



Miriam Bäckström, *Advanced Cone I*, 2019 | Photographer: Johan Eldrot

MIRIAM BÄCKSTRÖM

Extensions

11.09 — 08.11.2025

“Extensions” may refer to strands of hair, human or synthetic, glued onto or woven into our own. Sometimes they are supposed to look convincingly real, sometimes no one cares if they are obviously fake — it just heightens the illusion that they are chic and edgy. An extension may also be a new wing of a building, for instance a museum of contemporary art, which tries either to blend in with the existing structure or stand out against it. A particularly popular exhibition in that same museum may be extended and kept open longer.

Other concrete interpretations are possible. A more abstract one would be: extending something signals that we refuse to acknowledge it as finished. In Miriam Bäckström’s words, “This feels like giving ourselves license. Whenever we take things further, they become extensions. It just means that we have progressed from our first thought without abandoning it. This operation is becoming more and more important. Constantly entertained and distracted by our phones, we seem to be losing the ability to extend our thoughts into abstraction.”

As her remarks indicate, the celebrated Swedish artist has titled her new solo exhibition after a state or direction of mind rather than a topic or theme. The works on display are three-dimensional, although sometimes no more than a few millimeters thick. They are made with threads and with the help of advanced cameras and virtual-reality programs. Yet despite all the studio work that went into their production, the finished pieces are abstract extensions of their own physical presence, unattributable to the traditions of sculpture, textile and photography.

Galería Elba Benítez

To make her image-objects, Bäckström starts from a painstaking process of photographing small pieces of textile or metal in extreme close-up. The resulting ultra-high-definition images are all virtual and composed from multiple takes, so the term “photographing” is losing precision already at this first stage. The second stage is to translate these composite images into detailed instructions for automated jacquard looms and weave them as silk tapestries. The third and final stage is to stretch the luxurious, resplendent textiles over basic three-dimensional geometric shapes.

The exhibition comprises the larger works *Advanced Cone I* (2019) and *Tetrahedron* (2024) and the smaller work *Bicone Double Mirrored I* (2023) as well as new additions to the series *Concentric* (2024–25). The titles are meant to be self-explanatory. The older works are mounted on cones in wood and composite materials, and the newer ones—radiant, delirious studies in how color behaves when it is organized in concentric tracks—on metal discs.

Now we understand why the works in *Extensions* are images and objects at the same time. They have two different kinds of agency, as images of objecthood and as objectified images. They are extensions of initial visual thinking (forms of imagination) into upholstered illustrations of seeing (forms of imaging). They form part of Bäckström’s longer-term project of challenging established notions of perspective, imagery and objecthood.

In her practice, driven by relentless technical experimentation and development together with a team of specialists in digital imaging, computer programming and industrial weaving, Miriam Bäckström strives for a speculative enlargement of our field of vision and our understanding of the world. She wants us to “see more than we have agreed to see” and seeks to “augment augmented reality.” Her newest works give a collective—or community—of viewers simultaneous access, in shared physical space, to images that “follow the laws of virtual reality” but would otherwise be confined to secluded online platforms that contribute to the atomization of society.

Anders Kreuger
Curator and Writer, Director of Kunsthalle Kohta, Helsinki

Initially known for her photography, Miriam Bäckström (Stockholm, 1967) has also worked with theater, performance, artists books and, in her most recent production, large-scale photo-based tapestries and objects. Regardless of format, Bäckström has consistently used her practice to examine the complex and multi-faceted relationship between image and reality in today’s changing world.

Bäckström has had solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Kohta (2024, Helsinki); Marabouparken (Stockholm, 2017); Moderna Museet (Stockholm, 2014); Extra City Kunsthall (Antwerp, 2014); Lunds Konsthall (Lund, 2012); Nationalmuseum (Stockholm, 2011); European Kunsthalle (Cologne, 2009); Moderna Museet (Stockholm, 2007, 2003), Centre de la Photographie (Geneva, 2006), Museum für Gegenwartskunst (Basel, 2004), FRAC Fonds Régional d’Art Contemporain (Dunkerque, 2001), ICA Institute of Contemporary Art (London, 2000) and elsewhere.

Bäckström’s work forms part of collections such as INELCOM (Madrid), Grazer Kunstverein (Graz), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), MoMA Museum of Modern Art (New York), National Gallery of Iceland (Reykjavik), Miami Art Museum, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York) and Tate (London), among others. In addition, Bäckström’s major public and private commissions include Nya Sjukhuset Malmö (2025); Lund Stadshall (2024); Albright-Knox Art Gallery (2023); Nya Psykiatrin (2022); Karolinska University Hospital (2018); Frederik VIII’s Palace (2018); Kvadrat (2012); Allée des Justes (with Carsten Höller) (2008) and elsewhere.

Bäckström represented Sweden (with Carsten Höller) at the 51st Venice Biennial (2005), and was a finalist of Artes Mundi 5 (Cardiff, 2012), where her work won the Audience Choice Award.

Extensions is Bäckström’s fourth individual exhibition at the Galería Elba Benítez and will form part of the Aperture Gallery Weekend.

The exhibition *Extensions* is part of

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