

## BETTINA MARX

### Wander, drift, melt and fold

January 22 – April 10, 2022

**Fullersta Gård is pleased to present the exhibition *Wander, drift, melt and fold* with the artist Bettina Marx.**

Bettina Marx (b. 1981) is based in Bonn, Germany and works with painting, printmaking and spatial installations. Her imagery oscillates between abstraction and figuration and builds upon traces of a place's history or properties. The exhibition title *Wander, drift, melt and fold* hints at the multitude of movements - historical, temporal, meteorological, processual and production-related - that we meet in the work of Bettina Marx.

The exhibition at Fullersta Gård is primarily based on a series of works she created after a trip to Hälsingland and Dalarna in 2018, now shown in Sweden for the first time. With an initial interest in the ornamental Kurbits paintings by itinerant painters and the famous Falu red colour, she visited historical farms in Dalarna. In addition, she also visited historical farms in Hälsingland listed as UNESCO World Heritage.

Mid-nineteenth century farmers in Dalarna and Hälsingland experienced a rising prosperity and their painting traditions were increasingly influenced by bourgeois culture and emerging industry. The farms testify to both a highly developed building tradition and rich folk art in the form of decoratively painted festive interiors. Expensive imported wallpapers were combined with a freer selection of motifs and styles than before; nature and city views, religious motifs, stencil paintings and marbles were in vogue.

Marx's paintings and prints speak of this travel experience by tracing layers in time. Roads and streams, thickets and condensed structures are often present. Her starting point, however, is the sketches in A3 and smaller formats that she draws during travel. As a kind of diary, they capture silhouettes, surfaces and conditions from the spatial experiences of the various places she passes. The result is a first distillate of impressions which then serves as a focal point in an in-depth painting process.

With acrylic on MDF or with ink, pencil and crayon on paper paintings appear layer by layer. The process is also informed by natural structures, formal and colour harmonious impressions, as well as time references. Alternatively, Marx uses tree trunks with ink and acrylic paint to print on paper. She often transforms tree trunks, sticks and bark into sculptural works. In addition to this, Marx also uses industrial foil in the printing process and in the creation of murals.

During her trip, ice and snow determined which places she could reach by car or on foot. As silent witnesses or states of aggregation, the works mirror concrete places and events. At the same time the places also acquire a universal character and remain unidentifiable to the viewer. By the same logic, the titles of Marx's works are often abbreviations of place names and describe this shift from the original place to a freer memory. While the titles may elicit certain associations for a Swedish-speaking public, Marx was solely guided by the sounds of the words; in some way her works remain friendly strangers.

While the interest of German tourists in Sweden's nature is well known, the topic is less commonly explored in works by contemporary artists outside the Nordic countries. Marx's approach to landscape and weather balances a nature-romantic idea of a place's soul with a more sober examination of one's own vision and memory. By extension, her work is also a new interpretation of both classical landscape painting and veduta painting in contemporary art.

The exhibition raises questions, irrespective of one's interest in art: How does travel affect us? What constitutes a place? Which traces do we leave behind?

*Bettina Marx (b. 1981) studied at the Kunstakademie Münster, where she graduated in 2009 as a master's student of Cornelius Völker. She is i.a. recipient of the prestigious North-Rhine-Westphalian Fine Arts Award and has had solo shows i.a. Kunstverein Neukölln in Berlin and Kunstverein Leverkusen and group exhibitions i.a. at Haus Opherdicke in Unna, Museum Ostwall in Dortmund, Kunstverein Bochum, Garden of Villa Romana in Florence and Cité Internationale des Artes in Paris. Together with the sculptor Kathrin Graf, she forms the artist collective tiefkeller, which simultaneously also is the name of their independent art space in a brick cellar in Bonn. Inspired by scientific or private collections, tiefkeller creates installations that question the genre boundaries between artwork and collection exhibition.*

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Open: Wed – Sun 12-4 pm, Thurs 12-7 pm