BEATING AROUND THE BUSH

MAX OLOFSSON

MAY 12–26
2020

NSFW/SVILOVA

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In 1964 Andy Warhol made the film *Sleep* featuring his then lover John Giorno, who was, as the title suggests, sleeping.[1] This five-hour long, so called anti-film, created a continuity through looping the movements of Giorno across five reels; each including its own variations and angles. *Sleep* was the predecessor for the eight-hour long *Empire*, also from 1964, a static view of the Empire State building shot in slow-mo.[2] The lack of action and the protruding meaninglessness is basically what art is. Oh yeah, this text is not about Andy Warhol, it's about Max Olofsson.

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1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep_(1964_film)
2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_(1964_film)

Still image from *Sleep* (1963) by **Andy Warhol.** 16mm, silent, 5 hrs. 21 min.© Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

Let's continue down the Wiki-rabbit hole for a bit (thanks Oscar, and sorry Max, I'm getting to the point in a bit). Ever heard of the Trojan room coffee pot? I hadn't. This famous coffee pot was the inspiration for the world's first webcam in 1991. I know! I assumed it was a dog or, you know, porn...

"To save people working in the building the disappointment of finding the coffee machine empty after making the trip to the room, a camera was set up providing a live picture of the coffee pot to all desktop computers on the office network."[3]

Lol: " to save people". Laziness is truly a form of art. :) In the mid 90s when the Internet became a thing, this went online and became extremely popular, until it was turned off in 2001. (Was that the year of the birth of wellness culture? When walking stopped being frowned upon?)
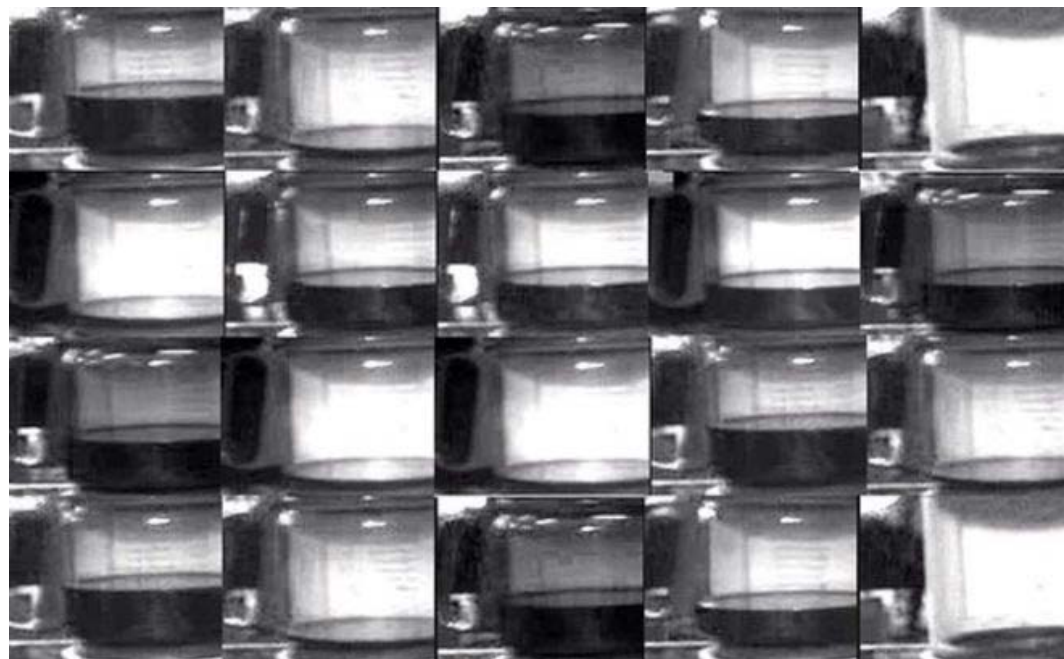
The Trojan Room coffee pot (1991-2001).The original webcam updated the image of the coffee pot about three times a minute @ **https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/coffee/coffee.html**
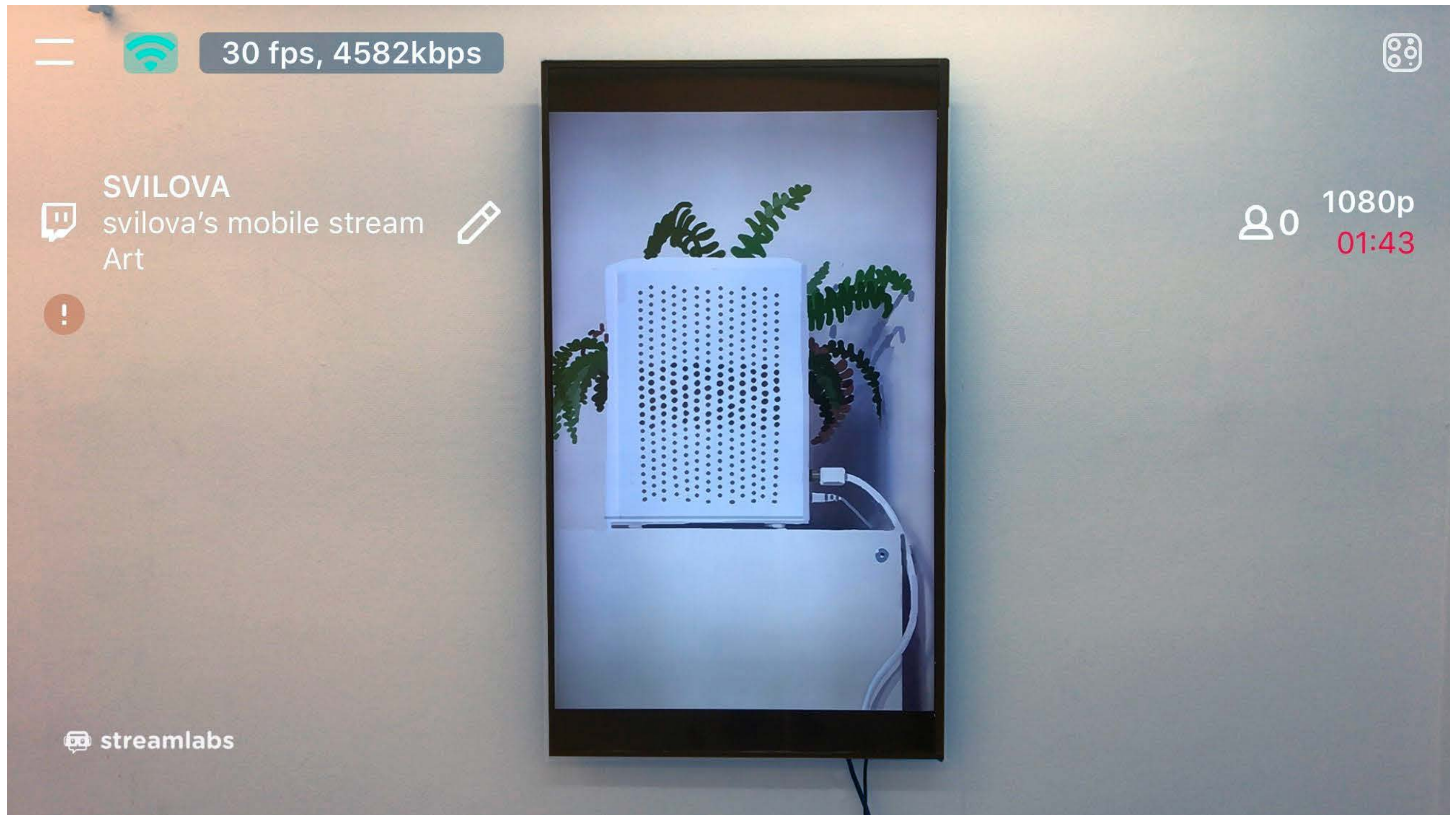
3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trojan_Room_coffee_pot

But imagine the boredom of watching a pot cook coffee for ten years! Boredom, repetition, seemingly never ending. "Isn't that hell?", you might ask. Me too! So, of course the journey in the fair land of Wikipedia continues (Max, I know, sorry again). Dante wrote about hell. He didn't describe it as a repetition in that way, but hell is eternal so it's bound to repeat itself.[4] In a Quora thread user Ray Manson sums it up " Life is hell". And well, yeah: it's repetitive, boring and long (hopefully).[5]
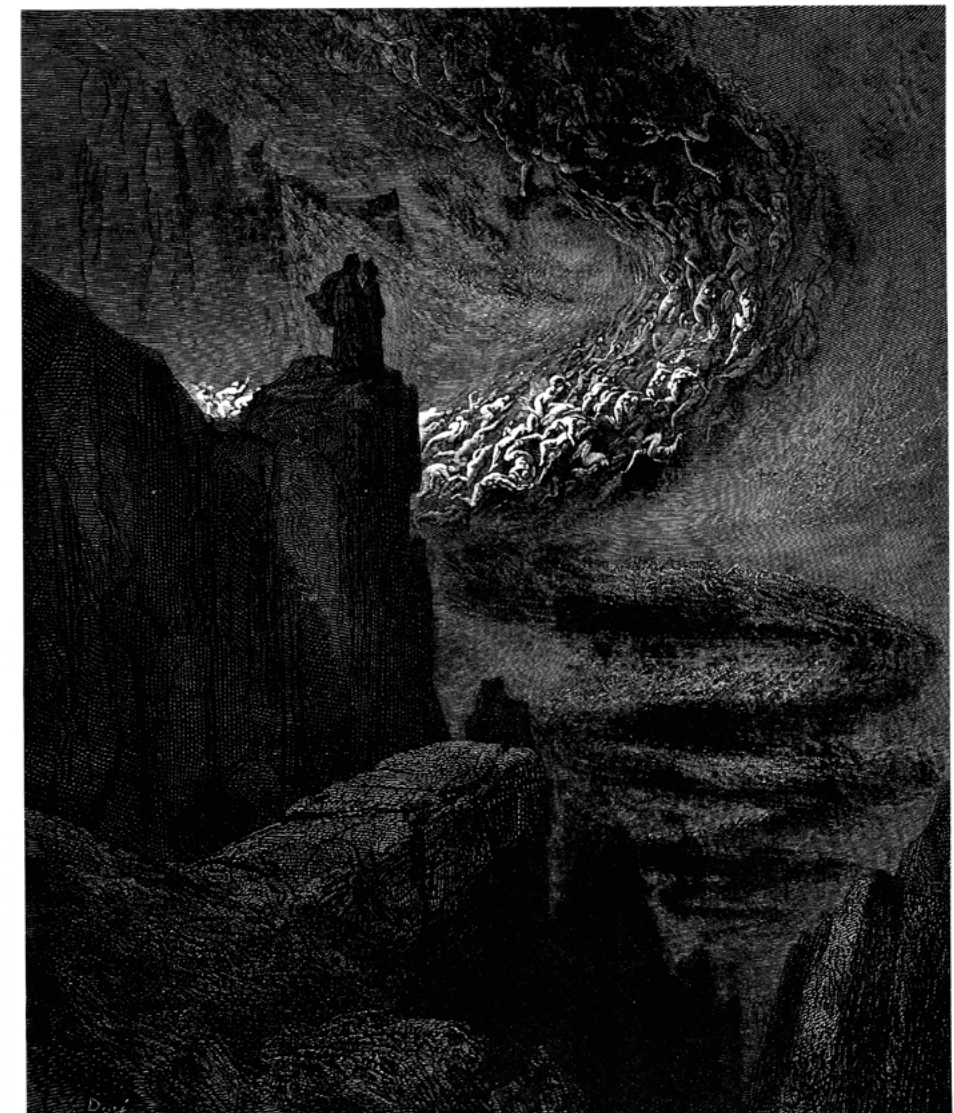
Gustave Doré's illustration to Dante's Inferno. Plate XIV: Canto V: *The infernal hurricane that never rests / Hurtles the spirits onwards in its rapine* (1857).

4 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_Comedy
5 https://www.quora.com/They-say-that-in-hell-youre-stuck-repeating-reliving-what-you-hate-the-most-Whats-your-hell

30 fps, 4582kbps

SVILOVA
svilova's mobile stream
Art

0   1080p
01:43

streamlabs

Max Olofsson (2018/2020), *Post-modem Still Life*. Digital painting [960x640pixels].
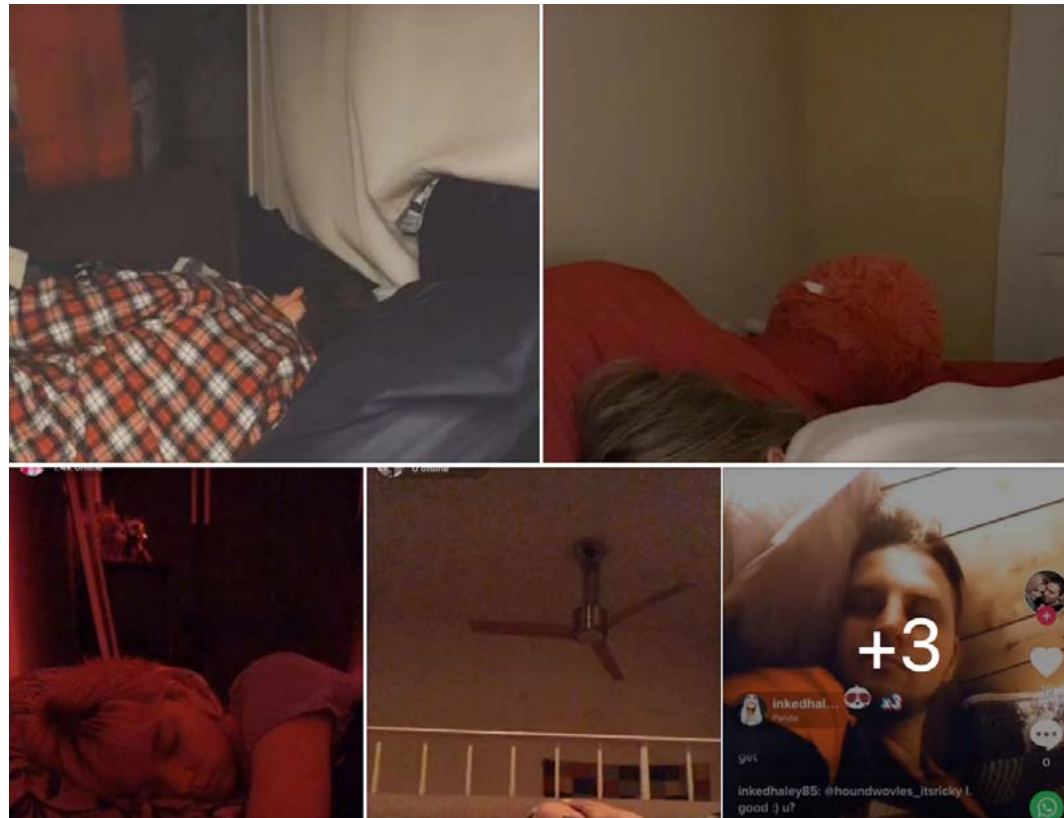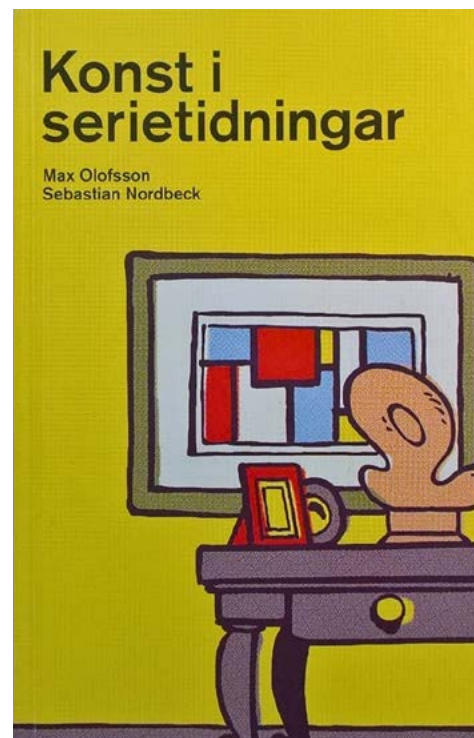Displayed on a 50″ digital screen @ NSFW/SVILOVA HQ in Gothenburg.
*Live-stream: **http://svilova.org/gallery/exhibitions/**

Image compilation of kids and teenagers live-streaming themselves overnight, while they sleep.
Source: https://www.tiktok.com/

Konst i serietidningar (2016) by **Max Olofsson** and **Sebastian Nordbeck**.
Published by **Orosdi-Back**.

Sorry, I digress. Andy Warhol's films have influenced our live-streaming culture today. An example is that the new craze on TikTok is filming yourself while sleeping, but in 2020 you do it for money, not art.[6] No, wait, that's not what I was going to write about.

Don't miss Max Olofsson's digital painting *Post-Modem Still Life* in the live-stream online exhibition Beating Around the Bush, (get it?), curated by NSFW/SVILOVA.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Max Olofsson (b.1983, Gothenburg) is an artist based in Stockholm. He graduated 2012 from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. He predominantly paints and takes his inspiration from comics, video games, and graffiti, which he uses as visual inputs, or as points of departure, not as destinations, so to speak. Besides that, his works often deal with digital things and culture thematically. This is seen in Beating Around the Bush, which features a painting of a router entitled Post-Modem Still Life.

In 2011 Olofsson and colleague Sebastian Nordbeck began a research project looking into how art (works) have been represented in comics from 1940 to today, trying to answer the question: "what does art look like when it's supposed to look like art?" It has been presented in/as several exhibitions, in which artworks (paintings and sculptures) found in comics have been realized as physical works in estimated real scale. It has also resulted in a book "Konst i serietidningar", which has been released twice. The project – which is still ongoing – is called *What's That in the Background?* abbreviated WTITB.

6 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/06/style/sleep-tiktok-live.html

In 2013 Olofsson started making digital paintings on his phone and has since 2018 been posting them on his Instagram weekly. The year after he started a digital gallery called "Red Barrel Gallery" on his website, a screenshot based gallery where digital works are shown in digital exhibition spaces, explained in short by a one line description: "A real imagined space for real imagined works".

Max Olofsson exhibited a series of digital paintings at Taverna Brillo in Stockholm in 2019 with the title *Fake Painting*. They were then printed on canvas, stretched, varnished and ultimately coated with a clear, see-through acrylic paint medium, applied thickly in expressive, overstated brushstrokes, unrelated to the underlying
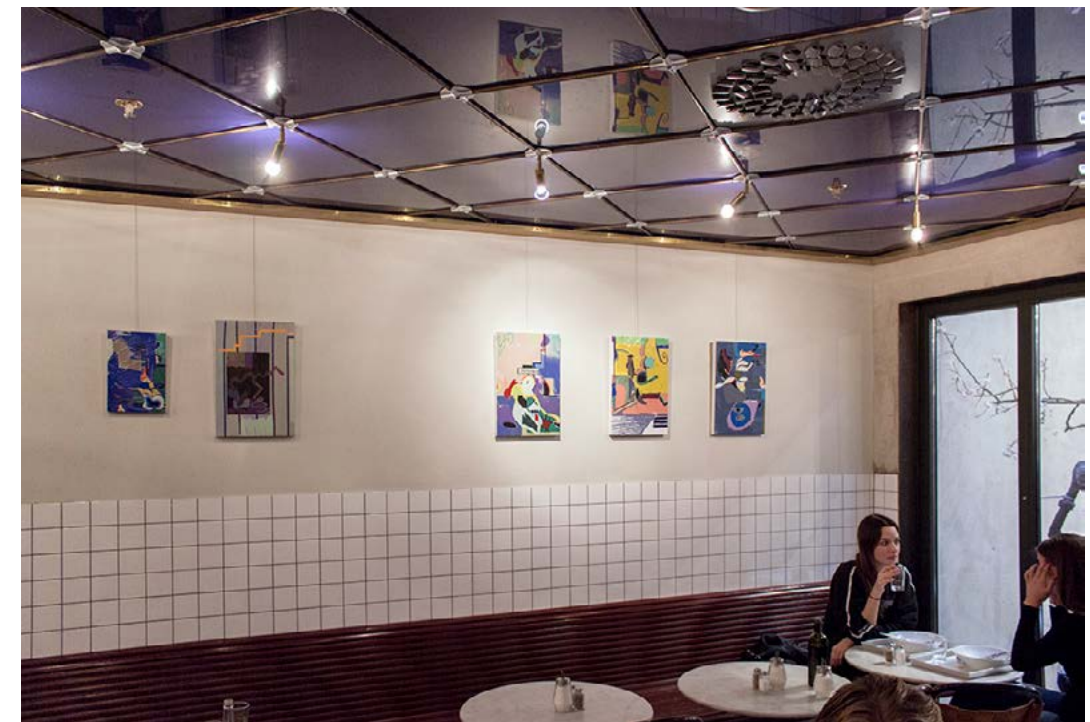
Installation view @ Taverna Brillo, Stockholm, 2019. *Fake Painting* by **Max Olofsson.**

Red Barrel Gallery @ https://maxolofsson.com/

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