

ENIGMATIC CLARITY.

THERE IS REALLY IS SOMETHING SPECIAL about Arnäck's oil paintings of flowers, foliage, grass and amazing torrents of water that gush from some secret source, always concealed by lush vegetation. They are very clear and it is, in part, this clarity which makes them enigmatic. The artist's careful emphasis on form and colour, light and shade, foreground and background, means that the observer feels invited to meditate on the deeper meaning of the pictures. After seeing two or three of her paintings, one realises that her work is not realism in the normal sense of the word.

Whereas in other modern art we often encounter incompletely expressed fragments of the material world – reality seen, as it were, out of the corner of one's eye – Arnäck shows us the world seen through a magnifying glass. She does not seek to present us with a kind of photographic exactitude. Her magnifying glass is related to the magician's crystal ball; she encourages us to see more.

When her eye explores a bush her intention is to view everything. Branches and leaves form a microcosmos which reflects the whole and gives us an intimation of the wonders of creation. It is here where light and shade, cold and warm, sorrow and joy all interact. Pointed, phallic branches press firmly against tempting cavities. Alternatively, they might have leaves the shape of female genitalia. Here, a dance of the senses takes place; it embraces male and female, and this interplay results in harmonious syntheses. She is not a detached painter, but rather a utopian and a visionary. This sounds abstract, perhaps, but that's simply how it sounds. In the paintings all of this is down-to-earth, sensuously lucid and completely natural.

THROUGH HER VISIONARY enlargements Arnäck enables the viewer to see the mysterious in what seems to be the familiar. This is also characteristic of her portrait works. Over the years she has painted quite a number of portraits and has worked as a commissioned painter, which has proven demanding and difficult. Here, pictures in the genre are denoted not only – or even primarily – by their likeness to the original but rather by clues to secrets. By emphasising a particular feature, more through subtlety than caricature, her portraits intimate certain characteristics of their subjects. Once again, it involves the magnifying glass. Everything is as it looks, but elucidated and slightly accentuated. The viewer can stand for a long time pondering over one of Arnäck's portraits, trying to discover the intuitive psychology behind the brushstrokes.

One small detail reflects the entirety. Arnäck's microcosmos is a macrocosmos. Her tricky, elusive realism challenges the viewer's imagination. Giving a flattering depiction does not satisfy her – she provides form and content. Both periphery and centre are everywhere, as with the Neoplatonists. The viewer needs to be submerged in her pictures to take them in, to differentiate depth from surface, and substance from that which is only beautiful.

A PAIR OF INCANDESCENT-LIKE WOLVES are to be found in Arnäck's work, peacefully resting in symmetrical harmony which reminds us of an eastern mandala.

A group of slightly threatening, or at least sly, wild animals in one of her more colourful paintings have twilight-blue fur and bright yellow eyes which shine intensely like strange, distant heavenly bodies.

Animals and plants are as one with the deep mystery of existence, like people when they sleep or in some other way forget themselves – in the child's play or adults' eroticism.

What is so fascinating is not only Arnbäck's artistic skill but also her ability to give form and suggestive vision to existence. She does it with the utmost sensitivity. She shows us the wonder of life in what appears to be the familiar, in aspects which are easy to recognise.

IN ADDITION TO BEING DECORATIVE her paintings have soul and depth of intention. Blake's famous lines come to mind; these can function instructively and as guidance for those who want to take a closer look at her paintings.

To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.

Her painting is not literary but I have always been of the opinion that it is related to poetry and have therefore asked her to prepare covers for several of my collections. Like all good poets, Arnbäck succeeds in being a realist and a symbolist at one and the same time.

She paints not only expressively and beautifully but also evocatively, with a constant invitation to engage in reflection and meditation.

TOMMY OLOFSSON
writer and literary critic..