

Bus Riders – preview of the Spring Salon at Liljevalchs

For the first get-together of 2015, Bus Riders' members met for a preview of the Spring Salon at Liljevalchs kunsthalle.

Mårten Castenfors, Director of Liljevalchs, gave a captivating presentation of the Salon



and this year's participating artists. He began by emphasising that **one of the Spring Salon's**

most important objectives is to inspire visitors who may only visit one exhibit or museum this year. The tradition of the Salon dates back to 1921 and the number of applicants to participate with their work keeps increasing – this year the jury had to consider **2 335 contributions** during one week. The final exhibition includes both well-known artists and newcomers with paintings dominating this year's choices. Other genres that are well represented this year are drawing and sculpture.

The Salon is immensely popular with **76 000 visitors in 2014** and enables "the everyday person" to start a collection as the prices, set by the artists themselves, range from 600 000 SEK to the affordable 125 SEK.

What makes the Spring Salon so significant to the Swedish art scene is its prominent jury,

this year consisting of Lena Josefsson, president of Moderna Museet's Friends, Jeanette Bonnier, founder of Bonnier's kunsthalle, Tom Böttiger, advertising genius and Mårten Castenfors himself.

The visitor is met by a large concrete piece consisting of 430 unique sculptures, by the artist and teacher at Konstfack, Simon Anund. Mårten shared with the members that the different sculptures together form a fictional city in the scale 1:300 and are cast in expended packaging material – expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam). The sculpture corresponds with Europe's yearly production of Styrofoam and if the members were to stand in one of the streets of the concrete city, they would be little over 6 mm tall.



13. *Fragile*, Concrete sculpture by Simon Anund



Another piece that immediately captured the attention of the group was **a sculpture of a large black cat, made by artist Niki Lindroth von Bahr**. The sculpture is a symbol of the black cat that is said to haunt the culverts of the White House whenever an election or a tragedy is about to occur. This piece is part of the artist's work revolving around animals appearing in modern myths or conspiracy theories. Mårten admitted that at first, when he thought that the cat was only a couple of decimetres in size, he was reluctant to include it in this year's salon. However, when he learnt the actual size of the sculpture he said it was a no-brainer to include the piece.

One of this year's trends is painting and Mårten speculated that this might be because the genre has returned to the art academies – much do to the fact that this specific craft is easier to earn money on when the artists are first starting out.

Described in one sentence, Mårten and the jury are looking for strong pieces, made by artists that has their own individual way to enunciate their ideas.



144. *Ghost Cat, sculpture in Styrofoam, jesmonite and filler by Niki Lindroth von Bahr*

