nordin (samling)

**Technicians:** Tony Axelsson, Peter Wiklund

**Assistants to the technicians:** Erik Aalto, Anna Benettsson, Lars Hedelin,

Björn Kjelltoft, Disa Krosness, Jonatan Lennman, Elin Magnusson, Lukas Nystrand  
von Unge, Cristoffer Reschke, Nicole Smith

**Intern:** Sheena Malone

**Graphic design:** Sandra Praun, Designstudio S

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Upstairs Berlin, Germany

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## FALL 2012

### **Anton Henning – Too Much Skin, Taste & Turpentine**

September 7 – December 9, 2012

Curator: Richard Julin

### **Chris Burden**

A solo presentation from the collection

September 22 – December 9, 2012

Curator: Tessa Praun

### **Something Turned Into a Thing**

Janine Antoni, John Chamberlain, Wim Delvoye, Tom Friedman, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Denise Grünstein, Sol LeWitt, Agnes Martin, James Turrell, Lawrence Weiner, Rémy Zaugg. From the collection.

September 22 – June 2, 2013

Curator: Tessa Praun

## OPENING HOURS & ADMISSION

Thu 11am–7pm, Fri–Sun 11am–5pm (during the season). Admission 60/40 SEK (includes a season pass). Free admission for those under 20 years.

## GUIDED TOURS & PROGRAM

Each Saturday at 2pm we offer a public tour of the exhibitions (in Swedish). Dates for guided family tours and open lectures are posted on our website.

## AUDIO GUIDE & LIBRARY

Free audio guides are available for selected exhibitions. Audio files and podcasts of previous programs are available for download from our website. The reference library contains our unique collection of literature focusing on current exhibitions and artists in the collection.

## ADDRESS & CONTACT

Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Frihamngatan 28, 115 56 Stockholm, Sweden, Tel +46 8 545 680 40, [www.magasin3.com](http://www.magasin3.com)  
Bus 1 or 76 to Frihamnen

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