



LIV METTE LARSEN

NIGHTVIEW

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ANDERS WAHLSTEDT FINE ART
NEW YORK





Rooftops, Nights, Lights

PAUL D'AGOSTINO

Straightforward, candid, ostensibly simple, verbally plain, the expression 'the roof of the night' is nonetheless one of vast metaphorical richness. It scans unadorned, parses quietly. Lingering on its terms and meanings places us outdoors, perhaps, looking up, or indoors, looking out. It leaves us pondering architecture and the cosmos at once, foregrounds and backgrounds, darkness and light. The pensive mode into which it lures us is not one of concern or alarm, rather one that's at ease. And yet, its expressive immediacy and sense of quietude still allow for airs of mystery. It's a patent denotation that murmurs nocturnal secrecy.

Much ado about the agile beauties of a mere idiomatic phrasing, one could say, but most all of the same observations and metaphorical reflections find comfortable housing within the visual context of *Nightview*, Liv Mette Larsen's solo exhibition of paintings and works on paper at Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art. This is due only in small part to the consistent presence of rooftops and night skies throughout Larsen's discretely complex suite of works. Were that the lone matter of note, the relevance here might seem nearly trite. However, that presence is indeed our point of entry to much else. It's that very same, plainly binary register of essential elements in Larsen's paintings that ushers us into similarly vast expanses of thoughts - of matters structural and nocturnal, geographic and atmospheric, enigmatic and pictorial.

Where 'the roof of the night' has idiomatic immediacy, Larsen's paintings have visual stamp, compositional punch. The expression and works alike offer us, front center, primarily two things: a rooftop and a night. The metaphor at play veils its literal understanding only slightly; the artworks in question are materially spare, and substantially shy of ornate. In both cases, it is apparent simplicity that grips our minds or seizes our gazes. With Larsen, we're in a sphere of choice elements, subtle textures, few colors. We have roofs, nights, lights. And?

And a great deal more, the more deeply we look, and what we see and sense are things visible, envisionable, and otherwise perceptible. At this point, the paintings are more openly present to us as we make ourselves present within them. In doing so, we find ourselves

inside and outside at once, or indoors and outdoors at turns; this hinges on what we're looking at, where we're looking from, how we're thinking within, and within what. Larsen provides us with elemental yet ample index to regard her works in all such ways. We look at her buildings and skies, and see them plainly as such. We then enter the works and wonder where we might be as we view these structures and ambient lights. Are we in their midst, in those streets, somehow looking directly at, rather than up at them? Or are we indoors, perhaps next door on a second or third floor, looking at them from a viewpoint of across from? By now we're noting textures, too, and especially in those night skies, subtly variant hues. We sense chromatic and compositional balances much more closely. Larsen's counterpointed forms and cleverly poised asymmetries shift our eyes gently about. We sense distant horizons even though we don't see them. Serenity reigns even as longer looking stirs latent mysteries into motion. We enter the artist's nights, question those starless skies, and wonder what purposes those quirkily contoured buildings might serve. What do they contain, house, shelter, or obscure? Or whom? Again, where are we, and why are we here? And who are we to be looking?

It's not always important to answer such questions, but it might be useful here to address a few of them. Larsen has long preferred buildings, often variably industrial, as her subject matter. Factories, warehouses, water towers, and silos are among the structures in her customary wheelhouse, and she depicts them individually or paired (*Vertical Night View IV*, *Small Night View XI*), or at times in small groups (*Night View VII*, *Night View XIII*). Landscapes they are, skylines they are – but then again, not really. 'Buildingscapes' describes them better; 'building portraits' hits even closer to home. The artist's structures appear to us as shapes and as sitters, as 'formal' casts of posing characters, as blocky individuals with personalities and moods. Like bottles for Morandi, Larsen's buildings transcend their objectness to embody certain qualities not always granted to objects: simplicity and humility, honesty and sympathy, and wistful, whispery curiousness.

Industrial structures as actors poised before ambient backdrops: thusly set is Larsen's stage. If *Nightview* were in fact a play, it would be set in the warehouse district of Bushwick, Brooklyn, where the artist has kept a home and studio for many years, around which are situated all of the buildings portrayed in the exhibit. We see them much the way Larsen sees them when looking out her windows at night, lights low, registering notes for new works. Their compositional quiet and calm echo the calm quiet of their inception. Larsen achieves this tenor by depicting her subjects as silhouettes, in hues generally dark, before open skies,

generally monotone. Her buildings range from near-blacks to blues, greens, and reds; her night skies, from deep purples to warm oranges and bright yellows. The artist peers out her windows into the roof of the night, and at the shadowed buildings that commune beneath it, then furnishes surfaces with rooftop contours and nocturnally luminous atmospherics.

Larsen works slowly and deliberately, more like a caretaker than an engineer. She mixes her own egg tempera colors using finely ground raw pigments, and she applies them skillfully and meticulously to linen surfaces of generally modest size, both horizontal and vertical. She works without tape, without rulers, allowing the gradual, experienced movement of her hand and brushes to create lines that are straight enough, washes of color that are consistent enough. Her applications are typically thin, such that the tooth of the linen remains readily visible; this serves to soften the contours of the structures and nimbly variegate the expanse of their backdrops. Her lines are carefully formed and angled, though never rightly rectilinear or rigid. As such, her buildings appear settled, weathered, used.

Her largely monochromatic skies, meanwhile – now deep, now vivid; now darker, now brighter – take up the subtle textures of her surfaces, leaving her backgrounds grainy and striated, her ambient lights diffused. The artist achieves similar effects in her works on paper by way of cutouts collaged atop washes. Abstractions indeed, to be sure, yet Larsen's painstakingly rendered paintings and collages nonetheless register very real buildings in a very real place, staged and staid like actors before a curtain, or like precious objects in a display case. The varicolored diffusions looming luminously all around these forms, meanwhile, are analogously convincing as the bizarrely real lights of industrially peripheral metropolitan nights.

Like certain lightly metaphorical, openly interpretable phrases, Liv Mette Larsen's artworks open up a prodigious trove of broader matters to ponder. They might bring us to admire the presumed order of the cosmos, pose questions about the disorder of life, and venture guesses about curiosities obscured under the cover of darkness. As expression or image, 'the roof of the night' suggests both shelter and escape. Pictorially idiomatic, in a sense, and humming with machinic mysteries, Larsen's rooftops, nights, and lights in *Nightview* do much the same.



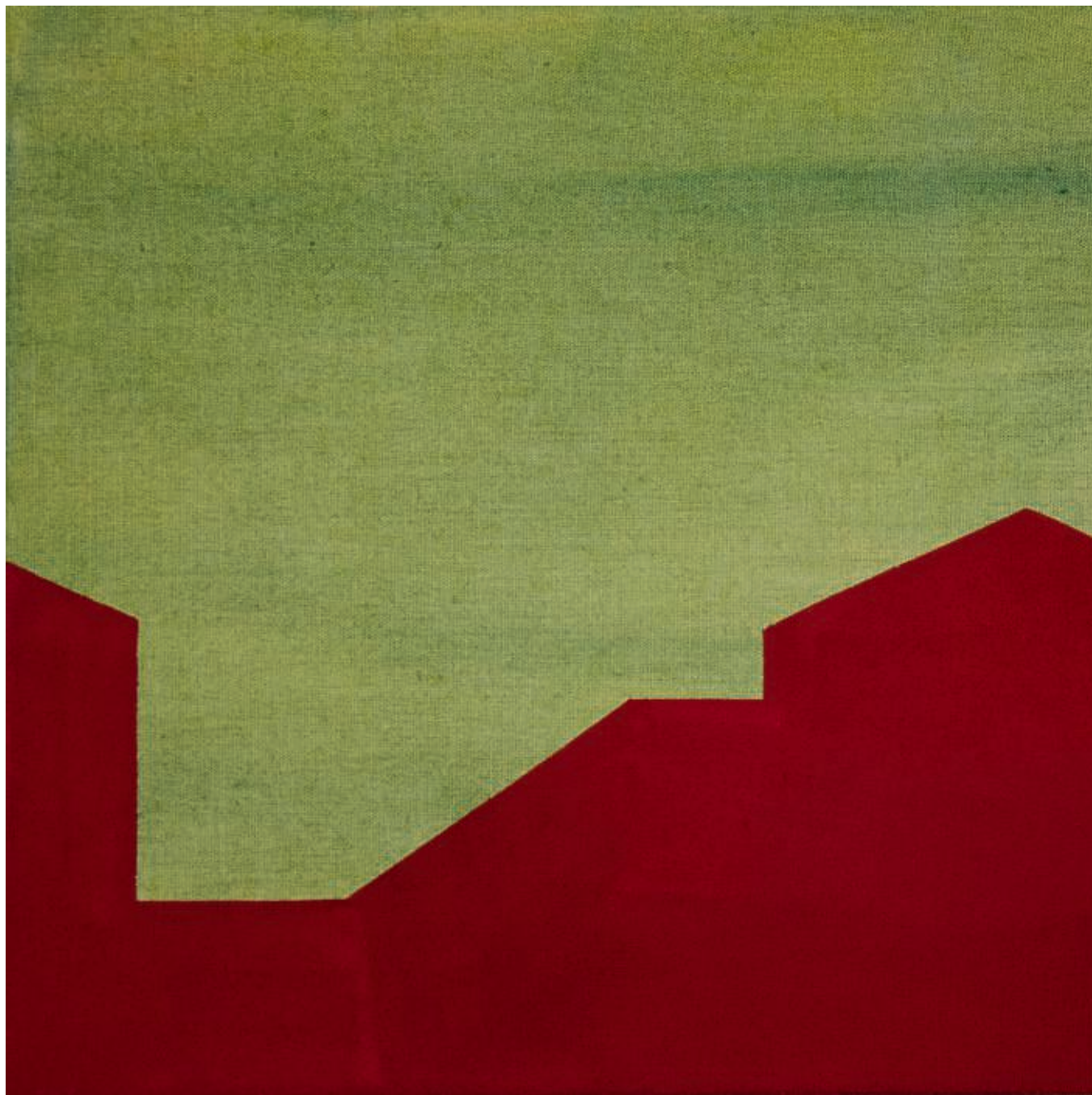
Night View IV, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen, 18 x 24 in.

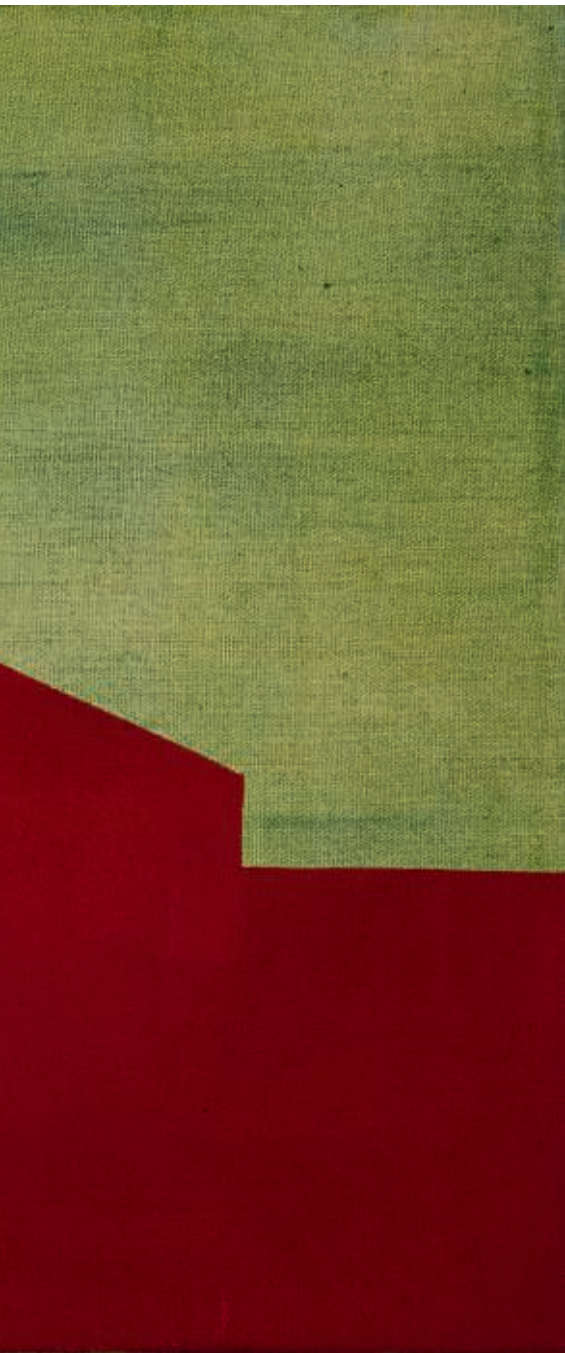


Vertical Night View I, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen, 58 x 33 in.



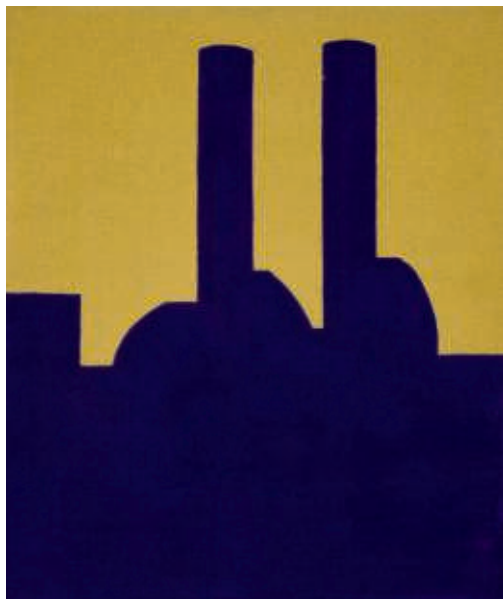
Vertical Night View V, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen, 55 x 36 in.



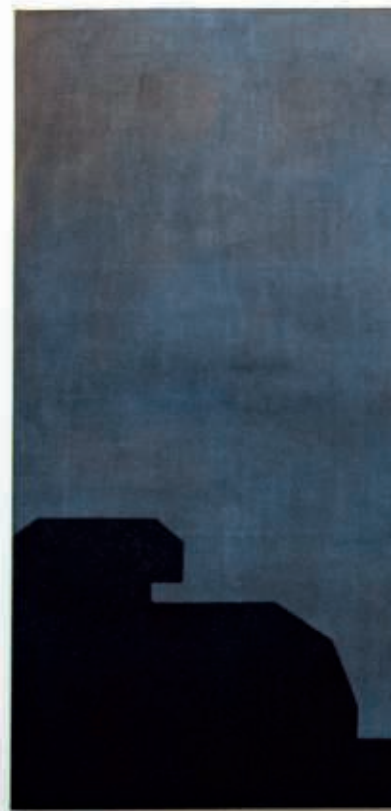


Night View XVI, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen,
17 x 24 in.

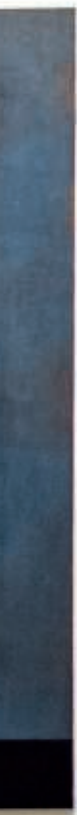


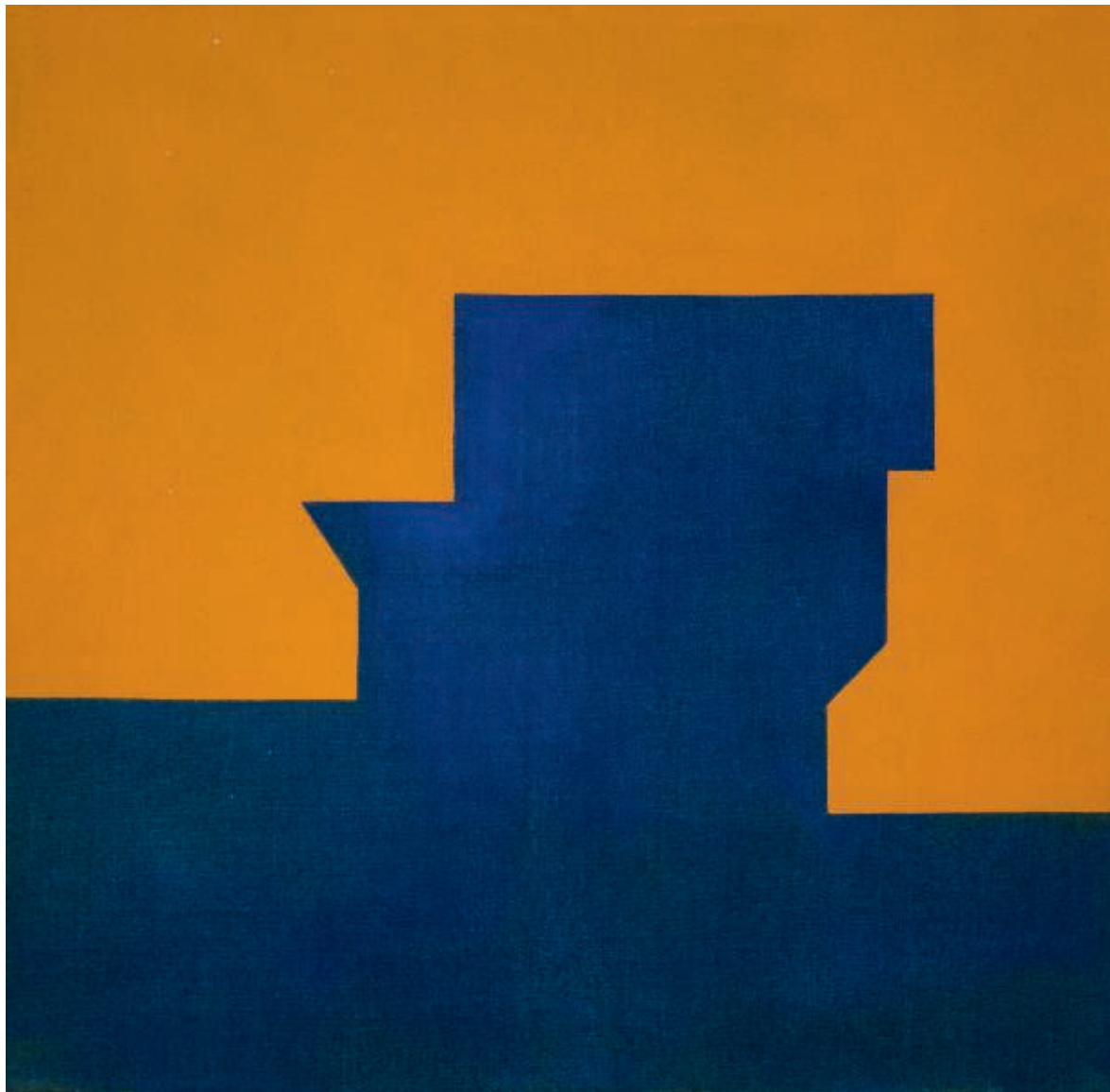


from left to right:
Bushwick Silhouettes V, 2018, Egg tempera on linen, 17 x 14 in.
Small Night View XXI, 2018, Egg tempera on linen, 12 x 10 in.
Small Night View XI, 2018, Egg tempera on linen, 14 x 11 in.
Small Night View VI, 2018, Egg tempera on linen, 13 x 11 in.
Small Night View XXV, 2018, Egg tempera on linen, 10 x 8 in.



from left to right:
Small Night View XXV, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen, 10 x 8 in.
Vertical Night View I, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen, 58 x 33 in.
Night View XIV, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen, 17 x 24 in.
Vertical Night View V, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen, 55 x 36 in.





Vertical Night View IV, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen,
33 x 31 in.



Vertical Night View VI, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen,
50 x 38 in.



Vertical Night View III, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen,
50 x 40 in.



Vertical Night View VII, 2018,
Egg tempera on linen,
27 x 20 in.





from left to right:

Vertical Night View V, 2018

Egg tempera on linen, 55 x 36 in.

Night View I, 2018

Egg tempera on linen, 18 x 24 in.

Vertical Night View IV, 2018

Egg tempera on linen, 33 x 31 in.

LIV METTE LARSEN BIOGRAPHY

- 1952** Born in Oslo, Norway
1971-73 Westerdals School of Communication
1973-77 SHKS School for Arts and Crafts Oslo, Norway
1978-84 Hochschule der Künste (UdK), Berlin, Germany
1984 Masterclass student with Prof. Fussmann,
Cofounder of artist run Gallery Wissarth, Berlin

GRANTS

- 1992** Grant of the Senate's Cultural Affairs Department, Berlin
2013/2018 BKH-Grant, Norway
2014/2018 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, New York

SELECTED SOLO AND TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2022** *Nightview*, Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art, New York
2020 *Brytningstid*, Enebakk Kirke, Enebakk, Norway with Bente Geving
2017/18 *In Dialogue*, Fresh Window, Brooklyn, New York with David Goerk
2017 *Concrete Factory/Slemmestad Fabrikker*, Trafo Kunsthall, Norway (catalogue)
2016 *Out of the Ordinary*, SPECTRE Art, Durham, North Carolina with Paula De Luccia
Insight/Outsight, The Painting Center, New York with Marianne Gagnier
Innblikk Utblikk NYC, Bærum Kunstforening, Norway with Eva Faye
2015 *URBAN JUXTAPOSITIONS*, SLAG Contemporary, Brooklyn, New York with Carol Salmanson
2014 *Urban Formalities*, William Holman Gallery, New York with Paula De Luccia (catalogue)
2013 *Slippery When Wet*, SUGAR, Brooklyn, New York with Gwendolyn Skaggs
2012 Rose Burlingham Gallery, New York with Matt Magee
2011 *360° scrap metal pieces*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany with Nadine Fecht
Scrap Metal New York Paintings, Helac Fine Art, New York
2010 *Berliner Blau*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany (catalogue)
2008 *Renaissance Walking*, Galeria Fruela, Madrid, Spain
Plaza, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
2007 *Berliner Vertikale*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany (catalogue)
2005 *rød, gul, blå*, Asker Kunstverein, Norway with Bente Geving (catalogue)
Grosse Vertikale, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
2003 *über eine zeit gestreckt*, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität Frankfurt/Main, Germany
2002 *Fragmentierungen*, Kunstsammlung Neubrandenburg, Germany (catalogue)
2001 *In Residence*, Kunsternes Hus, Oslo, Norway with Tone Avenstroup (catalogue)
2000 *An auf über...*, Vestfold Kunstnersenter, Norway with H.E. Wiegand (catalogue)
Schriftportraits, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany (catalogue)
1999 *an auf über...*, Städtische Galerie Lüdenscheid, Germany with H.E. Wiegand (catalogue)
Schriftportraits, Galerie Annmarie Taeger, Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Portretter, Galleri LNM, Oslo, Norway

- 1998** Goethe-Institut, Oslo, Norway with Ann Reder
- 1997** *Transparenz*, Galerie Westernhagen, Cologne, Germany with Jochen Stenschke
- 1995** Kunstverein Marburg, Germany (catalogue)
- 1994** *Innblick-Einblick-Utblick-Ausblick*, Galleri Heer, Oslo, Norway (catalogue)
- 1987** Galerie Westernhagen, Cologne, Germany
- 1986** *Quere Wege II*, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany with Yana Yo
- 1985** *Standbild*, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany with H.E. Wiegand (artist book)
Malerei, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (edition)
- 1982** AV-Geschoss, Berlin, Germany with Andrea Hilton

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** *Marienburg Summershow*, Holmestrand, Norway
- 2018/19** *Così via*, Centotto Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
- 2018** *Summer Group Show*, Edward Thorp Gallery, New York
- 2017** *Striations*, Buggy Factory, Centotto, Brooklyn, New York
- 2012-18** *Sideshow Nation*, Sideshow Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
- 2016** *Wintershow*, William Holman Gallery, New York
- 2015** *Situation 74*, Bleibtreu Galerie, Berlin, Germany
Resurface, MX Gallery, New York
- 2012** *New Address*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
Lineup round 4, SUGAR, Brooklyn, New York
- 2010** *Schaulager I*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
Pinta New York, Galerie Kai Hilgemann
- 2009** *Artists Books*, Tegnerforbundet, Oslo, Norway
- 2008** *Schaulager II*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
- 2007** *paper works*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
- 2005** *Fünf aus Norwegen*, Stiftung Landdrostei, Pinneberg, Germany
- 2004** *.no.*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
Quatérnio III, Galerie am Turm, Berlin, Germany
- 2003** *Neue Räume*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
Situation 12, Galerie Bleibtreu, Berlin, Germany
- 2002** *Situation 4*, Galerie Bleibtreu, Berlin, Germany
Kein Strich Zuviel, Kunstmuseum Lüdenscheid, Germany (catalogue)
Quaternio III, Centro Cultural de Sao Francisco, Joao Pessoa, Brazil
- 2001** *Linien*, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
- 1999** *Nordischer Klang*, Schloß Griebenow, Greifswald, Germany
Wasser Wind Wale, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
Art at the turn of the century, Galerie Kai Hilgemann, Berlin, Germany
- 1998** Gesellschaft für Gegenwartskunst, Augsburg, Germany (catalogue)
- 1996** *Museum Lodz*, Museum Krakow, Poland (catalogue)
10 Jahre, Galerie Westernhagen, Köln, Germany
- 1995** *Museum Radom*, Poland (catalogue)

- 1994** *Positionen Figurativer Malerei der Gegenwart*, Galerie Schlehn, Hannover, Germany
- 1987** *WISSARTH*, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (catalogue)
Berlin bleibt Nilreb, Galerie Westernhagen, Cologne, Germany
- 1986** *Luitpoldbad*, Bad Kissingen, Germany (catalogue)
Neue Bahnen-Altes Kreuz, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (artist book)
- 1985** *Der Rote Kanal*, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany (edition)
die, die heute von heute..., FB1 HdK Kunstquartier Ackerstraße, Berlin, Germany (catalogue)
- 1984** *Martin Luther*, Galleri Hammerlund, Oslo, Norway
Europäische Malerei der Gegenwart, Trier, Germany (catalogue)
Eröffnungsausstellung, Galerie Wissarth, Berlin, Germany
- 1983** *Osloer Straße*, Norwegische Studenten an der HdK, Berlin, Germany (catalogue)
- 1982** UKS, Oslo, Norway
Karl-Hofer-Symposium, Berlin, Germany (catalogue)

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Asker Kommune, Norway
Fidelity Collection, Boston, USA
Caldic Collection, Wassenaar, Netherlands
The Royal Norwegian Embassy, Berlin, Germany
Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, Kristiansand, Norway
Sammlung Ernst & Young, Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Sparebanken Møre Kunstsamling, Ålesund, Norway
Sammlung Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo, Norway
Gesellschaft für Gegenwartskunst, Augsburg, Germany
Marburger Kunstverein, Germany
Artothek Masserberg, Germany
Museum Lüdenscheid, Germany
Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, Germany

**ANDERS
WAHLSTEDT
FINE ART**

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page 2/3: *Night View X*, 2018
back cover: *Vertical Night View III*, 2018 (detail)

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