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Art offers a precise remedy for a pause in the midst of a hectic rush

A falling glass of milk is an invitation to play.



Johan F. Karlsson & Parsa Kamehkhosh, From Outside the Frame No. 4. Photo: Kati Heljakka

[Kati Heljakka](#)

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PresenceTimeBody. Johan F. Karlsson & Parsa Kamehkhosh. Gallery 3H+K, until January 29th.

Presence is perhaps one of the most elusive needs in our busy times. That's why art exhibitions, where simply looking around is not enough, offer the best medicine for stopping and being still for a moment.

In January, the 3H+K gallery was covered in black, and screens were placed in the space. [Johan F. Karlsson](#) and [Parsa Kamehkhosh](#), who are interested in spaces, objects, and states of mind, tackle the impulses and stopping of movement in their art. The black and white video works offer the opportunity to focus for a moment on events that create movement and freeze the changes it causes in the space as silent images.

Karlsson and Kamehkhosh appear in their performative video works themselves. One piles stones in his lap and pours full glasses of milk onto the floor, then becomes part of the solidifying black-and-white art image. The other flickers as a shadow in the background or tests the limits of remaining still with a clenched fist.

In the background, questions about the relationship of objects and bodies to gravity, time and light flicker. The apparent insignificance and meditateness of the works, as described in the exhibition description, strike a precise chord with my own experience. The works are hypnotic: For a moment, my sense of time blurs, and my understanding of the January twilight on the other side of the curtain recedes. I am simultaneously in a space I recognize and in the metaphysical spaces the artists are pondering.

A single glass filled with white liquid on the floor is a hauntingly concrete invitation to play that I have stumbled upon: What if? What if? I would like to kick it over, but I don't. Here is clearly a threshold of adult correctness and the authority of an art critic, which artists have constructed to measure the viewer's courage.

I chuckle as I contemplate the possibility of merging into the world of work with a sharp push of the milk glass. It can fall over completely accidentally, after all, I happened to notice it by chance too. The most important question posed by the exhibition is not whether the glass is half empty or full, but how it fell over. And, did someone — child or adult — take up the invitation to play?