Tampere University of Applied Sciences

# Instagram as a Source of Themes in Contemporary Painting

**Anna Värri**

BACHELOR'S THESIS
June 2021

Degree Programme in Media and Arts
Fine Art

**ABSTRACT**
Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Media and Arts
Fine Art

VÄRRI, ANNA:
Instagram as a Source of Themes in Contemporary Painting

Bachelor's thesis 45 pages, appendices 13 pages
June 2021

---

The purpose of this thesis was to critically analyze the ways of how issues related to Instagram are explored in contemporary painting. By reviewing paintings addressing various phenomena related to Instagram, a theoretical framework for Instagram-related contemporary paintings was achieved.

By discussing the recent works of contemporary painters like Jen Mann, Mauro C. Martinez and Emma Ainala, it was reviewed how artists have tackled phenomena that Instagram culture has birthed in the recent years. By using various articles and literary sources as a basis, themes like censorship, performativity in social media, and the relationship between identity and an online presence, are discussed. It was found that there exist common factors in the paintings addressing these themes, like strenuous attention to detail, aesthetic beauty and a quality of something being slightly off.

Included in this paper is also a report of the artistic part of this thesis, a series of paintings that depict Instagram Stories. While also touching on similar themes that were the topic of this research, the paintings concentrate on one's presence in social media and the habits of contemporary visual communication, which platforms like Instagram enable.

---

Keywords: Instagram, social media, contemporary painting

**CONTENTS**

# 1  INTRODUCTION

The ever-increasing digitalization and increasing popularity of social media has brought with it a slew of new phenomena that are directly reflected in our society and culture. Social media applications like Instagram have become a permanent part of the life of contemporary humans and the effects their popularization has had on people on a global scale is massive. Whereas Instagram can be a useful tool for networking or maintaining relationships, it has downsides which have sparked the interest of multiple contemporary artists in the past years. This thesis aims to dissect how issues related to Instagram have been explored especially in contemporary painting.

During the background research for this thesis, it was found that issues such as copyright infrindgement, invasion of privacy and third party members profiting off of its user database are all prominent features built in the social media system. Other downsides that can be reflected more directly in users' personal lives include problems like cyberbullying, distorted self images, overly polished depictions of reality and fear of missing out.

The artworks discussed in this thesis have been chosen by their extensiveness in how they deal with the phenomena generated by Instagram. During the background research, it was found that in contemporary painting field some of the most explored themes concerning Instagram culture were censorship, performativity in social media, and the relationship between identity and an online presence, which is why these themes in particular are discussed. These topics are reviewed chapter by chapter, while also introducing the artists and their paintings that address these topics. Because of Instagram's rapidly changing conventions and for the sake of topicality, only paintings from the past five years were chosen to be discussed.

In this thesis, the phenomena occurring in Instagram are reviewed and their different ways of reflection on contemporary painting are considered. The relationship between contemporary painting and Instagram is interesting for many reasons. Instagram serves as a marketing platform for a significant

number of visual artists, although as a display venue for art, the application is not completely unproblematic. In addition, the relationship between the digital environment and physical painting offers interesting research perspectives. How can an analogical and centuries-old medium respond to the digital revolution of our time? The relevance of painting has been actively considered since the invention of photography, and the rise of new digital channels of expression can be seen as a challenge to painting, which has underwent strenuous turmoil during the course of its history.

This thesis also presents the painting series, titled: If you post this, can you tag me? which was created alongside this research. The series deals with questions related to image-based sharing of social media and borrows its form from the Story feature of Instagram. The series was presented as part of the Kaleidoscopers degree show at kaleidoscopers2021.com.

## 2    BRIEF HISTORY OF INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a photo- and video based social media application launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010. Ever since the beginning, Instagram's purpose has been to share photographs taken on mobile devices with a base of followers. The users have always had the chance to enhance their photographs with a selection of filters provided by the app, which enabled even lower-quality photographs to appear aesthetically pleasing. The filters were a key part in what made the app so popular in its early years. During its history, Instagram has gone through many updates, some of which the most notable are video sharing, added in 2013, and a Story-feature added in 2016, in which a user can add photos or videos in their profiles, which are visible for only 24 hours. (Blystone 2020)

In 2012, Instagram's user base had already grown to approximately 27 million users. Later that same year, Facebook acquired the company with 1 billion dollars. Today, Instagram is amongst the most popular social media apps with its user base growing every day. (Blystone 2020)
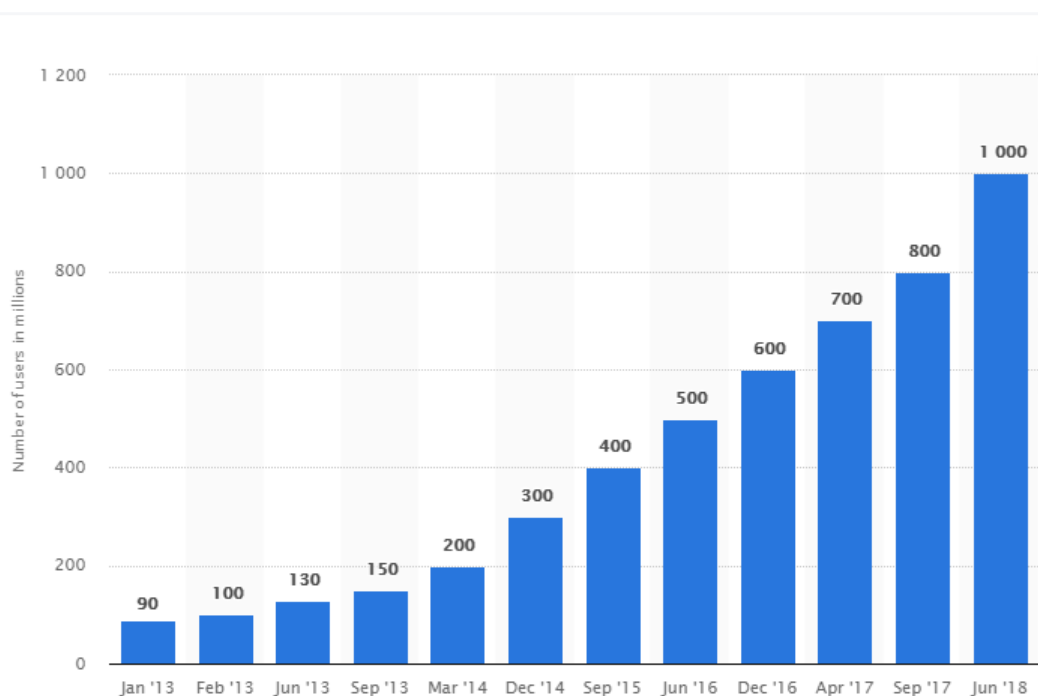


FIGURE 1. The growth in Instagram users between 2013-2018 (Tankovska 2021)

In the past decade, Instagram has increased its popularity in such a way, that in 2018 its number of users reached 1 billion (Graph 1). Throughout its history, the application has been popular especially amongst people between the ages of 18-34, with over 70% of its users falling under this age group. (Tankovska 2021, Mohsin 2021). Nowadays, Instagram remains as an important tool for youth for socializing and staying in contact, following accounts of their interests and sharing content with their followers. The popularity of the application is made clear when looking at the average time spent on it daily, which in 2021 was 53 minutes. (Mohsin 2021).

There are various reasons for the app's ever-increasing popularity; A study from 2016 concluded that the most important reasons for using the app were surveillance, coolness, documentation and creativity. Another study from 2015 found that there are five key social and psychological reasons for using Instagram: peeking, archiving, self-expression, interaction and escapism. (Seibel 2019, 2.)

## 3   ON PAINTING

Throughout history, artists have captured meanings and images on their canvases that help us understand history and humanity. For centuries, painting flourished mainly because of the mandates of patrons. Those who could afford it, were able to hire an artist to document things that, from their perspectives, were essential to document or present (Core Knowledge Language…8-9, 2012). For example, the church served as the patronage for a huge number of European artists during the Renaissance, which is why ecclesiastical art and religious themes are so widely represented in the history of European painting. (Sutton 2019.)

For centuries, painting followed a certain pattern - it represented something. Historically painting had always had recognizable figures, people, trees, animals; something that clearly referred to something existing and identifiable. Renaissance paintings all followed the rules of perspective: everything represented in a painting was depicted as seen from a certain angle at a certain moment (Galassi, 1981, 12-13). A major turning point occurred when photography was invented in the early 19th century. It began to take over the mantle of documentation from painting, soon replacing painting as the primary means of visual documentation. Suddenly the field of painting was in a huge upheaval. After seeing the photograph for the first time, the painter Paul Delaroche famously declared painting to be dead. (Barnes 2019.)

Photography was also met with criticism and many found it too realistic, revealing the nature of reality too well, including all the ugly aspects. Despite the representativeness of the paintings, however, the artists used to embellish the surrounding reality, not least the appearance of the clients who paid their salaries. However, the artists responded to the challenge posed by the birth of photography, as they realized that for the first time in history, there was room for more than just figurative painting. Soon, trends such as Expressionism and Impressionism began to take over the field, partially abandoning the conventions of traditional, figurative painting. A continuum began that led to Pointillism, Cubism, Surrealism, and numerous other art movements. The artists

seemed to be freed from the yoke of classical figurative painting, and responded to it by unraveling their creativity in entirely new ways. (Qin 2018.)

Painting has always proved its resilience in the face of new challenges and emerging new mediums. As made clear in this thesis, contemporary painters continue to keep the medium hearty by exploring modern day phenomena in their works, issues that are unique to our times, such as Instagram culture. The issues researched in this thesis and juxtaposition of a classical medium and digital environments produces completely fresh insights to questions that have been key interests of artists in all times, like identity, performativity and censorship.

## 4   IDENTITY AND SELF-OBSESSING

Given that Instagram is a photo-based application, it is important to look into exhibiting one's identity through photography. A popular phenomenon related to Instagram in the past decade is self-expressing through the act of taking self portraits, or "selfies". A selfie is a self-generated and self-selected documentation to communicate the transitory message about oneself at a particular moment in time, typically taken with the use of smartphones and webcams for the purpose of immediate distribution to others via social media networks (Soerjoatmodjo 2016, 139). This effortless image distribution is heavily linked to the "selfie culture", a phenomenon popularized in 2010s, in which an individual can post a self-portrait online, and directly influence the image others have of them via social media. Through posting selfies in which the individual is posing with a certain hairstyle, brand or clothing, one can easily send a message about which demographic or subculture they belong in.

Origins of the selfie extend centuries back. Monks would draw tiny portraits of themselves when copying manuscripts, and artists would place their own likeness in a painting of people. In the 18th century, artists' self-portraits became popular collectibles and towards the end of 20th century, artists had widely explored their own bodies in their art. (Rettberg 2014, 8) The attitudes towards self-portraiture by artists has been mainly positive, neutral at least. But the contemporary attitude towards the selfie is different. Ever since the popularization of selfie culture, the phenomenon has been faced with massive amounts of critique. The act of taking a selfie has been dubbed vain or narcissistic by the public, an opinion which has also been widely echoed in pop culture, for example in the 2014 Chainsmokers' pejorative song #SELFIE, in which women are pictured in a club's bathroom discussing stereotypically feminine things, like guys, dresses and taking selfies.

In her article Self(ie)-Discipline: Social Regulation as Enacted Through the Discussion of Photographic Practice (2015), Anne Burns, referencing writings of Michael Foucault about discipline and power, argues that the critique of the selfie culture is directly related to disciplining young women, as the selfie is

"discursively constructed as both problematic and feminine" (Burns, 2015, 15). According to this theory, the act of taking a selfie, or simply self-documenting, is often seen as vain or narcissistic by the general public, and something that is inherently tied to femininity.

## 4.1 Jen Mann

'Ceci n'est pas ma vie', states Jen Mann (b.1987) in the bio of her Instagram profile, and by referencing a famous artwork by René Magritte, sums up very coherently what her body of work deals with: reality and illusion. Jen Mann (b.1987) is a Canadian conceptual artist, specializing in painting, sculpture, video, audio and performance art. Her work often comments self image in a post-internet world as well as performativity in social media and the authenticity of it. She is best known for her large-scale paintings portraying people. (Mann n.d.).

Mann's body of work can be described as metaphysical. She often makes art about art, by painting pictures of her own paintings, painting self-portraits based on photographs, painting still images from the films she makes, and so on. Her paintings are often grand in scale, hyper-realistic and heavily borrow from photographic material. Glitter, pastels, neon colours and beautiful people are reoccurring motifs in her work.

PICTURE 1. An exhibition view of Mann's paintings, 2017 (Highlark)

"Right now social media and technology is an unavoidable evil. My work isn't really making critiques on social media, but maybe making satire of our culture, and how we use it.", says Mann in an interview (Zemtsova 2017). Her work is full of hints towards social media, in the form of symbols, phrases and emojis. Nods to Instagram can be found for example in references to the app's like-feature, in the painted heart symbols, as well as the calculated perfection of everyone and everything presented, which could be straight from a photoshoot of an artistically inclined influencer. This is not always far from the truth, since Mann often uses photos of herself, or photos she has taken herself, as a basis for a painting (Zemtsova 2017).

PICTURE 2. Jen Mann: Cult Of Femininity, 2016, oil on canvas

Cult of Femininity, from the series Self Absolved, pictures a young woman, with blonde locks of hair braided and tied with purple ribbons. The woman is looking idly out of the picture with a blank stare. Tiny pieces of glitter are scattered across her face and chest, which upon closer inspection are tiny star and heart shapes. Behind her there is a crumpled up foil, reflecting pastel pink and blue colours. At chest height, there is a mirror which reflects her from downwards, onto which her braids ascend.

The woman in the painting is Mann herself. Like in many other paintings, she bases her work on photographs she has taken herself. The impression of a photograph is evident in the hyper realistic approach and the tiniest details which are portrayed masterfully. This, alongside with the title of the painting,

already gives the viewer a clue about the context of social media. In the title, Mann makes it clear she's discussing femininity in the context of social media. The braids are reminiscent of youth or innocence, whereas glitter may nod to the lengths some people may go when wanting to portray the best part of themselves online.



PICTURE 3. Jen Mann: Detail of Cult Of Femininity, 2016, oil on canvas

It is fitting that the pieces of glitter are in the shape of stars and hearts, both of which are popular emojis, often commented under someone's picture on Instagram. The heart especially reminds the viewer of Instagram's famous like-icon, a symbol which is clicked in the app when wanting to showcase admiration or acceptance towards someone's content.

The mirror's reflection, one that would be entirely visible only to the woman if she were to look down, seemingly reflects the woman as she is, but on closer inspection the expression is different. The face that is a little bit reflected in the mirror, does not correspond with the woman's it reflects. The lips are curved just slightly into a tiny smile. In addition, the amount of glitter on her has decreased. This could hint to how the personalities expressed online are always rooted in reality, where the amount of glitter, or the amount of obsession with self-representation, is much less, but never zero.

The theme of curated personalities is echoed delicately in the immense detail Mann pours into the painting. Not one strand of hair, not one piece of glitter is out of place, the radiant colours exist in harmony. Everything is so calculated and perfect, it almost becomes nauseating. A viewer may be prone to start looking for any imperfection. Maybe the only "imperfection" detectable is the expression, which seems somewhat confused or idle. Maybe that's the whole point: under the dreamy pastel surfaces and the tedious upholding of a perfect online personality, something of key importance has been forgotten: letting loose and enjoying oneself.



PICTURE 4. Jen Mann: PLZ <3 ME, 2016, oil on canvas

The painting PLZ <3 ME from 2016, pictures a woman, also based on an image of Mann herself, looking idly into the distance. The text PLZ <3 ME has been doodled across her head and chest, the heart placed in the middle of the image. The colours are very saturated, hair blonde, almost yellow, skin bright pink and eyes strikingly blue. The colour choices remind of heavily edited portraits posted on Instagram, the saturation taken to extremities, as if to highlight the polished, colourful life people live in their social media profiles. Mann's approach is also

reminiscent of another artist, photographer Cindy Sherman, who is well-known for her very saturated and heavily edited self-portraits in which she portrays different characters and which she also posts on her Instagram.

The large scale of the text seems to be poking fun at the motivations behind posting such portraits. It's as if Mann is revealing what the polished to perfection portraits are saying between the lines. It is notable that the heart symbol is situated in the middle of the painting, where the Instagram heart would approximately appear upon liking the image on Instagram. By using herself as a model, it's as if she's poking fun at herself as well, admitting to being a part of this game of idealized self-representation.

## 4.2 Summary

In the series Self Absolved, Mann is addressing identity and the culture of self-obsessing online. A reoccurring element in the series seems to be a quality of idleness of the model. Everything in the photos is picture-perfect and aesthetically beautiful, almost to a nauseating degree. And whereas the paintings are beautiful, the women pictured in them don't often seem to be very happy, always facing away from the viewer, smiles absent.

It is interesting that photography is such a key part of Mann's working process, since self-expressing on Instagram is almost always done through photos. The act of her photographing herself, and then meticulously painting that carefully crafted image photorealistically, feels like an act of introspection. Mann is essentially dissecting Instagram culture and self-obsessing, using herself as an instrument. The incredibly detailed paintings with massive amount of details echo the obsessiveness that Instagram users may experience upon photographing themselves for an audience. Through this self-examining act, Mann is almost as if admitting that there is no escaping from the culture of obsessing over the self. Not even when it is done by a person critically addressing said issue.

# 5   CENSORSHIP


Instagram is known for its harsh censorship policies, which concern especially nudity. Nudity has always been a prevalent subject in art, especially in painting. In 2019, Betty Tomkins, an artist who paints hyper-realistic paintings often containing nudity, had her account deleted by Instagram even though her account didn't break any rules of the community guidelines. She later got her account back, but her case is not an isolated incident. Artists who depict nudity or some other kind of "questionable" content in their works, often have to censor some of the works themselves before posting to avoid getting their posts blocked, even though sometimes this kind of self-censorship doesn't even work. Even though Instagram's community guidelines permit nudity in paintings and sculptures, many artists have had their accounts or posts deleted even upon covering parts depicting nudity in their paintings. (Instagram 2021, Dawson 2020)

These censorship policies can hamper some artists' ability to share their art with their followers. Upon posting "questionable" content, a post might get blurred and labeled as 'sensitive content', or get deleted completely with a possible ban of the account (Dawson 2020). The user may not even receive a warning or any further comment about the reason for deletion (Laaksonen 2020, 27). This can be considered ethically questionable, because it directly limits the ways artists working with such topics can express themselves, something that is directly related to the topic of free speech and freedom of expression. Such censorship can be especially harmful to outsider or emerging artists, who do not have a better platform for exhibiting their art, like a gallery space.

It is worth questioning why posting a hyper-realistic painting containing nudity is permitted (at least on paper) but a photograph is not. Even while representing the exactly same image, only the former is permitted. These kinds of censorship guidelines clearly assign different values to different mediums, whether specifically intended or not. In 2019, in an open letter to Facebook and Instagram, NCAC, the National Coalition Against Censorship, appealed to Facebook, which also owns Instagram. They addressed their concern about the

harmful effect the nudity censorship has on for example, photographers who work with nudity and museums who have difficulty advertising exhibitions displaying nude photography. The coalition also noted that while they acknowledge the social media site's right to their own community guidelines, Facebook with over two billion, and Instagram with over a billion users, have a significant cultural impact on a global scale. The NCAC even recognized the difficulty to distinguish art from not-art images, and proposed possible solutions for this problem, such as an option to block all content with nudity, proposing giving more control to the users, rather than letting Facebook and Instagram decide to ban all nudity. (Dafoe 2019) As of today, none of such changes have been made by Facebook or Instagram.

There's a case to be made for the importance of an artist's presence in social media. "The deletion of an artist's account is like throwing someone's address book and portfolio into a fire." said Spencer Tunick, an artist battling against social media censorship in an interview (Gill 2019). The art world is continuously shifting towards digital platforms, where galleries, museums, curators and art collectors are using Instagram to find new artists. In the contemporary art field, visibility is inherently tied to income, since today an increasing amount of sales are done online as well. Therefore, a platform which favors the content of some art over others, can be considered a huge problem in the contemporary art field.

Naturally, artists have responded to these censorship policies they see as problematic. There exist multiple articles and petitions against the ongoing censorship in Instagram. There's also an ongoing online exhibition from a gallery in Connecticut, run by the writer and curator Jac Lahav and his wife and graphic designer Nora Lynn Leech. The exhibition, titled 'Instagram's shadow - The Story Of How Instagram censors artists, erases the LGBTQ community, and shames women's bodies', features works from artists who have had their art or accounts banned from Instagram. One of the main goals of the exhibition was to shed light on the double standards upheld by Instagram, pointing out how photographers can't post nudes, for example, but influencers like Kim Kardashian can post a picture of her bare breasts without getting her post banned in any way. "Instagram is a two-headed monster," Lahav says. "One

side is an amazing venue for visual creativity and community outreach. The other side is one of celebrity, excess, and a mainstream cis-sex-sells mentality." (Dawson 2020).

Instagram is aware about the concerns of its creative community, since in 2019, it hosted a private meeting to discuss these issues with a small group of selected artists (Gill 2019). Unfortunately, as of now, Instagram has not publicly addressed these valid concerns towards censorship and shadow bans. Only time will tell if the social media giant will start giving in to the demands of its creative community, which nowadays often depend on Instagram when selling and promoting their art (Goetzmann 2018).

## 5.1 Mauro C. Martinez

Mauro C. Martinez (b. 1986) is an American painter who focuses on the ever-changing visual culture of today and our relationship to social media. In his work, he specifically criticizes issues related to well-known social media platforms, such as censorship and desensitization. His art often repeats familiar symbols from the world of social media, such as the Instagram like or save features. (Unit London, n.d.)
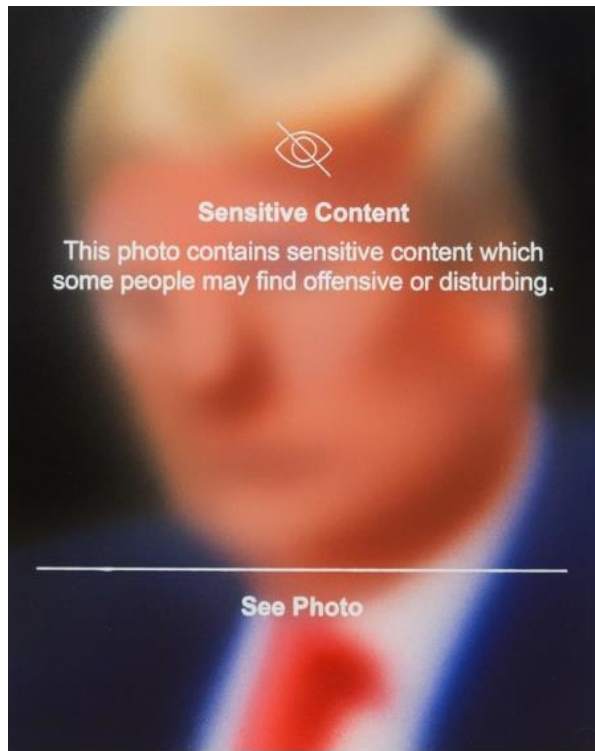
,
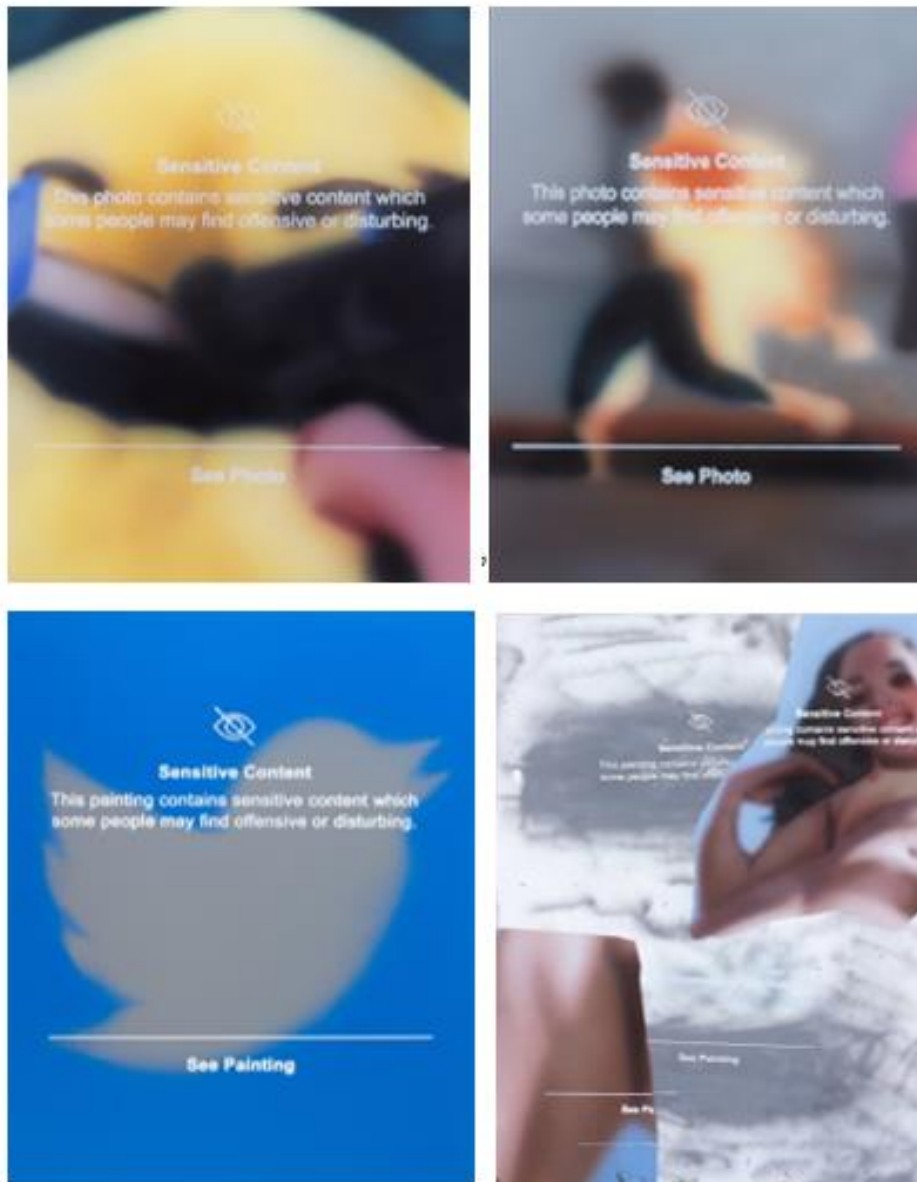
PICTURE 5. Mauro C. Martinez: Sensitive Content n. 28, acrylic and acrylic ink on cradled wood panel (Artsy 2021), Sensitive Content n. 25, acrylic and acrylic ink on cradled wood panel (Artsy 2020), Sensitive Content n.23, acrylic and acrylic ink on canvas (Artsy 2020) and Sensitive Content n.16, acrylic, acrylic ink and aerosol on canvas (Artsy 2020)

In his series Sensitive Content, Martinez criticizes Instagram's automatic censorship feature by painting images that appear to be as if taken directly from Instagram's feed. The blurry images often depict scenes containing nudity for violence, something that would be automatically censored by Instagram upon posting. The works often hint to memes, emojis or other popular internet phenomena. The paintings have been created with a spray painting technique

that achieves a realistic impression of a blurred image. The text on the other hand is implemented by screen printing, a method that produces a font identical to Instagram's. As a publishing platform for this series, Martinez specifically favors Instagram (Juxtapoz 2020), which as a place of exhibiting enhances the absurdity and irony of the paintings while also completing the works in a way. The comment sections under the paintings from the Sensitive Content series are often full of questions from astonished followers wondering if the posts are somehow broken. According to Martinez, some have even sent emails to the gallery representing him, asking them to fix the "broken" posts (Juxtapoz 2020). This performance with the recipients of the work feels almost like its own work of art, concerning the communicatory problems of the internet and overall confusion surrounding internet culture.

The themes in Martinez's work are also echoed in the production technique: the backgrounds are painted with an airbrush manually by freehand, and the texts are produced by silkscreen printing, a machine (Unit London n.d.). There are noticeable similarities in the utilising of techniques and the order they are being applied with the process of Instagram automatically censoring an image or an artwork made by hand.

PICTURE 6. Mauro C. Martinez: Sensitive Content No.22, acrylic and acrylic ink on cradled wood panels (Unit London 2019)

Painting Sensitive Content No. 22 from 2019 addresses contemporary politics of the United States. Donald Trump's, who's recognizable appearance is pictured in the painting, presidency was a politically polarized time in the United States. During his tenure, Trump became known for his contentious politics, his skirmishes with the media, and his questionable statements, which eventually led to the rise of violent far-right extremism and spreading of conspiracy theories (Prasad 2021).

The Sensitive Content stamp in this context may refer for example, to generalized boredom towards contemporary politics and the phenomenon in which privileged people have had the opportunity not to participate in or follow politics in any way. On the other hand, the actions of Trump's presidency have also been perceived by many as offensive or disturbing, adjectives both of which are mentioned in the painting. The president himself could also be described as sensitive by some, since during his term Trump often addressed critique towards his persona either via Twitter or in his rallies (Fritze & Collins, n.d.).

The painting also evokes thoughts of Trump's openly incited unequal policies. During Trump's presidency, social media platforms Trump used to voice his opinions, especially Twitter, faced critique for not banning the president's statements that violated the app's community guidelines. This is part of the phenomenon mentioned earlier, in which different rules sometimes apply to celebrities and ordinary users in social media, even when posting similar content (Mehmood 2021). Perhaps Mexican-born Martinez sometimes felt that Trump's openly racist statements could have been accompanied by a filter.

## 5.2 Summary

Martinez's work addresses the relationship between digital and analogical, as well as people and digital images, something that is currently constantly evolving. Instagram has faced a lot of critique especially by artists when it comes to censorship. There is a delicious irony in the artist "censoring" his own works in the state of creation and then posting them on a platform which is notorious for censoring art. This kind of humour seems to be a recurring theme in Martinez's art.

By self-censoring his own works, Martinez also, in a way, circumvents the censorship provisions of the app. Despite the blurred images, the image appears exactly how it is intended as, and the viewer is able to deduce what the image represents and complete the missing details for themselves. It's as if Martinez applies the censoring filter himself before any application has the opportunity to do so. Instead of directing the viewer's attention to what the real-life event is represented in the blurry paintings, it feels more poignant to look in the direction of how social media applications choose on behalf of us what is appropriate to witness.

# 6  PERFORMATIVITY

Rob Cover, referencing Judith Butler's theories of identity and performativity, argues that performativity is actively happening when editing one's social media profile. Performativity in social media is active in two ways: one is editing one's profile, like bio, entries or profile photos, the second is curating one's list of friends or followers. According to Cover, these are online performances of self-identity, both of which are mirrored also offline. (Cover, 2012, 4).

Instagram, as a visual platform, naturally highlights the importance of aesthetics, which is why it is important to focus especially on visual performances of identity. There is a link between aesthetics preferences and social status, suggests a study from 2016. The same study finds that aesthetics are utilized in expressing belonging in a subculture or to identify with particular lifestyles (Manovich, 2016, 40). This is a key part of social interaction online: one can easily find like-minded people to follow based on the visual content of their feeds.

Web pages generally can be considered as something that are always under construction, constantly updated and edited. This also applies to online identities. By posting or deleting certain content, a visual identity is being constructed. (Cover, 2012, 6) As social media profiles can be considered as extensions of offline identities, it is natural for people to edit their online personalities, as the same activity of identity construction also occurs offline. People change styles, opinions, relationships, and an online personality often mirrors that. But in an online environment, there always exists a possibility to spend more time thinking of the best way to present oneself, to make everything more polished, more flattering and more interesting than offline selves. This kind of hyper-awareness of the self online can naturally present itself with downsides affecting the individual.

The popularization of social media has led to a whole new kind of expanded, shared publicity (Vihma, Hartikainen, Ikäheimo, Seuri, 2018, 21). Acquaintances, colleagues, potential dating partners and even future bosses

can peek at a user's profile and form their opinion of a user based on it. Active presence in social media as well as a heightened sense of self-awareness can lead to an increased risk of mental health issues, like anxiety or depression, especially amongst young people (Royal Society Of Public Health, 2017, 8). Hyper-awareness of one's online persona, which could theoretically be constantly altered to be a little bit better, is naturally linked to the desire to appear as successful as possible, resulting in a certain degree of performativity online, for better and for worse.

## 6.1 Emma Ainala

Emma Ainala, born 1989, is a contemporary artist, whose works often depict scenes that draw inspiration from popular culture, art history and social media (Helsinki Contemporary n.d.). The paintings in her series from 2018, Soft Hardcore, focus on the latter (Dillemuth, 2020, 7). The paintings depict people, usually young women, who are often in the presence of screens and other references to social media, like the content of an Instagram feed.

Ainala's topics are related to womanhood: themes like sexuality, the male gaze, taboos, ideals and the phenomenon of "slut shaming" are present in the works. The inspiration for them came from the community formed by women around the selfie-culture, in which mutual admiration and encouragement are present, as well as the misogynist critique around the phenomenon – women who celebrate themselves and their own sexuality may be seen as threatening and narcissistic. (Ainala n.d.)

PICTURE 7. Emma Ainala: I am the neck that turns the head, the head and the sexy body, oil on canvas (Tiainen 2018)

Many of the paintings in the series Soft Hardcore are in the form of a square, a shape that may remind the viewer of the form of an Instagram post. Thus, the paintings can be read as Instagram posts, and the women in them existing in a digital realm. As the exhibition review in Itä-Savo-magazine states: "Ainala's paintings repeat the way people transform themselves into images and stories on social media" (Lempinen-Vesa 2018).

Beautiful floral arrangements decorate the background and the makeup are flawless in a setting that alludes to group selfies posted by young women, often glorifying youth, beauty and parties. Ainala's painting derives from this aesthetic by representing a scene that is like an afterparty of said girls' night out with a

strange twist. Pretty flowers, clothes and colours dominate the scenery, but there is also fatigue and boredom in the air, perhaps due to the poppies, and the word "opium", which could allude to the addictive nature of Instagram.

The women's faces are expressionless, bodies posing in different positions, bent at strange angles. There are heads without bodies, perhaps hinting towards ductile identities. Some women have grown extra body parts, maybe to satisfy the stare of the pair of eyes in the background, or the audience's evergrowing thirst for voyeurism, losing their own sense of reality in the process.

Still, the women of the paintings are inherently feminist. They are unapologetically feminine, challenging the viewer's eye with their serious stares, declaring phrases nodding to #metoo, such as "I owe you nothing" depicted on their clothing. It's as if the women are pondering on whether they have quorum in their pastel queendom or not; they are constantly being watched, but still seen in a way they themselves decide to be seen. In a time of gazing and being gazed, they are playing this voyeuristic game of being on display as well as they possibly can.

PICTURE 8. Emma Ainala: Melancholy Masquerade, oil on canvas (Tiainen 2019)

In Melancholy Masquerade, a group of young women recline outside, surrounded by greenery and blooming flowers. As the title suggests, they are attending a party, a masquerade, with most of the women's faces covered or hidden in some way. The women are accompanied by a dalmatian and objects scattered before them, including candles, flower crowns, a cherub, a book and a pile of papers that reads "All the things we should have done but never did".

It is notable that the center figure seems to be the only one who possesses a whole body. This, in addition to the severed heads, suggest an interpretation of shifting identities. The composition of the objects in the foreground is also notable. Candles set the pious mood, and the cherub reminds of God and the presence of religion. When juxtaposed with young, contemporary women, questions of conservative values, and again, the disciplining of young women, are raised.

The title, Melancholy Masquerade, states very concisely what the painting is about. The smartphone held by the center figure nods to contemporary times and again, to Instagram. Her pose reminds of a type of selfie popular amongst young women, in which the body is photographed, but the face is hidden. This alludes to hiding one's "true" or offline identity. Perhaps all the other women around the center figure are there to serve as alternate personalities, different styles and ways that she can present herself online. What is interesting, is that the center figure bears a resemblance to Ainala herself. Similarly to Jen Mann, this could be a hint from Ainala, that she does not exclude herself from the game of performativity online.

The word "melancholy" naturally suggests that a masquerade of this kind brings anxiety or sorrow to the one upholding the performance. Similar performances are happening online all the time, when decisions are made to portray only the flattering or interesting parts of reality, keeping the ugly aspects of life and true identities hidden, like the women of the painting. Even a phenomenon, that a witness of such performativity might feel, 'fomo', or fear of missing out, could be hinted towards in the text written on the paper.

### 6.1.2 Stories as a platform for art

As well as exploring these themes in her paintings, Ainala has also incorporated Instagram as a platform for making performance art. Ainala began using the internet as a tween and so many of her relationships have started online, she doesn't really differentiate between real life and social media. (Dillemuth 2020, 14.) On her personal account she often performs in Instagram Stories, imitating the aesthetic of her own paintings, exploring how people play different roles in different social situations.

Ainala enjoys Instagram Stories because she perceives them as something that is happening right now. She feels that anything posted on social media is essentially a performance and questions whether her Stories, that often feature her in older or weirder clothing and props, are really any more performative than anyone else's. (Dillemuth 2020, 69.). The idea of an always-present

performativity online is interesting as well as believable, since behind every image posted online, there is a decision, conscious or not, of how one wants to be portrayed. Authenticity and performativity in social media, especially that of women, is often discussed and heavily criticised on different platforms online and this can be considered as a continuum of the act of disciplining young women (Rettberg 2014, 17.)

## 6.3 Summary

There definitely is much more to be discussed about the paintings of Emma Ainala. Filled with the tiniest details and clever hints to popular culture and art history, the works are rich and layered, and therefore only analyzed here on a surface level.

An often occurring theme in Ainala's body of work seems to be the juxtaposition between an overflowing abundance and a sense of boredom. Despite appearing "pretty" on the surface, upon closer inspection, something sinister always seems to be brewing. The communities of women in Ainala's paintings have often surrounded themselves in beautiful pastel objects, which portray a certain sense of wealth and social status. This juxtaposition is fitting when it alludes to Instagram culture, where, especially among social media influencers, status is everything, even if being well-off doesn't always correlate with an individual's well-being and good mental health.

# 7   IF YOU POST THIS, CAN YOU TAG ME?

## 7.1 Background and inspiration

'If you post this, can you tag me?' is a series of oil and acrylic paintings that I worked on from the fall of 2020 until the spring of 2021. It consists of over thirty paintings, of which each depicts a hypothetical Instagram story.

The inspiration for the practical part of my thesis came to me in the beginning of the pandemic. A couple of weeks had passed since the lockdown had started and I, as many others, found myself bored, confused, stuck inside and thirsty for news from my friends. This led me to spend more time on Instagram, mindlessly clicking through stories, where something more exciting was happening to someone more interesting, was it either a friend, a celebrity or a meme account.

The extended periods of time I had spent with my phone glued to my hands led me to think more about my own relationship with Instagram and how healthy my own social media habits were. The more I read articles and news about the downsides of social media, the more difficult I felt taking part in it myself, and still, I didn't consider it a good idea to quit it altogether. This contradiction of wanting, perhaps even needing, to stay connected and thus choosing to feel anxiety about the whole thing was grotesque and very timely.

The Instagram Story -feature fascinated me for many reasons. It was contemporary and actively used by more than 500 million people daily (Barnhart 2021), and linked to my interest of virtual visual communication. The Story-feature offered the possibility of staying in contact at all times, either in the form of posting or by viewing stories. And given the feature's popularity, there is always someone posting, and it's practically impossible to run out of new content to view. I was also heavily interested in the culture of churning out often thoroughly thought-out images, all of which became old as soon as the next ones were posted. These images worked in the opposite way a painting did, and I found that relationship fascinating. Juxtaposing that concept with painting,

a centuries old medium which demanded hours of planning and careful execution, piqued my interest with its irony.

The title, 'If you post this, can you tag me?' came from the hungriness related to online personas I could perceive around me. The title of the series is a phrase that I personally had heard multiple times uttered by many in social gatherings, myself included. The more I heard the phrase, the more I became fascinated by the hunger of it: The want to live a kind-of double-life, one in real life and the other online, where everything tended to be pictured in the best light, position and angle possible.

## 7.2 The working process

From these thoughts, an idea to paint Instagram Stories solidified. The plan was to execute a series of about thirty oil and acrylic paintings, the final amount depending on how much time I would have to use. I painted on MDF-boards of varying sizes, 7x14cm being the smallest, and 100x56cm the largest. With the large amount of paintings I wanted to emulate a tiny part of the amount of digital images we are subjected to on the daily. Naturally, thirty doesn't come even close to the true amount, but nevertheless, a feeling of being overwhelmed by the visual information was what I aimed for. I never had a specific number of paintings in mind, and always thought that the more paintings I could produce until the deadline, the better. This meant prioritizing the most important images, and producing many paintings of different sizes, before I would move onto the other images I had in mind. I did have an ideal number of paintings in mind, though, which was thirty, the amount I was able to achieve before the deadline.

Due to the pandemic, and the postponing of the exhibition, the project is still ongoing, and the number of paintings keeps on increasing. Therefore naturally I'm only discussing the paintings that were completed before April of 2021. It feels natural to keep working with the project for a long time and produce more and more images, since the same process is constantly echoed in digital environments. I am also very interested in taking these themes studied in new

directions. The series exhibited in this thesis is its own collection, but perhaps it will grow to be even bigger in the future.

My plan for achieving the desired visual look, was to create a collection of images that borrowed from the Instagram Story -aesthetic. I made a list of notes of which kind of images people liked to share in their Stories. Most common themes were landscapes, selfies, pets, parties, friends, and food. Even though every Instagram user's feed is different based on who they follow, I wanted to paint sceneries that the viewer could easily relate to what they see in social media. The series consists of some carefully planned paintings, as well as more intuitively created pieces. I felt like picking some reference images more spontaneously would help with achieving a collection of organic images, which could naturally be found when browsing Instagram Stories.

From early on, I wanted to include Instagram Story affordances into my paintings. Playing around with text and icons that had certain functions in Stories fascinated me. I felt like the icons I would paint could serve as an allegory for illusion of volition: something that, by tapping on them, would serve a purpose in a digital realm, would now be stuck in place, only imitating the thing that would give a user a chance to edit their Stories. I even began to paint usernames and different icons on top of the paintings, but quickly noticed that they simply did not work on the bigger paintings. The smaller ones were just fine, and the texts didn't distract the eye too much, but in some of the bigger paintings they ruined the atmosphere. After much consideration, I decided to leave the icons on some of the smaller paintings to have that desired element of an extra digital layer, but the bigger ones could do without. I was confident that leaving that element out didn't diminish their value, and trusted that they got the intended message across, being accompanied by the pieces that referenced Stories a lot more.

I painted the works partially at home, partially at a studio in Mediapolis, where I worked with the bigger paintings. I was happy to be able to work at home as well, as I didn't feel that comfortable to travel often to Mediapolis by a bus, when the pandemic had taken a turn for the worse in Finland. I favoured painting in daylight, which of course limited my working hours, due to the painting process

mostly taking place in the darkest time of the year. When I ran out of daylight, I would continue by sketching, priming the MDF boards, or searching reference photos. The active part of painting lasted from November 2020 until March 2021, when the deadline for the exhibition was supposed to be, before the postponing of our degree show. Even though our group exhibition was postponed, an online event was held in April, where our website, kaleidoscopers2021.com was introduced, accompanied by video selfies in which we introduced our artworks.

## 7.3 The paintings

One of my main interests while working on this project was to contemplate how does the meaning of the image change, when it is painted by referencing a photograph. Each of the paintings is a recreation of some extent, of an existing photograph, some of which have circulated in social media, some of which have not.

I feel that looking at a painting can be incredibly captivating, enthrilling even. When looking at an impressive photograph, I tend to note the composition and use of light, evaluate the atmosphere etc. But in comparison to photography, when looking at a figurative painting I see all of these things, but on top of that, the physical labour of every brushstroke and every colour mixed together, which in my opinion, often gives the artwork an extra layer of meaning. Due to the large amount of the works, in this chapter I will discuss only a few of the paintings as examples, choosing works that, in my opinion, best address the questions I had in mind during the production of this thesis.
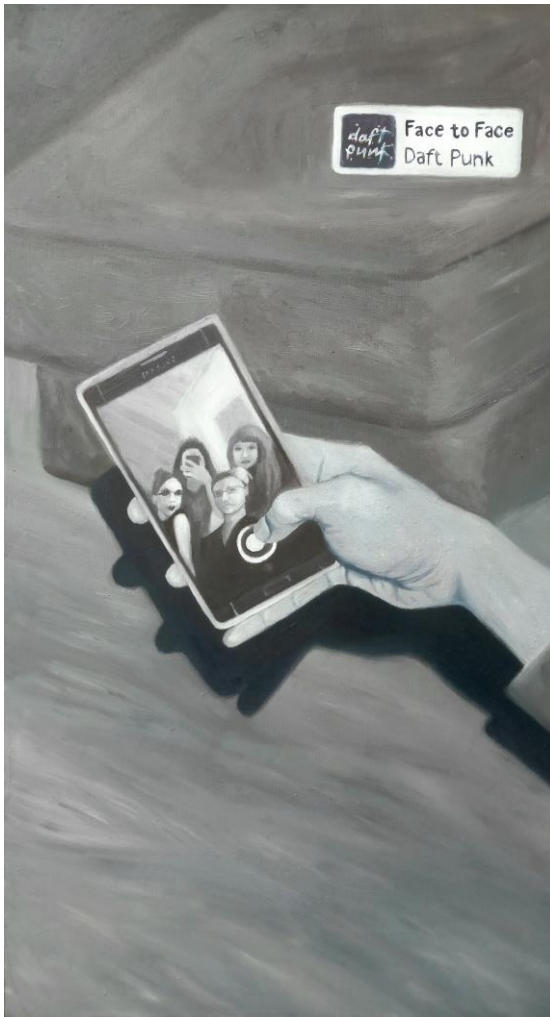
PICTURE 9. Anna Värri, Face to Face, 2021, 50 x 28 cm, oil on MDF

In Face to Face, the viewer is in the position of the person taking the photograph. There is a lot happening. A photograph is being taken of a photograph being taken. It's as if the viewer is a part of the group in the photo, who is taking a picture of themselves; they're the person hiding behind the smartphone, taking the image. If the image were to be viewed in Instagram Stories via a smartphone, the hand of the painting would kind of become the hand of the phone's holder. An extended arm as if ready for an embrace, including the viewer as a part of the artwork.

When posting images to Stories, the user can add a music sticker on top of the story, which is playing the chosen song for the duration of time the image is being viewed. The music sticker in the painting is playing the song Face to Face by Daft Punk. I chose to include the sticker for multiple reasons: It alludes to Instagram Stories, it hints to what's happening between the painting and the

viewer and a new layer of meaning is added by referencing a song. I really enjoy making intertextual references in my works. I feel like it can add a lot to the topic explored, and it's a lovely way to pay homage to pieces of art I admire. I felt like the song Face to Face was the perfect fit; the lyrics of the song go really well with the overall theme of my series. I interpret the lyrics of the song as a conversation had via the internet, concerning the difficulty of communication.



PICTURE 10. Anna Värri: Couldn't load painting, tap to retry, 2021, 7 x 14 cm, acrylic on MDF

Often when browsing Instagram stories, a user may come across this image. It occurs when the user is experiencing a bad internet connection, something is wrong with Instagram's servers, or it can also occur when an user is trying to post content that is prohibited by the community guidelines.

The idea of censoring an image that would be visible if not for the "technical difficulties" evoke questions of what was being censored, and why, since painting, as an analogic medium does not rely on an internet connection to depict what it wants. This painting with the circular arrow, reminiscent of an ouroboros, became one of my favourites of the series, and contextualized all of the paintings differently, since it suggested that there was something that the

viewer couldn't access, that was hidden. The Instagram-mimicking paintings, in my opinion, also suggested towards the digitalization of art as a whole, and raised questions about the state of painting in an ever-digitalizing world.

## 7.4 Installation

Due to the pandemic, the exhibition, originally planned for March 2021 in Galleria Himmelblau was postponed, so in this chapter I will be only discussing the installation plan. We were informed that our group could have floor 3B, which consisted of two very large halls, so we had a lot of space to exhibit our artworks. I wanted a space in the back hall, which would have most of the video works on display, and therefore have the walls painted with a darker colour and a much dimmer lighting than in the first hall. I intuitively felt that the themes I was working with would be better highlighted if surrounded by a darker atmosphere. The wall I had for exhibiting was over 6 meters long, so I had a lot of room for planning.
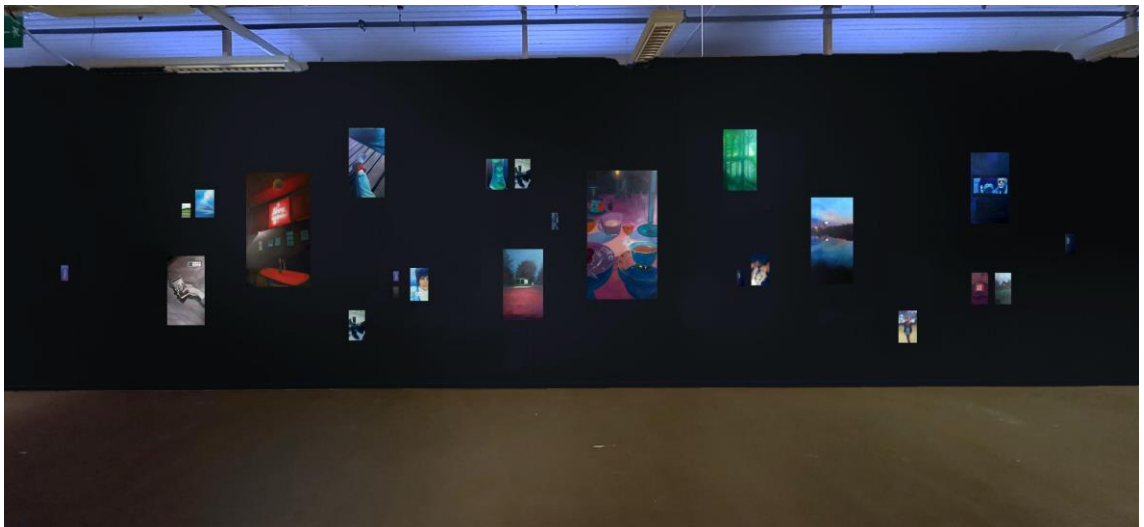


PICTURE 11. Anna Värri: Installation plan, 2021

I contemplated many possible installation options and different colours for the background, but ended up with the version pictured above. I wanted the installation to appear lively and vivid, something that would make the viewer's eye bounce across the wall. A more traditional set-up would have felt too static, which was not what this series needed. For the background colour I

contemplated between different darker shades, like green or turquoise, which were prominent colours used in many of the paintings, but I felt that a black background would better tie all of the works together rather than just elevating some of them. To me, the black also represented the vastness of social media, and the installation plan reminded me a little bit of particles floating in space, which was fitting.

## 7.5 Conclusions

'If you post this, can you tag me?' is a contemplation of the different relationships between digital photographs, paintings, social media and people. It's an examination of our contemporary digital sharing tendencies, as well as the importance of context and how much the meaning of an image can change when contextualized differently.

In the core of the series is the interaction happening between the painting and the audience. When we, as people, are presented something as art, our approach towards it tends to be different than with any other object. I wanted to question that change in reaction, when someone was looking at an Instagram story versus looking at a painting, when they both represent the same image. How is the relationship different from looking at an image, not art, when translated into a painted form, which is read as art?

The series is also a contemplation of the culture of digital sharing of today. From the dawn of social media, our sharing tendencies have changed massively. 'If you post this, can you tag me?' is a cross-section, a time capsule of sorts, of what digital image sharing is today. It's funny moments, sunny landscapes, party pictures, filtered selfies, idealized selves, and a contemplation of the need for sharing it all. The boom of digitalization and inventing new social media platforms doesn't seem to be slowing down, and our contemporary visual culture is evolving every day. When looking at the paintings, I hope to evoke these kinds of questions in the viewer, and perhaps to contemplate their relationship with social media as well.

## 8   DISCUSSION

The object of this thesis was to gather a better understanding of the reflection of Instagram's different phenomena on contemporary painting. As a result of this thesis, a better understanding of this was achieved. It was made clear that there exist multiple issues surrounding Instagram culture, which interest contemporary painters globally. The ways contemporary painting continues to reflect the surrounding world's issues, in this case Instagram culture, are multifaceted. The phenomenon of addressing these issues doesn't seem to be showing any symptoms of slowing down, since the artists discussed in this thesis are all still very active and continue to address these themes in many of their current works.

During research for the artworks for this thesis and addressing the works of Ainala, Martinez and Mann, it was made clear that Instagram's intertwinement in contemporary lifestyle is something that has sparked interest widely in the field of art. Not only is Instagram culture something that is increasingly more addressed in contemporary painting, but Instagram has also started to be incorporated into the process of making art, and there is definite potential in displaying art in the application as a primary platform, for example for the sake of availability of art.

The ways the issues related to Instagram were explored were diverse. Many of the paintings relied on aesthetic beauty (echoed in Instagram culture) to captivate the audience. What was notable was the frequent use of details and precision used in the painting process, which also alluded towards Instagram culture and its obsessiveness. Also a common factor in all of the discussed paintings was a sense of captivating eeriness, something sinister brewing underneath the clean or beautiful surfaces. Some other notable ways these themes were handled in the paintings were utilization of photorealism, oversaturation of colours, abundance of decorativeness and borrowing aesthetics, phrases and affordances from Instagram feeds. It was found that Instagram, and the various phenomena related to it, continues to be a topic of

inspiration for many contemporary painters, perhaps precisely because of the fascination of juxtaposing a digital environment with an analogic medium.

## REFERENCES

#StatusofMind – Social media and young people's mental health and well-being, 2017, London: Royal Society of Public Health, John Snow House.

Artsy. n.d. Emma Ainala: Soft Hardcore. Read on 23.4. https://www.artsy.net/show/helsinki-contemporary-emma-ainala-soft-hardcore/info

Artsy, n.d. Mauro C. Martinez. Read on 20.5.2021. https://www.artsy.net/artist/mauro-c-martinez

Barnhart, B. 2021. The most important Instagram statistics you need to know for 2021. Sprout Social. Published on 25.2.2021. Read on 4.4.2021. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-stats/

Blystone, D. 2020. The Story of Instagram: The Rise of the #1 Photo-Sharing Application. Investopedia. Updated on 6.6.2020. Read on 3.4.2021. https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/102615/story-instagram-rise-1-photo0sharing-app.asp

Burns, A. 2015. Self(ie)-Discipline: Social Regulation as Enacted Through the Discussion of Photographic Practice. Loughborough: Loughborough University.

Cover, R. 2012. Performing and undoing identity online: Social networking, identity theories and the incompatibility of online profiles and friendship regimes. Perth: The University of Western Australia.

The cult of femininity. 2016. She does the city. Published on 1.12.2016. Read on 12.5. http://www.shedoesthecity.com/the-cult-of-femininity/

Dafoe, T. 2019. After Criticism, Facebook Agrees to Meet With Artists and Curators to Discuss the Censorship of Art on Its Site. Artnet News. Published on 5.6.2019. Read on 15.4.2021. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/criticism-facebook-agrees-meet-artists-curators-discuss-censorship-art-site-1565818

Dawson, A. 2020. Social media crack-down: how Instagram 'protects' us from art. The art newspaper. Published on 15.6.2020. Read on 1.5.2021. https://www.theartnewspaper.com/blog/social-media-crack-down-how-instagram-protects-us-from-art

Dawson, A. 2020. From self-censorship to activism: artists react to Instagram's ban on 'offensive' art. The art newspaper. Published on 13.8.2020. Read on 11.5.2021. https://www.theartnewspaper.com/blog/from-self-censorship-to-activism-responses-to-instagram-s-ban-on-offensive-art

Dillemuth, M. 2020. Jaettu teos – Emma Ainalan taide fygitaalisena aikana. Faculty of Arts. Thesis. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

Fritze, J. Collins, M. n.d. Trump calls himself an 'extremely stable genius,' while responding to Pelosi criticism. Read on 28.5.2021. Usa Today. https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/05/23/trump-defends-himself-extremely-stable-genius-after-blowup-pelosi/1209925001/

From Today, Painting Is Dead: Early Photography in Britain and France. n.d. Barnes. Read on 28.5.2021 https://www.barnesfoundation.org/whats-on/early-photography

Galassi, P. 1981. Before photography : painting and the invention of photography. New York. The Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by New York Graphic Society.

Gill, K. 2019. Instagram Held a Private Meeting With Artists About Its Nudity Policies. Hyperallergic. Published 22.10.2019. Read on 1.5.2021. https://hyperallergic.com/524099/instagram-nudity-policies-meeting/

Goetzmann, Z. 2018. These Artists Jump-Started Their Careers by Selling Directly to Collectors on Instagram. Artsy. Published on 26.10.2018. Read on 31.5.2021. https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-artists-jump-started-careers-selling-directly-collectors-instagram

Greenwood, A., Perrin, A., Duggan, M. 2016. Social Media Update 2016. Pew Research Center. Published on 11.11.2016. Read on 11.5.2021. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/

Helsinki Contemporary. n.d. Read on 28.5.2021. Emma Ainala. https://helsinkicontemporary.com/artist/emma-ainala

Instagram. 2021. Community guidelines. Read on 10.5.2021 https://help.instagram.com/477434105621119

Laaksonen, J. 2020. Instagram kuvataiteen esittämisen paikkana. Kuvataide. Turun ammattikorkeakoulu. Thesis.

Lempinen-Vesa, P. 2018. Emma Ainala, mestarimaalari Savonlinnasta — Soft Hardcore -näyttely Helsingissä saa pelkkää ylistystä. Itä-Savo. Published on 21.22.2018. Read on 5.4.2021. https://www.ita-savo.fi/paikalliset/3878018

Mann, J. 2017. Artist's webpage. Read on 15.4.2021. https://www.jenmann.com/2017

Mann, J. n.d. About. Read on 3.4.2021. https://www.jenmann.com/

Mann, J. n.d. Instagram bio. Read on 3.4.2021. https://www.instagram.com/jenmannart/?hl=fi

Mehmood, R. 2021. The double standards in Facebook and Twitter's Trump ban. Al Jazeera. Published on 21.1.2021. Read on 31.5.2021. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/1/29/the-double-standards-in-facebook-and-twitters-trump-ban

Mohsin, M. 2021. 10 Instagram stats every marketer should know in 2021. Oberlo. Published on 21.2.2021. Read on 20.5.2021. https://www.oberlo.com/blog/instagram-stats-every-marketer-should-know

Prasad, R. 2020. US historians on what Donald Trump's legacy will be. BBC News. Published on 19.1.2021. Read on 20.5.2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55640427

Qin, L. 2018. Some thoughts about photography's influence on painting. CCTP 802 – Art and Media Interfaced. Published on 27.3.2018. Read on 3.4.2021. https://blogs.commons.georgetown.edu/cctp-802-spring2018/

The Renaissance: Patrons, Artists, and Scholars. 2014. Core Knowledge Language Arts,

Rettberg, J. 2014. Seeing ourselves through technology. Palgrave Macmillan. Bergen: University of Bergen.

Seibel, B. 2019. Insta-Identity: the Construction of Identity through Instagram an Extended Literature Review. Portland: Portland State University. Thesis.

Soerjoatmodjo, G. 2016. I Selfie Therefore I Exist: A Preliminary Qualitative Research on Selfie as Part of Identity Formation in Adolescents. Department of Psychology. Pembangunan Jaya University.

Sutton, B. 2019. What Happened to the Catholic Church's Art Patronage. Artsy. Published on 1.10.2021. Read on 20.5.2021. https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-happened-catholic-churchs-art-patronage

Tankovska, H. 2021. Number of monthly active Instagram users from January 2013 to June 2018. Statista. Published on 1.27.2021. Read on 28.5.2021. https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/

Tankovska, H. 2021. Instagram: distribution of global audiences 2021, by age group. Statista. Published on 10.2.2021. Read on 19.4.2021. https://www.statista.com/statistics/325587/instagram-global-age-group/

Unit London. n.d. Mauro C. Martinez. Read on 3.4.2021. https://unitlondon.com/artists/229-mauro-c.-martinez/

Vihma, A., Hartikainen, J., Ikäheimo, H., Seuri, O. 2018, 21. Totuuden jälkeen : miten media selviää algoritmien ja paskapuheen aikana. Helsinki: Teos.

Why every artist should be on Instagram. n.d. Artwork archive. Read on 18.5.2021 https://www.artworkarchive.com/blog/why-every-artist-should-be-on-instagram

Zemtsova, M. 2017. "Jen Mann: I find relationships the most fascinating, and the relationship you have with yourself…" ArtMaze Mag. Published on 11.6.2017. Read on 11.4.2021. https://artmazemag.com/jen-mann

**APPENDICES**



Appendix 1. Anna Värri: I love you, acrylic and oil on MDF, 100 x 56 cm, 2021

Appendix 2. Anna Värri: Midnight tea party, acrylic and oil on MDF, 100 x 56 cm, 2021
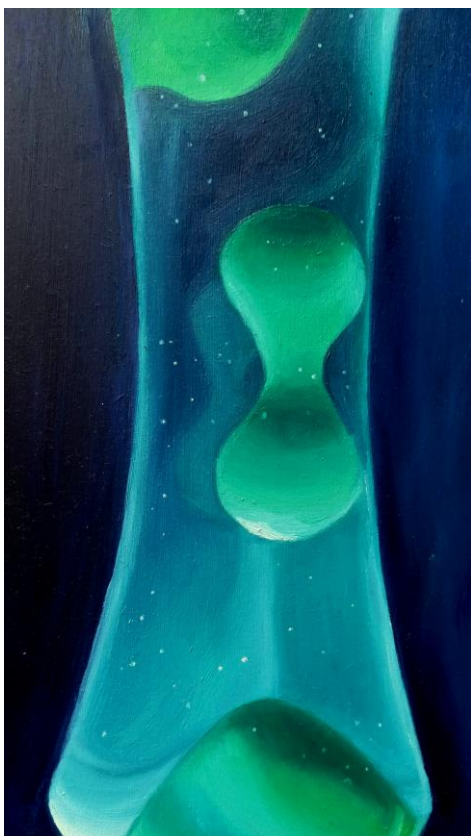
Appendix 3. Anna Värri: Over there, oil on MDF, 82 x 46 cm, 2020
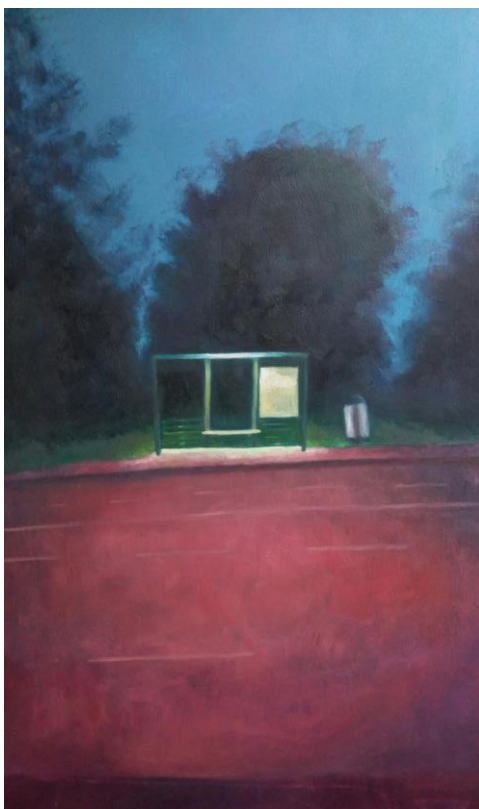
Appendix 4. Anna Värri: Bus stop, oil on MDF, 50 x 28 cm, 2021



Appendix 5. Anna Värri: Give me all the pills, oil on MDF, 50 x 28 cm, 2021

Appendix 6. Anna Värri: Flow, oil on MDF, 14 x 25 cm, 202



Appendix 7. Anna Värri: I think I love her, oil on MDF, 14 x 25 cm, 2021

Appendix 8. Anna Värri, Private party, acrylic on MDF, 14 x 25 cm, 2020

Appendix 9. Anna Värri: Dancing queen (compass), oil on MDF, 14 x 25 cm, 2020

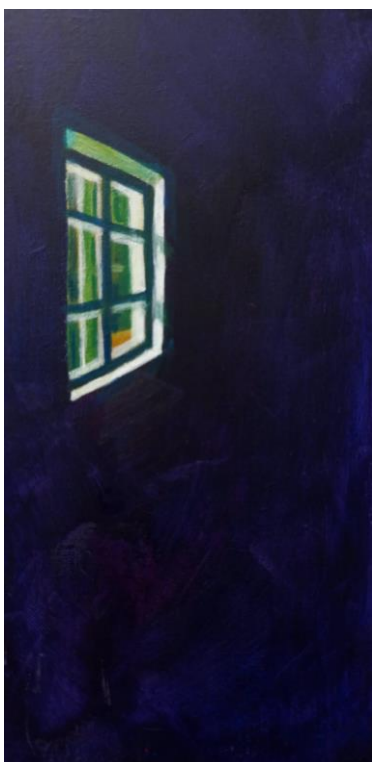Appendix 10. Anna Värri: Red window (inside), oil on MDF, 14 x 25 cm, 2021



Appendix 11. Anna Värri: Red window (outside), oil on MDF, 14 x 25 cm, 2020

Appendix 12. Anna Värri: Movie night, oil on MDF, 50 x 28 cm, 2021

Appendix 13. Anna Värri: See-through, oil on MDF, 50 x 28 cm, 2021



Appendix 14. Anna Värri: Green window, acrylic on MDF, 7 x 14 cm, 2020

Appendix 15. Anna Värri: Couldn't load painting, tap to retry, acrylic on MDF, 7 x 14 cm, 2020



Appendix 16. Anna Värri: On the road, acrylic on MDF, 7 x 14 cm, 2020
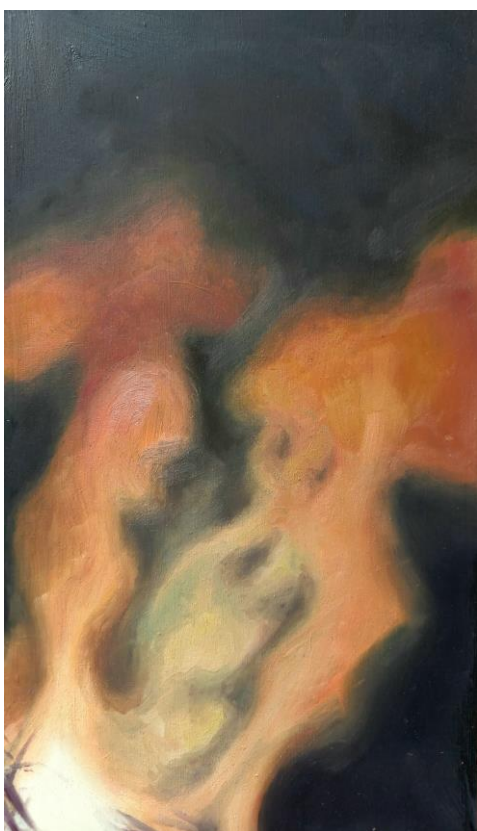
Appendix 17. Anna Värri: 0.00, acrylic on MDF, 7 x 14 cm, 2020



Appendix 18. Anna Värri: Take me with you, oil on MDF, 7 x 14 cm, 2020

Appendix 19. Anna Värri: Home street, oil on MDF, 7 x 14 cm, 2020



Appendix 20. Anna Värri: Passing, oil on MDF, 7 x 14 cm, 2020

Appendix 21. Anna Värri: Face to Face, oil on MDF, 50 x 28 cm, 2020