Charlotte Johannesson Large Print Wall Text

The work of Charlotte Johannesson (b.1943, Sweden) represents a synthesis between the artisanal and the digital. Over the past 50 years, she has explored the formal and conceptual connections between the craft technology of the loom and the digital technology of computer programming. From the outset, Johannesson saw ‘great synchronicity between the two machines’ that became her tools for making images.

Largely self-taught as an artist, Johannesson trained as a weaver in the late 1960s. At a time when textiles were seen as a decorative craft, she was instead interested in their potential as a medium of protest. As she recalls, ‘I was interested in the real world – in politics. This was the reality that struck me’. Indeed, her woven images reflect the social and political dissent of the time: 1960s counterculture, feminism, punk, and the militant activism of the 1970s.

In 1978, Johannesson traded a weaving for an early version of the personal computer. She taught herself to program so she could make graphics for the screen – a time-consuming process that she had to figure out for herself. Johannesson’s graphics drew on a wide repertoire of motifs: some are strangely ethereal and almost abstract, while others anticipate our new dependence on communication technologies and the networked nature of the internet. From 1981 to 1985, Johannesson and her partner Sture ran the Digital Theatre, Scandinavia’s first digital arts laboratory.

This exhibition brings together textiles, digital graphics, plotter prints, paintings and screenprints made over the past 50 years. Image, pattern, colour, texture, material and language recur and play out across time and different mediums. The survey brings handmade paper works from the early 1990s, presented here for the first time, into conversation with new experiments in lace made especially for this exhibition. It proposes that these little-known facets of Johannesson’s work might be understood in connection with the rest of her practice as a form of what she calls ‘fibre art’. But more than anything, this exhibition underscores the politically and artistically radical nature of her work, positioning her as a forerunner of today’s post-feminist and digital art.

**RELATED EVENTS**

**Exhibition Walkthroughs**

**Wednesday 15 February, 12pm**

Welcome walkthrough
Explore the exhibition with our team and join us for refreshments and conversation in the café afterwards.

**12.30pm every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, starting 21 February**Join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants for a short exploration of one of our exhibitions. For more details visit our website.

**Artist talk
Saturday 11 February, 3–4.30pm**

Charlotte Johannesson in conversation with art historian and curator Lars Bang Larsen.

**Free Family Activities**

During school holidays:

**14–16 February, 4–6 and 11–13 April**

Explore the exhibition’s themes through making and play.

*Charlotte Johannesson* is curated by Nicole Yip, assisted by Niall Farrelly.

The exhibition is generously supported by the Swedish Arts Grants Committee; the Embassy of Sweden, London; Hollybush Gardens; and the Charlotte Johannesson Exhibition Circle: Eleanor Cayre and ArtAV.

For more information about
the exhibition, related events and learning programmes, visit nottinghamcontemporary.org

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