



Agneta Ekman and Håkan Serner
in the film 'Kisses and Hugs'.

Embroidered Pictures

"Is this stack for sale?"

"Sure. Shall we say a hundred?"

On a shelf lay thirty-five old black-and-white film stills, some with attached captions, others anonymous. Not a hint of to which film they belong. And so begins the story of Madeleine Aleman's find at a flea market in Bromsten.

"It was the best sale, a total goldmine!" says Madeleine Aleman.

These pictures have laid at home in the chest of drawers for three years, they need to like, mature. And suddenly, one ordinary day in artist's Madeleine Aleman's life, she gets the idea to transfer something to the pictures, to make them more or less absurd.

"I have worked in the territories of masculine/feminine, but also with my own relationship to men. I basically put men under a microscope," says Madeleine Aleman.

The film stills, some being from the sixties, are portraits of men, with the exception of a few.

"It felt like men, men, men for an eternity, but in different phases: typical cartoon series action figures, dated cowboys and stereotypical soldiers. Pictures from Lars Ardelius and Yngve Gamlin's film "The Bather" from 1967 have received the working title of "Lust". Madeleine Aleman plants a sassy, embroidered carrot in the tall grass with the blond girl.

"This works in the summertime scenery, right? Besides the girl resembles a little white bunny, you know?"

Jonas Cornell's film "Kisses and Hugs" from 1966 with an intertwined Agneta Ekman and Håkan Serner instantly became "The Kiss".

It's like she tries to strengthen the love through embroidering a pink heart around their kiss, but the slack threads twist downwards, in a slightly depressing way. Maria Gripe's and Kjell Grede's "Hugo and Josefin" from 1967 has short and sweetly become "Hugo". In this, Madeleine Aleman literally sews "Hugo" into the picture with blue shiny embroidery yarn.

"Queer" has undergone a metamorphosis. Those two guys who already from the beginning looked a bit androgynous have each been equipped with his own pea-green, fluttering tulle ballerina toutou.

"Look how they gleam with pride!"

The picture, "Without title" can take out of anyone. From the beginning, it was a bare portrait of a soldier.

"He laid there in the studio for quite some time. I looked at him sometimes and thought: What can you communicate with this picture?"

It became a portrait with the face half-covered in black tulle, but it also became a picture about the art of hiding oneself behind a uniform.

"Embroidering has never been my strongest artistic expression; I got a C in handicraft. This is my revenge for that."

Susanna Hellberg