

WORKPLACE

The Gaze of a Parisienne
'Jacob Dahlgren looks a bit like Dick Annegarn'
5 January 2022
By Florence Briat-Soulie



Jacob Dahlgren looks a bit like Dick Annegarn

January 5, 2022

Andréhn-Schiptjenko Gallery

BY THIERRY GRILLET



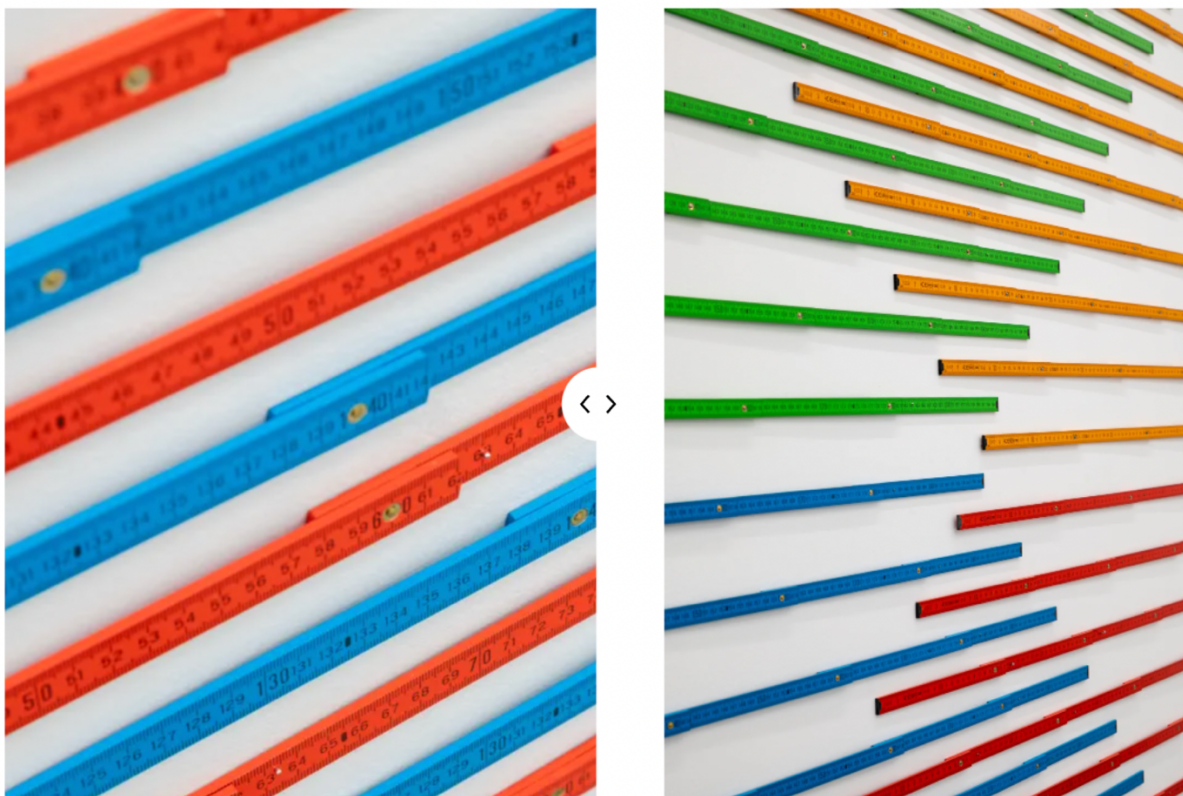
Jacob Dahlgren – Installation view Andréhn-Schiptjenko Gallery, Paris, France, 2021. © Alexandra de Cossette – Courtesy Andrehn Schiptjenko

Gallery ©Jacob Dahlgren

The Swedish Jacob Dahlgren has a little air of Dick Annegarn – for those who still know this dreamy Belgian singer from the 70s. The other evening, at the opening of his exhibition in the Andréhn-Schiptjenko gallery, rue Saint Anastase, he had the seem to come from another planet. The joyful fifties, the disheveled hair of a bird, and above all, above all, a magnificent T-shirt with pink, green, blue, red stripes! Rather flashy!

I couldn't miss it. It seemed to me to be a work itself, living, moving among the works displayed on the walls. Two large surfaces, covered with brightly colored stripes. I had the impression of being in the presence of the contemporary reincarnation of Robert Delaunay, inventor, with his wife Sonia, of the movement of simultaneity. He too, like his glorious predecessors, plays with colors, contrasts them to alter our perception of them. He also exports this color aesthetic to fashion – didn't he create a range of striped T-shirts for the Swedish brand Acne, a copy of which he wore tonight? Unfortunately, it was a collector's item and we can't find any more... Note that the striped T-shirt transgresses a very old code, as explained in a famous book by the art historian Michel Pastoureau. It is the "devil's stuff" in the Middle Ages. Since then, striped clothing has been reserved for prisoners or deportees. But Dahlgren knowingly reversed the sign of damnation into a joyous celebration of color. Like a moving painting, he has been wearing colorful striped T-shirts for 15 years. He keeps a collection of more than one thousand five hundred. Every day, he takes a picture of himself wearing a different T-shirt. This gimmick has become a biographical marker, a counter of the passage of time. He made a montage film that scrolls at full speed, over five minutes, more than a decade of life. Intimate notebook, existential chronometer which reveals, in the accelerated succession of images, a fascinating work of "optic art".

The works that make up the "Units of measurements" installation bear witness, beyond that, to the artist's relationship with the world. The two large walls of the gallery are occupied by what first appear as two colored paintings. They are actually two wall arrangements composed of colored *folding* rules, these wooden measuring tools that the craftsman slips into the pants. Dahlgren (who collects it) has composed here a parallelepiped, which, by playing on lines and colors, "moves" like an op art painting, and there, a series of lines, colored undulations...



Jacob Dahlgren -Jacob Dahlgren – Installation view Andréhn-Schiptjenko Gallery, Paris, France, 2021.

© Alexandra de Cossette Courtesy Andrehn Schiptjenko Gallery ©Jacob Dahlgren

In the center, on the floor, a parquet floor of black cobblestones arranged in a square which turn out to be scales displaying the weight when you walk on them. And on the third wall, the video montage of Dahlgren in a T-shirt... These works developed from instruments of measurement – space, weight and time – all claim objectivity in the perception of the world. In their layout, they take up the codes of the artistic movements of the last fifty years: minimalism with the black cobblestones (which are reminiscent of floor works by Carl Andre), op art and geometric art (Soto and Stella) with this parallelepiped... Dahlgren builds his work on the sedimentation of a contemporary art history, but adds a slight distortion to it. These movements promoted in their time the withdrawal of subjectivity. It was, for many of their representatives, to fight expressionism, the pretenses of subjectivity. Dahlgren, in a way, takes up and subtly reintroduces into this cold aesthetic, the warmth of bodies (T-shirts or the weight of individuals), the presence of everyday life. Dahlgren's work is thus stretched between an ideal, represented by these movements, which consists in having an objective attitude towards the world, and at the same time, a desire to reinscribe, in this puritanical and austere aesthetic, joy and play. This is the obvious feeling given by a visit to this very stimulating exhibition. the heat of the bodies (T-shirts or the weight of individuals), the presence of everyday life. Dahlgren's work is thus stretched between an ideal, represented by these movements, which consists in having an objective attitude towards the world, and at the same time, a desire to reinscribe, in this puritanical and austere aesthetic, joy and play. This is the obvious feeling given by a visit to this very stimulating exhibition. the heat of the bodies (T-shirts or the weight of individuals), the presence of everyday life. Dahlgren's work is thus stretched between an ideal, represented by these movements, which consists in having an objective attitude towards the world, and at the same time, a desire to reinscribe, in this puritanical and austere aesthetic, joy and play. This is the obvious feeling given by a visit to this very stimulating exhibition.



Jacob Dahlgren - Jacob Dahlgren - Installation view Galerie Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Paris, France, 2021. Courtesy Galerie Andréhn Schiptjenko

©Jacob Dahlgren

INFORMATION:

[Andréhn-Schiptjenko Gallery](#)

JACOB DAHLGREN – UNITS OF MEASUREMENTS

until January 29, 2022

Andréhn-Schiptjenko Paris

10, rue Sainte-Anastase, 75003 Paris, France

Wednesday – Friday 11am-7pm

Saturday 2

pm-7pm paris@andrehn-schiptjenko.com