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**Kunsthalle
Friart
Fribourg**

Charlotte Johannesson

Save as art?

5.NOV.2023 – 11.FEV.2024

Exhibition guide

Introduction

Charlotte Johannesson has been producing work centred on an intuitive practice of image creation for fifty years. At the crossroads of the weaving loom and emerging digital technologies, her oeuvre is guided by an anti-authoritarian approach that resonates with events and changes in the eras she has lived through. Her Friart retrospective *Save as art?* puts the accent both on the different media she has explored and the coherence of themes and messages conveyed by her images.

During her training as weaver, Charlotte Johannesson discovered the work of Hannah Ryggen (1894-1970) and Ryggen's tapestries with their expressive realism denouncing fascist society. In Malmö in the 1960s Johannesson opened her studio Cannabis, named after the hemp plant used for the fibres for her works. The studio became a meeting place for the then thriving counter-cultural scene.

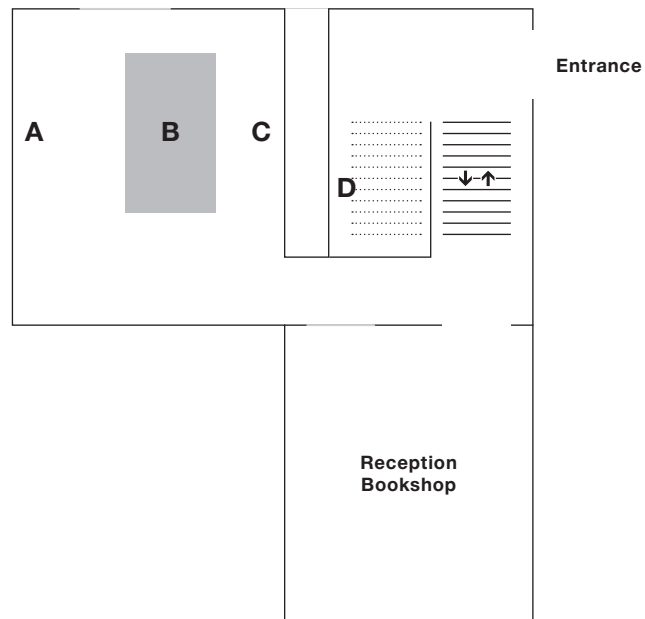
In 1978, fascinated by the similarities between the weaving loom and computer programming, Charlotte Johannesson swapped her textile artwork *I'm no Angel* (1972-1973/2017) for a very early personal computer, the Apple II. At that time, these still relatively scarce machines were used to process information and text. Using a grant, Charlotte and her partner Sture Johannesson set up the Digital Theatre in 1981. The Digital Theatre was a platform for the research and development of artistic digital projects and was described as one of the most advanced Apple II systems of its time. It included seven computers, printers, monitors and synthesisers. It would be operational until 1985.

Neither textile nor digital art were then seen as being part of the field of contemporary art. Retrospectively, the artist's choices, which often went against the current, strengthened the sense of a work in which feminism was allied with new technologies, making the artist a pioneer of post-digital art.

Biography

Charlotte Johannesson (born 1943 in Sweden) lives and works in Skanör, Sweden. She is represented by the gallery Hollybush Gardens in London.

The exhibition at Friart *Save as art?* follows her participation in the Venice Biennale in 2022 and her recent retrospectives at Nottingham Contemporary (2023), the Badischer Kunstverein (2022) and the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid (2021). This exhibition marks the rediscovery of a self-taught artist whose career has largely taken place on the fringes of the official art system.



Basement

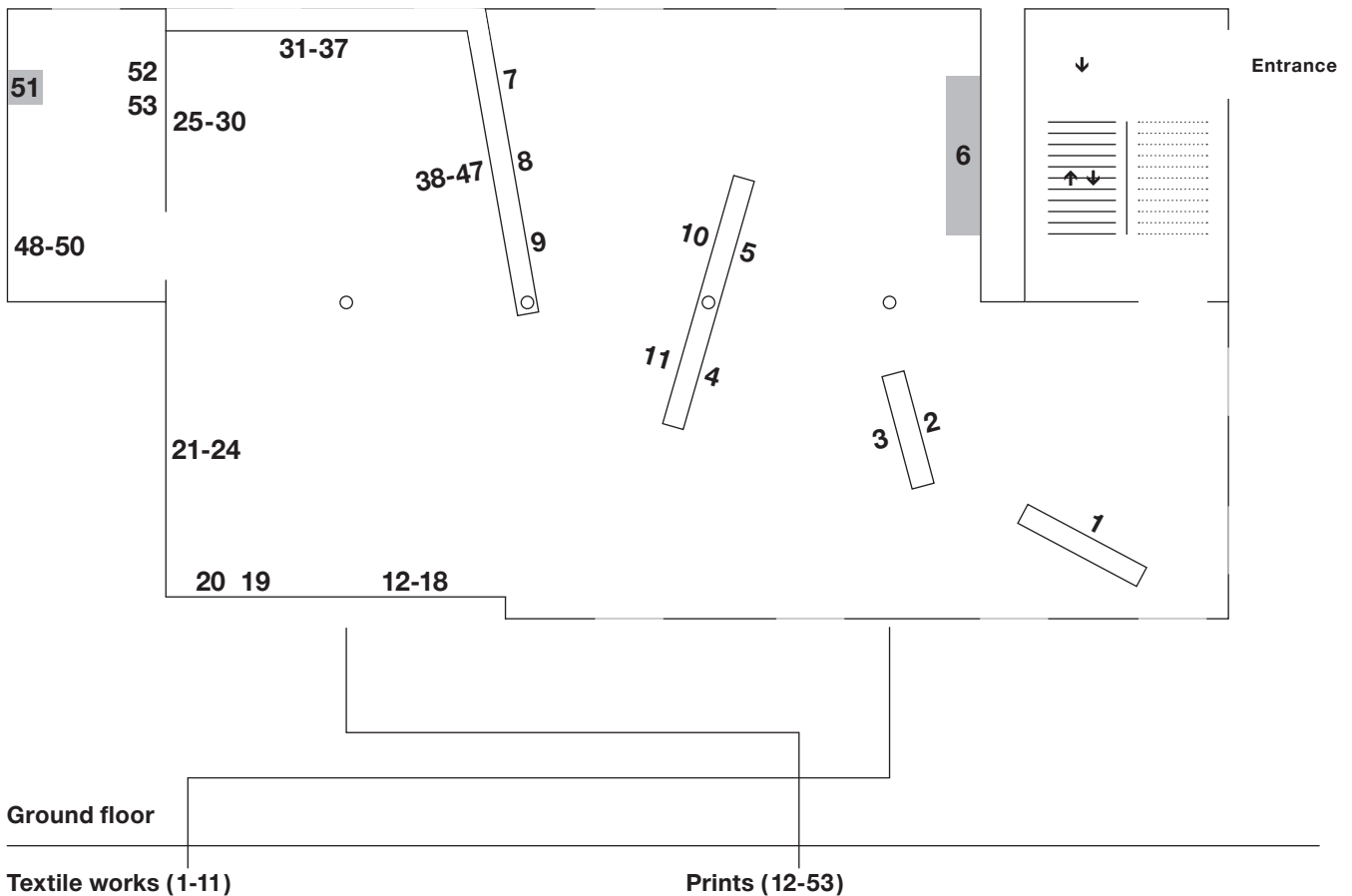
- A** Archives Digital
Theatre (slideshow)
- B** Archives Digital
Theatre
- C** *Digital computer
graphics, 1981-1985*

Images courtesy of the
artist's archive

- D** *Human 21, 2017*
23.5 × 16.5 cm
3D prints (21 prints)

Archives

A patchwork of documents of archives and original digital visions puts the Digital Theatre (1978-1985) into context: memories of a new type of production studio with an experimental ethos.



The main exhibition space on the ground floor presents a broad selection of the textile works dating from the 1970s. The images resulting from collisions between slogans and reappropriated symbols create semantic games engaging with the chaotic political events of the time. On several tapestries, a number refers to the imposition of the social security code attributed to each individual by the Swedish state. In *No choice amongst the stinking fish* (1970/2016), we see personifications of the political parties of the time. *Chile echoes in my Scull* (1973/2016) evokes the Chilean coup d'état of 1973, while *Freie Die Raf* (1976) echoed the Baader Meinhof affair.

These graphic and satirical works comment on the blurring of the lines between information and media propaganda, as witnessed within liberal politics, the mediatised landscape of terrorism and the punk and industrial culture of the 1970s. Demonstrating resistance rather than direct militancy, the artist used the medium of textiles to open up a space that conflated agit prop and domestic creativity. The interlaced fibres took on the role of a feminist code par excellence, a minor key material subversion of the violence of unequivocal meaning.

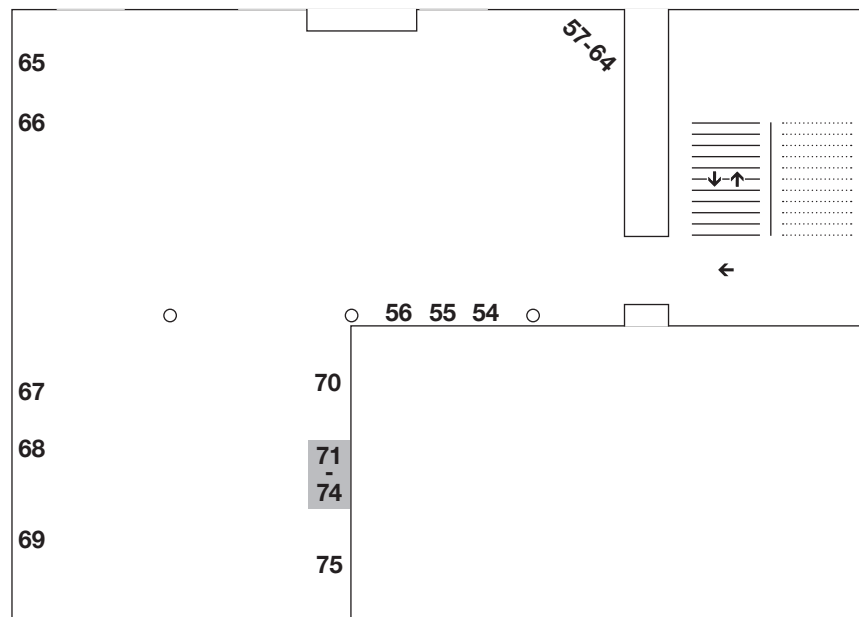
Plotter prints, based on rudimentary code, created by the artist under the banner of the Digital Theatre between 1981 and 1985, were the ethereal visions of a nascent virtual imaginary. They comport within them the magic of revelation, the first times. Although automated, their production remained within the domain of the hand-made and required focussed individual concentration from the artist.

Hung according to both their thematic and formal constellations, the series illustrate the transformation of the social body in contact with digital media technologies. The portraits of famous personalities, of Bowie (14), Massou (24), the artist Beuys (29), the writer Victoria Benedictsson (25) evoke the new viral power of the face. Indian dancers, caravans, maps of the world, mermaids, narcotics, abstractions, make up the figures of a virtual global groove. The ridged digital surface and its pixels impose a technical rationality. They link the eye and the mind to produce an interactive vertigo.

Charlotte Johannesson explores the potential of modifiable images and motifs. Alteration, distortions, pulsations, vibrations, re-compositions are the figures of style of a cybernetic style in test phase. Sat in front of her command posts, the artist methodically composes, codes and remixes. Each image requires of her an applied execution, a routine tripping, establishing a plateau to improvise on. As with the weaving loom, the artist connects to an interface and to its social phylum. Together alone in connected solitude they reason things out.

TEXTILE WORKS

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>1 <i>Jamlika ar vi allihopa (We are all equal)</i>
70s/2020
85.5 × 128.5 cm
Wool, wood, barbed wire, handwoven reproduction by Tiyoko Tomikawa</p> <p>2 <i>I'm No Angel</i>
1972-1973/2017
165 × 100 cm
Handwoven wool, reproduction of a missing artwork</p> <p>3 <i>Terror</i>, 1970/2016
121 × 60 cm
Linen, wool, leather, pins, pencil sharpener, needle, barbed wire, buttons, handwoven reproduction by Tiyoko Tomikawa</p> <p>4 <i>Street Life</i>
1976/2020
80 × 142 cm
Wool, handwoven reproduction by Tiyoko Tomikawa</p> <p>5 <i>Look</i>
60s/2020
85 × 140 cm
Wool, handwoven reproduction by Tiyoko Tomikawa</p> <p>6 Sketches and archives</p> <p>7 <i>Frei die RAF</i>, 1976
150 × 100 cm
Handwoven wool</p> <p>8 <i>No Choice Amongst Stinking Fish</i>
1970/2016
100 × 60 cm
Wool, handwoven reproduction by Tiyoko Tomikawa</p> <p>9 <i>Chile eko i skallen (Chile echoes in my Scull)</i>, 1973/2016
Textile: 108 × 59 cm
Baton: 1.8 × 94.5 cm
Wool, cinnamon stick, handwoven reproduction par Tiyoko Tomikawa</p> <p>10 <i>No Future</i>, 1977
105 × 94 cm
Weaving
Courtesy Valdemar Gerdin</p> | <p>11 <i>New Wave</i>, 1977
156 × 107 cm
Weaving
Courtesy Thomas Ekström, stockholmmodern</p> <p>PRINTS
left to right and top to bottom</p> <p>12-13/15-18
<i>How to Make a Plotting of David Bowie</i>
1981-1986
44 × 31.5 × 1.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>14 <i>David Bowie (With His Autograph)</i>
1986
115 × 85 × 4 cm
Screen print on paper</p> <p>19 <i>Black and White</i>
1983
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>20 <i>Computer Mind</i>
1984
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>21 <i>Computer Mind</i>
1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>22 <i>Self-portrait</i>
1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>23 <i>Self-portrait</i>
1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper
Private collection, Basel, Switzerland</p> <p>24 <i>Massoud (Ahmad Sha Massoud, Afghan Politician and Military, 1953-2001)</i>
1981-1986
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>25 <i>Victoria Benedictsson</i>, 1983
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> | <p>26 <i>World</i>, 1984
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>27 <i>Texture 7</i>, 1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>28 <i>Texture 3</i>, 1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>29-30 <i>Joseph Beuys (German artist, 1921-1986)</i>
1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>31 <i>Clarten Niebuhr in Happy Arabia 1758</i>, 1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>32 <i>Walk</i>, 1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>33 <i>Self-portrait</i>, 1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>34 <i>There</i>, 1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>35 <i>Walk 3</i>, 1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>36 <i>Black Hole (Purple Blue)</i>, 1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>37 <i>Untitled (Purple)</i>
1983
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>38 <i>Untitled (Orange)</i>
1983
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>39 <i>Untitled (Grey)</i>
1983
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>40 <i>Oasis</i>, 1985
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper
Private collection, Basel, Switzerland</p> | <p>41 <i>Pray</i>, 1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>42 <i>Flag (Turquoise Brown)</i>, 1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>43 <i>Save Us</i>, 1984
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>44 <i>Vote ?</i>, 1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>45 <i>A Note in Space</i>
1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>46 <i>Where</i>, 1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>47 <i>Walk</i>, 1981-1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>48 <i>Parsifal</i>, 1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>49 <i>Vote</i>, 1984
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>50 <i>Richard Wagner (German composer, 1813-1883)</i>, 1983
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>51 Charlotte and Sture Johannesson
<i>Riksdagshuset</i>, 1983
1:00 min
Digital computer graphics
Sound: Goran Weihs</p> <p>52 <i>Stockholm City Hall</i>
1985
52 × 42 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> <p>53 <i>Sweden's coat of arms</i>, 1986
42 × 52 × 3.5 cm
Computer graphics plotted on paper</p> |
|---|---|---|---|



First floor

54	<i>Peace</i> , 1986 42 × 52 × 3.5 cm Computer graphics plotted on paper	62	<i>Brain cell</i> , 2019 111 × 57 cm Wool, digitally woven	69	<i>Worth a World of Arguments</i> , c. 1970 145 × 110 cm Weaving Private collection	The four handmade laces works were commissioned by Nottingham Contemporary.
55	<i>Peace</i> , 1983 42 × 52 × 3.5 cm Computer graphics plotted on paper	63	<i>We Are Not Museum Curators</i> , 2019 121 × 57 cm Wool, digitally woven	75	<i>Desert Dream</i> , 1990 91.5 × 64.5 cm Lace and ink on handmade paper	
56	<i>Bird</i> , 1983 42 × 52 × 3.5 cm Computer graphics plotted on paper	64	<i>Native American</i> 2019 117 × 57 cm Wool, digitally woven			
	left to right	65	<i>More Matter, Less Art</i> 2018 81 × 65 × 6 cm Acrylic on canvas with organic matter			
57	<i>Caravan</i> , 2019 104 × 57 cm Wool, digitally woven	66	<i>Longing</i> , c. 1970 110 × 120 cm Weaving Private collection	71	<i>Umbrella</i> , 2022-2023 47 × 11.5 cm Handwoven lace	
58	<i>HIGH FOREVER</i> 2019 120 × 58 cm Wool, digitally woven	67	<i>POETS TELL MANY LIES</i> , 2020-2021 60 × 40 × 1.5 cm Acrylic on canvas with organic matter	72	<i>Robin Hood</i> 2022-2023 49 × 12 cm Handwoven lace	
59	<i>Vote</i> , 2019 105 × 57 cm Wool, digitally woven	68	<i>...that we seen our atoms!</i> , 2020-2021 60 × 40 × 1.5 cm Acrylic on canvas with organic matter	73	<i>Work MMXXII</i> 2022-2023 46 × 10 cm Handwoven lace	
60	<i>The Brain is Wider Than the Sky</i> , 2019 125 × 58 cm Wool, digitally woven			74	<i>Braincell</i> , 2022-2023 47 × 12 cm Handwoven lace	
61	<i>Save as Art Yes/No</i> 2019 128 × 56 cm Wool, digitally woven			75	<i>It's All in a Day's Work</i> , 2020-2021 50 × 50 × 1.5 cm Acrylic on canvas	

All works except when mentioned : Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Fiber art

Matter and memories. A selection of more recent works are exhibited on the first floor. Crochet and paper enrich a practice the artist calls «fiber art». Native digital motifs serve as source code for the production of new tapestries (57-64). The artist's paintings on the long wall at the back give a more natural or cosmic dimension to her work as a whole. Their messages in the form of poetic art (*More Matter, Less Art*, 2018; *POETS TELL MANY LIES*, 2020-2021) enter into dialogue with the early textile works *Longing* (c. 1970) and *Worth a World of Arguments* (c. 1970). This urge to break away, a love for liberty.

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♥ **DANKE**
♥ **THANK YOU**



THE EXHIBITION IS ORGANISED IN
COLLABORATION WITH

Nottingham
County Council

HOLLYBUSH GARDENS

DURING THE EXHIBITION

OPENING
4.NOV.2023, 18:00

FESTIVAL CULTURE ET ECOLE 2023
AVEC FANNY DELARZE, KOLLEKTIV ORTIE
CULTUREETECOLE.CH
14-30.NOV.2023

VISITE DES AMI-E-S AVEC NICOLAS BRULHART
16.NOV.2023, 19:00

LECTURE BY ART HISTORIAN AND CURATOR LARS BANG LARSEN ON
THE WORK OF CHARLOTTE JOHANNESSON AS PART OF THREE DAYS
SYMPOSIUM (14 - 16.DEC)
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG
BEYOND REALITY? VIRTUALITY AND EXPERIENCE
(AESTHETICS & CRITICS VII)
14.DEC.2023

NOCTURNAL TOUR
WITH NICOLAS BRULHART AND SADIE PLANT
27.JAN.2024, 20:00

FRIBAR SPECIAL
CONTRE-BANDE: MUSIQUES ALTERNATIVES ET CULTURE CASSETTE AVEC
LES STATUES MEURENT AUSSI
10.FEV.2024, 20-0:00

COMPLETE PROGRAM
WWW.FRIART.CH

KUNSTHALLE FRIART FRIBOURG

NICOLAS BRULHART, ESTELLE NEGRO, SACHA RAPPO, JULIE FOLLY,
MAXIME PAPAUX, FANNY DELARZE/KOLLEKTIV ORTIE, PIERRICK
BRÉGEON/EUROSTANDARD, FABIAN STÜCHELI, PIERRE BERSET, STEPHAN
WEBER, ANNE SUDAN, JÖRG BOSSHARD, GUILLAUME BAERISWYL, ANJA
DELZ, JACK SIMS, ATELIER 48, CLÉMENCE DE WECK AND THE COMMITTEE
OF FRI-ART, THE FRIENDS OF FRIART, RECEPTION STAFF, CONCEIÇÃO
SILVA CARVALHO, ALIONA CAZACU

THANKS

ANJA CASSER, MARIE GYGER, MALINDA JOHANNESSON, LARS BANG
LARSEN, BERNHARD ZITZ, NICOLE YIP, VERTICALDRAPE

OPENING HOURS

MO-TUE BY APPOINTMENT
WED-FRI 12AM-6PM
SAT-SUN 1-6PM