

“In the shadow of Halmstadgruppen”. The artist Arvid Carlson and Hallandsringen.

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av

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A B S T R A C T

T H E P U R P O S E O F this thesis is to expose the artist Arvid Carlson (1895–1962), his art, and the regional artistic life in which he worked. The artist was part of Hallandsringen (The Halland Ring), a virtually forgotten circle of artists that existed in the 1930s and 1940s parallel to Halmstadgruppen (The Halmstad Group). The thesis is divided into three descriptive parts which are summed up with analyses in the light of some of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological concepts, chiefly habitus, capital, and field.

Part I consists of the story of Arvid Carlson, with special emphasis on his adolescence and his path to an artistic career, which proved to be the typical one for Swedish artists at the end of the 1910s: basic education in Sweden followed by studies in Copenhagen and Paris. According to the analysis, the choice of teachers and artistic direction corresponded to Carlson’s habitus and the capital he possessed.

Part II focuses on what Bourdieu calls the agents in artistic life in Halland: chiefly Hallandsringen, Halmstadgruppen, Hallands Konstförening (The Halland Art Association), and the art critics of the local press. Artistic life was to be dominated by Halmstadgruppen and an influential stratum in Halmstad who supported their surrealistically oriented painting. The dominated position was occupied by Hallandsringen, whose naturalist painting was appreciated by many people, but not to the same extent by those in charge of Hallands Konstförening nor by the major art collectors.

Part III consists of an analysis of Arvid Carlson’s oeuvre and his most important motif cycles: landscapes, portraits, and representations of women. The analyses of the pictures show that Carlson stood for a toned-down modernism through his orientation to a classicist naturalism in which a large number of paintings can be associated with the Swedish New Realism.

Key words: Arvid Carlson, Hallandsringen, Halmstadgruppen, Hallands Konstförening, regional artistic life, local press, naturalism, sur-realism, New Realism, modernism, landscape, portrait, female representation, habitus, capital, field, dominant, dominated.

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