

JKG

JH Engström
BANQUET

2 April - 4 June 2022

Jean-Kenta Gauthier *Vaugirard*

Jean-Kenta Gauthier

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JH Engström

BANQUET

"I once stated that I see no hierarchy between photographic formats and that the only thing that matters is what happens when you put it altogether. I could state the same regarding different mediums.

To me, these mergers create energy, dynamism and beauty. Something I believe and trust. For the same reason I believe and trust human diversity and life itself with all its contradictions, doubts and ambiguities."

— JH Engström, March 2022

2 April - 4 June 2022

Jean-Kenta Gauthier Vaugirard
4, rue de la Procession 75015 Paris

Wed-Sat, 2pm-7pm

A photographer, "JH is a book maker. [...] Exhibitions become secondary for a while," wrote Urs Stahel¹. JH Engström, born in Sweden in 1969, whose numerous books are regularly acclaimed by critics, is also a film director, a practice he has been developing since 2006. *BANQUET* is a synthesis of these two practices, which are closely linked in his work.

Presented from 2 April to 4 June 2022 at the Jean-Kenta Gauthier / Vaugirard gallery, the exhibition *JH Engström: BANQUET* consists of an installation designed for the gallery space and which presents a long silent film made by JH Engström. The film is composed of 21 chapters that are shown in a loop on as many monitors. Each scene, directed by JH Engström assisted by Mauro Fleuri and Carl-Mikael Ström, shows the artist's hands flipping through each of the 21 books he has produced so far, from start to finish, on his studio table.

The banquet is a moment of joy, a celebration, and this exhibition marks a milestone in the artist's practice. For *BANQUET* is presented on the eve of the publication of *The Frame* (Pierre Von Kleist, spring 2022), probably the largest project of JH Engström's career and which was first presented as an installation mixing photographs and projections at the gallery in 2018. This was a first for JH Engström who, apart from his films, has since the late 1990s defined the book as the primary destination for his projects. And this is a real challenge for any gallery: to accompany an artist and do justice to his or her work when it is primarily in the form of books. *BANQUET* is a celebration of the 25 years JH Engström dedicated to the book form.

The banquet is a moment of sharing.

"The experience offered by a museum or gallery is generally collective, while that of the photobook invites itself into the home and offers a more intimate and personal understanding of the work," wrote Clément Chéroux². This is the programme of this banquet, which invites us to share JH Engström's books through film.

The banquet is synonymous with profusion, and here the viewer will probably not be able to get through all 21 videos. But this profusion is the condition of the banquet, and the quantity is commensurate with the event.

BANQUET, a vast film designed for the exhibition space, is part of the fundamental movement of the artist's work. Many of Engström's projects include elements from previous projects. Like *Revoir* (Journal / Akio Nagasawa Publishing, 2016), which is largely composed of

photographs from the 1990s and 2000s published in *Trying to Dance* (Journal, 2003), the artist's first critical success. *BANQUET*, by showing all the past books, respects this retrospective principle and even pushes its logic to the extreme.

JH Engström's work is littered with projects that stand as reports of the past period. *Trying to Dance* was about the artist's first marriage. In 2015, the ironically optimistic title *Tout va Bien* [All is Well] (Aperture) suggested the state of mind of an artist pausing to see that a future is possible. In this sense, *BANQUET* is a review of two decades of practice in which the book has been a major part of the practice. With the release of *The Frame*, his first truly versatile project, JH Engström invites us to a great celebration.

With *BANQUET*, JH Engström the director exploits and develops the aesthetics of a video genre that is now widely present on the internet or in institutional exhibitions: the slow flipping of whole books that accompanies internet videos of "unboxing" items. These videos, of varying lengths, are the work of publishers, booksellers, authors and exhibition curators. For as Clément Chéroux reminds us in the text quoted above: "*Some contemporary publishers of photobooks [...] see bookmaking as a vector for the diffusion of art: a gallery without a wall, or a paper museum.*"

In *BANQUET*, the double-page spreads are shot like the sequence shots in a film. Indeed, JH Engström often claims to compose his films (such as *HÄR/ICI/HERE*, 2018, or *DJURET/L'ANIMAL/THE ANIMAL*, 2020) like books, based on the principle of successive double-pages. At first glance, *BANQUET* has an amateurish aesthetic, but the rigorous framing and colours that recall the overexposed colour photographs of his 2000s work betray the mark of a professional director.

In the introduction to his documentary films *Contacts*, William Klein commented: "*A photo taken at 1/125th of a second. What do we know about a photographer's work? A hundred photos, maybe 125? It's an oeuvre, it's a whole second.*" The time it takes to take a photograph does not determine the time it takes to view a photograph, which, almost by magic, can be contemplated for an infinite length of time. The same is true of any image published in a book, which can be read at an infinite rate, even more so than a text. Engström's work is often given a "punk" aesthetic because it mixes day and night, sex and family, city and country. Or, as Urs Stahel

writes: "*[In Engström's work] everything is life, almost everything becomes photography, in all its diversity and with many contrasts [...] This is his life, this is his photography. Fear and risk coexist. Constantly.*" However, all of JH Engström's work is an exercise in organisation, in understanding life, in mastering a flow. With *BANQUET*, JH Engström plays with the documentary status of these scenes to create a retrospective video work that organizes his books into 21 chapters. Put together, these sequences form a film of approximately one and a half hours. His photographic work to date is almost 100 minutes of film. That is already a feast.

— Jean-Kenta Gauthier, March 2022

¹ Urs Stahel in *All is life. Almost every thing becomes photography*, in JH Engström / Photo Poche vol. 167, Actes Sud, Arles, 2021. Urs Stahel is curator, historian, co-founder and former director of Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland.

² Clément Chéroux in his editor's note of the *PhotoBook Review*, Fall 2021 issue. Clément Chéroux is the Chief Curator of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

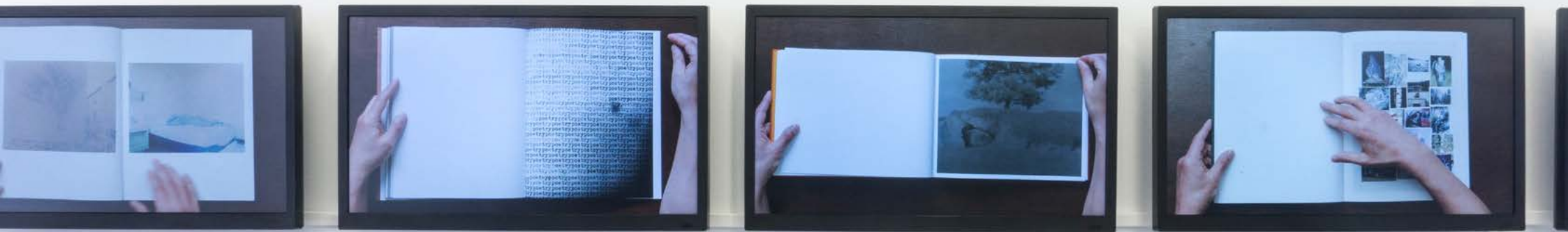
Installation views



JH Engström, *BANQUET*
2 April - 4 June 2022
Jean-Kenta Gauthier / Vaugirard, Paris
Installation view (detail)



JH Engström, *BANQUET*
2 April - 4 June 2022
Jean-Kenta Gauthier / Vaugirard, Paris
Installation view (detail)



JH Engström, *BANQUET*

2 avril - 4 juin 2022

Jean-Kenta Gauthier / Vaugirard, Paris

Vue d'installation (détail)



JH Engström, *BANQUET*
2 April - 4 June 2022
Jean-Kenta Gauthier / Vaugirard, Paris
Installation view (detail)



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Installation view (detail)

Works

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)

21 single channel videos
lengths variables
loop

Edition of 3 + 1 artist's proof

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 1
Single channel video
4 min 26 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 2
Single channel video
5 min 25 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 3
Single channel video
8 min 8 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



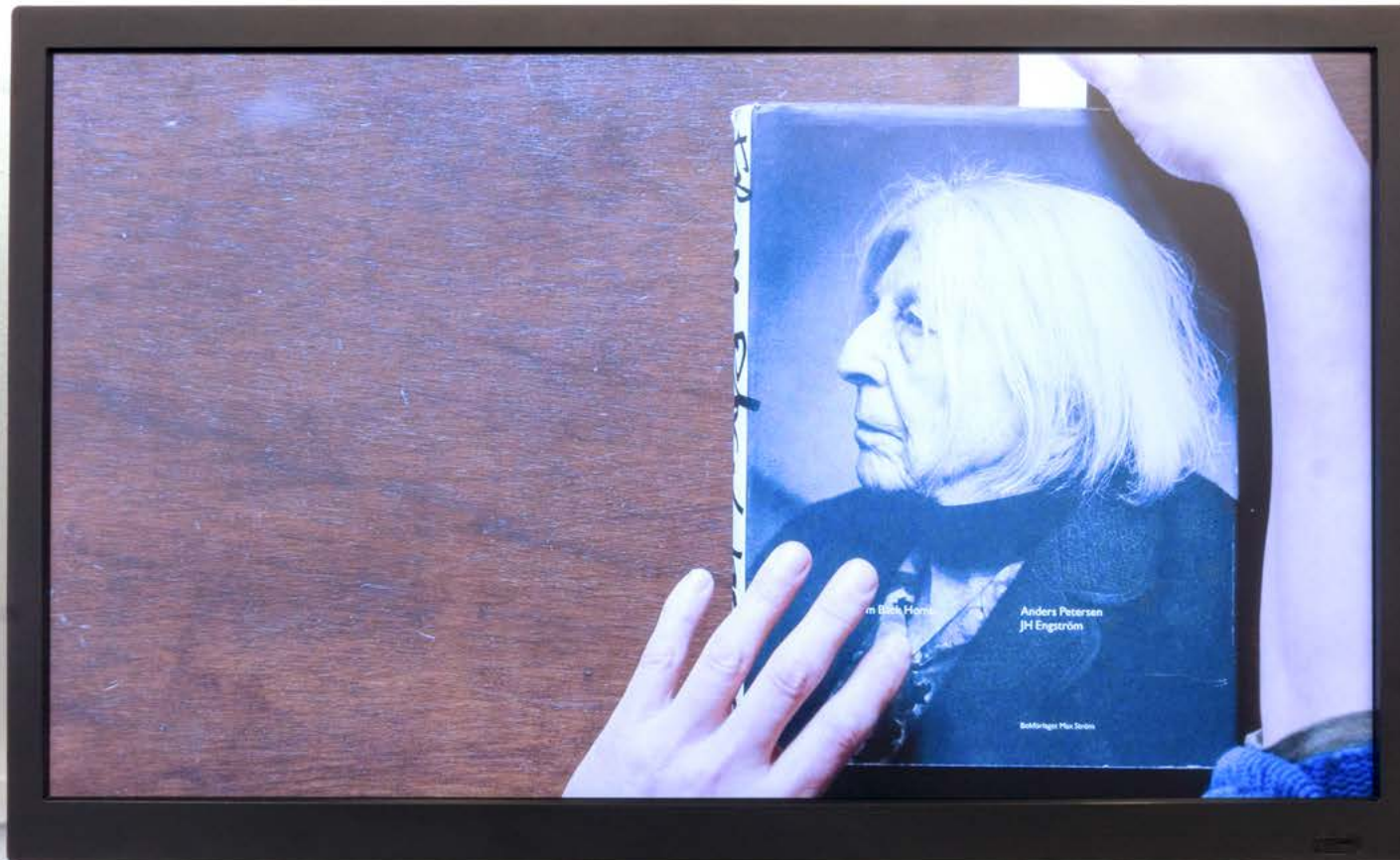
BANQUET, scene 4
Single channel video
4 min 30 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 5
Single channel video
1 min 45 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



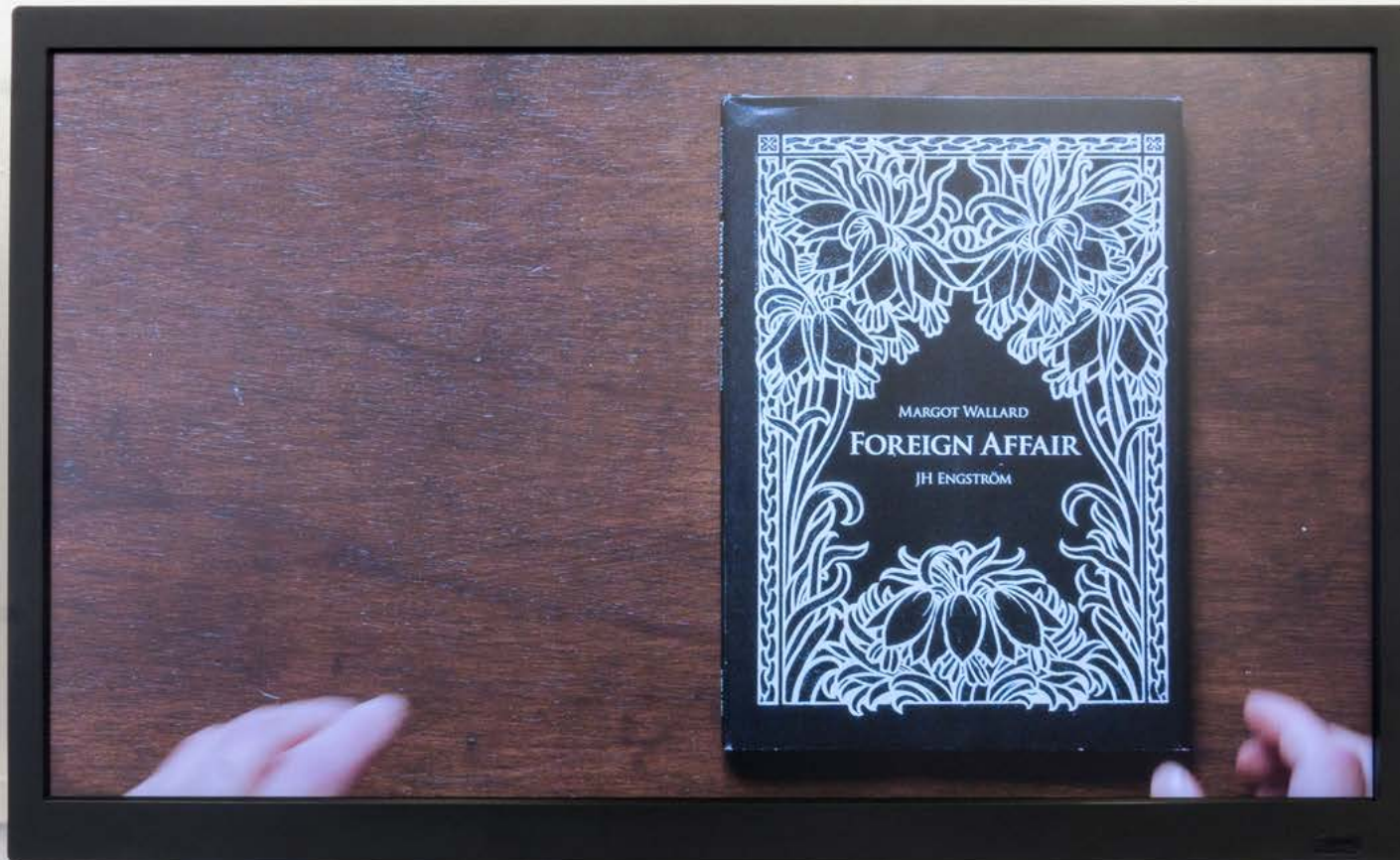
BANQUET, scene 6
Single channel video
6 min 14 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 7
Single channel video
6 min 47 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 8
Single channel video
2 min 13 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



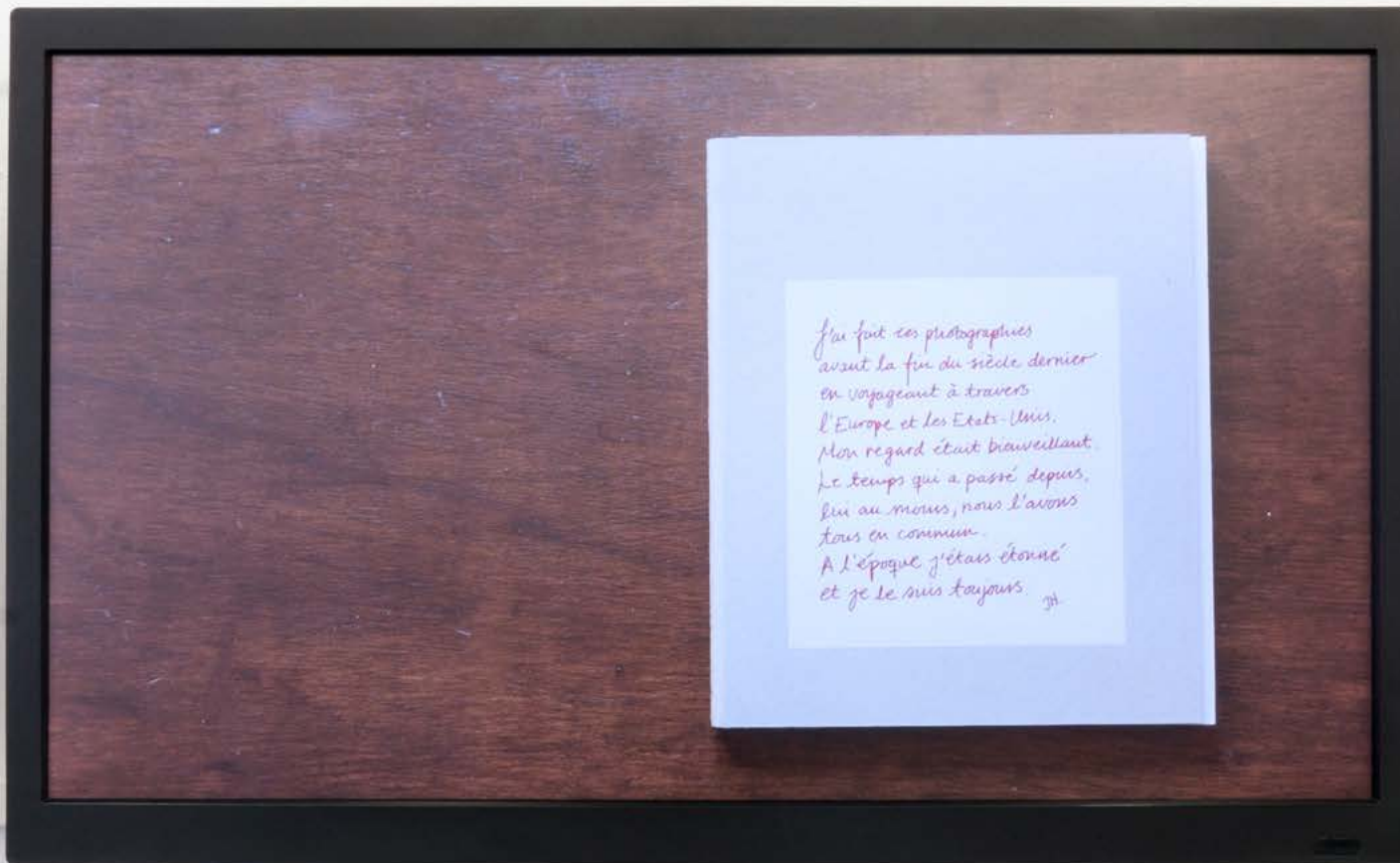
BANQUET, scene 9
Single channel video
2 min 15 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 10
Single channel video
5 min 9 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



J'ai fait ces photographies
avant la fin du siècle dernier
en voyageant à travers
l'Europe et les États-Unis.
Mon regard était baveillant.
Le temps qui a passé depuis,
lui au moins, nous l'avons
tous en commun.
À l'époque j'étais étonné
et je le suis toujours. JH



BANQUET, scene 11
Single channel video
5 min 7 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 12
Single channel video
1 min 50 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



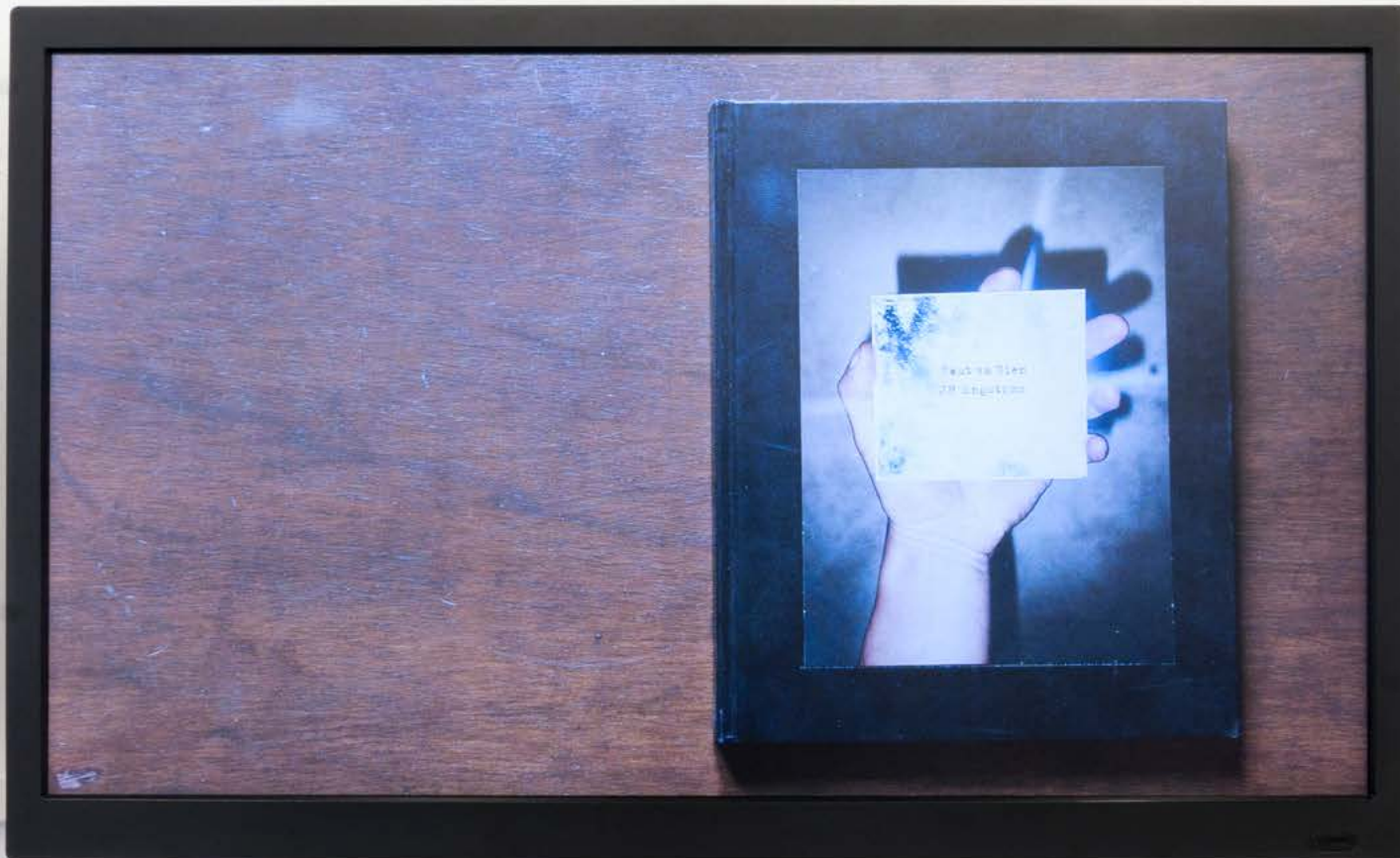
BANQUET, scene 13
Single channel video
10 min 26 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



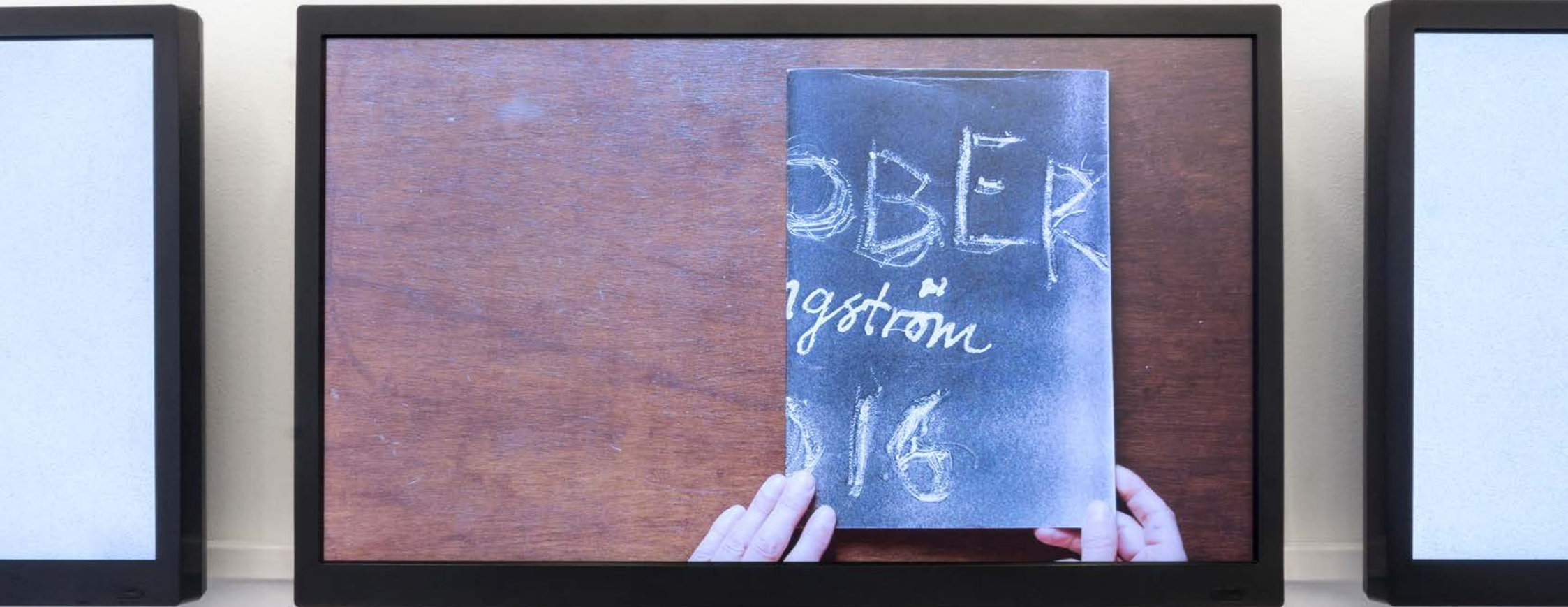
BANQUET, scene 14
Single channel video
6 min 13 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



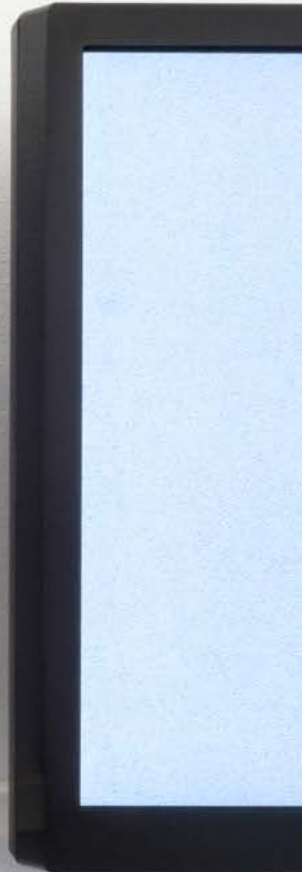
BANQUET, scene 15
Single channel video
5 min 47 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 16
Single channel video
2 min 34 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 17
Single channel video
9 min 16 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



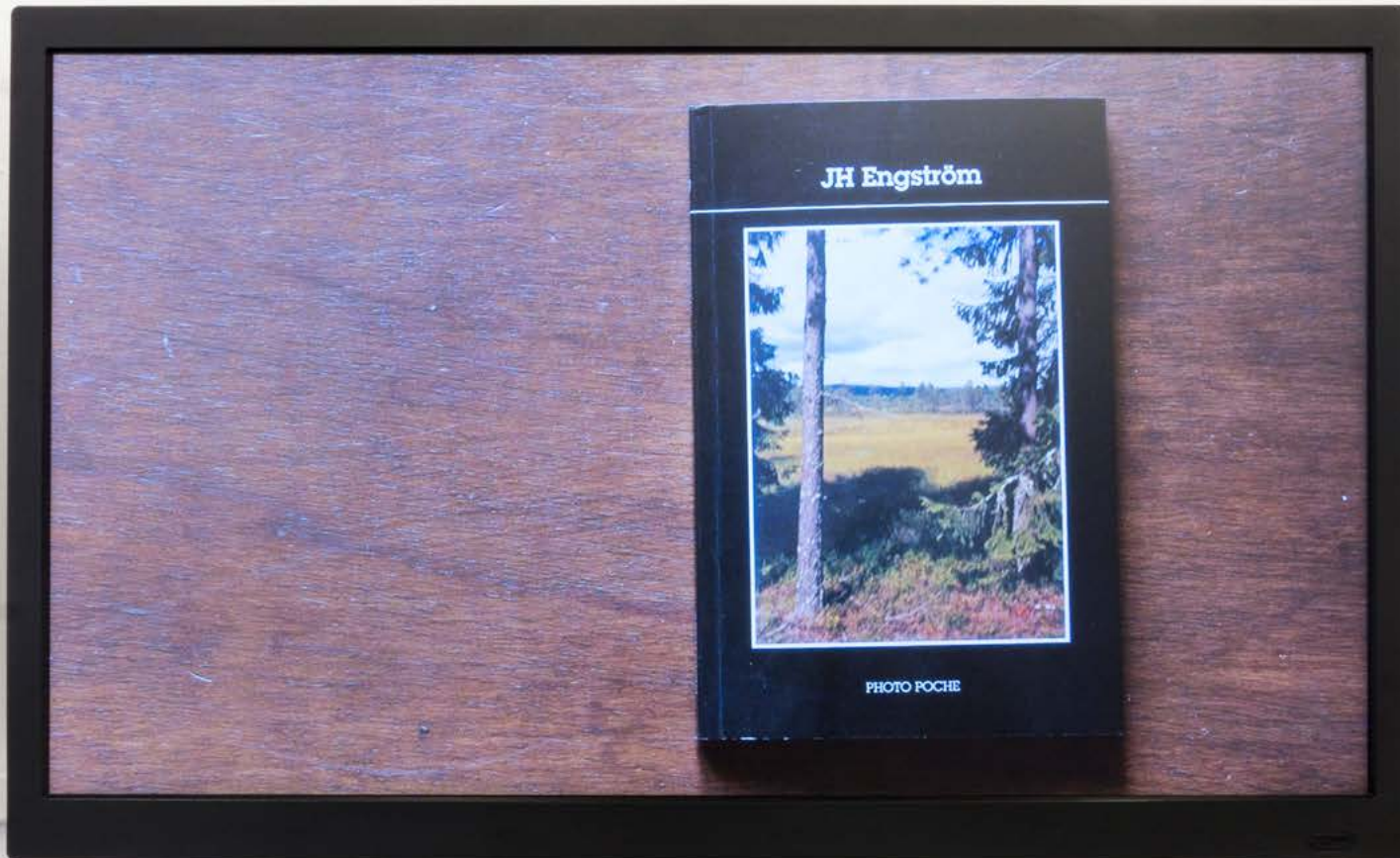
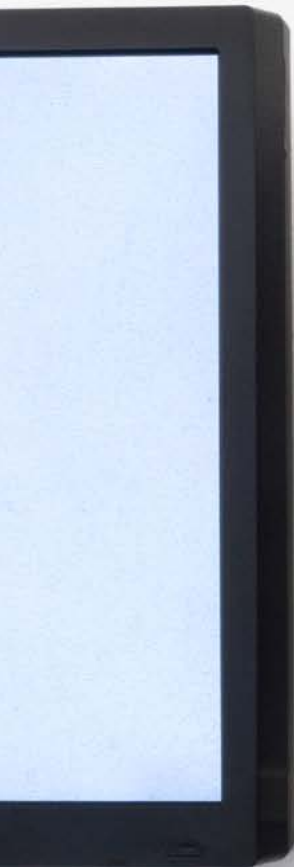
BANQUET, scene 18
Single channel video
3 min 9 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 19
Single channel video
7 min 19 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 20
Single channel video
5 min 38 sec, loop

JH Engström
BANQUET (2022)



BANQUET, scene 21
Single channel video
1 min 26 sec, loop

Further information:

BANQUET, scene 1

4 min 26 sec

Book title: *Härbärke/Shelter*

Year: **1997**

Publisher: Bokförlaget DN

Design: Lars Fuglesang

Text: back cover text by Robert Frank (Swedish)

/ inside text by Christina, guest at the shelter
(Swedish)

112 pages, hard cover, 215 x 275 mm

BANQUET, scene 2

5 min 25 sec

Book title: *Trying to Dance*

Year: **2003**

Publisher: Journal

Design: Patrick Leo, Leo Form AB, Gösta Flemming

Text: back cover text by JH Engström (Swedish /
English / French)

144 pages, hard cover with picture tipped-in, 310 x
240 mm

BANQUET, scene 3

8 min 8 sec

Book title: *Haunts*

Year: **2006**

Publisher: Steidl

Design: Greger Ulf Nilson

Text: -

216 pages, hard cover, 250 x 312 mm

BANQUET, scene 4

4 min 30 sec

Book title: *CDG/JHE*

Year: **2008**

Publisher: Steidl

Design: Greger Ulf Nilson

Text: -

112 pages, hard cover, 312 x 238 mm

BANQUET, scene 5

1 min 45 sec

Book title: *Sketch of Home*

Year: **2008**

Publisher: Gun

Design: Greger Ulf Nilson

Text: David Neuman (English)

33 pages, hard cover, 240 x 315 mm

BANQUET, scene 6

6 min 14 sec

Book title: *From Back Home* [with Anders
Petersen]

Year: **2009**

Publisher: Max Ström

Design: Greger Ulf Nilson

Text: text by JH Engström (Swedish / English) and
from the Nationalencyklopedin

320 pages, hard cover, 200 x 270 mm

BANQUET, scene 7

6 min 47 sec

Book title: *La Résidence*

Year: **2010**

Publisher: Journal

Design: Greger Ulf Nilson

Text: introduction text by Jean-Louis Godefroid
(Swedish / French / English) and texts by JH

Engström (Swedish / French / English)

150 pages, hard cover, 185 x 248 mm

BANQUET, scene 8

2 min 13 sec

Book title: *Foreign Affair* [with Margot Wallard]

Year: **2011**

Publisher: Super Labo

Design: JH Engström and Margot Wallard

Text: -

48 pages, hard cover, 149 x 216 mm

BANQUET, scene 9

2 min 15 sec

Book title: **7 days, Athens, November, 2011** [with Margot Wallard]

Year: **2011**

Publisher: Super Labo

Design: JH Engström and Margot Wallard

Text: -

56 pages, hard cover, 149 x 210 mm

BANQUET, scene 10

5 min 9 sec

Book title: **Långt Från Stockholm**

Year: **2013**

Publisher: Mörel Books

Design: Patric Leo

Text: -

128 pages, hard cover, 246 x 323 mm

BANQUET, scene 11

5 min 7 sec

Book title: **Ende und Anfang - Early Trips**

Year: **2013**

Publisher: Andre Frère Editions

Design: Patric Leo

Text: cover text by JH Engström (two versions of the book French / English)

128 pages, hard cover, 200 x 250 mm

BANQUET, scene 12

1 min 50 sec

Book title: **Random**

Year: **2015**

Publisher: Mörel Books

Design: Aron Morel

Text: -

40 pages, soft cover, 250 x 300 mm

BANQUET, scene 13

10 min 26 sec

Book title: **Sketch of Paris**

Year: **2013**

Publisher: Aperture / Max Ström

Design: Patric Leo

Text: -

314 pages, soft cover, 210 x 280 mm

BANQUET, scene 14

6 min 13 sec

Book title: **Karaoke Sunne** [with Margot Wallard]

Year: **2014**

Publisher: Super Labo

Design: JH Engström and Margot Wallard

Text: -

160 pages, hard cover, 150 x 215 mm

BANQUET, scene 15

5 min 47 sec

Book title: **Tout va Bien**

Year: **2015**

Publisher: Aperture

Design: Patric Leo

Text: back cover text by JH Engström (English)

152 pages, hard cover, 230 x 285 mm

BANQUET, scene 16

2 min 34 sec

Book title: **October 2016 (the fear of leaving)**

Year: **2016**

Publisher: Mörel Books

Design: JH Engström

Text: -

60 pages, soft cover, 210 x 297 mm

BANQUET, scene 17

9 min 16 sec

Book title: **Revoir**

Year: **2016**

Publisher: Akio Nagasawa Publishing / Journal

Design: Patric Leo

Text: text by Christian Caujolle (French / English / Swedish / Japanese)

244 pages, hard cover, 234 x 285 mm

BANQUET, scene 18

3 min 9 sec

Book title: **Crash**

Year: **2017**

Publisher: Akio Nagasawa Publishing

Design: Patric Leo

Text: -

70 pages, hard cover, 282 x 221 mm

BANQUET, scene 19

7 min 19 sec

Book title: ***Day by Day***

Year: **2020**

Editeur: Éditions Bessard

Design: JH Engström

Text: inside and back cover texts by JH Engström
(English)

155 pages, hard cover, 205 x 255, with a print

BANQUET, scene 20

5 min 38 sec

Book title: ***JH Engström - Photo Poche, vol. 167***

Year: **2021**

Publisher: Actes Sud

Design: JH Engström

Text: introduction text by Urs Stahel and biography
by Jean-Kenta Gauthier (French)

144 pages, soft cover, 125 x 190 mm

BANQUET, scene 21

1 min 26 sec

Book title: ***L'Écart***

Year: **2021**

Publisher: printed with copy machine on
27/11/2021 at Le Bal, Paris

Design: JH Engström

Text: -

30 pages, soft cover, 297 x 420 mm

JKG

Jean-Kenta Gauthier