



## **Astrid Svangren At Maria Stenfors REVIEW**

### **Astrid Svangren: A Longing For The Bestowed... @ Maria Stenfors – REVIEW**

Astrid Svangren presents seven works in her mouthful of an exhibition at Maria Stenfors, extravagantly entitled; 'A longing for the bestowed, towards or through it, crushed, absolutely non-existent, flickering uncontrollably, to be able to move again, as if the sun turned pain gold'.

A three metre long fence made of wood and perforated metal stretches across the entrance, and gives a sense of precious secrecy from the outset, as if the gallery holds some inestimable treasure. Once inside, six pieces are spread about the space, with hard-edged glass works upon the wall contrasted by Karla Black-style fragile sculptural hangings and floor pieces. Irreconcilable in one sense – a juxtaposition of strength and vulnerability, like two emotions – they are nonetheless forced into coexistence and relationship by placement in the gallery space.

One work – a large piece of glass painted black with dark reds and blues, creating texture – instantly demands attention, reflecting the viewer and distorting their image according to its pattern. Next to it, and in dramatic contrast to the harshness of this metallic vision, droops a delicate hanging made from a soft material, limp and weak. But walking around this second work, the formal boundaries between the two break down: despite ostensible opposition, the two sharedly derive their power from an interactive/reactive quality; just as the glass reflects, the hanging sways as one walks past it. Apparently passive, these works actually function in dialogue with the viewer, Svangren creating a bond between the observer and the art itself, with the work putting on a greater show as audience numbers (and thoroughfare) increase. So delicate (and, in consequence, so responsive) are some of these pieces, that the observer becomes almost afraid of the artwork.

The strength of this exhibition is the way in which Svangren forces these two opposing work-types into interrelation. She roughly amalgamates the two elements, shoving them together and joining them as one leaving no room for separation. This clever presentation subtly contradicts itself leaving the observer perplexed, uneasy, thoughtful.

**Words: MacIntyre Law © 2012 ArtLyst**