

# LARS BOHMAN GALLERY

## Evert Lundquist 18 June - 27 July, 2014

### The Fifth Element

Evert Lundquist's breakthrough as an artist came with an exhibition at Konstnärshuset (Swedish Artists' Association) in 1941 when he was thirty-seven years old. His path to artistic maturity had been anything but straight. In the years between the two world wars he had travelled extensively, seeking places, people, nature and education. In the second half of the 1920s he made a few of paintings in the spirit of the Neue Sachlichkeit of the time - paintings executed with such pregnancy that it seemed that he had found a direction for to his painting. But a couple of years later he made "From Sacre-Coeur" and "Jardin du Luxembourg," two mature masterpieces that anticipate what will be coming from his studio in the following five decades.

Even so, he was not there yet. Within him was a dark streak, which manifested itself in recurring depressions. In 1937, he made a number of paintings where the pictorial space of the two pictures just mentioned is fractured; in a heightened, vacillating palette, he describes dramatic scenes of cosmopolitan life, some of which end in death. Here, Evert Lundquist exhibits kinship with Toulouse Lautrec and Ensor rather than with Rembrandt, who would become a beacon for him. In the same year he also made a self-portrait, "Butler," which emphasizes the melancholia of a person driven by demons.

By the fall of 1939, traveling in Europe was over. He met his future wife, Ebba Reutercrona, like him a painter, and later on they would have twin boys. When, in 1944, he had a successful retrospective exhibition at Konstakademien (the Academy of Arts), his stature as an artist is cemented.

Evert Lundquist was a city boy, born and bred in Norrmalm in Stockholm. His travels took him to Berlin, Dresden, London, Paris, Nice, among other places. At the same time, his painting became increasingly linked to nature and to man's encounter with nature. His two most important studios were located in Saltsjö-Duvnäs, where he and Ebba Reutercrona lived and worked in fellowship with Olle Nyman, and later in Kanton, in the park of Drottningholm, where he worked until his death.

Both places occupy a borderland between town and country. On the way to the archipelago, nature barely keeps the city at arm's length. Here Evert Lundquist was captivated by the four elements: Fire, air, water and earth. The classic quartet became his predominant theme in the following fifty years. To look at his paintings is to be drenched by giant waves or refreshed by a bubbling spring, to be dazzled by the fire of the sun and guided by the burning light, to lift up feet made heavy by mud or to trace skyward the tree's defiance of gravity and the horizon, to watch birds soaring upward into the element that flows unimpeded through our bodies while for the birds it is solid and buoyant matter.

On his palette, Evert Lundquist found his fifth element in the impasto whose hues testified on canvas to the existence of the other four. Color became independent of external sources of light; light was no longer a reflection but emanated from within the fifth element, the paint itself.

He obtained a similar effect in his "etchings", (they were called that, although none, with one exception, had been anywhere near an acid bath). Evert Lundquist was attracted to the quickness with which the direct attack of the burin on the copperplate can register an impression. Sharp burrs were forged along the lines in the plate, making the printed line bleed, so that the linear image in black and white became closer to painting. Thus the fifth element also transformed the white paper into a light-filled room.

Olle Granath

Translation: Kerstin Lind Bonnier