

Sven-Åke Johansson

Location: Hotel Engelberg, Telephone booth

Some things disappear from our daily lives. A very normal process. At some point, there were no more carriages, then no more steam trains. Public phone booths also disappeared. You often notice such changes only unexpectedly, for example when you come across the telephone booths in the Hotel Engelberg. They still exist, but there are no telephones anymore.

Sven-Åke Johansson is an absolute multi-talent. As a composer, percussionist, poet, writer and visual artist, he has worked with other well-known artists and cultural figures around the world. Johansson has played in the Globe Unity Orchestra, composed and performed a piece for 12 tractors, and published numerous records and books. And he is a gifted draftsman. He draws the everyday world with a quick stroke. Rows of houses, power poles, cans, boxes, fluorescent tubes, and telephones. He draws the latter from every possible angle—and calls the group of works *Telefonie* [Telephony], which includes much more than just telephones. Telephone networks, voice communication, cell phones, answering machines and radios also fall under this term. But what we see are telephones, the kind that existed until the late 2000s.

Sven-Åke Johansson's drawings, however, are not just illustrations of objects that young people today would call vintage. Johansson uses them to explore a broad field in order to reflect on progress, without judgment or reproach. He gives a stage to the telephone as a representative of interpersonal relationships, which are increasingly being put to the test by digitalization

As part of the exhibition *Backstage Engelberg*, a selection of around 20 drawings from the *Telefonie* series will be presented in one of the former telephone booths of the Hotel Engelberg. A deeply pulsating place has been created where—quite apart from any discussion about tradition and innovation—the question is asked in a refreshing way: How do you feel about communication? (*ds*)

Sven-Åke Johansson, born in 1943 in Mariestad, Sweden, is one of the best-known drummers of the German free jazz era of the 60s and 70s. Since the 1980s, he has made a name for himself with his own artistic projects as a musician, and increasingly in the visual arts and new music. His oeuvre includes more than fifty record releases, several musical theater pieces, radio plays, visual art works, and an active touring life. Johansson lives in Berlin.

Further information: sven-akejohansson.com