



Andy Freeberg, *Nina Menocal*, *Armory Show*, 2011. Courtesy of the artist.

Press release 25 March 2022

Andy Freeberg exhibition portraying the art world opens at Serlachius Museums in Finland

American photographer Andy Freeberg surveys the art world in his exhibition *Where Art Thou?*, which opens at Serlachius Museum Gösta on 26 March. In his four series of works, he visits art galleries, museums, contemporary art fairs and private homes, finding qualities consistent with his works: professional pride and elitism but also warm humour.

Andy Freeberg (b. 1958) began his career as a photojournalist, and his photographs of famous rock, pop and jazz musicians were published in many major magazines, such as *Time*, *Fortune*, *Rolling Stone*, *Village Voice* and *Der Spiegel*. Since 2007, he has worked as a full-time photographic artist. The work of the photojournalist is reflected, however, in his way of observing his surroundings through the camera lens and capturing short-lived moments in his images.

The exhibition includes four series of works, the oldest of which, *Sentry*, was made in 2006–2007. In this, Freeberg depicts the reception desks of contemporary art galleries in New York and the staff concealed behind them. The same set-up is repeated in the photographs: a high white desk with only top of the head of the desk sitter visible behind it.

The message and humour conveyed by the images are best revealed when looking at the entire series of works. It has been viewed as depicting the elitist and hermetic gallery culture of large cities. A customer stepping in through the door is hardly greeted and at least is not considered a potential buyer. Real buyers are approached by a telephone half-hidden behind the desk.

Theatrical compositions of trade fairs and museums

Freeberg continues his portrayal of the world of contemporary art in his *Art Fare* series. Shot at art fairs in Miami and New York and in Basel, Switzerland between 2009 and 2011, the series depicts the construction of the fairs as well as the tired gallerists present, who have been working for days. In the images, the staff at the fair booths examine their phones or computers, negotiate art deals or sleep behind screens. The fair booths are like small stages where people form insightful compositions with the art that surrounds them. Postures, colours or other details connect them into the entity formed by art.

The series *Guardians*, photographed by Freeberg in the museums of St. Petersburg and Moscow in 2008 and 2009, tells about a completely different art world. In these works, he incorporates the often elderly women who guard the art into their ornate environment. They do not hide behind desks, but watch over the art treasures of the galleries, well aware of their value. The museum environment provides a photogenic setting for the works. The artist has not staged these images. At most, he might have asked a guard to move to another seat in order to position her next to the artwork of choice.

Art consultants decorate homes

In the exhibition's most recent series, *Advisor*, the artist has photographed the homes of California's nouveau riche, which art consultants decorate with art. The series is again characterised by the momentary connection between artworks, people and setting, which may arise from the composition of the work or the image it evokes.

The exhibition *Where Art Thou?* is curated by Pauli Sivonen, Director of the Serlachius Museums. It is accompanied by a book with the same title, which will be published by Kustannusosakeyhtiö Parvus at the time of the exhibition opening. The texts of the book are in Finnish and English.

Andy Freeberg's exhibition *Where Art Thou?* is open at Serlachius Museum Gösta from 26 March to 4 September 2022.

For further information and image requests, please contact:

Susanna Yläjärvi, Information Officer of the Serlachius Museums, tel. +358 50 560 0156 susanna.ylajarvi@serlachius.fi

Press releases and press photographs: <https://serlachius.fi/en/for-media/>

The Serlachius Museums are open:

in the winter season, 1 September–31 May, from Tuesday to Sunday, 11 am–6 pm.

in the summer season, 1 June–31 August, every day 10 am–6 pm

Visiting addresses:

Serlachius Museum Gustaf, R. Erik Serlachiuksen katu 2, Mänttä

Serlachius Museum Gösta, Joenniementie 47, Mänttä

Serlachius Museums in the social media:

<https://facebook.com/serlachius>

<https://twitter.com/serlachius>

<https://instagram.com/serlachiusmuseums>

<https://youtube.com/serlachiusmuseot>