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Art in Tights: *Tableaux Vivants* as Commercial Entertainment in Sweden and Finland, 1840–1860

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On July 27, 1844, the following advertisement appeared in the Stockholm newspaper *Aftonbladet*:

With gracious permission, on Monday July 29th, the Academy of Living Pictures presents [...] its first representation of antique and modern works of art, in three acts. It will be performed by the Academic Art Society under the direction of Professor Quirin Müller from Berlin.¹

Quirin Müller and his company performed “living pictures” or *tableaux vivants* consisting of persons assuming the attitudes and positions of famous sculptures. A later advertisement gave details of the Academy’s program: the 19 works to be recreated included *The three Graces* as sculpted by Thorvaldsen and by Canova as well as recreations of the sculptures *Mars and Venus*, *Oedipus and Antigone*, and *The death of Abel*.² In late September 1844, after giving a number of performances, the Academy left Stockholm for Copenhagen. By 1847, Müller was back in the Swedish capital, after which he toured south and mid-Sweden for some time.

Müller’s shows were given favorable press reviews. One review gives an idea of the nature of the show. The company consisted of around ten people, mostly young women. These stood stock-still in various formations, using their bodies and facial expressions to recreate classical and neoclassical works of art.³ The three-dimensionality of the representation was enhanced by a rotating stage:

Especially well-found is Mr M[üller]’s idea to let the groups stand on a moving platform, which slowly rotates, through which movement the spectator gets the opportunity to observe the groups under all possible variations of light and shadow.⁴

Müller’s visit to Stockholm created a minor craze for “living pictures” as commercialized entertainment in both Sweden and Finland. While *tableaux vivants* were an established form of amusement within educated urban culture, they were new as a commercial product. This article will examine the performances sold by Müller and other exhibitors of living pictures, according to reports appearing in (recently digitized) Swedish and Finnish newspapers. I will focus on two

main points. First, I discuss the artistic and educational claims made by directors such as Müller in order to be accepted by an urban, middle-class public. Second, I look at the problematic nature of the Academy's artistic claims, given that – according to some commentators – the central feature of the performances was the rotating exhibition of scantily-clad young women. I argue that it remains unclear whether these living pictures were about beauty in art or beauty in young women. A possible conclusion is that it was about both, and that the aesthetics behind the *tableaux* were created for a male visual culture in which the male gaze's consumption of female bodies was self-evident, even if veiled by artistic claims to truth and beauty.

The digitization of the press has made it possible to detect and trace otherwise obscure popular phenomena in peripheral European countries such as Sweden and Finland.⁵ If it were not for the artists' newspaper advertisements, reviews and commentaries, information on an ephemeral and itinerant entertainer such as Müller and his Swedish performances would be almost impossible to find, much less to examine. The performers have left very few archival traces and the audiences few if any first-person documents describing the events. Apart from published reviews, there are no known descriptions of Müller's shows. For this article, I have systematically tracked Müller's and other directors' tours through Sweden and in some cases through Finland, analyzing advertisements, editorial comments and reviews. Note that the articles, reviews and comments referred to below were unsigned, anonymity being the norm in Swedish 19th-century press.

While there is little research on Swedish and Finnish performances of living pictures, international scholarship can be divided in two groups. One has focused on early 19th century performances as an artform and as literary motifs.⁶ The second has examined the second wave of living-picture performances in the British music-hall traditions of the late 19th and early 20th century.⁷ This article seeks to add to the substantial and impressive research on early 19th century *tableaux vivants* by shedding light on their early commercial stagings in countries on the European periphery.⁸ Heidi Schlipphacke has described the *tableaux* as “a deeply uncanny art form”; an encounter between the imagined and the real, stillness and movement, a copy or a double of art while being art itself.⁹ The commercial staging added yet another layer of the uncanny, as (mostly) middle-class men bought tickets to see actors and actresses stage *tableaux* of an often erotic nature. My analysis indicates that the directors who staged the *tableaux* and advertised them mainly to educated, middle-class male audiences, made their artistic claims so as to evoke two different emotions. First, they advertised an aesthetic experience cultivating and confirming romantic ideals of art and beauty. Second, they offered an erotic experience, consisting of a chance to gaze at lightly clad, attractive young women. In doing so, they reaffirmed an image of an ideal society based on well-defined power relations between sexes. They nourished the male gaze by draping the unequal relation between the sexes in claims to beauty and aesthetics, while emphasizing the obligation of women to be beautiful and accessible.

Tableaux Vivants: from the aristocracy of Naples to small-town society

The *tableaux vivant*, unlike many other forms of 19th-century entertainment, was aristocratic in origin. Rooted in early-modern drama and festivities, their post-1800 breakthrough was initiated by the “attitudes” presented during the 1780s and 1790s by Emma Hart (later Emma Hamilton) in her Naples salon.¹⁰ Hamilton, mistress and then wife of William Hamilton, the British ambassador in the Kingdom of Naples, performed dramatic configurations of women based on classical myths such as Medea and Ariadne, with lightning-fast changes of scenery and dress between acts. These staged representations of antiquity’s heroines created a sensation within the international elite. A remarkable number of European intellectuals visited the salon to see Hamilton perform; several of her *tableaux* were reproduced by distinguished artists such as George Romney and Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun.¹¹ Hamilton’s stagings created strong aesthetic experiences, impressing some of the great theorists on the field such as Herder.¹²

Goethe’s works probably also contributed to the popularity of living pictures. His novel *Die Wahlverwandschaften* (1809) features a small circle of friends who stage living pictures, while what he termed “attitudes” played a central role in his innovative tragedy *Proserpina* (1815).¹³ By the 1820s, staging *tableaux* had become highly fashionable in urban social life all over Europe. *Tableaux* were a feature of soirées and balls, and provided diversion during theater intermissions. They portrayed well-known motifs taken both from antiquity and from contemporary novels such as those by Walter Scott.¹⁴ *Tableaux* also became fashionable

among the Swedish gentry. In 1836, Esaïas Tegnér, bishop of Växjö and author of the national-romantic poem *Frithjof’s Saga*, mentioned in a letter to his son that he had been shown *tableaux vivants* at one of Baroness Wrede’s soirées; and others wrote of *tableaux* staged at Malla Silfverstolpe’s Uppsala salon during the 1820s and 1830s.¹⁵ Contemporary novels also featured women who performed *tableaux*; see for instance Sophie von Knorring’s *Skizzer* (*Sketches*, 1841) and Fredrika Bremer’s *Grannarne* (*The Neighbors*, 1837).¹⁶ In the 1830s, *tableaux* were also mentioned in press reports on theater performances and social events attended by the Swedish bourgeoisie and other middling sorts.¹⁷

The Swedish public was, thus, not unfamiliar with living pictures when Müller arrived in Stockholm in 1844. Nor was Müller the first to offer the Swedes *tableaux* independently of both theater companies and amateur social events. In 1843, the equestrian showman Didier Gautier and his company included living pictures when touring Stockholm, Karlskrona and Norrköping with a show of art horse-riding, acrobatics and pantomime. In December 1843, entertainment entrepreneur C.A. Nyman’s show featured living pictures, including six *tableaux* based on William Hogarth’s *Midnight Modern Conversation* – that is, a wild drinking party.¹⁸ Thus, *tableaux* had entered the Swedish repertoire of commercial entertainment shortly before the advent of Müller’s Academy.

The aesthetic, artistic and social claims of commercial *Tableaux Vivants*

Professor Müller made a great impression on the Stockholm audience. The repertoire,

scope and claims of his shows were new. As seen in the opening quote, Müller sought an educated audience. This (it seems) justified stretching the truth a bit. Müller, a German newspaper revealed, was in fact a “home-baked Professor”, and his “Academy of living pictures” was no traditional academy but, rather, a troupe of athletic, agile persons working for wages. The use of the word “Academy” was a marketing gimmick, used to create artistic and scientific legitimacy. It might also have been a way to frame the presentation of semi-nude figures as decent and acceptable, along the lines of artistic academies.¹⁹ By conferring an academic title on himself and referring to his troupe as an “Academy” and the “Academic Art Society”, Müller attempted to convince the public that his shows rested on firm artistic and scientific grounds. This seemed to work. A first review, published in *Aftonbladet* the day after the first performance, was full of praise. Although the reviewer put the term “professor” in quotation marks, he made it clear that Müller distinguished himself artistically.²⁰

Müller’s “plastics”, wrote the reviewer, were comparable to “the *higher* ballet”. They had a double value as an aesthetic experience and as an “aesthetic means of education”: the Academy made it possible for audiences to become familiar with statues which were spread over the continent and which they would otherwise have no chance to see. However, the review makes it clear that Müller interpreted these works of art in his own way, probably in order to enhance the visual effect:

Mr Müller looks for a middle-way between the pure plastics and painting, by using colored drapes on his figures; we cannot fault this, because a too severe imitation of the plastic originals may have met too

great obstacles in practice. We do however ask Mr M., if it would not make a more poetic impression, if he chose, in all that concerns the drapery, less gaudy and more light-color nuances.

The “pure plastics” mentioned in the review referred to the presumed whiteness of antique marble statues, the imitation of which was a challenge when using live actors. Instead, the individuals seem to have been clad in flesh-colored tricot – to which I return below – and in colorful draperies.

During his stay, Müller varied his repertoire by replacing some *tableaux* with others. In one of his last advertisements, finally, Müller claimed that he was leaving Stockholm for Saint Petersburg.²¹ This was one of those little white lies entertainers used: to travel to and (presumably) perform in Saint Petersburg was a sign of prestige for Swedes, the Russian capital being by far the largest city in the Baltic region. Instead, Müller gave his next performance in Malmö, in the opposite direction, in November, after which his troupe performed in Denmark for a period.²²

I will soon go into some details regarding Müller’s repertoire. First, I will discuss the small craze for living pictures that followed Müller’s success in Stockholm, in Sweden and in Finland (where the language of the press and the educated elite was still predominantly Swedish). In the Åbo newspaper *Åbo Tidningar*, an advertisement was published in November 1844 by the well-known entrepreneur in the entertainment business, the acrobat Carl Rappo. He offered the following:

Great Arabic, Herculean, Athletic Art- and Strength-Representation, as well as the Academy for Living Pictures (here never before seen), by CARL RAPPO, recognized [as the] last European Hercules, together

with the Academic Art-Society, consisting of ladies Guidora, Pfarfartto, Josephine Rappo, Nicoline Nielsson and J. Frisch, and Mr. Jean Jentzé.²³

The advertisement was a clear steal, Rappo using both “the Academy for living pictures” and the “academic Art-Society” to describe a troupe consisting of five women and two men (including Rappo himself). Rappo was an experienced artist who knew how to exploit fashionable trends. His repertoire was similar to Müller’s, and there was a connection between the two companies: the J. (Johanna) Frisch mentioned in the advertisement had been part of Müller’s troupe in Stockholm. The *tableaux* were well received, although one reviewer could sense a dividing line between those in the audience who preferred the “herculean efforts”, and those appreciating living pictures as “a pleasure of a far nobler kind”. As in Stockholm, the educational aspect was mentioned: a visit to Rappo made a trip to Rome unnecessary.²⁴ Thus Rappo, too, succeeded in his artistic claims. A few months later, when Rappo performed in Helsinki, the newspaper *Morgonbladet* wrote that the show made an indescribable impression on the audience, creating “a strong craze for studying antiquity and sculpture”.²⁵

Rappo had probably visited one of Müller’s Stockholm performances. We know that he did observe other entertainers, because he once caused a social scandal in Gothenburg by interrupting a competitor’s show.²⁶ Müller and Rappo were in Stockholm at the same time; Rappo was then attached to Joseph Liphard’s Hamburg circus company, an outfit which gave large-scale shows involving more than 30 people. Müller’s influence can be further traced in an advertisement

published by Liphard in October, promising the following (among other things):

Mr. Baptist Liphard performs the plastic Academy, on horseback, or: Les Poses des Hercules [*sic*], according to Thorvaldsen’s famous Academic Model.²⁷

Thorvaldsen’s quite conventional statue of Hercules was not made for horseback, but entertainers were open to innovations. The Liphard family had evidently adopted both the idea of human reenactments of artworks, and the nonsense academic prose in which Müller wrapped his performances.

Liphard neither stayed in Stockholm nor followed Rappo to Finland. Instead, he went to Norrköping to perform art horse-riding. However, in November 1844, an advertisement appeared in the Linköping newspaper *Östgöta Correspondenten*, in which Liphard promised a four-part show of which the first was presented as follows:

The first Part:
ACADEMY of LIVING PICTURES
or
Gallery for Antique and Modern works of art by the most famous masters, from older and newer eras.²⁸

Müller’s shows had, thus, produced two imitators, both well-established entrepreneurs in Baltic entertainment. A review in *Östgöta Correspondenten* stated that Liphard gave “living pictures of antique and modern style according to the Qvirin-Müller method”, a phrasing which revealed Müller’s reputation: he had never appeared in Linköping, yet readers were supposed to be familiar with his work. Liphard’s pictures were said to be very well executed; every new formation “met with loud cheers”.²⁹ When he returned to nearby

Norrköping soon after, the reviewer in *Norrköpings Tidningar* repeated that every picture was met by lively cheers. The reviewer further dismissed the rumor – to which I return below – that the living pictures could somehow be indecent. This rumor had resulted in a virtually all-male audience. Women, wrote the reviewer, should rise above that type of small-town mentality and appreciate the living pictures, enjoying, as a bonus, a good laugh at the Pajazzo.³⁰ Later, Liphard toured the country southwards before leaving for the continent.

At this point and for a short while afterwards, *tableaux vivants* were an established product in the entertainment market. In October 1845, the Danish acrobat family Price embarked on a year-long tour, offering Swedes pantomimes, dancing and living pictures.³¹ This company also received good reviews. The Göteborg newspaper reviewer wrote that the *tableaux* deserved the highest praise for both composition and execution.³² One Karlskrona newspaper published a panegyric poem to the three young “sylphs” Juliette, Amalia and Sophie Price.³³ The Price family certainly had talent. The same could probably not be said of D.C. Alexander, a jack-of-all-trades within Swedish entertainment. His company offered acrobatics, the spectacle of a giant snake and the like; in 1845, Alexander also began advertising “plastic antique-representations”.³⁴ He did not receive any newspaper reviews, but his adoption of *tableaux* showed that they had become the flavor of the month.

In August 1847, Quirin Müller returned to Stockholm, again receiving a warm welcome. Although many of the works of art shown were familiar from the last visit, a reviewer wrote, they were still well worth the visit.³⁵

The reviewer noted that Müller had expanded his use of drapes – soon after, Müller himself started to use the phrase “shawl-groups” in his advertisements.³⁶ His claim that there was artistic merit in these peculiar, draped interpretations of popular art motifs was generally accepted. *Stockholms Dagblad* claimed that Müller was the best in his genre, while *Aftonbladet* praised the “shawl-groupings” for their artistic value.³⁷ The Uppsala newspaper *Uppsala* celebrated Müller’s shows as a great opportunity to experience major artworks impossible to see in the Nordic countries.³⁸

In December 1847, Müller started a tour in Southern Sweden. His reputation, enhanced by puffs in local newspapers, preceded him. In Jönköping:

Mr. Quirin Müller, famous for his *tableaux vivants* and groups taken from antiquity etc, and who has shown his ‘living pictures’ with extraordinary approval in Stockholm and other towns of the Realm – not to mention abroad – has arrived in town.³⁹

In Göteborg, Müller again received much praise, although his artistic claims were presented in a somewhat different way. The reviewer wrote that the first show was excellent with the exception of the ill-tuned orchestral music. This had led Müller to fire the orchestra and hire a better one. Obviously the stagings were also musical. The aura of classical antiquity seems to have been fading away; the display of figures, exaggeratedly draped and slowly rotating, was now accompanied by the ever-present mid-19th-century brass ensemble.⁴⁰

Müller left Sweden in spring 1848, never to return. The glory days of commercial *tableaux vivants* were over, although the genre did survive. Joseph Liphard returned

to Sweden in 1850, but now as an exhibitor of a wax cabinet and artistic rider in Alexander Guerra's so-called Roman circus.⁴¹ Carl Rappo, however, continued to give *tableaux vivants* when touring Sweden 1851–52. A Norrköping advertisement for his show, appearing in 1851, contained the near-nonsense prose typical of 19th-century entertainment. Rappo led an "Indian, Syrian, Japanese and Bioplastic Academy" which performed living pictures, acrobatics, and also a pantomime.⁴² He received one positive review, which emphasized the *tableaux* in particular, complete with the props and drapery:

The so-called Bioplastic Museum of Living Pictures performs pictures, illuminated in lovely and successful ways, mostly taken from Greek mythology, but also from Biblical history, and partly taken from antiquity. [...] The rich costumes, the shining weapons and helmets, the fluttering draperies, contribute to raise the total effect of these *tableaux vivants*.⁴³

Living pictures had also been adopted by the Italian director of a company of acrobats, Giovanni Viti, arriving in Malmö from Copenhagen. His repertoire was similar to Rappo's: acrobatics and *tableaux vivants*, which Viti like his predecessors claimed to be of artistic value, describing them portentously as "the Atelier of Living Pictures taken from Greek and Roman Mythology".⁴⁴ It seems to have been a short visit before returning to Copenhagen.⁴⁵ In 1858, Viti was again in Sweden, arriving in Uddevalla from Norway with "the Mimic-Plastic-Ballet-Dance-Society". He gave "aesthetic performances" consisting of dancing and *tableaux vivants*.⁴⁶ A longer tour to Sweden and Finland followed. Reviews were mixed. *Carlskrona Weckoblad* held that the living pictures gave proof of "a

deep study of antique masterpieces, and of an aesthetic conception of the myths on which they are founded", while a Stockholm newspaper dismissed them as cheap and tasteless.⁴⁷ At this point, Viti was one of very few commercial artists still giving living pictures.⁴⁸ This genre of spectacle returned, instead, to the sphere of private bourgeois sociability.⁴⁹

Aesthetics at work: a noble pleasure or girls in tights?

As mentioned above, the Liphard company's shows had been troubled by a rumor of indecency. There were reasons for that. Müller and his epigones made artistic claims. In the 1840s, art theory centered on the idea of beauty as a subjective experience. This was the consequence of late 18th-century theories of aesthetics, in which German art philosopher Johann Joachim Winckelmann played a prominent role. Winckelmann represents a crucial shift in the conception of good art. He rejected the older view of art as a craft, to be judged in accordance with the artist's technical competence and skill. Instead, art was to be understood as an individual experience, with emphasis on the viewer's capacity to see and comprehend true beauty. Winckelmann believed that beauty could not be understood by reason, nor calculated; it could only be felt. This did not mean that absolute beauty did not exist. On the contrary, antique Greek art (it was maintained) was superior to all other in depicting beauty; heroic grandeur and other baroque ideas of beauty were to be rejected.⁵⁰ For (Winckelmann maintained) true beauty is mild, harmonic and calm, showing, as he famously summarized it, "noble simplicity and tranquil greatness" ("Edle Einfalt und stille Größe").⁵¹

The philosophers associated with the emergence of aesthetic theory, such as Herder, Goethe, Kant and Hegel, all referred to Winckelmann's writings.⁵² Both the individual experience of beauty and the implied dogma of the superiority of Greek antiquity became central components in aesthetic philosophy. Of course, artists were deeply inspired by these ideas; their works were anchored in intensive studies of Greek art. The sculptor Canova was one of the main proponents in this trend.⁵³ The exhibitors of living pictures in the 1840s and 1850s claimed to be working within this aesthetic tradition. Intellectually, they were the offspring of Winckelmann; artistically, they depended on Canova and Thorvaldsen. For Canova, the interplay between idealized body and their clothes – antique costume – was a central means of creating tranquil but moving beauty; draperies were also one of Winckelmann's four characteristics defining ideal Greek art.⁵⁴ Drapes or shawls were also essential to the early *tableaux* and attitudes performers such as Emma Hamilton and her turn-of-the-century successors such as Henriette Hendel-Schütz and Ida Brun.⁵⁵ Thus, Müller's extensive use of drapes, although exaggerated, was based on artistic practice and aesthetic theory; a popularized aesthetics.

The reviews mentioned above accepted the claims made by Müller and his epigones, praising the living pictures as art. Although art was not supposed to rotate with the help of mechanical cranks nor contain flesh-colored tights, in the eyes of reviewers, at least, living pictures represented something of the noble simplicity and tranquil greatness described by Winckelmann. The positive comments centered on how the living pictures' composition and execution gave the audience an experience of beauty.

Accordingly, an exaggerated use of colorful draperies was perceived as heightening the experience of art, not debasing it.

It was this perceived ability to convey an experience that made the living pictures "a pleasure of a far nobler kind". Winckelmann had defined true beauty as expressed through the idealized human body – both male and female.⁵⁶ In 19th century Sweden, however, there was also massive emphasis on beauty as a specifically female faculty. The general conception of beauty derived more from Rousseau than Winckelmann, in defining beauty as a natural trait of woman-kind. Beauty was not something ascribed to women, it was the essence of womanhood. A real woman was beautiful. Men could be beautiful, but they did not have to be; for a woman, on the other hand, beauty and grace were essential to her nature, virtue and duty.⁵⁷

From their inception in Emma Hamilton's salon, *tableaux vivants* had been strongly tied to women and femininity. In subsequent bourgeois environments, women were usually responsible for organizing and executing *tableaux vivants*. As a social amusement, living pictures united aesthetic ideals with female pastimes and the objectification of young women, who were to render themselves tranquil, idealized objects for the gaze of others. This fits with the classical texts on the male gaze, such as those of the 1970s feminist scholars of film and literature Laura Mulvey and Griselda Pollock. They describe a double conception of beauty – beauty as truth and beauty as the essence of woman – that established a male heterosexual gaze and a male right to look.⁵⁸ Contemporaries' dismissive evaluations of Emma Hamilton when not performing illustrate this point. Goethe had found her unhappy and others described her as vulgar and common; but

when she struck a pose, she was turned into an ideal. Her audience – which, it must be added, was both male and female – seemed to have liked her best when she managed to present herself as beautiful and idealized. She went from being an object of dissatisfied male gaze to an object which satisfied, from a real woman to an ideal, as her appearance changed so as to coincide with aesthetic ideals.⁵⁹

After Müller's arrival in Stockholm in 1844, a review in *Aftonbladet* noted that while his audience of 350 persons gave his second show a full house, only ten of those present were women. The review betrays ambivalence when it comes to the shows' combination of artistic and female beauty. On the one hand, the reviewer assured "sculpture-loving women" that the shows were perfectly appropriate to both sexes. On the other, he complained about "inconsiderate *da Capo*-criers" shouting at the female models.⁶⁰ Clearly, he felt that some men were a little too noisy in their praise of female beauty, for reasons not found in aesthetic theory. This probably did make the event less suitable for decent bourgeois or middle-class women.

The reviewer's description of an almost completely male audience was founded in reality, and the consequent rumor of possible indecency posed a challenge to the shows' profitability. On August 5, Müller published an advertisement with an addendum addressed to the "Honorable Ladies of Stockholm". He defended his *tableaux* against ill-natured reports:

I have noted, with true grief, that the Ladies here [in the town] have honored my plastic performances with their presence to only a small extent.

I assume that the cause of this absence lies in an understandable prejudice towards

Tableaux vivants, which ill tongues have propagated.

However, today, a large and educated public has been able, through experience, to persuade itself that my representations in no way offend the sense of decency, but may be viewed by even the most discrete of women.⁶¹

Müller proposed to combat the troublesome perceptions of indecency by demonstrating the suitability of living pictures for female audiences by giving a special show for a woman-only audience:

In order to give the Ladies the pleasure of such a show, I have decided to give an extra show *just for the Ladies*, for which the *Tableaux* and the groups have been chosen with particular regard to them.

In hindsight, it may seem as if Müller was simply confirming the rumor when arranging shows specially adapted to an all-female audience.⁶² The issue can be illuminated by examining his repertoire. To what extent were the *tableaux* about female beauty? Luckily, the advertisements sometimes detailed the shows' content. That dated July 31, 1844 gives the earliest repertoire. Müller promised to stage 19 pictures:

No 1. The Graces taken from [the statue by] Thorwaldsen.

No 2. Colos de Monte Cavallo.

No 3. The Girl with pigeon and the girl capturing a butterfly.

No 4. Borghese Gladiator

No 5. Bacchus and Hebe taken from Canova.

No 6. The Daughters of Bacchus.

No 7. Cleopatra, Meleager, Poesia, Antinous and the praying boy

No 8. The Gladiators.

No 9. Ariadne.

No 10. Mercury.

No 11. Mars and Venus.

No 12. The Graces taken from Canova.

- No 13. The Graces with the Flowerbasket.
- No 14. Oedipus and Antigone.
- No 15. The Death of Abel.
- No 16. The Funeral of Abel.
- No 17. Ajax and Cassandra.
- No 19. Diana and her nymphs in the bath.⁶³

Although some of the motifs were male, heroic and biblical, there was an obvious dominance of *tableaux* showing women. The *Three Graces* was a popular subject both for neoclassical artists and for Müller, Liphard and Rappo. The mythological Graces' main task had been to attend the Olympians at feasts; thus they were clearly cast in the role of subordinate, eroticized objects. *Tableau* number 12, *The Graces taken from Canova*, referred to Canova's *Three Graces*, an influential work often used as a point of reference in early 19th century discussions of aesthetic ideals. Canova's piece is notably erotic, showing the Graces as intimately involved with and caressing each other. Of course, we cannot know exactly how Müller staged the spectacle, but it is hard to ignore the objectification that would have been inherent in three young women in tight, flesh-colored tricots, displayed in an erotic pose, slowly rotating under the gaze of a paying male audience. It almost certainly challenged norms of decency held by the female middle-class public.

Müller shared the neoclassical artists' emphasis on the aesthetic significance of the Graces. His show opened with Thorvaldsen's version of the same motif, and there was still another *tableau* showing the Graces carrying a flower basket. Müller did not specify the sculpture which formed the basis of this *tableau*, but the motif had been commonplace since the renaissance. Aside from the Graces, Müller also provided some openly semi-erotic scenes, such as *Diana and her nymphs in the*

bath. This theme, taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, had likewise been popular since the renaissance, it gave Müller good opportunities to utilize his female staff. The important part played by Canova is obvious. "Bacchus and Hebe after [the manner of] Canova" may have been a double set showing one of Canova's and neoclassicism's most important works, *Hebe*, in conjunction with a representation of a Bacchus sculpture. It is probable that scene 11, "Mars and Venus", was a Canova work with equally erotic potential. "Ajax and Cassandra", finally, was a mythological motif featuring the rape of Cassandra by Ajax the Lesser in the temple of Athena.

The *tableaux* did give some instruction in art history. The Graces as a motif had attracted artists such as Botticelli, Rafael and Rubens long before it was reinterpreted by Canova. "Colos di Monte Cavallo" refers to the colossal statues of Castor and Pollux on the Quirinal Hill in Rome. Other *tableaux*, such as "The girl with pigeon", taken from a 2nd century Roman statue of a girl protecting a bird from a snake, reproduced classical statues important to the development of aesthetic theory.⁶⁴ Again, we do not know how faithful to the original the living pictures were. Most likely, neither the public nor reviewers had seen the original art works.

The use of tight clothes was emphasized from time to time; a Karlskrona newspaper mentioned that the actors wore "flesh-colored ... tricots".⁶⁵ The word "tricot" (Swedish: *trikå*) entered the Swedish language in the 1820s. In the classic Swedish novel *Rosen på Tistelön* (1842, translated into English in 1844 as *The Rose of Tistelön: A Tale of the Swedish Coast*), by Emilie Flygare-Carlén, there is a scene in which a boy acts the part of Eros in a play. To make him look naked, he was dressed in "a pair of

very tightly-worn nankeen trousers, which *mamsell* called tricots”.⁶⁶ In the same way, Müller’s actors’ tight, flesh-colored clothing represented the nudity of antique statues. This illusion of adult nudity probably *per se* verged on indecency in the 1840s. When staged commercially in the form of Canova’s *Three Graces*, it was obviously problematic. The rumor of the troupe’s semi-nakedness spread fast. In August 1844, a Gothenburg newspaper reported that “the living pictures of Müller horrify the ladies, so much [do] the tricots resemble natural nudity”.⁶⁷

Some of Müller’s *tableaux* showed men in heroic positions. However, there is no doubt that the actresses were the main attraction. Apart from the helmets and swords cited above, no reviewer commented on the appearance of the male actors. Instead, reviews were more like, say, that appearing in August 1844 in *Aftonbladet*: it praised the performances, for “one can but admire the skill with which the actresses comprehend the positioning and the mimicry of these works”.⁶⁸ This is telling. As Peta Tait has shown, nineteenth-century audiences could in fact express appreciation of beautiful male bodies. She points to how, in the 1860s, commentators praised the muscular and well-proportioned body of trapeze pioneer Jules Léotard; he too imitated nudity by wearing flesh-colored tricots similar to costumes of Müller’s performances.⁶⁹ In the case of the Swedish commercial *tableaux vivants* of the 1840s, by contrast, male bodies were left completely unmentioned, although we may assume that the Hercules Rappo, at least, wore the same type of tights. We know that the Frenchman Venitian, who called himself “the first Hercules of Europe”, wore flesh-colored tricots on the 1830 tour of Sweden. During that tour, a reviewer praised Venitian’s muscular and well-proportioned body in a

language similar to that used to describe Léotard, going so far as to claim that every time Mr. Venitian left the stage, the reviewer longed for his return and to see his beautiful body yet again.⁷⁰ Such language was rare, but it does point to the fact that male beauty could be appreciated by a male audience, which makes the complete silence concerning male *tableaux* actors interesting. Indeed, in 1847, Karl af Kullberg (a contemporary Stockholm flaneur) claimed that no-one would ever buy a ticket for Müller’s shows were it not for the women.⁷¹

As mentioned, Liphard also had problems with rumors of indecency. His repertoire was similar, in part, to Müller’s, but his employment of a “Hercules” tilted his show towards demonstrations of strength. On one evening in Karlskrona, he staged eight *tableaux* as part of a larger show: The Girl with pigeon and The girl capturing a butterfly; The indignant Hercules; Hercules and Hebe; Hercules with the boy; Ajax and Cassandra; the Gladiators, The Theban fratricide and the Three Graces with the flower basket.⁷² Rappo’s repertoire was likewise similar to Müller’s. His first advertisement for his “academy”, in November 1844, listed twelve living pictures:

- (1) The Three Graces, taken from Flaxman, performed by Dem. [Demoiselles] J. Rappo, Nielsen and Frisch.
- (2) The Fighters, 1:st group, taken from antiquity, performed by M. [Messieurs] Fr. Rappe and Jentzé.
- (3) Ariadne, taken from Danneker, performed by Dem. Frisch.
- (4) The Girl with pigeon and The girl capturing a butterfly, taken from Drache and Wichman, performed by Dem. J. Rappo and Frisch.

- (5) Hercules and Liehas, taken from antiquity, performed by M. F. Rappo and Jentzé.
- (6) The Three Graces, taken from Torwaldsen, performed by Dem. J. Rappo, Nielsen and Frisch.
- (7) The Iron Age, taken from Flaxman, Furies by Dem. J. Rappo and Nielsen and M. F. Rappo and Jentzé.
- (8) The Toilet of Pandora, taken from Flaxman, performed by Dem. J. Rappo, Nielsen and Frisch.
- (9) Aurora persuing Zephales, taken from antiquity, performed by Dem. J. Rappo and Frisch.
- (10) The Gladiators, taken from antiquity, performed by M. F. Rappo and Jentzé.
- (11) Galathea and Venus, taken from antiquity, och The bathing girl, taken from Byström, performed by Dem. J. Rappo, Frisch and Nielsen.
- (12) Ajax and Casandra, taken from antiquity, performed by Dem. Johanna Frisch and Mr Jean Jentzé.⁷³

Rappo seems to have neglected Canova in favor of another influential neoclassical artist, John Flaxman. Although four of the *tableaux* were performed by men and one was mixed-sex, there was an obvious female dominance, the Graces appearing in two different versions. Ajax and Cassandra and Girl with pigeon were staged by all three directors on most occasions.

Rappo's shows stirred some debate in the Finnish press. *Åbo Tidningar* published two fictitious letters headed "To my friend Alexander in Helsinki", both mentioning Rappo's Helsinki performances. The first letter stated that while the ladies of Helsinki had been spellbound by a visiting male musician, the

men had responded with strong feeling to the beauty in Rappo's living pictures, an ironic comment on the Helsinki audiences' taste in art and beauty. In the second letter, "Alexander" was scolded for having attended Rappo's shows for the wrong reasons. He obviously cared for neither art nor beauty: "You say absolutely nothing about art, but this does not surprise me, your motive was never to experience art but to see three women in tricots".⁷⁴

Rappo was criticized more severely by the editor of the Kuopio newspaper *Saima*, Johan Vilhelm Snellman. He had long been unaware of "the great art expert Rappo", he wrote. But he had eventually visited a *tableaux* performance, and was appalled.

The ideal form, the deep expression, the tranquil pose – those are not at stake here. One does not even imitate the color of marble. No, in flesh-colored tricots, with painted faces and natural hair, a few athletic men and a few voluptuous women, in positions somewhat reminiscent of the real works of art – just in case let's say ten people in the audience had any knowledge of them.⁷⁵

Snellman points to the show's erotic undertones and to the fact that people generally – unlike the well-educated editor – had no clue to the actual appearance of Canova's or Flaxman's artworks. The show's ambivalence, balancing between displaying the beauty of art and the beauty of young women, was noted in an ironic poem published in the Helsinki newspaper *Morgonbladet*. Again, the focus was on the Three Graces. Both the first and the second strophe of the poem emphasized the beauty of the work, but in different ways:

Tell me, have you seen or felt
The beauty which Canova's hand

Created from cold marble?
 The beauty, which in the bonds of art
 Reveals its godly descent, [...]
 Have you seen the Graces of Canova,
 The three images united,
 The three beings cast together,
 Harmonic, holy, as one?
 [...]
 Surely then, you must have seen
 The three Graces in tricots,
 The paradisaically beautiful Graces,
 With Venus in eyes and face,
 The cheeks' roses of carmine,
 And a little modesty of drapery?
 Did you see the curve of that hip!
 There life's fullness seems to dwell.
 The round and soft arm,
 the breast, full of innocence,
 on that lilywhite snow
 Small cupids go sledding,
 If the inner flames do not happen
 To turn the winter into thaw?⁷⁶

The last lines of the poem were easy to grasp: Canova, yes, great, but the audience found the beauty neither in his ideals nor Winckelmann's, but in tight tricots on female bodies, further enhanced by the very non-marblesque use of rouge (carmine).

Tableaux vivants, beauty and gender power relations, or the authority to look

The critique of living pictures and its performers pointed to the fact that beautiful women were an essential prerequisite both for *tableaux vivants* as a genre and for the application of the theory of aesthetics in entertainment. The staging of marble forms with living bodies added an element of vulgarization. It was this that made possible the genre of commercial living pictures. The element of sexism was neither an accident

nor incidental, but rather – at least according to critics – the main reason that most of the audience bought a ticket. The performance could be legitimized by describing it as art, and this, in turn, was possible because contemporary artistic ideals contained the same elements of sexism and objectification of the female body. This was inherent in the aesthetic theory's idea of beauty as an individual experience and related, in turn, to the concurrent emphasis on beauty as a feminine trait. Staging live bodies as part of the neoclassicist worship of beauty, in front of a male, educated, middle-class audience, seems to be an early example of the hegemony of the male gaze as described in relation to 20th century film, press and advertising. Adult men's "pay-per-view" consumption of female bodies was both disguised as and legitimized by the artistic idealization of beauty.

Of course, beautiful women formed part of other forms of 19th century entertainment, as a review of Alexander Guerra's circus performances, held in Stockholm in 1845, makes clear. The horses and the artistic numbers were impressive, the reviewer wrote, adding that "the gentlemen connoisseurs and lorgnette amateurs equally assert that the women have features of an extraordinarily regular beauty".⁷⁷ This reference to the male ocular inspection of female bodies captures the visual gender power relations in 19th-century entertainment. However, the commercial stagings of *tableaux vivants* had an especially problematic relation towards the female audience. As mentioned, both reviewers and Müller himself noted that women refrained from attending his performances. Albeit we have no information of how individual women reacted to the *tableaux*, a comparison to other forms of entertainment built on the representation of bodies makes

it clear that this was not a recurring problem in 19th-century Swedish entertainment.

Representations of bodies were standard features on the entertainment market during the whole of the 19th century, with acrobats, tightrope-dancers, circus riders, strongmen such as Venitian, and pantomimes. An inventory of these genres shows that gender-specific shows did not exist, nor was ever the problem of decency addressed in reviews or acted against in advertisements the way Müller did.⁷⁸ Both women and men attended shows, watching male and female artists manifesting their bodies in different ways. This was not the case with all forms of entertainment at the period. A few other performers did have special shows “for ladies only” from the 1840s onwards: waxwork exhibitions, peephole panoramas, anatomic museums. They had in common the erotic element; putting women, albeit not real ones, on display, such as Venuses, oriental Harems, naked women, and in the case of the museums, also their breasts and genitals in particular, challenging norms of decency.⁷⁹ They could also experience the same problem as Müller: out of 8,400 people visiting Alexander Hartkopff’s Anatomic Museum during its visit to Norrköping in 1873, only 300 were women.⁸⁰

This indicates that the erotic element indeed was central to the commercial *tableaux*. Underneath a thin varnish of aesthetics, they offered the male urban audience two valuable things at a low price: self-affirmation and a position as a superior subject in a visual culture whose foremost object was attractive young women. Perhaps, finally, they provided order; they confirmed societal hierarchies. The authority to look – the right to see and watch, freely and independently, and “to take pleasure in the act of

looking” – is not equally distributed in any society.⁸¹ The right to look, the knowledge of how to look, and the duty to be looked upon, are important parts of the construction of power relations in any society. Exhibitors of living pictures sold the right for urban men to claim both to be educated and to be served eye candy. They confirmed the gendered order of a society in which the main task of young women was to be pleasant objects for a male gaze. Obviously, it could be a rather indecent gaze at times, and as such maybe a liberating experience for the male audience in a culture which so strongly emphasized decency. The urban women, on the other hand, realizing that they had a less strong right to look, chose to stay at home. The product was not that interesting to them, since they could not, without great risk, assume the male position which was part of the price of entry.

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Notes

1. Advertisement for Quirin Müller, *Aftonbladet*, July 27, 1844.
2. *Aftonbladet*, July 31, 1844.
3. Cf. Dagmar von Hoff and Helga Meise, “Tableaux vivants – Die Kunst- und Kultform der Attitüden und lebenden Bilder”, in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, eds. Renate Berger and Inge Stephan, Köln: Böhlau, 1987, p. 69; Peter M. McIsaac, “Rethinking Tableaux Vivants and Triviality in the Writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johanna Schopenhauer, and Fanny Lewald”, *Monatshefte*, Vol. 99, No. 2, 2007, p. 152.

4. "Stockholm den 30 Juli", *Aftonbladet*, July, 30, 1844; a report: August 2, 1844.
5. The digitization of the Swedish press is an ongoing project; it is more or less complete when it comes to the newspapers of larger towns of the 1840s; the data-base is administered by the Royal Library and found at <https://tidningar.kb.se/>. Access is open for newspapers older than a 115 years. The press of Finland was digitized at an earlier stage and is complete for the 19th century, administered by the National Library; https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/search?set_language=sv&formats=NEWSPAPER.
6. Cf. Francis Russel, "An Album of Tableaux-Vivants Sketches by Wilkie", *Master Drawings*, Vol. 10, No 1, 1972; Hoff and Meise, "Tableaux vivants – Die Kunst- und Kultform"; G.A. Hovet and T.R. Hovet, "Tableaux vivants: Masculine Vision and Feminine Reflections in Novels by Warner, Alcott, Stowe and Wharton", *ATQ* 7, 1993; Mary Chapman, "Living Pictures: Women and *Tableaux Vivants* in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction and Culture", *Wide Angle*, Vol. 18, No 3, 1996; Monika M. Elbert, "Striking a Historical Pose: Antebellum *Tableaux Vivants*, 'Godey's' Illustrations, and Margaret Fuller's Heroines", *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No 2, 2002; McIsaac, 2007, p. 152; Heidi Schlipphacke, "Kinship and Aesthetic Depth: The *Tableau Vivant* in Goethes *Wahlverwandschaften*", *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, Vol. 87, No. 3, 2018. It should be mentioned that a pioneer study, often referred to in this research, is actually Swedish, Kirsten Gram Holmberg, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux vivants: Studies on Some Trends in Theatrical Fashion, 1770–1815*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967.
7. Brenda Assael, "Art or Indecency? *Tableaux Vivants* on the London Stage and the Failure of Late Victorian Moral Reform", *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 45, No 4, 2006; Rosemary Barrow, "Toga Plays and *Tableaux Vivants*: Theatre and Painting on London's Late-Victorian and Edwardian Popular Stage", *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 62, No 2, 2010. Björn Ivarsson Lilieblad, *Moulin rouge på svenska. Variétéunderhållningens kulturhistoria i Stockholm 1875–1920*, Linköping: Linköpings universitet, 2009, p. 90f, mentions briefly living pictures in Swedish variety of the 1890s.
8. Gareth H.H. Davies, *The Clown King. Popular Entertainment 1840–1860*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015 is an exception to the tendencies in previous scholarship, dealing with commercial living pictures in 1840s and 1850s Britain.
9. Schlipphacke, 2018, p. 157.
10. The *tableaux* had an older and more complex history on which I cannot elaborate here; cf. Jordan J. Gilbert, "Lebende Bilder im Deutschen Drama des 17. Jahrhundert", *The South Central Bulletin*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1973; Philine Helas, *Lebende Bilder in der italienischen Festkultur des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999.
11. Waltraud Maierhofer, "Goethe on Emma Hamilton's 'Attitudes': Can Classical Art be Fun?", *Goethe Yearbook*, Vol. 9, 1999, pp. 222–226; Volker Schachenmayr, "Emma Lyon, the Attitude, and Goethean Performance Theory", *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. 13, 1997, pp. 3–7 (Lyon was Hamilton's earlier name); Amelia Rouser, "Living Statues and Neoclassical Dress in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples", *Art History*, Vol. 38, No 3, 2015, pp. 465, 470–472; Barry J. Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity: The Late-Victorian Discovery of Popular Music*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004, p. 147; Assael, 2006, p. 146f.
12. Rouser, 2015, p. 476.
13. McIsaac, 2007, pp. 153, 162–163; Gabrielle Bersier, "'Hamiltonian-Hendelian' Mimiplastics and *Tableau* of the Underworld: The Visual Aesthetics of Goethe's 1815 *Proserpina* Production", *Goethe Yearbook*, Vol. 23, 2016.
14. Russel, 1972; Birgit Joos, *Lebende Bilder: körperliche Nachahmung von Kunstwerken in der Goethezeit*, Berlin: Reimer, 1999; Assael, 2006, p. 147.
15. Esaias Tegnér, *Esaias Tegnér's brev. Utgivna av Tegnérsamfundet. Redigerade av Nils Palmborg*, Malmö: Allhem, 1963, p. 17 (to Christopher Tegnér, February 09, 1836); John Landquist, "Lotten von Kræmer. Levnadsteckning av John Landquist", in *Valda dikter. Utgifna af Samfundet De nio, med lefnadsteckning af John Landquist*, ed. Lotten von Kræmer, Stockholm: Bonnier, 1918, pp. 18–20.
16. Sophie von Knorring, *Skizzer. Af författaren till Kusinerna. Första samlingen* (Stockholm: L.J. Hjerta, 1841), I, 98f; Fredrika Bremer, *Grannarne. Utgiven med inledning och kommentarer av Carina och Lars Burman*, Stockholm: Svenska vitterhetssamfundet, 2000, p. 346.
17. "Inländskt. Västerås", *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning*, October 20, 1836; "Landsorts-nyheter", *Aftonbladet*, June 27, 1838; advertisement for masquerade ball, *Aftonbladet*, January 3, 1842.
18. Advertisement for Gautier, *Norrköpings Tidningar*, December 23, 1843; for C.A. Nyman, *Carlskrona Weckoblad*, December 4, 1843.
19. "Leipzig, 4 Juni", *Mnemosyne*, June 11, 1843, 284. Om the use of the word "Academy" and decent nudity, see for instance Heather Waldroup, "The Nude in the Album: Materiality and Erotic Narrative", *Visual Resources*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2020, 202–203.
20. "Stockholm den 30 Juli", *Aftonbladet*, July 30, 1844.
21. Advertisement for Quirin Müller, *Dagligt Allehanda*, September 10, 1844.
22. Advertisement for Quirin Müller, *Malmö Allehanda*, November 9, 1844.
23. Advertisement for Carl Rappo, *Åbo Tidningar*, November 16, 1844.
24. "C. Rappo", *Åbo Underrättelser*, November 20, 1844.
25. "Inrikes Nyheter", *Morgonbladet*, January 16, 1845.

26. "Götheborg", *Phoenix*, December 31, 1842.
27. Advertisement for Liphard and Rappo, *Aftonbladet*, October 5, 1844.
28. Advertisement for the Liphard Company, *Östgöta Correspondenten*, November 16, 1844.
29. "Linköping", *Östgöta Correspondenten*, November 20, 1844.
30. "Norrköping", *Norrköpings Tidningar*, December 7, 1844.
31. Advertisements for brothers A. & J. Price, for instance *Göteborgs Handels- och sjöfartstidning*, October 10, 1845; *Jönköpings Tidning*, January 10, 1846; *Norrköpings Tidningar*, May 9, 1846.
32. "Göteborg", *Medborgaren*, October 17, 1845; review in *Dagligt Allehanda*, September 19, 1846.
33. "Carlskrona", *Carlskrona Weckoblad*, October 24, 1846.
34. Advertisement for C.A. Nyman, *Linköpingsbladet*, October 5, 1845; advertisement for D.C. Alexander, *Gefleborgs Läns Tidning*, December 24, 1845.
35. Advertisement for Quirin Müller, *Aftonbladet*, August 21, 1847; "Herr Qvirin Müllers återkomst till Staden", *Aftonbladet*, August 11, 1847.
36. Advertisement for Quirin Müller, *Upsala*, October 15, 1847.
37. "Stockholm", *Stockholms Dagblad*, September 17, 1847; "Stockholm", *Aftonbladet*, September 16, 1847.
38. "Inrikes", *Upsala*, October 8, 1847.
39. "Jönköping", *Jönköpingsbladet*, December 28, 1847.
40. "Göteborg", *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, February 21.
41. "Rättegångs- och polissaker", *Aftonbladet*, August 22, 1850; advertisement for Alexander Guerra, *Aftonbladet*, September 14, 1850.
42. Advertisement for Carl Rappo, *Norrköpings Tidningar*, October 18, 1851.
43. "Norrköping", *Norrköpings Tidningar*, October 18, 1851.
44. Advertisement for Giovanni Viti, *Malmö Allehanda*, April 4, 1852.
45. *Kjöbenhavns Kongelig Alene Privilegerede Adresse-Contoires Efterretninger*, May 6, 1852.
46. Advertisements for Giovanni Viti, *Bohusläns Tidning*, January 1, 1858; February 8, 1858.
47. "Carlskrona", *Carlskrona Weckoblad*, April 13, 1859; "Korrespondens från Stockholm", *Dalpilen*, August 27, 1859.
48. See for instance advertisements for J.F. Johannesen, *Barometern*, March 26, 1853; *Malmö Allehanda*, August 2, 1854; for Johannowitsch, *Aftonbladet*, July 10, 1854; *Korrespondenten från Landskrona*, December 9, 1854.
49. "Offentliga nöjen. Theater å Hof", *Hernösandsposten*, February 14, 1872; "En familjefest", *Aftonbladet*, September 14, 1872.
50. Meindert Evers, *The Aesthetic Revolution in Germany 1750–1950. From Winckelmann to Nietzsche – From Nietzsche to Beckmann*, Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 2017, pp. 13–18.
51. Barbara Maria Stafford, "Beauty of the Invisible: Winckelmann and the Aesthetics of Imperceptibility", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, Vol. 43, No 1, 1980, pp. 65f, 68; Evers, 2017, p. 14.
52. Evers, 2017, pp. 25–34.
53. Napolitano, "Antonio Canova and Antiquarian Studies: The Dance", 2014b.
54. For the drapes, see especially Fiona K.A. Gatty, *Ideal Beauty in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century French Art and Art Criticism with Special Reference to the Role of Drapery and Costume*, Oxford: Somerville College, 2014, for instance 65, 228, ch. 6; Peter Brandes, "Beauty as the Middle between two Extremes: Encountering the Aesthetics of Equilibrium in Winckelmann's Theory of Art", *The Germanic review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, Vol. 92, No 2, 2017, p. 147.
55. Bersier, 2016, pp. 172–181.
56. Raymond Giraud, "Winckelmann's Part in Gautier's Perception of Classical Beauty", *Yale French Studies*, Vol. 38, 1967, pp. 175–179; Evers, 2017, p. 14.
57. I have studied Swedish conceptions of beauty and the female duty of pleasing, for instance Leif Runefelt, *Att hasta mot undergången. Anspråk, flyktighet, förställning i svensk debatt om konsumtion 1730–1830*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2015, ch 3; "Modedockan: en del av det europeiska kvinnohatet", in *Historiska typer*, ed. Peter Josephson, Stockholm: Gidlunds, 2020.
58. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen*, Vol. 16, No 3, 1975; Griselda Pollock, "What's Wrong with 'Images of Women'?", *Screen Education*, Vol. 24, 1977, pp. 25–34.
59. Maierhofer, 1999, pp. 234–239; Betsy Bolton, "Sensibility and Speculation: Emma Hamilton", in *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Katherine Kittredge, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003, p. 145; Ann Bermingham, "The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship", *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 16, No 2, 1993, p. 16; McIsaac, 2007, p. 157.
60. Note without headline, *Aftonbladet*, August 2, 1844.
61. Advertisement for Quirin Müller, *Aftonbladet*, August 5, 1844.
62. Müller advertised for some more shows for ladies only, for instance in *Dagligt Allehanda*, August 14, 1844.
63. Advertisement for Quirin Müller, *Aftonbladet*, July 31, 1844.

64. On Canova and this statue, see Salvatore Napolitano, "Antonio Canova and Antiquarian Studies: The War", *Notes in the History of Art*, Vol. 34, No 1, 2014, p. 37.
65. "Med gårdagens Snällpost", *Najaden*, August 13, 1844.
66. Emilie Flygare-Carlén, *Rosen på Tistelön. Berättelse från Skärgården*, Stockholm: N.H. Thomson, 1842, vol. 1, 218.
67. "Från Red:s Korrespondent", *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, August 24, 1844.
68. "Stockholm den 31 Aug.", *Aftonbladet*, August 31, 1844.
69. Peta Tait, *Circus Bodies: Cultural Identities in Aerial Performances*, London & New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 12.
70. "Åtskilliga underrättelser", *Sammlaren*, April 24, 1830.
71. François Rouel [pseud. for Karl af Kullberg] *Minnen från en vistelse i Stockholm åren 1844–45*, Norrköping, 1847, p. 93f.
72. Advertisement for Joseph Liphard, *Carlskrona Veckoblad*, February 8, 1845.
73. Advertisement for Carl Rappo, *Åbo Tidningar*, November 16, 1844.
74. "Till Vänner Alexander i Helsingfors", *Åbo Tidningar*, part 1, January 11, 1845; part 2, January 29, 1845.
75. "Inrikes", *Saima*, January 30, 1845, see Sven Hirn, *Den gastronomiska hästen. Gamla nordiska artistaffischer* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2002), 118; Snellman later returned to this criticism, "Lefvande bilder", *Saima*, November 27, 1845.
76. "Lefvande Bilder. Efter Antiken", *Morgonbladet*, January 16, 1845.
77. "Inrikes Nyheter", *Östgöta Correspondenten*, June 7, 1845-06-07, appendix.
78. Such bodily manifestations are analyzed in Leif Runefelt, *Några ögonblicks förundran. Marknaden för ambulerande underhållning i Sverige 1770–1880*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, forthcoming. The inventory of representation of bodies is based on advertisements for, reviews of and comments on the more frequently appearing companies as well as international visiting artists such as: Casorti (acrobatics, pantomime, active in Sweden 1801–19), the Magito family (acrobatics, c1810–), the Kuhn family (art-riding, acrobatics, 1810–27), M.F. Steen (acrobatics, 1824–68), the Gautier-Bono families (acrobatics, art-riding etc., 1829–); J.J. Riego (acrobatics, 1838–67), Carl and François Rappo (acrobatics and more, 1842–73), the Eisfeldt family (acrobatics, 1840–); Johannessén (acrobatics, pantomimes, 1852–); Venitien (strongman, 1829–32), among others.
79. Cf advertisements for S. Samelson, *Stockholms Dagblad*, Oct. 31, 1849 (sleeping wax Venus); J. Nawratil, *Aftonbladet*, Sept. 1, 1849 (anatomical museum); Alexander Hartkopf, *Stockholms Dagblad*, Dec. 11, 1850

(ethnological and anatomical museum); anonymous exhibitor, *Westmanlands Läns Tidning*, Feb. 24, 1853 (demonstration of stereoscopic images).

80. "Veckokrönika", *Göteborgsposten*, May 10, 1873. The number of women were proportionally much larger, 10,000 out of 36,000 paying visitors.
81. Quote from Waldroup, "The Nude in the Album", 204.

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Summary

In the 1840s, Sweden and Finland were hit by a minor craze for living pictures or *tableaux vivants* as commercial entertainment. For the price of a ticket, the public could experience the staging, by live actors, of work of arts from antiquity and contemporary sculptors such as Canova and Thorvaldsen. Making strong claims of artistic value, based on the aesthetic theory of Winckelmann and the artistic practice of artists such as Canova, the performances raise interesting questions of how aesthetics worked when set in a commercial framework. The article discusses the problem of beauty faced by entertainers and spectators when art was reenacted for money. The experience of beauty was central to aesthetic theory and to living pictures. However, it remains unclear whether commercial living pictures was about beauty in art or about good-looking women. A possible conclusion is that it was about both, and that the aesthetic theory behind the *tableaux* was a theory created for a male visual culture, in which the male gaze's consumption of female bodies was self-evident while dressed in arguments of truth and beauty, confirming a social order in which a certain right look was ascribed to men.

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