



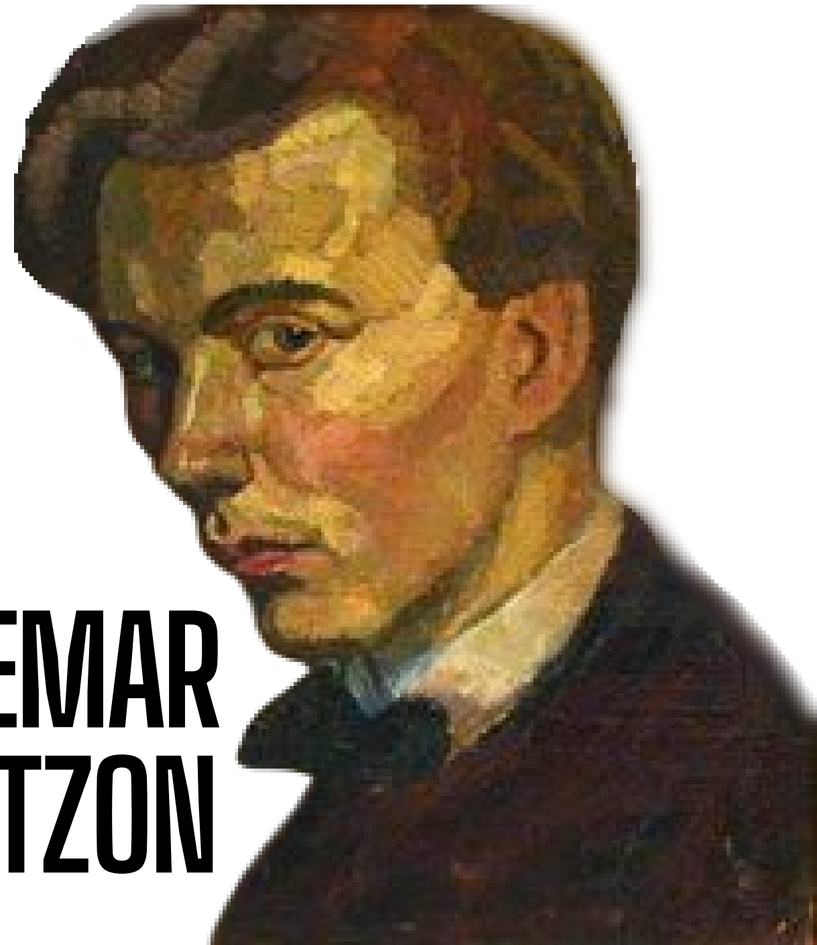








# WALDEMAR LORENTZON



# INTRODUCTION

**Waldemar Lorentzon (1899–1984)**



*Lilja i fönster, gouache, 30.5 x 23.5 cm.*

Waldemar Lorentzon was born in Sweden in 1899 and grew up in Halmstad, a coastal town that would remain central to his life and work. From an early age, he showed a strong interest in drawing and painting, and as a teenager became deeply engaged with the emerging ideas of modern art. In 1915, together with his cousins Axel and Erik Olson, Lorentzon co-founded the youthful art group Gnistan (“The Spark”), an early expression of their shared ambition to challenge academic traditions and explore new artistic directions.

Lorentzon made his public debut in 1919 at an amateur exhibition in Halmstad, where his work attracted attention for its boldness and modern sensibility. Like his peers, he benefited from the encouragement of local patrons and advocates who recognized the potential of this new generation of artists. In the early 1920s, Lorentzon travelled through Germany and Italy, experiences that proved formative. In 1923 he settled in Berlin, then a vibrant center of the European avant-garde, where he studied under the sculptor and painter Alexander Archipenko. Exposure to Cubism, Constructivism, and other radical movements deeply influenced his developing visual language.



*Havets skörd, oil on canvas, 92 x 66 cm.*

Returning to Sweden in the mid-1920s, Lorentzon became an active figure in the Halmstad art scene, contributing to the progressive painting circle De Unga (“The Young Ones”) and working alongside artists such as Sven Jonson, Esaias Thorén, and Stellan Mörner. To support himself, he also undertook commercial and applied art projects, a practice that sharpened his graphic clarity and compositional discipline. In 1929, Lorentzon formally joined Axel and Erik Olson, Jonson, Thorén, and Mörner in founding the Halmstad Group, a collective that would play a crucial role in introducing Cubism and Surrealism to Swedish art.

Throughout the 1930s, Lorentzon’s work moved from post-Cubist structure toward a more poetic and introspective form of Surrealism. His paintings often draw on quiet, everyday imagery—figures, architectural forms, coastal motifs—transformed through subtle distortion and symbolic suggestion. During the years surrounding World War II, his art took on a more restrained and contemplative tone, reflecting the uncertainty of the period.

In the postwar decades, Lorentzon continued to refine his style, balancing modernist experimentation with a strong sense of order and calm. Travel, particularly to France, broadened his perspective, while the landscapes and atmosphere of southern Sweden remained a steady source of inspiration. He continued to work with clarity and quiet conviction well into later life. Waldemar Lorentzon died in 1984, leaving behind a body of work that stands as a thoughtful and enduring contribution to Swedish modernism.

# BIOGRAPHY



*Waldemar Lorentzon portrait photo, taken by an unknown photographer in 1930 in Gothenburg, Sweden.*

**1899**

1 Born in Halmstad, Sweden. Raised in a coastal environment that would later influence his visual language and recurring motifs.

**1915–1919**

2 Became active in the local art scene alongside his cousins Axel and Erik Olson. Together they formed the young art collective Gnistan, marking Lorentzon's early commitment to modern art.

**1922–1924**

3 Traveled to Italy and Germany with financial support from a private patron. In Berlin, he studied under Alexander Archipenko and encountered avant-garde movements that significantly shaped his artistic direction.

**Late 1920s**

4 Returned to Halmstad and took part in progressive artist circles, including De Unga. Supported himself through commercial and applied art while continuing to develop his modernist style.

**1929–1940s**

5 Co-founded the Halmstad Group with Axel and Erik Olson, Sven Jonson, Esaias Thorén, and Stellan Mörner, helping introduce Cubism and Surrealism to Swedish art. His work gradually evolved toward a quieter, more introspective Surrealism.

**1984**

6 Passed away in Halmstad. Left behind a thoughtful and disciplined body of work that remains an important part of Sweden's modernist legacy, represented in major public collections.

# HALMSTAD GROUP



*Foto: Halmstadgruppen, 1934. Foto: Zenta*



*The Halmstad Group painted by group member Stellan Mörner*

**The Halmstad Group** was a collective of six young Swedish artists who, beginning in the late 1920s, played a central role in bringing European modernism and Surrealist ideas into Sweden. Their work challenged the traditional, conservative Swedish art environment of the time.

**Their Role in Modern Swedish Art**

• They introduced new visual languages—Cubism, Surrealism, geometric abstraction—at a time when these movements were still unfamiliar to Swedish audiences.
• The group emphasized international exchange, traveling to Europe to study modernist trends and exhibiting with progressive artists abroad.
• They became one of the most influential forces in Scandinavian modern art of the 20th century.

**Waldemar Lorentzon's Contribution**

• As a co-founder of the Halmstad Group, Waldemar Lorentzon played an important role in establishing the group's modernist identity and its openness to international influences.
• His studies in Berlin under Alexander Archipenko exposed him to Cubism, Constructivism, and avant-garde experimentation, which informed his structured yet poetic approach to form and composition.
• Lorentzon contributed a quieter, more contemplative voice within the group, helping shape a distinctly Swedish modernism that balanced European innovation with clarity, restraint, and everyday imagery.

# ARTISTIC STYLE & THEMES

## Main Characteristics of Style

• Modernist synthesis combining Cubism, Constructivist structure, and Surrealist sensitivity
• Strong emphasis on clarity, balance, and carefully ordered compositions
• Simplified forms with a calm, architectural presence
• Frequent use of symbolic or suggestive imagery drawn from everyday life
• A restrained, introspective mood that avoids dramatic gestures in favor of quiet tension



*"Fylgia", 1971, Painting on panel, 47 x 69 cm.*

## Recurring Motifs

• Stylized human figures, often isolated or contemplative
• Architectural elements such as walls, staircases, arches, and geometric interiors
• Coastal references and Nordic landscapes reduced to essential forms
• Still-life elements—objects, tools, or structures—used symbolically rather than narratively
• Spatial relationships that feel dreamlike without becoming overtly fantastical



*Astral attraktion, 1934, oil on canvas, 62.5 x 62.5 cm.*



*Kallelse, ca. 1939–1940, oil on canvas, 92 x 83 cm.*

## Evolution of Artistic Approach

### Early period:

• Influenced by European modernism, particularly Cubism and Constructivism
• Fragmented forms and structured compositions
• Exploration of rhythm, proportion, and spatial tension
• Interest in symbolic meaning beneath everyday subjects



*"Modèle dans l'atelier"., 1924, painting on panel, 33 x 23.5 cm.*

### Mature period:

• Increased clarity and compositional discipline
• Reduced color palette with subtle tonal harmonies
• More monumental figures and simplified spatial arrangements
• Strong sense of balance, stillness, and containment
• Paintings that convey quiet psychological depth rather than narrative drama



*Vikande mörker, 1965, oil on panel, 31 x 39 cm.*

## Connection to European Modernism

• Active member of the Halmstad Group, helping introduce international modernism to Sweden
• Cubism: geometric order, structural clarity, and formal discipline
• Surrealism: subdued symbolism and metaphysical atmosphere
• Nordic modernism: emotional restraint, introspection, and connection to place
• Emphasis on form, balance, and contemplation over expressive excess

# WORKS



*”Man och kvinna”, oil on canvas, 60.5 x 43.5 cm.*



*Tvätterska i Spanien med gult fat, ca. 1960–1969, oil on canvas, 73 x 54 cm.*



*"Fiskarparet", 1949, Painting on canvas, 24 x 35 cm.*



*Aktiv scen, ca. 1930–1939, painting on canvas, 73 x 92 cm.*

# WORKS



*Brittsommar, 1945–1947, oil on panel, 41 x 33 cm.*



*City view, 1922, Painting on canvas, 46 x 448 cm.*



*Strandlandskap med bodar, oil on panel, 60 x 73 cm.*




*Söndrums Stenhuggeri, sommaren 1939, 1939, oil on canvas, 35.5 x 44 cm.*

# WORKS




*Den lyckliga promenaden, 1940, oil on canvas, 65 x 50 cm.*



*Kompositioner, 1930, watercolor on paper, 42 x 31 cm.*



*Syn i badrummet, 1938, painting on canvas, 90 x 100 cm.*



*Förvandlingens strand / Metamorfosernas strand, painting on canvas, 59 x 78 cm.*

# NOTES

## Waldemar Lorentzon's Place in Modern Art

### A Distinct Voice in Swedish Modernism

Waldemar Lorentzon holds an important position within Swedish modernism through his steady engagement with international avant-garde ideas and his ability to adapt them to a Nordic sensibility.

### Role within the Halmstad Group

As a co-founder of the Halmstad Group, Lorentzon contributed to the formation of a vital platform for modernist experimentation in Sweden. Within the group, his work often stood apart for its restrained tone and thoughtful composition, offering a counterweight to more overtly Surrealist expressions. This measured approach helped enrich the group's collective output and expand its artistic scope.

### Exhibitions and Recognition

From the late 1920s onward, Lorentzon participated in key modernist exhibitions in Sweden, frequently exhibiting alongside fellow members of the Halmstad Group.

### Presence in Public Collections

Waldemar Lorentzon's works are represented in major Swedish public collections, including:

- Mjellby Art Museum
- Nationalmuseum, Stockholm
- Hallands Konstmuseum



*Utsikt från terrassen, Mallorca, 1932, oil on canvas, 50 x 59.5 cm.*



*Grön äng, 1947, oil on canvas, 37 x 59 cm.*

# MARKET & COLLECTING




*Parisiska gatumusikanter, 1926, oil on canvas, 101 x 74.5 cm.*

## HOW COLLECTORS VIEW WALDEMAR LORENTZON'S WORKS

**Characteristics Valued by Collectors**

Waldemar Lorentzon's works are solid and clearly built, his compositions feel balanced and intentional, and nothing appears accidental. Moving from a personal form of Cubism toward a more classical style, he often painted musicians, sailors, and everyday figures with a quiet seriousness.

**Position in the Nordic Modernist Market**

Lorentzon's importance is reinforced by institutional representation in major Swedish public collections, including the Nationalmuseum, Moderna Museet, Hallands Konstmuseum, and Mjellby Konstmuseum.

Internationally, his standing was established early. In 1925, Lorentzon participated in the major international exhibition *L'Art d'Aujourd'hui*, shown alongside works by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Gino Severini, and Fernand Léger—placing him firmly within the European avant-garde context of his time.

From a market perspective, Lorentzon's work has demonstrated notable strength. His current auction record stands at USD 355,050, achieved by *"Parisian Street Musicians (1926)"*. This price shows growing international interest and reassessment of his importance within 20th-century modernism. While major works command premium prices, smaller and later works remain comparatively accessible, offering entry points for new collectors.

**Appeal for New Collectors**

Lorentzon's work moves from a personal form of Cubism toward a calm, classical style, often centered on athletes, sailors, and strong human figures. His Surrealism draws on marine symbols and cosmic imagery, expressing a quiet, searching spirituality rather than the language of dreams or the subconscious.