

Profane

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The Swedish artist Jonas Liveröd is also a lecturer, an exhibition curator, a collector, and the curator of his own museum, nestled in the attic of a mill. A museum devoted to a vast number of objects gathered according to his passions and encounters, and which resembles a real cabinet of curiosities. You won't be disappointed inside his red mill.



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Don Liveröd from the Baltique





Jonas Liveröd's acquisition policy could be summed up in one sentence: "I collect things I didn't even know existed, things that for some reason are difficult to define." So welcome to his museum, the Liverödskas Wunderkammaren, the cornerstone of the intercultural project he is actively engaged in. Its name comes from the German "*Wunderkammer*," which means "cabinet of curiosities." Cabinets of curiosities appeared in Europe in the mid-16th century and are considered to be the ancestors of museums. These places displayed all sorts of wonderful and exotic objects, from the world of nature (stuffed animals, shells, skeletons, etc.) or fine arts (antiques, medals, silverware, etc.). These collections were at the crossroads of science and the popular beliefs of the time—it was not uncommon to find dried dragon blood or unicorn horns in them.

Jonas's museum belongs to this tradition. There, one can discover such things as fossilized dinosaur excrement, as well as stuffed birds and other human creations verging on outsider and folk art (such as a set of small heterogeneous figures placed inside the model of an ancient temple) but also relics of religious and magical beliefs (Irish holy water displayed next to Brazilian voodoo ritual tools), as well as historical and geopolitical testimonials: a ten-billion-dollar note dating back to the hyperinflation of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, next to cocktail glasses decorated with African dictators and a chunk of Bohus granite from the Triumphal Arch intended as part of the Germania project Hitler fantasized about.

Although it opened this year, the idea appeared in 2011, in conjunction with an exhibition designed along the same lines. The project then traveled, until Jonas decided to settle in the village of Ågårdskvarn.

In 2016, after having traveled around Europe—a time he describes as a "tour"—and having had the keys to three different studios, he felt the need to set up home somewhere, in order to bring to life many of his desires. By chance, he discovered a mill dating from 1850, adjoining a house—the former miller's—and a barn. He renovated them, extended them, and built other buildings. The mill, as a food-producing place with a pivotal role in the life of

the village, continues to hold a special place for its new owner, who wishes to make his home an open and cultural space called Luftslottet.

Ideas galore

“*Luftslottet*” is the Swedish expression for a grandiose project involving unattainable ideas, and literally translates as “castle in the air.” Even though Jonas is keen to keep his project humble, in order to maintain an intimate, family-like setting that allows for freedom of expression and experimentation, far from the constraints of official culture. “Luftslottet welcomes all the ideas that don’t fit elsewhere,” he confides. Thus, on the occasion of concerts, conferences, exhibitions, or dinners, subcultures, outsider art, folklore, and visionary art are given pride of place, and even rewarded once a year with the *Je suis une pipe* (I am a Pipe) prize, a reference to René Magritte’s painting *The Treachery of Images*, from 1929. The mill is alive and well, with its different activities, its workshop on the ground floor, a flat for the residents of Luftslottet, the organization’s offices on the first floor, and its famous museum at the top.

Although the place is now permanent, Jonas Liveröd wishes for it to evolve constantly, hence its simple and adjustable scenography. The entire collection is not on display, and some objects are on show in his house. He has chosen not to write explanatory labels but rather to encourage oral transmission: “The objects come to life when I talk about them,” he says. Some are very valuable, others have absolutely no economic value, but all are brimming with stories, real and fictional—the border is porous. For the curator, the stories surrounding his objects are just as important as their material characteristics.

He could be searching for some of them for years, while others are the result of chance encounters. Private individuals have started donations, which makes him proud and happy. Recently, he was presented with the head of a giant antelope that stood in the trophy room of the

Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie (1892-1975). It has joined the remains of one of the emperor’s lions, a gift from the son of Haile Selassie’s zookeeper. For Jonas, the feline’s skin is both “the star of the Liveröd show” and “a sacred Rastafarian relic.”

In order not to miss anything, the “Liverödian encyclopaedia”¹ has just been published by the Swedish publishing house Il’Editions, compiling approximately 250 items over 400 pages, relating more specifically to his artistic universe and his personal mythology. The other book of Jonas.

jonasliverod.com
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1.
Jonas Liveröd, *GRAND ASSEMBLY - an encyclopedic inventory*, Gothenburg: Il’Editions, 2021.







