

Martin Aagaard Hansen

*A Silence of Things Lost and Found*

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*"Hear me, hear my silence. What I say is never what I say but instead something else."* - Clarice Lispector, *Água Viva*

There is a blue in Martin Aagaard Hansen's (b. 1988, DK) paintings that stays with you. It is not the blue of sky or water, but something denser - the blue of rooms that have been closed for a long time, or of a memory you cannot quite locate. From it, forms gather - withering flowers bowing their heads; contours of figures that have not yet condensed into bodies; rooms opening onto other rooms, just beyond reach. These paintings do not invite so much as draw you in and hold you there.

A particular space lingers behind this body of work. An apartment once filled with conversation and the passing through of many lives, now emptied and returned to stillness. What remained was a gesture: flowers placed by the window, honouring traces of a life that the room still held but could no longer keep. During the 1960s and 70s, it had gathered a milieu of Situationist artists, writers and musicians, a history the works carry without illustrating. In Aagaard Hansen's paintings, these spaces are not portraits of a place so much as carriers of its imprint - walls hold the memory of those who inhabited them, and the paintings follow them inward.

The recurring flowers move through the paintings like a quiet refrain. Caught at various stages of decline, their dried heads catch light like small constellations, fragile, radiant, resistant to disappearance. In one painting, a single flower holds the centre of the composition, the room around it layered in silted olive and grey blue, the geometry of walls and corridors giving form to what would otherwise dissolve entirely. These works carry the feeling of a held breath.

Elsewhere, paintings darken and figures begin to surface. From near-black grounds, presences emerge - a face, a silhouette, the suggestion of gathered company. Points of light, punctures in the surface, hold these compositions in place, as though the instability of the figures requires something fixed to press against.

Throughout, the works are built by accumulation and erosion, layers added, scraped back, and reworked. The paint carries lived experience, not through description but through sedimentation. Presence becomes evidence, and evidence, in time, becomes speculation. The sculptures extend this further - darkly stained architectural constructions, precise as silhouettes, in which stairs ascend to hollow doorways and spaces open onto nothing. Diorama-like in their quality, they share the paintings sense of a constructed reality, something rooted in the real world but never able to fully grasp it — objects that say less than what they know.

What is lost, the title suggests, does not vanish - it settles into surfaces, lingers in rooms, persists in the layers. Across painting and sculpture, Aagaard Hansen attends to absence not as emptiness but as density, something preserved, eroded, and carried forward.