

Fantasy Flowers and Mysterious Cities: Winter Carl Hansson and Dalecarlian Folk Art circa 1800

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During the latter half of the eighteenth century, folk art developed in new and intriguing directions in several Scandinavian regions.¹ Best known is the art that emerged around Lake Siljan in Dalarna in central Sweden.² On the following pages I will say a few words about this remarkable artistic tradition as it is expressed in the works of one of the most accomplished among the Dalecarlian folk artists, Winter Carl Hansson. I will pay special attention to a few telling details and one central compositional feature in his art: the relationship between aggregates of flowers and aggregates of houses.³ I will also attempt to link these features to broader cultural and artistic contexts. Let me begin by sketching the early history of Dalecarlian folk art.⁴

An Artistic Tradition Develops

Folk painting had existed in Dalarna and elsewhere long before the eighteenth century; the influence of paintings in churches had been particularly important.⁵ While such inspiration remained strong in the late eighteenth century, folk artists, to a much greater extent than before, began fetching motifs from printed sources, such as the 'Picture Bibles' (*figurbiblar*) and the illustrated broadsheets (*kistebrev*) which were becoming increasingly common in rural homes.⁶ Indeed, the direct or indirect inspiration from books and mass-produced images was so important that it could be said that late eighteenth-century folk art in Dalarna (and elsewhere) was created in symbiosis with print. The artists may not have been schooled in the academies, and some were even illiterate, yet like their academically trained peers, they depended on models.⁷

Furniture making is another important context for the emergence of Dalecarlian peasant painting in the late eighteenth century. Peasants around Lake Siljan

(both those who owned land and those who did not) had long supplemented their incomes by selling woodwork during their seasonal migrations in search of work.⁸ But like other rural artisans they had been subjected to restrictions that prevented them from taking up carpentry on a larger scale: they were not allowed to compete with guild carpenters or buy imported paint pigments, for instance. Following two years of crop failure, however, Gustav III repealed these restrictions in a 1772 ordinance in which he encouraged Dalecarlians to supplement their income with carpentry and other types of handicraft (*slöjd*).⁹

And carpentry did increase around Lake Siljan in the 1770s – at least in part as a result of this royal encouragement. Dalecarlians quickly learned the craft from furniture makers and decorators in Hälsingland, Jämtland, and elsewhere.¹⁰ While they retained stylistic traits from earlier periods (such as the Renaissance urn), they also experimented with *rocailles*, tulips, and imaginary flowers, and created different versions of the audaciously stylized floral arrangement that has become known as *kurbits*, which differs considerably from floral motifs found in folk art elsewhere.¹¹ When the Dalecarlian artists began painting on woven fabric or paper, and even directly on walls, ceilings, and doors, the *kurbits* became even more fanciful. Often it was the sole decorative element (Image 1), but just as often it was part of complex sceneries that frequently included aggregates of buildings. The subjects tended to be biblical, but we also find portraits of royalty and such popular subjects as the Transformation of Old Women to Young Maidens.¹²

By 1800, artists from Dalarna were sought after to decorate walls and furniture in well-to-do homes in Dalarna, Hälsingland, Gästrikland, Värmland, and Västmanland. A few travelled as far as Telemark in Norway and Stockholm. Occasionally, married couples travelled and worked together.¹³ At the same time that they contributed to the fame of Dalecarlian painting, these ambulating artisans found opportunities to enrich their work by studying pictorial representations in churches, inns, and homes.

Winter Carl Hansson and the Ullvi Artists

Winter Carl Hansson was born in 1777 in the village of Yttermo in the parish of Leksand.¹⁴ His father, Winter Hans Hansson, was a village overseer and schoolmaster and his mother, Margareta Larsdotter, a midwife. Winter Carl was the eldest of six children. He died a bachelor in 1805, after having contracted ‘pneumonia or a cold’ (*bröstfeber eller förkylning*). In the parish books his conduct in life is characterized as ‘Christian’.

Winter Carl painted his first known work (a small wall panel) at the age of fourteen. This and other early works are surprisingly disciplined, suggesting that he had been taught from a young age, perhaps by his father. But he was also inspired by others. The village of Yttermo, on the shores of the river Dalälven, is situated opposite the village of Ullvi, where *kurbits* painting had caught on in the 1780s. Winter Carl knew some of the Ullvi artists, such as Jufwas Anders Ersson (1757–1834) and the brothers Back Olof Andersson (1767–1820) and Back Erik Andersson (1778–1847). Perhaps he rowed across the wide river to meet them. All three outlived Winter Carl by many years and produced most of their work after his passing. While they all had individual styles, it is not difficult to observe similarities in motifs, style, structure, and colouring between Winter Carl's work and theirs.

Winter Carl Hansson accomplished a surprising amount during his short life. Some sixty paintings by him are known today, and new ones are still being discovered. He favoured biblical topics but also selected other subjects. Two of his renditions of the Stages of Life (*ålderstrappan*) are among the best known examples of Swedish folk art (Image 1). Like other Dalecarlian artists he led an ambulatory life and completed most of his art work outside his home parish. He visited the city of Falun, but he never worked outside Dalarna (Image 2, map). Let us now turn to some paintings.¹⁵

The Workers in the Vineyard

The parable of the Workers in the Vineyard was a favourite subject of the Dalecarlian folk artists. Nearly sixty examples are extant, three by Winter Carl Hansson. The paintings illustrate the account in the Gospel of Matthew in which a vineyard owner hires five groups of labourers during one day, sending each group to work in the vineyard for the same payment. Usually the painters included the text: 'Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you' (Matthew 20:4).

The best-known of Winter Carl's renditions of the subject has been admired for its elegant composition and delicately drawn details (Image 3).¹⁶ Anders Zorn bought the painting from an unknown source in the early 1900s, and it is stored today in the Zorn Museum in Mora. A tree whose crown forms a group of gigantic pinecones stands in the middle and divides the composition into two halves.¹⁷ To the far left is part of a similar tree. Inside the vineyard three labourers are at work: one carries water with the help of a yoke, another pushes a wheelbarrow, and a third digs in the earth near the roots of a glorious *kurbits* – a striking integration



Image 1: A glimpse through the door into the kitchen of the summer house at Danielsgården Farm in Bingsjö. In the background we see one of Winter Carl Hansson's renditions of the Stages of Life. Stiftelsen Danielsgården, Rättvik. Photo: Sune Garmo.

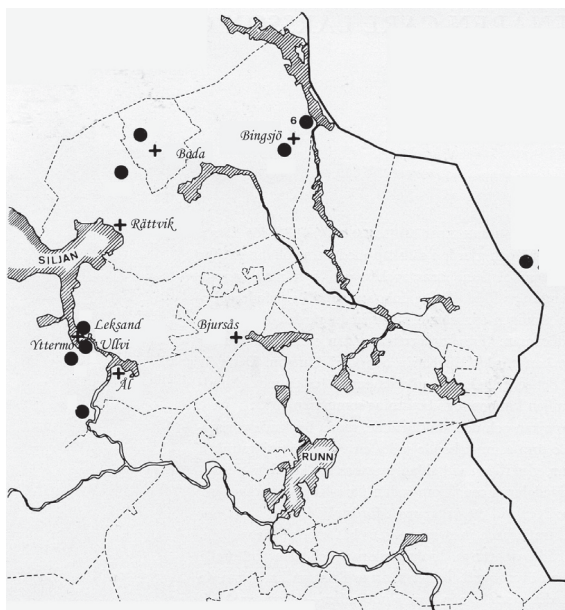


Image 2: This map indicates places in the central and southern parts of Dalarna where Winter Carl lived and worked. It is based on a map in Svante Svärdström's *Dalmälaren Winter Carl Hansson* (1970, p. 71). Photo: Bjarne Graff.



Image 3: In the early 1900s, Anders Zorn bought this painting of the Workers in the Vineyard by Winter Carl Hansson and brought it to Mora. The Zorn Museum, Mora. Photo: Lars Berglund.

of *kurbits* and subject matter. And in a brilliant depiction of simultaneous action, we see the imposing vineyard owner negotiating with three additional workers outside the vineyard. Two of them respectfully hold their hats in their hands; a third is about to take his off. The labourers and the master are dressed in ways that would have been common in Dalarna at the end of the eighteenth century. To the far right is a splendid three-story building, presumably the master's home. The scene echoes a scene contained in the *Figur-bibel* (Picture Bible).¹⁸ But Winter Carl's painting is far more concentrated than its model. He has reduced the large city in the *Figur-bibel* to a single grand house whose straight lines form an effective contrast to the soft curves of the *kurbits*. Indeed, the floral forms are so striking because they form a contrast to the building.

As recently as 2007, another painting of the vineyard scene by Winter Carl was discovered during a kitchen renovation in the parish of Ål (Image 4).¹⁹ We learn a great deal about the working methods of the Dalecarlian artists by comparing the two versions: they are quite similar apart from the fact that the compositions are reversed. The recent discovery is regarded the older of the two, and Winter Carl must have traced the version in the Zorn museum from it (or from an unknown work) in such a way that the reversal took place. Actually, he and other hurried folk artists frequently traced images from all kinds of models. They used pins, and when transferred to a new surface, the new image would be reversed.

In this older and seemingly coarser version, too, Winter Carl plays with imaginative details. A small *kurbits* emerges hesitantly from the soil. It does not unfold

and become luxuriant until it reaches the sky above the workers. The tools are different from those in the other version but just as ordinary. Note the man to the far right who uses large garden shears to cut down something from the tree with pine cones of fantastic proportions. Perhaps he is harvesting grapes. It is fascinating to observe that Winter Carl's colleague in Ullvi, Back Olof Andersson, paints similar, although even larger, shears in one of his renditions of the Vineyard Parable (Image 5). Since shears are unusual tools in Dalecarlian paintings, and since Back Olof's painting has been dated to 1805, when Winter Carl was dying or already dead, it is reasonable to suppose that Back Olof picked up the idea of the shears from his younger colleague. In details such as these one can study not only how the painters inspired each other, but also which details they found important or intriguing.

The Dalecarlian artists had never seen a vineyard and could hardly envision what one looked like. Nor could they learn much from the indistinct images



Image 4: This painting of the Workers in the Vineyard by Winter Carl Hansson was found in 2007 during a kitchen renovation in Insjön. Courtesy: Dalarnas Försäkringsbolags Kulturstiftelse and Dalarnas Museum, Falun. Photo: Pär K. Olsson.



Image 5: Back Olof Andersson from Ullvi Village completed this interpretation of the Workers in the Vineyard around 1805. In the 'speech bubble' we read: 'Ask the workers to come forward and give them their wages.' The Nordiska museet, Stockholm.

contained in the *Figur-bibel*. On the other hand, as Svante Svärdström observes, they would have known what it meant to be hired as a day labourer.²⁰ Most of them had experienced the conditions of *berrarbete* (migrant labour, see note 8), and perhaps the Vineyard Parable was so popular because it resonated with their own experiences. Winter Carl's vineyard paintings bring us close to everyday life in the late 1700s. He portrays a life of toil in an unpredictable, hierarchical world that has parallels in the biblical world. But he and other artists envelop drudgery in fantasy, play, and mystery. Indeed, the fantastic seems plausible because it is coupled with familiar details: tools, implements, bodily movements, and mundane gestures such as taking off one's hat before a superior. It has been said that Winter Carl and his fellow artists portray the biblical world in a Dalecarlian idiom. And they do. But they equally depict a Dalecarlian world in which other times and places are present.

The Descent from the Cross

Some of Winter Carl Hansson's most exquisite work can be found in Danielsgården Farm in the village of Bingsjö in Rättvik, where he painted in 1795, 1799,

and 1801. Particularly intriguing are his paintings in one room in the summer house.²¹ During the second half of the nineteenth century, when the room served as a country store, its walls were plastered with wallpaper. This served to preserve the paintings, and today's visitor is met by an explosion of colour and images in the form of a massive conglomerate of houses and *kurbits* flowers.²² (Images 6 and 7). It takes awhile to notice the human figures and recognize that they represent the Descent from the Cross, which is described by all four Evangelists. This important subject, painted by Rubens, Titian, and others, is unusual in folk art, and the Danielsgården painting is the only Dalecarlian example. The text along the top of the painting echoes the Second Epistle to Timothy (2:8): 'Consider your Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has suffered for the sins of the world.'

Below the text we see the familiar giant pine trees. All human action is concentrated to the lower left. Also to the left, and reaching toward the sky, is a *kurbits*; a smaller one is painted further to the right. Both seem to grow out of the aggregate of buildings and towers that dominate to such an extent that the composition appears lopsided at first glance. Many observers seem to have taken for granted that the houses are there merely to fill an empty space. And perhaps they are. Yet they must have been meaningful to the artist. On one level, they likely signify Jerusalem, while on another, they appear to suggest Falun, a city with two church towers that Winter Carl is known to have visited. In addition, aggregates of large houses are likely to have been charged with many conflicting associations for him and other Dalecarlians who would have been hired to work on building projects. For them, the large buildings may have resonated with memories of hard and relentless labour, but perhaps also with dreams of refined urban life. But the city painted by Winter Carl is a closed and mysterious theatrical set. There is no gate or door, and no life can be glimpsed inside.²³ This Jerusalem is impenetrable. Whatever associations the flowers and the city may have carried for artist and viewers, the two complement each other and create visual contrast and tension.

Let us now turn to the lower left corner. Three men stand on rickety ladders – ladders of the kind that might have been used for construction work. They have just taken the limp body of Christ down from the cross. Two are clothed as Dalecarlian labourers. The third, who is dressed more elegantly than the others, carefully holds the lifeless body of Christ. Most likely, he is meant to be the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea, who after procuring Pilate's permission to take down Christ's body wrapped it 'in a clean linen cloth' (Matthew 27:57–59). But there is more to the scene: one of the labourers triumphantly holds up a pair of pliers with a nail which he has just removed from Christ's body. Once again the artist manages to capture a brief but significant moment.



Image 6: Around 1800, Winter Carl Hansson painted doors, furniture, and walls in the summer house of Danielsgården Farm in Bingsjö. In the background we see his rendition of the Descent from the Cross. Stiftelsen Danielsgården, Rättvik. Photo: Sune Garmo.

It would be tempting to assume that the nail and the pliers are the inspired invention of an artist familiar with carpentry. Indeed, as Svante Svärdström suggests, they stand out as ‘a true carpentry detail’.²⁴ In other words, Svärdström seems to take for granted that the nail and the pliers are a testimony to Winter Carl’s inventive genius. But this cannot be correct: together with the spear and the crown, the nail and the cross the pliers often appear as symbols of Christ’s suffering during the Crucifixion. Furthermore, they are sometimes included in depictions of the Descent from the Cross.²⁵ We find them, for example, in a painting by Rembrandt from 1634. Winter Carl Hansson’s painting in Bingsjö displays similarities with Rembrandt’s in terms of composition, not least with regard to the position of the ladders. This raises the question of where Winter Carl could have seen a copy of this painting or a similar one. While copies of renditions of the Descent from the Cross by great masters could be seen in churches all over Europe, including Sweden, none seems to have existed in a Dalecarlian church. It is therefore more plausible that Winter Carl saw it (or a similar picture) reprodu-



Image 7: Winter Carl Hansson's painting of the Descent from the Cross in the summer house of Danielsgården Farm in the village of Bingsjö. To the left is his rendition of Christ Praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Both works are damaged. Stiftelsen Danielsgården, Rättvik. Photo: Sune Garmo.

ced in graphic art or in an illustrated broadsheet.²⁶ It is also possible that he saw it in illustrations distributed by the Pietists or Moravian missionaries who were active in the Swedish countryside during the time. Perhaps he was more influenced by such religious movements than has previously been assumed.²⁷ The poignancy and bodily presence in his version of the Descent from the Cross would point in that direction.

No likely model for the Danielsgården painting has been located so far, and all these questions remain to be resolved. It is nevertheless important to emphasize that although the pliers and the nail are likely not the invention of the artist but rather his version of a widespread motif, this insight does not diminish his creativity. In his portrayal of a central and solemn event of the Christian mystery, Winter Carl communicates piety and a remarkable 'power of presence'.²⁸ In his use of everyday details and his ability to show us brief and compelling moments of action, the artist blends the events on Golgotha with his own here and now. His work is not a shadow of the work of a great master but a new and intriguing blend.



Image 8: In 1917, Carl Larsson completed *The Spinner* on a visit to Bingsjö. The painting was immediately sold to a buyer abroad and was not rediscovered until 2007. In the background we see Carl Larsson's copy of *Winter Carl's Descent from the Cross* showing the lower left corner before it was damaged. Photo: Sune Garmo.

As can be seen, the painting has been damaged. This damage must have occurred sometime after 1917. For decades it was impossible to know what the artist might have painted in the lower left corner. In 2007, however, a previously unknown watercolour by Carl Larsson surfaced at an auction sale. It shows a woman sitting at a spinning-wheel against the background of *Winter Carl's Descent from the Cross* (Image 8). It is one in a series of watercolours that Carl Larsson completed in 1917 during a visit to Bingsjö. Soon after painting it, he sold the work to a buyer from Austria, where it remained until 2007.²⁹ Carl Larsson's painting reveals that originally one additional person supported the central ladder on which Christ is being carried down. With this addition the composition is much firmer than in the damaged version. The Carl Larsson painting also indicates that *Winter Carl* included two female figures, presumably the two Marys.

Concluding Remarks

Folk art was long regarded as the art of the unlettered. It was thought that simple artists occasionally picked up traits from the academies and salons, adapted them to their own culture, and then continued to apply them for long periods. Folk art was regarded conservative and slow to change: it lived its own life outside innovative urban centers. Although ideas of this kind might have some relevance for understanding the folk art that developed in the late 1700s, they do not account for the swiftness with which it developed. To the extent that the late eighteenth century constituted a breakthrough into new cultural, intellectual, material, and social concerns, this is true also of folk art. The rural artists of the time were quick to pick up trends that were popular in the higher echelons of society. Several factors contributed to this rapid response, among them the new importance of furniture decorating. But above all, this rapidity must be understood in the context of two particularly significant factors. One is the intensified spread of printed texts and images, religious and otherwise. The other is the skill of individual folk artists. A few, such as Winter Carl Hansson and his Ullvi colleagues, were not only skilled in shaping these new impulses into new combinations, they also knew how to make creative use of the stylizations, symmetries, and other features of traditional folk art. Indeed, these traditional constraints appear to have given Winter Carl Hansson, in particular, the freedom to paint with emotional intensity. This is not least true of his handling of the tension between the stylized aggregates of flowers and houses. And it is also true of his way of capturing fleeting moments and movements, and everyday tools and implements in the lives of day labourers and their employers.

Winter Carl Hansson was both a pioneer and the representative of an early artistic peak. Several outstanding Dalecarlian folk artists were to follow, and many changes were to take place until the 1870s, when the tradition had outlived itself. A few decades later, however, Dalecarlian folk art was discovered anew, this time by museum builders such as Artur Hazelius, by artists such as Carl Larsson and Anders Zorn, and by poets such as Erik Axel Karlfeldt. Through their efforts and the efforts of others, Dalecarlian folk painting eventually came to signify one of the most decorative, charming, and appealing aspects of Sweden's national cultural heritage. The poignant religious messages and the harsh conditions of eighteenth-century peasant life were forgotten. And today, new copies of these artworks serve as catchy logos for Swedish business enterprises competing in global arenas.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Marie-Christine Skuncke for inspiring me to think about folk art in relationship to the eighteenth century. For their suggestions and kind interest, I thank Roland Andersson, Rune Bondjers, Anders Jarlert, Johan Knutsson, Maj Noderman, and Ingrid Sjöström.
2. For overviews, see Nils-Arvid Bringéus and Margareta Tellenbach (eds.), *Dalmålningar i jämförande perspektiv* (Falun, 1995); Roland Andersson & al., *Dalmåleri* (Falun, 2007).
3. While the flowers in Dalecarlian painting have received a great deal of attention, little has been written about them in relation to the houses. Often the houses are merely noted; no analysis is undertaken. See, for example, Nils-Arvid Bringéus, 'Dalmålningar och sydsvenska bonadsmålningar i jämförande perspektiv', in Bringéus & Tellenbach 1995, p. 129; Maj Noderman, 'Om dalmålningar och stilpåverkan', in Bringéus & Tellenbach 1995, p. 95.
4. In this text I use the term *folk art* simply to mean the art of people who have not been trained in a formal academic sense. For other meanings attributed to the term, see Henry Glassie, *The Spirit of Folk Art* (New York, 1989); Lena Johannesson, 'Om folkkonst, massbildsproduktion och andra visuella moderniteter', in Lena Johannesson & al., *Konst och visuell kultur i Sverige 1810–2000* (Stockholm, 2007); Barbro Klein, 'Mi Casita de Campo', in Alf Arvidsson & al. (eds), *Människor och föremål* (Stockholm, 1990); Johan Knutsson, *Folkliga möbler: tradition och egenart* (Stockholm, 2001).
5. Noderman, 'Om dalmålningar och stilpåverkan', in Bringéus & Tellenbach 1995, p. 92.
6. Of the three Swedish editions of the *Figur-Bibel*, the one from 1777 became especially widespread. All three editions contain 230 pictorial scenes from the Old and New Testaments, accompanied by brief texts. See Svante Svärdström, *Dalmålningarna och deras förlagor* (Stockholm, 1949), a seminal work by a pioneering expert on Dalecarlian painting. See also, Johan Knutsson, 'Dalmåleriet i konst- och inredningshistorien', in Andersson, & al. 2006, pp. 78–103. *Kistebrev* are hand-coloured prints that were often nailed or glued inside the lids of storage chests. The motifs are frequently Biblical and the prints were widely distributed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
7. Folk artists and academically schooled artists at this time shared modes of working to a much greater extent than folk art scholars once believed. See Maj Britt Andersson, *Allmogemålaren Anders Ädel* (Stockholm, 2000).
8. The practice was called *herrarbete* (migrant labour; literally 'work for masters'). See Göran Rosander, *Herrarbete: dalfolkets säsongvisa arbetsvandringar i jämförande belysning* (Uppsala, 1967).
9. Rune Bondjers, 'Det började med möbelmåleri efter en kunglig "upmuntran"', in Andersson & al. 2006, pp. 50–75.
10. Bondjers 2006; Maj Noderman, *Mästare och möbler* (Östersund, 1990); Knutsson 2001.

11. The painters themselves did not use this word; instead they used *rosmålning* (rose painting) or *krusning* (decorating). *Kurbits* was not introduced until the 1920s, when Erik Axel Karlfeldt used it in his poetry. The word derives from older Swedish Bible translations (prior to 1917), where it was used for the bush (or 'gourd') that thanks to God's intervention grew outside Nineveh to protect Jonah from the scorching sun. In the 1930s, Svante Svärdström introduced the term *kurbits* into scholarly discourse.

12. Almost 70% of the more than 3000 registered paintings by close to 360 painters have biblical subjects, more often fetched from the New Testament than from the Old.

13. A couple of women painters are known by name. See Roland Andersson, 'Dalmålarna och deras arbetsvandringar', in Andersson & al. 2006, pp. 128–129. The situation in Dalarna differs a great deal from that which prevailed in southern Sweden, where several female painters became well-known. See Nils-Arvid Bringéus, *Sydsvenska bonadsmålningar* (Lund, 1982).

14. The sketch is partially based on Svante Svärdström, *Dalmålaren Winter Carl Hansson 1777–1805* (Falun, 1970) and on Roland Andersson & Margareta Andersson, 'Målarbiografier', in Andersson & al. 2006, pp. 480–489. Winter signifies the name of the painter's home farm. In accordance with the custom of Dalarna, the name of the farm precedes a person's first and second names. Often Dalecarlians are referred to by the name of the farm in which they live followed by their first name.

15. In describing Winter Carl's paintings I draw on Svante Svärdström, *Dalmålningar* (Stockholm, 1944) and on Svärdström 1970. However, my descriptions differ a great deal from Svärdström's in terms of the details emphasized. Also, I incorporate discoveries that were unknown to him and that have received scant attention in scholarship.

16. Svante Svärdström, *Dalmålningar i Zornmuseet* (Malung, 1994).

17. These kinds of trees are common in folk painting. The style is sometimes called *kottelöverk*.

18. Svärdström 1949, pp. 71–73.

19. I am indebted to Rune Bondjers from the Museum of Dalarna in Falun for information about this painting. See also *Dalarnas Tidningar*, September 8, 2007.

20. Svärdström 1970, pp. 118–122.

21. Svante Svärdström, 'Jufwas Anders Ersson och Winter Carl Hansson. Två dalmålare från Leksand', *Rig* 31 (1948), p. 15; Sune Garmo, *Danielsgården: en juvel i Rättviks finnmark* (Rättvik, 2008).

22. Winter Carl painted several other subjects in this room; in this text I concentrate on the Descent from the Cross.

23. The aggregates of houses in Dalecarlian folk art is a vast and tantalizing subject. For example, the relationship between interiors and exteriors, as well as the nature of these interiors, are among the many unexplored topics, just as unexplored as the contrast between the flowers and the buildings. The early artists painted church interiors or various vague interiors, such as the one that can be seen in Back Olof Andersson's 1805 painting discussed above (Image 5). As time went on, folk artists would increasingly depict Dalecarlians

at work inside their homes and workshops. During the 1870s, such ‘folk-life studies’ were commissioned by museum founder Artur Hazelius.

24. Svärdström 1970, p. 58.

25. I am grateful to Ingrid Sjöström for suggestions.

26. Quite a few broadsheets illustrated the Descent from the Cross. However, the ones I have located (at the Royal Library in Stockholm and in published editions) were printed in the 1830s and 1840s, i.e. after Winter Carl’s death.

27. If so, he would resemble late-eighteenth-century painters in southern Sweden, notably Johannes Nilsson in Breared. See Elisabeth Berglin, *En bonadsmålare och hans värld* (Lund, 2000).

28. Robert Plant Armstrong, *The Powers of Presence: Consciousness, Myth, and Affecting Presence* (Philadelphia PA, 1981).

29. For Carl Larsson’s visits to Bingsjö, see Svärdström 1970, pp. 72–84. An important role in the discovery of 2007 was played by Sune Garmo, Rättvik. See also *Dalarnas Tidningar*, 2009-03-04; *antikbloggen.blogg.se*, posted March 2009.

Summary:

Fantasy Flowers and Mysterious Cities: Winter Carl Hansson and Dalecarlian Folk Art circa 1800

During the late eighteenth century, folk art developed in new and intriguing ways in several Scandinavian regions. This essay concentrates on the developments around Lake Siljan in Dalarna, primarily as they were expressed by Winter Carl Hansson, one of the most accomplished of the artists. In his renditions of biblical topics such as the Workers in the Vineyard and the Descent from the Cross, one may observe a skilful blending of religious mystery and mundane life, as well as complex contrasts between floral arrangements and imposing cities. Through his remarkable ability to enhance common features of Dalecarlian folk art, this unschooled artist communicates striking powers of presence. Ultimately, the new artistic energies – in works by Winter Carl and others – must be understood in light of the influence of the many printed texts and images that were then available. Thus, to the extent that a general breakthrough into new cultural and social concerns took place during the late eighteenth century, this is true also of folk art. Furthermore, the folk art that was shaped at this time had a profound impact in the twentieth century, when it came to signify the most appealing aspects of Sweden’s national cultural heritage.

Keywords: folk art, late eighteenth century, Dalarna, Sweden.