

Our Spectral Gardens: Hilma af Klint's 'Ten Largest' as a template for our synthetic present

JANICE MCNAB, PHD

The Royal Academy of
Art, The Hague, NL

j.mcnab@kabk.nl

KEYWORDS

Hilma-af-Klint; feminism;
painting; textiles, climate.

DOI

[10.54916/rae.142379](https://doi.org/10.54916/rae.142379)

DATE OF PUBLICATION

03/05/2024

ABSTRACT

Archival research on artist Hilma af Klint explores how feminist networks and eco-vitalist beliefs underlie The Ten Largest, the Swedish painter's most famous work. These findings re-position the series in relation to climate breakdown, and at a time when re-imagining the connections between people and things has become a cultural imperative. How we now approach the patterns of the past is further explored, as artistic research, with the painting series Our Spectral Gardens (2021-23). Here, parallel image roots define synthetic representations of nature and a reconsideration of eco-vitalism as a force of the present.

Introduction

As climate breakdown accelerates, re-imagining the connections between people and things becomes an imperative of our time. Re-visiting patterns of the past that did not seem to matter in their own time, but which remain held within art, can trigger new thinking in the present. This paper traces a previously understated feminism within *The Ten Largest*, a 1907 painting series by Swedish artist Hilma af Klint, and the folk-art roots of this now famous work. It ties together both art and archives that were ignored by twentieth century history, but which can now be seen to propose alternative modes of engagement with other life, and with the material world, in the present.

This submerged history is held within textiles and traditional Swedish patternmaking. Tracing it also generated a tool for re-imagining in the studio, and the painting series *Our Spectral Gardens* (2021-23) is informed by resources that parallel those underlying *The Ten Largest*. *Our Spectral Gardens* explores a synthetic representation of nature alongside an exploration of eco-vitalism as a force of the present.

Many Women's Voices

The Ten Largest were painted between October 2 to December 7, 1907, when Hilma af Klint was 45. They are part of a cycle of 193 paintings called *The Paintings for the Temple*, a radical painterly experiment different to anything the artist had previously conceived. They are unique within that cycle as they are painted in egg tempera, not oil, and on thick paper that was then glued onto a canvas support. They are by far the largest paintings the artist would make (up to 328 x 240 cm each) and the lack of a clearly defined landscape, figure, even a horizon, also make them unique within the art of their time. These paintings are now recognized as a breakthrough work of early abstraction but for most of the twentieth century, af Klint's entire oeuvre was rejected by art historians. Despite this, her work is now wildly popular, seeming to speak to a need of our times.

Af Klint thought of *The Ten Largest* as defining a single, universal body, both male and female, in a journey through time. The title of each panel reflects a stage in this journey: childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age. The artist wrote that "the form is the waves," (the rolling compositional movements that define the work) and that "behind



Figure 1. *The Ten Largest*, 1907, tempera on paper, attached to canvas. Collection of The Hilma af Klint Foundation, Stockholm. Installed in The Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2018

the forms is life itself” (Hilma af Klint notebook 559, p. 164). When the panels were completed, a voice in her head told her they were “paradisaically beautiful” (Voss, 2023, p. 144), but the artist was writing in the language of her time, and these statements only find meaning when we open up the context in which they were written.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, most Swedes had lived in the countryside and af Klint grew up in a Stockholm engulfed by intense, late industrialization. Ruptures in the social, economic, and political fabric were painfully apparent, and by the end of the nineteenth century a movement we now call Romantic Nationalism had emerged in response. Its intellectual roots had grown among disillusioned city dwellers who saw mediocrity and alienation in the roughness of modernization and these city elites looked to Sweden’s agrarian past for a more heroic national identity. They saw life in tight-knit peasant communities as more in tune with life’s seasonal cycles, but their intellectual championing of this could be tinged with sentimental nostalgia. A key motif of National Romanticism was the folk costume, the highly decorated homemade clothing that rural farming people wore. By 1900, these easily identifiable clothes had come to signify a raft of externally imposed values deemed to express national identity and pride, but the clothes themselves had come into being as a result of centuries of harsh sumptuary law, which controlled what each stratum of society was permitted to wear.

The Swedish Life Reform Movement took ideas from Romantic Nationalism but in the writing of feminist, socialist and educator Ellen Key, re-visiting rural life was also a way to re-envision the future of the city, and her writing merged aspects of subsistence living with progressive, socially inclusive ideas. Her work was directed towards the urban poor and in *Beauty in the Home*, she explored how readers could find an “everyday beauty” in life by embracing both folk simplicity and the affordability of mass production, ideas that entwined with her work on education and women’s rights. (Frampton, 2008, pp. 33-58). Key was controversial but writer and educator Ottilia Adelborg followed her ideas, and was one of several artists and writers who, in the early 1900s, moved from Stockholm to rural Dalarna province. Unlike some who made this move, Adelborg was a committed feminist and set up a school in the village of Gagnef. This supported young women to learn traditional approaches to textile and lace production that were being lost as people fled to the cities. She also helped these

women sell their lace and so make a cash income. Her diaries record that alongside this community work, she was also collecting historic examples of women’s patterning, and spending time with guests from Stockholm. One of these was her old studio colleague, Hilma.

February 7, 1904. Hilma Klint left. She brought a lot of good companionship. We managed to work together very well. She talked a lot about Theosophy and Spiritualism, and some parts of that I do like, but I don’t believe in the voices. (Adelborg, 1904)

Adelborg’s rejection of ‘the voices’ reveals she did not share af Klint’s interest in Theosophy, the new religion sweeping through Europe’s intellectual classes at this time, but it was a combination of this theosophical practice and Adelborg’s textile archive that seems to underlie the artistic breakthrough that is *The Ten Largest*.

Theosophy was a new spiritual practice that attempted to synthesize findings from contemporary science and philosophy into a pan-theistic religious vision. Practitioners believed that recently discovered electrical and magnetic fields might carry the spirits of enlightened beings along their wavelengths, and that these could be absorbed within the deep focus of a séance. This idea seems bizarre today but as the industrial revolution mechanized ideas of the human body to be primarily thought of as a tool of production and profit, searching for higher truths in trance-like states was a mode of resistance. It could also be seen as a modulation of romanticism, as attuning oneself to changes in air pressure, wind direction and water vibration had for millennia been essential to successful farming and sea travel. This sort of knowledge was being lost as communities industrialized and Theosophy filled this gap with a different idea of what could be picked up, influenced by these same scientific and industrial developments.

By the early 1900s, Af Klint was regularly meeting with a group of like-minded women friends to enter such states of concentrated present-ness. As The Five, they listened for internal voices and sensations and recorded their sensed experience in drawings. In trying to attune themselves to the air around them, the women were also tuning into themselves, their mindfulness offering a pathway for normally repressed expression. They understood their drawings as notations of psychic exploration rather than art, but these records of embodied experience

would be a pivotal artistic development for af Klint, opening the door for her coming abstract work.

The Ten Largest were painted on the same paper as the séance drawings and while this work from 1903 reveals a shared visual vocabulary, the paintings are also more formally resolved; different in some fundamental way. Adelborg's diaries reveal that between 1903 and 1907, af Klint regularly visited Gagnef, and she wrote in her own notebook that within two months of her 1904 visit, inner voices were telling her to create "astral paintings." (Hilma af Klint notebook 418, p. 125.) She had not yet envisaged these, but her artistic metamorphosis had begun and Gagnef would be part of it.

Af Klint built her life within interconnected feminist communities. The Five were all women, as were her sexual partners (Voss, 2023). Theosophy had been primarily designed by women, and her sister Ida was a Suffragette. This is the frame within which the artist saw her old studio mate Ottilia give financial agency to young women and find

new value in the decorative work of their mothers and grandmothers. This was politics in action and af Klint lived within it, in Stockholm and on her regular sketching trips. As women in Sweden did not gain full legal majority until 1923, this cannot be underestimated. The inner freedom required to make a work like *The Ten Largest* would not have been easily won, but the women around the artist were also working to forge their own paths, each one in defiance of tightly controlled gendering of identity.

Adelborg's textile archive still exists, and this embroidered tangerine bonnet fig.3 is one of many in the collection, all with the same colors, patterns, and structure. In line with the sumptuary history to which they belong, these rural clothes were designed to encode meaning. They could be read, and caps like this were worn only by Gagnef women and on high days and holy days. If we compare the cap to the circles and tendrils of *The Ten Largest, No. 3, Youth* we see the same orange ground, with petals and fronds that seem



Figure 2. Séance drawing, *The Five*, 1903. Collection The Hilma af Klint Foundation. Photo: Hilma af Klint Foundation

to deconstruct before our eyes to float across the tangerine dreamscape of the painting. Af Klint never made this connection to her friend's collection, wondering throughout her life where these patterns had come from, and writing that "the pictures were painted directly through me, without any preliminary drawings" (Muller-Westermann & Widoff, 2013, p. 38). The work had been completed in just 40 days, relying on knowledge that the artist had within her, but which she could not name. This women's party cap makes clear that she is channeling the clothes collected by her friend however, and extending the worldview they embody into the language of art—her freely drawn patterns lifting and curling in ways that would have been familiar to her muscles from previous drawing experiments with The Five.

Adelborg also collected the birch bark templates used in intricate patchwork. When loosely strewn on a table (fig. 4), the decontextualized antlers, rising suns and tree fronds of these templates almost preview the way af Klint eased the cap design into abstraction.

In *The Ten Largest, Childhood, No. 1* (fig. 5) circles of lilies and roses float within a blue ground. They are reminiscent of the Nordic head garlands still worn today but lilies and roses also had a specific

code for af Klint. In both The Five's shared notes and the artist's notebooks, they signify feminine and masculine energies. By 1907, the lily had come to represent Gusten Andersson, the artist's lover, and the rose, Hilma. Their shared feminine and masculine energies would also be represented by the colors blue and yellow and these codes repeat throughout the paintings, together, in overlap, connected by tendrils. Af Klint would write that by cultivating both energies inside of themselves, she and her lover might together overcome 'the pain of duality' (Hilma af Klint notebook 556, 389). It is noteworthy that in the farming community from which these patterns come, poverty had driven most of the working age men to the coasts and other countries in search of paid employment. Women did the farming and looked after community life as well as their families, de-gendering previously separate roles. There was precedent.

Af Klint described *The Ten Largest* as "beautiful wall coverings" (Cramer, 2021, p. 5) an approach to painting that she would also have seen in Gagnef, where local people made simple, affordable paintings on large sheets of paper. They stored these in rolls and pinned them on their log cabin walls to mark festive days. They mostly represented local or religious scenes but with a *kurbits*, an imaginary flowering gourd that represented a complex, Vitalist



Figure 3: Left: *The Ten Largest, Youth, No 3, Group IV, 1907. Tempera on paper laid on canvas, 315 cm x 234 cm, Collection the Hilma af Klint Foundation. Photo The Hilma af Klint Foundation. Right: Silk bonnet, Collection Stiftelsen Gagnefs Minnestuga GM 1426. Photo Janice McNab*





Figure 4. Birch bark stencils of sun, stag, tree frond. Collection Stiftelsen Gagnefs Minnestuga, Dalarna. Photo Kasia Rust



Figure 5. *The Ten Largest, Childhood, no 1, Group IV*, 1907, tempera on paper laid on canvas, 315 cm x 234 cm,



Figure 6. Left: *The Ten Largest, Youth, no 4, Group IV*, 1907, tempera on paper laid on canvas, 315 cm x 234 cm, Collection the Hilma af Klint Foundation Photo the Hilma af Klint Foundation. Right: *Large Kurbitz* painting, tempera on paper, 1811. Collection Stiftelsen Gagnefs Minnestuga, Dalarna. Photo Janice McNab



idea of fertility, towering over all else. These *kurbits* remain synonymous with this area's folk art and one can be clearly detected in the flower shape on the lower right of *The Ten Largest No. 4, Youth*. (Fig. 6).

The artist grew up in a naval family. Her grandfather had mapped the seas around Sweden, and she studied these as a child. She was familiar with flatly painted symbolic shapes combined with letters and symbols and painted on large sheets of rolled paper. In Dalarna, she would see these formal terms return, but as paintings inspired by a spiritual goal. When the artist stepped away from her vertical easel in 1907 and rolled out the paper The Five used on their séance table, the movement from vertical to horizontal would repeat a now familiar adjustment in her mind-body focus, but the scale was now that of Dalarna's spiritually driven folk paintings. What she produced through this movement is a joyous cartography of women's lived experience. Invisible inner life drawn as a body in time, using the patterns that countless Swedish women before her had used to protect and care for their families.

A *kurbits* returns in the embroidery of this women's wrist warmer and we can see its after-image in *Adulthood, No. 6* (Fig. 7). It also slips into other panels, along with references to yellow birch leaf dye, scarlet embroidered linens, and stitched cream



leatherwork. Each clothing quotation appropriate to the life stage of the painting's title.

Subsistence communities understood their lives to be entwined in a living world that was respected and sacred. Most of their clothes came directly from the leather and wool of their animals, dyed with local plants, and embroidered with stylized wildlife, suns, and trees. They were woven from the land and understood as its gift. Historically, the power of its animals and plants were thought to be transferred into fabrics and to arm the wearer against attack from malign aspects of this same nature. (Hunter, 2019, p. 98). These thoughts had faded by the twentieth century, but clothes were still a conductive second skin between body and environment, coming from it, connecting to it, and protecting from it.

Such ideas of interconnectedness were culturally familiar to af Klint, they were promoted by Ellen Key, and had been interpreted into an idea of all-permeating "ether" in Theosophical thinking.

Figure 7. Left: A woman's wrist warmer, Collection Stiftelsen Gagnefs Minnestuga, Dalarna. Photo Janice McNab. Right: *The Ten Largest, Adulthood, No. 6, Group IV*, 1907, tempera on paper laid on canvas, 315 cm x 234 cm, Collection the Hilma af Klint Foundation. Photo The Hilma af Klint Foundation.



This spiritualist approach was part of a wider social response to industrialization that was also reinvigorating older *vitalist* approaches to being, which saw everything in the world as alive and of value (Morris, 2023) and was deeply embedded in Sweden's agrarian past. When the patterns and colors of this past, held within traditional clothing designs, were transferred into *The Ten Largest*, painted using the methods and materials familiar from *kurbits* painting, these conceptual layers glow through this radical modernist experiment as aesthetic experiences we can re-connect with today.

There is much in the past that we refuse to see because it fails to align with the desires of the present. Archives preserve some of it, as material evidence that waits for a new angle of the light. Hilma af Klint's body of work, Adelborg's textile collection, and the diaries that connect the two were not nurtured by twentieth century historians, who failed to see value in patterns that did not resonate with their own beliefs. They remain understudied, part of the feminist unconscious of an art history that was looking the other way.

The Coming Dark

There is another reason that thought worlds tied to Romantic Nationalism are not fully explored today, however. This 1905 photograph (Fig. 8) was taken at Skansen, an outdoor museum dedicated to Sweden's rural history. Af Klint is standing next to Adelborg and is dressed as Clean Peter, from the author's best-selling children's book. It is a remarkable outfit for the time, but it is also *not* a folk costume. She stands apart from what was, for some, a nationalist delirium for a single ethnic identity unified by a language, history, folklore, and appearance, and within which ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities (like the Sami) became targets of assimilation and erasure. Clothes made by the rural poor only became 'costumes' when they were romanticized into fetish objects. The women's clothing reform movement inadvertently also did this. In 1902, Märta Jörgensen updated the traditional costume to create a modern city outfit based on the blue and yellow of the Swedish flag. (Hertz, 2021). Having no corsets, these adaptations appealed to upper class women looking for modern comfortable clothes, but blending progressive feminist goals with a Nationalist agenda exemplifies a problem that af Klint may have foreseen. There are no known photos of the artist in folk costumes ancient or modern. These clothes were part of her

social world, but she chose to sidestep identification with what would later morph into a deadly cocktail of ethnic purity, blood, and soil. Her paintings do not fetishize clothes into costumes. Her Swedish blue and yellow, which she identifies as representing the male and female energies within all bodies, is instead abstracted into a radically free aesthetics. This movement escapes the overarching system of control that defines both sumptuary law and later, nationalism.

In artistic movements the artist was never able to bring into words, the liberating methodology of séance drawing, Ellen Key's political reforms, and the clothes and paintings of rural Sweden became unconscious steppingstones towards a work that is far from the dominant value systems of its time. These ten panels embed the creativity of generations of women living, working, and protecting their families within an idea of a single living universe in which everything is alive, and therefore sacred. The transmission of these ideas through pattern and color haunts *The Ten Largest* as a radiant feminist and proto-ecological rallying cry.

Our Spectral Gardens

As I traced this story of *The Ten Largest* and the community of women whose voices the paintings reiterate, their ghosts also inhabited my studio. I



Figure 8. Otilia Adelborg's 50th birthday party, December 6, 1905, Skansen Great Hall, Stockholm. Photo: *Idun Magazine*, December 1905, p. 364. Af Klint is No. 7, Adelborg No. 8. Public domain.

began painting a piece of fabric that I had held onto for many years, a personal memento that bounced me back over decades. *Our Spectral Gardens* are the result, an outcome of my research that takes material form as patterns of the present. The aesthetics of the paintings come from a garden design printed onto a 1950's scarf that belonged to my mother, and which I have known all my life. As my mother now loses her memories to dementia, working with these patterns from the past has been an attempt to hold on to our relationship, but also to see that loss of mind as a metaphor of our collective relationship with a fracturing and disappearing living world. The fabric reminds me of the story of my life, but I also chose it because of the 1950's ideas about nature that its patterns hold. These were not hand embroidered in the community, they are a mass-produced vision of endless bounty that we now see as an essential folly of the recent past. Its bright colors resonate with my mother's youthful hopes but also with the wider post-war optimism of Britain at the time. Painting these now is to flow backwards. This channel is opened by love but the complex personal loss that dementia presents is also my affective route towards the loss we are all experiencing in relation to our living world. In *Agony in the Garden* (Fig. 9) this pattern of the past is distorted, has lost its single viewpoint, and has mutilated cacti nestling among the florals.

The roots of our ecological crisis go a lot further back than the 1950's, when this textile was made, but a driving idea from that time, that in the West, "we" could "have it all," is a mindset that is marked into its colors and shapes. As a gesture of only looking back, these paintings could be hopelessly sentimental, but silk landscapes falling apart are also an exploration of the worn visual codes that continue to define "plenty." As dementia now erodes the memory of this time for my mother, and the luxurious scarf falls apart, so that social optimism, a Western notion of arcadia-for-sale, erodes our global garden.

We cannot re-inhabit the pre-Enlightenment vitalist mindsets of European subsistence life, and neither could the city elites of Stockholm in 1907. The return to arcadia is always a dream built on privilege, and it defines something that never existed. The patterns of the past printed onto the scarf re-iterate this, a garden that never was. Arcadia was, nevertheless, a feature of Romantic movements across Europe, and art, landscape painting in particular, played a role in defining the idea. From the seventeenth century on, landscape

painting became one of the social tools of European elites propagating an idea of the world and its inhabitants as commodities. As the price of this commodification began to reveal itself, Romantics re-focused on what might have been lost. But *et in arcadia ego*. In *The Nutmeg's Curse, Parables for a Planet in Crisis*, theorist Amitav Ghosh (2021) explores this process of re-imagining the world as built only from resources from which value could be mechanically extracted. His 'parables' are of increasingly remote landowners enclosing large estates or profiting from colonial projects in Africa, Indonesia, or the Americas. They no longer saw interwoven systems of life there and understood these far-away places only in relation to financial gain. Subduing the original environment and its people for profit became a driving incentive, and landscape painting helped define these ideas about ownership and extraction. Paintings that reified the 'view,' the remote oversight of ownership, helped this way of seeing gain wider acceptance, and the money made from such projects built museums that continue to house vistas cleared of slaves or resident communities, views that might be of the Americas, Indonesia, or remoter parts of Europe.

At the same time, newly landscaped gardens idealized romantic visions of the rural and filled them with exotic trees and plants. The aloe Vera bodies in *The Rift Valley* (Fig. 10) note this history. Their healing properties are one of nature's gifts, but they are also the armored vegetable tanks of a future, hotter world. They make these paintings into still lives. *Nature morte* was another image genre that grew throughout the period of industrialization, and often included treasures brought back from colonized lands, alongside the cut flowers of newly exotic garden collections. Such images played an important role in the cultural acceptance of change as "to envisage the world (as inert) was a crucial step towards making an inert Nature a reality." (Ghosh, 2021, p. 39). In our current time of ecological collapse, we can no longer afford this extractionist point of view and many historians are now re-writing the history tied to the 'embarrassment of riches.'

In *The Shadow of an Animal* (fig. 11), I have painted the shadow of my hands mimicking antlers, a specter of habitat and wildlife loss within a mirage of plenty conjured out of hills of silk and their mass-produced blooms. Af Klint's idea of bodily transparency becomes re-interpreted as lack, woven into a synthetic image of the living world.



Figure 9. *Our Spectral Gardens, Agony in the Garden*, 2022, oil on linen, 120 x 165 cm.
Photo Gert Jan van Rooij



Figure 10. *Our Spectral Gardens, The Rift Valley*, 2022.
Oil on linen, 120 x 165 cm. Photo Gert Jan van Rooij

Pre-industrial communities like Gagnef did not really participate in the Capitalist imaginary. They retained a tense awareness of their interdependent relationship with a world alive with energies beyond their control. We can see their lingering vitalist beliefs in folk paintings that continued to have a *kurbits* tower over church and village alike, and in embroidery that continued to intensify around heads, cuffs, and genitals to provide extra protection. Such beliefs have gone from our broken present but what Ghosh is pointing out is that we could usefully renew our interest in them. This might also help us re-imagine the harsh role he lays out for art as a second lieutenant of capital. Respecting other life on earth as a gift, not a resource, is an imaginative leap that is now required of us, and Ghosh's vision is global, not national. He recognizes pollution as a free-travelling citizen of the world.

In *Death by Landscape*, Elvia Wilk proposes that “what it means to be a person in an age of drastic eco-systemic decline ... is changing,” (Wilk, 2022, p. 7) that to be alive today means re-imagining our bodies, realizing that we possess both “an individual body in which you exist, eat, sleep and go about your day-to-day life,” and a second body that “has an impact on foreign countries and on whales” (Wilk, 2022, p.17). The first body senses and feels, the second ‘eco-systemic body’ lives in constant interaction with its surrounding ecology. It is a ‘me’ that is enmeshed beyond the parameters of the skin, a miasmatic expanse that is a new way of understanding ourselves. It is hard to grasp because our eco-systemic body is part of every melting glacier and in the microplastics in every sea. But it is not so far from these older ideas of a single living system, of ourselves as woven into our immediate environments. This idea atrophied when it was re-purposed within a nationalist agenda, but it lives on, in aesthetic translation, in *The Ten Largest*. As Klint did not copy-paste its motif, of fetishized dress-up “costumes,” she transformed the core spirit of the idea, in a process of aesthetic transmission that allowed the personal relationships she was also painting about, those with Gusten and her oldest friend Anna, to co-exist within this wider cultural set, and for both to remain traceable today. This way of recording the world was incomprehensible to generations of art historians, but we can see it now because it ties into the needs of our present.

Conclusion

Our Spectral Gardens look very different to af Klint's work but they inhabit her process, and similarly build on the patterns of the past while thinking about the future. Both painting series work by layering the personal and the political into collapsing landscapes in which figure and ground flow through each other.

Art is only of value if it helps us to live, and as we begin to comprehend the scale of our mistaken idea that land was an inert resource, we need ways to trigger a re-imagination of it as part of what we also are. The idea of co-existence does not align with a consumerist mindset, but this is not a new realization. The archival tracery I have sketched in this paper records the way this critique was implanted in a single artwork made over a century ago. It, and many others, were ignored by art history but we need to re-visit such works in our broken present and trace these forgotten histories anew. There is another story of the recent past in which our current path is not inevitable, in which other choices were proposed. If art can help us see these choices, it can have value in our lives.



Figure 11. *Our Spectral Gardens, The Shadow of an Animal*, 2023. Oil on linen, 80 x 130 cm.
Photo Gert Jan van Rooij



Figure 12. *Our Spectral Gardens, The Shadow of Birds*, 2023, oil on linen 120 x 120 cm. Photo Gert Jan van

References

- Adelborg, O. (1899 & 1904). Untitled diary entries on un-numbered pages. The archives of The Ottilia Adelborg Museet, Gagnef, Sweden. Trans, Lena Nordesjo.
- Af Klint, Hilma, undated notebook. HaK 418, 556, 559. The Hilma af Klint Foundation Archive, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Cramer, S. (2021). *Hilma af Klint: The secret paintings*. Art Gallery of New South Wales.
- Frampton, K. (Ed.) (2008). 'Ellen Key, 'Beauty in the Home.' In *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*. The Museum of Modern Art.
- Ghosh, A. (2021). *The nutmeg's curse, Parables for a planet in crisis*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Hertz, C. (2021). *Dressing with purpose. Belonging and resistance in Scandinavia*. Indiana University Press.
- Hunter, C. (2019). *Threads of life*. Sceptre Books.
- Müller-Westermann, I. & Widoff, J. (Eds.) (2013). *Hilma af Klint – A pioneer of abstraction*. Moderna Museet and Hatje Cantz.
- Voss, J. (2022). *Hilma af Klint. A biography*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Wilk, E. (2022). *Death by landscape*. Soft Skull.
- Morris, F. (2023). *Hilma af Klint & Piet Mondrian. Forms of life*. Tate Publications.

Endnotes

- 1** The Ottilia Adelborg diary entry for November 4, 1899, reads "I now have access to my old studio in the afternoons, Hilma Klint and Anna Cassel have the mornings" (Adelborg, 1899).