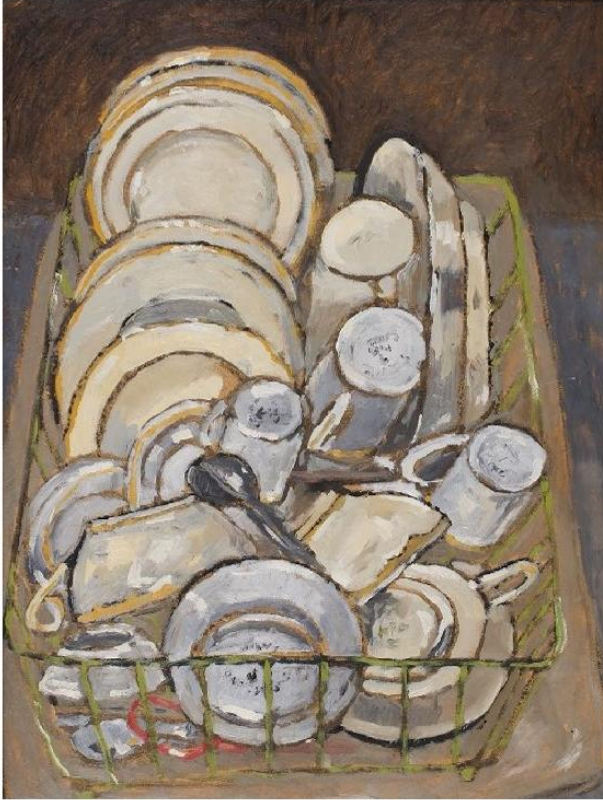




KIT FONG LING

Can we know the essence of a creature so different from us as a bird? Kit Fong Ling attempts this maybe impossible but absolutely worthwhile goal in her monotype series *Tjeld (Oystercatchers)*. Each image features one or more of these fowls, pecking at the ground, walking in a distinctly tilted way, standing on criss-crossed legs, flying with patterned black-and-white wings spread wide. "Liminal Space 1" is the oddest of all, looking at first like a bright orange and red sun shining in a mysteriously dark sky, with a jag of landscape below. Seen within the larger series—or rather, with the rest of its flock—the sun becomes an eye, the black sky is feathers, the jagged landscape reveals the beginnings of a beak. It is an extreme close-up of a tjeld, so close as to become strange, intimate, an intense knowing that is also an unknowing, closeness and apartness present at once. Tjelds have been listed as a near threatened species, and we humans tend to care most for those animals with which we feel a connection, or at least an appreciation. Kit Fong Ling demonstrates a means of doing so.

—Lori Waxman



KIRSTEN OPSTAD

Awkwardness can feel very good sometimes.

A skewed angle in a drawing, a bent nose on a face, an unusual color in a sweater, a tottering pile of books—these things are often easier to relate to than their perfect versions. In her portraits and still lifes, Kirsten Opstad could be said to be a specialist of this category, representing it both via subject matter and technique. Her painting of a Japanese tea tray, pot, and lacquer container—plus a lemon, because why not—tilts forward, imperfect and delightful.

Visible brushmarks insist on the resolutely handmade; outlines

render objects with distinction and interpretation; unusual color choices acknowledge senses beyond the visual. Van Gogh found blue shadows; Opstad delineates a nose and eye with magenta. The artist reference is not random; the expressionistic bent of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century artists is felt throughout her oeuvre. Those artists, reacting against the Industrial Revolution, asserted the human touch at every turn, understanding that only machines make perfect things, and that perfection may not always be the desirable goal. We are well beyond that revolution now, and needing the reminder all the more.

—Lori Waxman



EVY HORPESTAD TJÅLAND

Being offered a cup of tea is a common comfort of life on so many parts of our planet. It can happen to you in Japan, India, Norway, Turkey, England, even the United States. You can do it for yourself or for another. Yet it depends on the availability of fresh water, of colonial and post-colonial trade networks, of climate-sensitive crop growing, and so much more that is invisible while we drink a cuppa. In her 2024 installation "Waterfall, quiet streams," Evy Horpestad Tjåland arranges 3000 used tea bags into a configuration whose simplicity belies its sensorial and associative affect. Tea bags strung into a chain cascade from the roof of the gallery down a corner and onto the floor, where they spill out into an undulating pool of individual bags. The waterfall structure evokes the necessity of clean water; the tags of the intertwined bags acknowledge international commerce; the sea of little brown bags, tags removed and strings askew, teems like the masses of people involved in tea production from planting to sipping and everything in between. Up close, the sight and scent is unexpectedly touching, a reminder of the tea bags my grandmother would save by the side of the sink, to be reused because it was wrong to waste, an instinct even more relevant today.

—Lori Waxman



INGRIDA MOCKUTE-POCIENE

In her exhibition *The Rose Effect*, Ingrida Mockutė-Pocienė includes a vast array of materials, among them documentation of her own sleep analysis; blurry pinhole camera images on expired Russian film paper; a crown made of thorns; photograms also made using thorns; architectural photography of tunnel-like spaces in neglected institutional buildings and apartments; a few large green photographs of parks; and objects from a family archive, including postcards and a traditional embroidery featuring roses. That there are no paintings in this multi-media collection is only logical, given its difficult task of bearing witness to trauma, a goal more directly serviced through the evidentiary and indexical media that Mockutė-Pocienė employs. Her artworks picture the places where events occurred, their effects, their traces, and their symbolic stand-ins, but mostly they are tasked with the impossible, to represent what can no longer be seen. The hallways of the mental hospital are empty; the thorns draw no blood; the face does not express what goes on its mind; the park is full of spring flowers, not the remains of a rape that happened there long ago. The artworks in *The Rose Effect* are hard to contemplate, though surely that is infinitely easier than having lived through the events that necessitated their eventual creation. The least we can do is bear witness, but hopefully we can do more.

—Lori Waxman

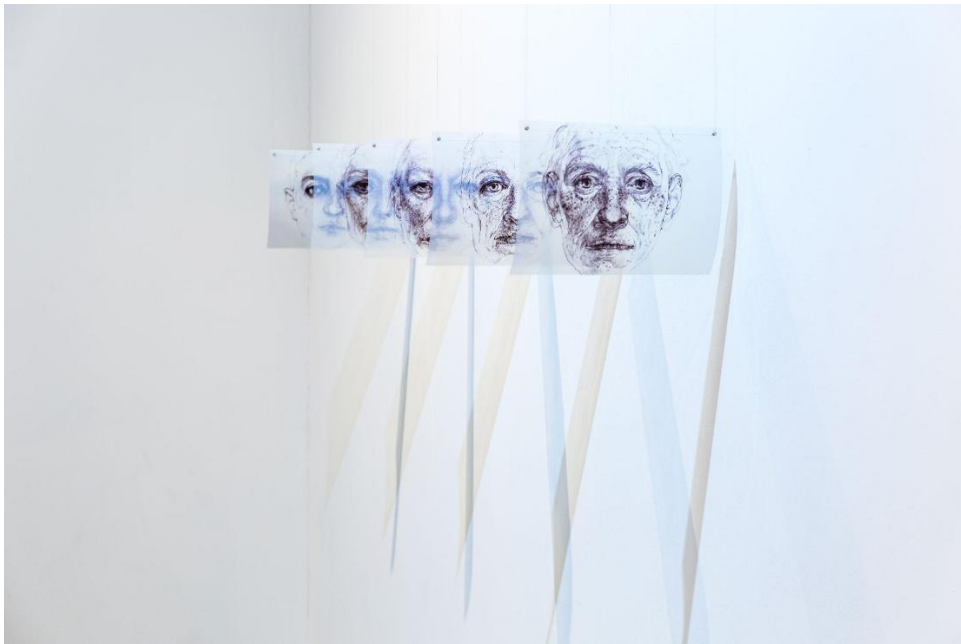


DAN SKJÆVELAND

There are 33 images in Dan Skjæveland's *33 Suspensions*, a book of photographs published in 2023. I counted because although the premise seems rather straightforward—a series of 33 photographs depicting instances of suspension—the effect is anything but. Certainly there are not only 33 instances of suspension herein. Some are obvious or even fun to notice: a balcony is a suspension of a built space, a dry cleaners contains many instances of suspended clothing on wire hangers, a clothes line suspends rugs in a way that momentarily changes a courtyard. Others are curious and tricky: a chair wrapped in plastic suspends its usefulness temporarily, but

also it suspends light, by catching its reflection on the surface of the wrapping. A few are profound, philosophical even: a wall clock photographed through bits of refracted light at four seconds before 1:05 will never exist exactly like that again except in this photograph, which is time suspended. Many of Skjæveland's photographs contain multiple instances of suspension, as in a room with wires and rebar dangling from its ceiling, embodying both literal suspension and figurative, being a place currently between purposes. Or when a school photograph of a girl appears taped to a wall in an emptied-out institutional space, suspending the girl and also the learning. Alas, we can only wonder who she is, and where she's gone, and why school is out—the answers suspended indefinitely.

—Lori Waxman



JULIA MORDVINOVA GILJE

We humans are hardwired to respond to faces. We find them even where they do not exist, in tree bark and rocks, and we cover them in people we wish to dehumanize. Julia Mordvinova Gilje's *Do You See Me*, ongoing since 2020, taps into this profound tendency. A sensitive observer, she remembers features and later incorporates them into invented portraits, drawn first in ballpoint pen on paper. She is keenly attentive to the dots and lines that together make up a face, judiciously using hatching, cross-hatching, pointillism, and contour to translate freckles, wrinkles, shadows, and all the standard facial features. That's all fine and good, but something actually extraordinary happens when she prints her drawings on acetate and displays them in groups, overlapped in different configurations: everyone becomes one. The technical explanation for this occurrence is that Gilje retains the same basic geometry and scale from one face to the next, so that noses line up with noses, irises with irises, ears with ears, etc. The affective explanation is that, in doing so, Gilje has invented a novel way of exploring aspects of ancestry, genealogy, coincidence, the uncanny, and, ultimately, our shared humanity. The conquerors of history knew what they were doing when they knocked the heads off the statues of defeated rulers; Gilje knows what she is doing in putting them back on.

—Lori Waxman

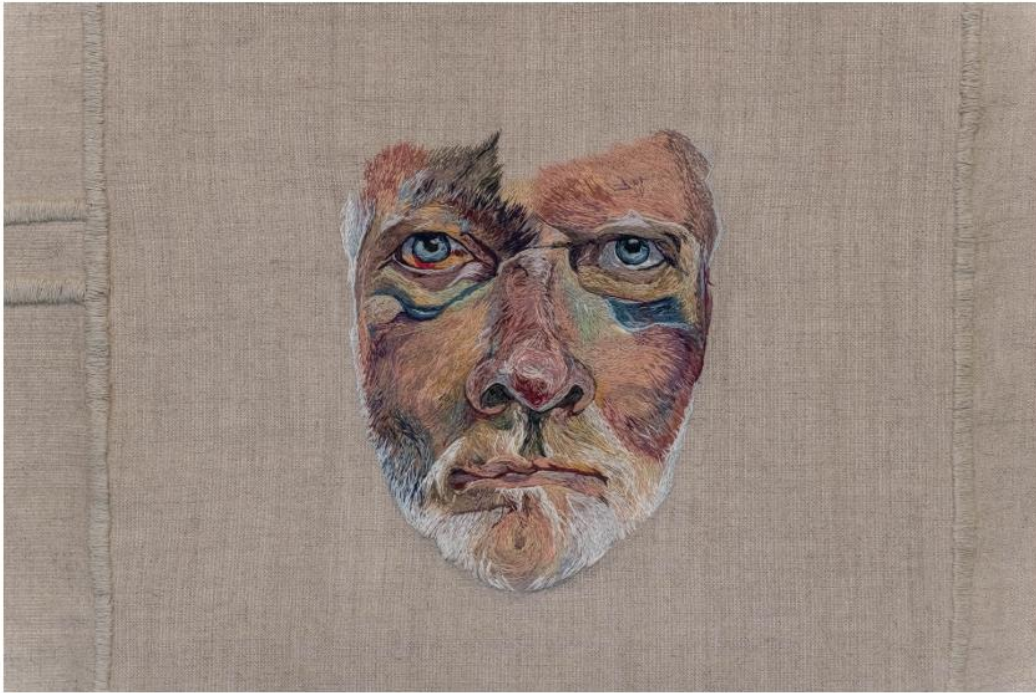


UNNI KAROLINE BAKKE

Memory formation depends in part on the hippocampus, a small area of the brain often described as being shaped like a seahorse. I will admit that I don't really see the resemblance, but nevertheless I like it very much, especially in the context of Unni Karoline Bakke's *Hippocampus* series. How we form and recall memories in real life is often based on objects and sensations—a treasured heirloom, a familiar smell—and Bakke weaves from this tendency a series of illuminating and inventive artworks. Each of three works in the series has in common an

illustration of the hippocampus, a sense of the underwater world, and a deployment of old textiles from friends, family or secondhand stores. In "Napkin" and "Paint Drop Cloth," threads hang from new embroideries like the tentacles of jellyfish. Lace fragments float buoyantly up to the surface or sink down to the seabed. Brightly colored floss recalls the outrageous brilliance of a healthy coral reef. Even the scourge of modern seas is acknowledged, via a huge layer of clear plastic that sheathes "Threads on Cloth." Rusted metal rods provide hanging structures, as if they had actually spent time in the ocean, amid the real seahorses which, for their size, are reputed to have good memories.

—Lori Waxman



VIBEKE ANDERSEN

As artists well know, but the rest of us often forget, human skin comes in an extraordinary range of colors, far beyond beiges and browns and blacks. Kerry James Marshall, the great African American painter, has made it his life's work to explore this in terms of dark skin, the subtleties of which have long been ignored in Western art history. Vibeke Andersen is having a fine time of it with Norwegians, who, it turns out, contain various shades of red, grey, yellow, green, and blue in their flesh. Two portraits bear this out with exceptional variety, due to her subject having taken a bad fall and suffered much bruising to his face. One is pastel on paper, the other an astonishing embroidery on a large panel of rough, stitched-together cloth. Andersen prefers the term "painting with thread" to embroidery, and she is quite correct. Her friend emerges via an additive process, out of a combination of many different hues, each a single mark. The effect is also dimensional, less like a sculptural bas-relief and more like a painting where the artist has gone heavy at the canvas with a palette knife. Here that volume is especially felt in the eyes, which bulge convexly on one side and concavely on the other, an uncanny aspect that continues as the thousands of threads come to feel cellular, vein-like, molecular—just like the components of a human being. As for this particular person, he may not be happy, and he seems to be in some pain, but at least he is also a rainbow.

—Lori Waxman



DOSSSEN BJØRNEVIK

With geometric abstraction, it can be tricky to know which way is up. Dossen Bjørnevik accounts for this most delightfully by signing some of her paintings twice, on two different edges, and including multiple hooks on the back. Likewise, one might wish to view these artworks horizontally, laid out flat rather than hung vertically on a wall. She calls them landscapes, after all, even if they show none of the features one might expect to find in that representational category. But they are there, blocks of color corresponding to the way land gets divided up by cartographers or to the type of buildings one finds in Stavanger and Swansea, elements clearly recognizable in Bjørnevik's drawings even if not quite in her paintings. The history of geometric abstraction is filled with this kind of tension, from the "Prouns" of El Lissitzky to the bush paintings of Aboriginal Australians, from the urban boogie-woogie of Mondrian to the adaptable weavings of Sophie Tauber-Arp. All of it looks deceptively simple but rewards close, slow looking, the kind that notices that Bjørnevik's oil-pastel "Landscape" of 2016, which appears at first to be a regular grid of color stripes, is in fact full of variation.

—Lori Waxman



NILS ROSTAD

Magical realism is a literary and artistic genre that allows for the believable envisioning of unusual and impossible scenarios. It's a useful lens through which to view two paintings by Nils Rostad, each of which takes retro technologies—a mic, a fan, maybe a blimp, definitely some electrical pylons—and through playing with scale and placement, makes of them something both familiar and utterly new. In "Fjellet (The Mountain)," liquid gold bubbles up from the ground, or maybe flows down into it, from a giant old-fashioned microphone propped up in the landscape at the base of a formidable peak. Someone, perhaps a singer, dangles up high in the sky on an unrecognizable contraption. One way or another, music is what's powerful here. In "Das Neue Vifte," a giant airborne blower banishes the rain clouds, leaving behind clear blue ether. Rostad explains the title as a play on words between German and Norwegian, but since I only speak French and English, I will take it another way, because *vifte* translates as *fan*, and fan means not only aerator but also devotee, as in sports fanatic. At the end of Rostad's huge lime blower are red and yellow striped shapes that look, to my eye at least, a whole lot like abstracted football jerseys. He says they're umbrellas, so I got it wrong, but maybe in magical realism, that can also be right.

—Lori Waxman



CECILE ANDA

Oxidation worries engineers, but I have always found it to be incredibly beautiful, as it decorates expanses of metal, rendering age and exposure visible. Cécile Anda works with rust as an artistic process, as much as she works with more typical and controllable materials, like metal or paper that can be cut or wood that can be painted. Her silhouettes range from the natural to the human, landscape to leaf to feather, filled not with realistic detail but abstract designs, some determined wholly by her, others by organic methods. "Plume," a feather-shaped mobile made from thin wood painted on both sides, works with nature indirectly, its all-over patterns recalling animal prints and botanical studies. "Amo" is more direct, a mobile contoured like a pair of intertwined people, two heads and one body, nearly heart-shaped, sliced from sheet metal and ornamented only with delicate orangey spots of rust, as if the artist trusted nature to collaborate on the sculpture with her. The effect is romantic in both senses of the word, as an emotional and aesthetic responsiveness to nature, and as a certain type of love.

-Lori Waxman



CHRISTINE URDAL

Throughout my various childbirths and miscarriages, my body has produced multiple placentas. Yet until Christine Urdal's exhibition *Pust*, I had never seen a placenta up close, not understood exactly how it connected to the umbilical cord, not visualized its webbed surface, not considered its rich variety of bloody hues. It says a lot about the treatment of women's bodies in modern medicine, and in Western culture in general, that this extraordinary organ, utterly necessary to the production of human life, is so unknown, even to those who carry them. We are so squeamish, and so sexist. Urdal's solution is a stunningly minimalist, nearly monochromatic installation of large- and medium-scale color photography, mostly on the wall but also built out as a sculptural table. Extremely sharp close-up images of a placenta are the primary subject, but a lone video presents a parallel from nature, the leaves of a maple tree blowing in the wind, in their seasonal autumn colors. The audio is wind but also the sound of blood pumping in the body, as is heard in any prenatal doctor's visit. It isn't sap flowing in a tree, but it could be.

—Lori Waxman



ELIN GABRIELSEN

A better naturalist than me would be able to more precisely identify all of the insects, waterfowl, birds, rodents, and foliage that so densely populate the woodcuts of Elin Gabrielsen. But no matter, it does not take a learned ecologist to appreciate the wondrousness Gabrielsen captures in pictures that teem all over with life and death, regular and random patterns, scales ranging from the invisibly small to the planetarily large. As it is in her artwork, so it is in nature. Likewise, Gabrielsen has innovated a means of structuring her compositions that is itself uncannily natural: each woodcut can be printed on its own and appreciated as such, or it can be printed alongside others on a long piece of paper, one image flowing seamlessly into another, creating a broad, lush landscape. She calls these panoramas "In Perpetuum," and so long as she carefully matches edge to edge, they can go on infinitely, like life itself.

—Lori Waxman



EVA C HOVEN

Children are the great innocents of war, and to serve all kinds of purposes we are every day bombarded with images of their suffering. I am not sure how much empathy versus numbness is created in that way, but I know that much tender humanity is achieved through gestures like Eva C Hoven's ongoing project of sculpting small heads in porcelain. Each is formed intuitively, then glazed and fired using an array of techniques, including raku and anagama. The optimistically named "Hope" appears to be an infant, his head scaly or fuzged, his eyes shadowed, nose bulbous and mouth red. His skin is dark in places, light in others. Like any porcelain object subjected to experimental firing and glazing, it was unclear how "Hope" would emerge from the kiln. Would he be stronger, would he be scarred, would he be beautiful? Would he even survive? In her choice of material and process, applied to such a sensitive and crucial subject, Hoven achieves a deeply moving metaphor.

—Lori Waxman



ANN KRISTIN BERGESEN

In "Dancing with Headphones," a performance ongoing since 2015, Ann Kristin Bergesen puts on headphones, a nice dress, and dances with her eyes closed and her back to the audience, to two songs that no one but her can hear. When she is done she takes a sip of water. Bergesen is not a flashy or even a particularly fantastic dancer, and neither am I. I love to dance, but am a bit too old to go to discos any more. When good music comes onto the kitchen radio, I make my moves, mostly just for me, and then I get back to the dishes or the cooking. That is not quite what Bergesen is doing here, in her almost but actually not at all private performance. She is causing me to think about how movement relates to sound, both imagined and heard, and what connections exist between clothing and gesture and interpretation. But in the decidedly accessible quality of her dancing, in her refusal to be virtuosic, in her acknowledgment of the personal need to act creatively with our bodies, I feel as if I've been given permission to dance a whole lot more.

—Lori Waxman



MARIT ØGLEND

Decades ago, the Canadian scientist Suzanne Simard hypothesized that underground networks of mycelium helped trees communicate with one another across vast areas of forest. Her ideas were dismissed as crazy until they were eventually proven to be absolutely true. It can be incredibly difficult to understand what we cannot see, either because it is microscopically small or hidden inside the earth or simply beyond our limited human imagination. Artists can be helpful here, employing unexpected materials and techniques to aid visualization. Marit Øglend does this for mycelium, much as others like the Wertheim sisters have done it for coral reefs. Using crochet, abstract painting, and woven willow branches, Øglend explores what networking can look and feel like, not scientifically but affectively. Crochet is a particularly apt method here, being structurally rhizomatic and interdependent, not to mention traditionally a women's craft. There were many reasons why Simard was not listened to back in the day, but sexism was most definitely one of them.

—Lori Waxman



CAMILLA LØKEN HILL

The copper wire sculptures of Camilla Løken Hill contain big beginnings and endings. "Takk for alt/Thanks for Everything R.I.P." borrows the form of a funeral wreath, marker of life's grand finale. "Mitt genetiske anker/My Genetic Anchor," fashioned from 1,023 handwoven DNA coils, symbolizes its start. But that is really too narrow, and too conventional, a view. Her wreath, woven from shiny copper strands, can be indefinitely expanded by adding more threads. Many end in old Norwegian coins, beautifully oxidized by time and the elements, suggesting mushroom caps or nasturtium leaves, the tops of organisms known for being rhizomatic networks of growth and communication. Out the bottom of the wreath stretch strands of different lengths, like roots and tendrils seeking nutrients and connection. Her "Anchor," suspended and glowing, begins at the top with a single coil then multiplies exponentially, spilling out on the ground like a dress or an inverted family tree. The work is finished but easy to imagine continuing indefinitely, or at least as long as we humans do.

-Lori Waxman



MARIT VICTORIA WULFF ANDREASSEN

Think of the body as an interior world, imagine entering it, what would you see? What if that body were in pain, or suffering from disease, or otherwise in distress? Marit Victoria Wulff Andreassen's large, intensively worked colored pencil pictures envision something like the inside of the mouth, the spaces through which blood flows, the folds of flesh, the squeeze of orifices, the passageways of the esophagus and the intestines. Sometimes her renderings recall geological places, like a cave with its stalactites and stalagmites, but mostly they feel like a landscape comprised of the parts of the body we struggle to see, even as they affect us deeply. Notably, Andreassen composes with near perfect symmetry, a quality only partly true of our bodies, less so as they become ill and age; but symmetry implies control and perfection, and it calms. The exception to this rule is her inclusion, in "Backwards Dreaming," of a tangle of green flowering vines at center. Asymmetrical and with cut-paper edges, they act not unlike potted plants in a sickroom, providing the promise of health, or at least an example of it.

-Lori Waxman



ANNE KLOVNING

In a Nigerian folk tale that I read to my children when they were young, the sky was once so close people could reach up and take a piece whenever they were hungry. It eventually went far away, as punishment for bad behavior on the part of humanity, and people had to learn to grow their own food. In Anne Klovning's deeply charming video, "When a piece of the sky pours in through my window," the sky is again close enough to touch, in fact it spills into her studio and stays, caught in the window sash. Klovning pulls it, folds it, plays with it, hides underneath it, curls up in it and takes a nap, a visual feat achieved with clever use of a green screen and digital editing. All the while, she softly repeats a mantra in which she asks and answers the question of how best to make use of this special situation without letting fear take over. Having a piece of sky in your studio and trusting yourself enough to utilize it—that could be a model for art-making more generally.

—Lori Waxman



SIRI BORGE

Siri Borge may be some kind of goddess from our dystopian future, where sharp-toothed fish-truck hybrids zoom around a morally and ecologically bankrupt planet, and people buy and sell each other online based on fictional biographies that play painfully to the basest stereotypes. Actually, maybe that horrible future is now. Certainly Borge is—of the now, not the horrible—a role she embraces fiercely and funnily, in performances and sculptural accessories alike. Maritime politics are tackled in the cleverly titled “Codspeed,” in which Borge, kitted out in a cod headpiece and mittens, races a remote-controlled mini monster truck, made by wiring a dessicated cod fish head to a toy car base. The nightclub performance “Tinderella,” a witty mash-up of Tinder and Cinderella, finds her mocking online dating strategies in the belly of the beast. If all this seems absurd, it certainly is, but so is 2026.

—Lori Waxman



HEIDI ULDAL

Heidi Uldal's *Upright* series consists of four women, represented using paint and thread on large pieces of fabric. Properly speaking, they are not really women but archetypes, stand-ins for concepts that Uldal indicates with carefully chosen titles, names that help identify ideas in a multicultural world where not everyone understands symbols alike. "Dancing Queen" is the simplest, a gracefully fluid figure who moves like a line drawing in gentle gold and pink. "The Futurist," aglow with a promising golden aura, stands sideways, giving a sense of always moving forward, following the trio of grey lines that run through her head at eye-level. "Pride" smiles warmly, confident but contained, outlined

in friendly red yarn and topped with a colorful afro. The rainbow background from which she emerges connects personal with collective pride, as expressed by the international movement for gay rights. "Rag Doll – Still Standing, Standing Still" is the odd one of the bunch, the one who does not declare what she is or what she needs, depending on the viewer to perceive in her unraveling mess of zigzag stitches, her detached feet, her tangled hair and skewed face, how much care and repair she desperately requires. One hopes, profoundly, that she receives it.

—Lori Waxman



**TOVE SOLBAKK
SEIERSTAD**

Landscape is a common subject matter for art in all media, but it is less obvious how to proceed than its familiarity might suggest. Should the artwork seek to realistically represent how a mountain looks, abstractly embody how the sea feels, materially translate the importance of the sun's energy? As a ceramicist, Tove Solbakk Seierstad has the advantage of working with materials and processes that are closer to the earth than many others; as one who is extremely skilled, she is also

able to get her medium to believably resemble her subject matter. In this case, it is the kelp forests that cover 25 percent of the world's coastlines, providing rich habitats for marine animals and much carbon sequestration. "Tareskog," her trio of tall, narrow vases covered in effervescent surfaces, slicked with flowing blue-green-brown glazes, feel as close to a manifestation of a kelp forest as ceramics might plausibly achieve. Strong but fragile, long and slender, able to contain water, I want nothing more than to swim amongst them, watching their colors shift as the sun filters through, feeling the tickle of bubbles and the silkiness of their seaweed strands.

-Lori Waxman



TORILL BROSTEN

I was always bad at keeping a diary. Which is an odd thing for a writer to admit, but paging through the magnificent painted journals of Torill Brosten, I sense that depending on words was where I went wrong. Brosten fills notebooks with all-over abstract compositions, glorious layers of color and texture and shape, in between which she records dates completed, the names of paint and other materials used, and occasional philosophical notes to self. (These last are in Norwegian, so for me, the experience remains primarily wordless.) Like an entry in a diary, each work is done in a day, recording the relevant thoughts, feelings, impulses or experiences. One can revisit older entries to notice tendencies, patterns, the rhythms of a life lived. A great number would make worthwhile stand-alone paintings—and sometimes Brosten does blow them up to larger scale—but to have so many gathered together page after page in books, for intimate handling, overwhelms and thrills. I could look at her *Visual Diaries* all day, but better would be to make them.

—Lori Waxman



KATHARINA BJELLAND

Pokemon cards, candy wrappers, lip balm, disposable cutlery, house keys, and so on and so forth—the 906 bits and pieces that comprise Katharina Bjelland's "Laundered Objects" are painfully familiar to me. I have kids and a spouse, and we live a middle-class existence in which we do a lot of laundry, buy a lot of cheap crap, and have far more stuff than we really need. Bjelland collects this detritus, most of which nobody will ever miss, and clips it to drying lines in the gallery. Here it appears orderly, almost anthropological, but also like a clever pop-up shop design. Nearby stands her 200-cm tall "Scrub Daddy," named for the yellow smiley-face sponge it monumentalizes. There's a Scrub Mommy product, too, but the popular one is Daddy, as if some cute marketing ploy could solve centuries of unequal domestic labor. All of this is really quite funny until you trip over the very thin line that Bjelland draws—using tactics of scale, repetition, and recollection—between humor and horror. This is our lives.

—Lori Waxman



MAREN ELVE

How do you go on a date with nature? In an untitled series of five black-and-white photographs, Maren Elve tries. The results are something like a romantic comedy, maybe filmed by Truffaut, starring Elve and a balloon, shot on location atop a picturesque grassy mountain. Fortuitously, there is no one and nothing else nearby to encroach on the couple's rendez-vous. Elve's hair is loosely pinned up and she is daringly costumed in a jacket and seemingly not much else. Her companion is appropriately heart-shaped, and they hold hands throughout or, rather, strings. The balloon goes up, it goes down, it pulls her here, she pulls it there, and then this viewer wonders: Oh, is she having an affair with the balloon or with the wind? A mountaintop would be the perfect place for such an encounter, a balloon the keenest matchmaker, a lack of clothing helpful for feeling a nice caress. Romanticism here enters a whole new era.

-Lori Waxman



**KRISTIN VELLE-
GEORGE**

The clay sculptures and pencil drawings of Kristin Velle-George are in no way representational, but yet they are incredibly familiar. Associations abound, all of them organic and natural.

"Filum," a fascinating graphite composition, fills the page with thousands of intricate lines that recall animal fur but also the tender striped insides of a flower. The diminutive "Albus," intuitively shaped from stoneware and left grittily unglazed, features a surface

alternatively rough, smooth, and pocked with tiny holes, like follicles or pores or the inside of a bone. "Fumus," a larger stoneware piece colored in places with green oxides, has this boniness, too, but also decorative patches that conjure fish scales and swirling smoke. On a macro level, these three artworks by Velle-George are marvelously alien; on a micro level, in their details, they reveal themselves to be firmly of this realm.

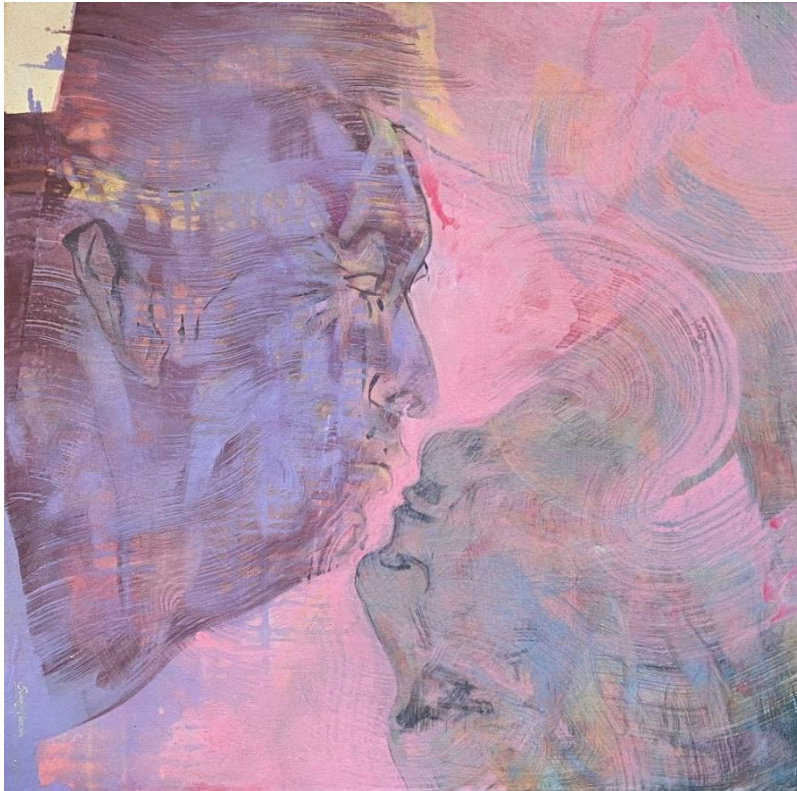
-Lori Waxman



SVEINUNG NYGAARD

The generosity of forests towards humankind is unmatched. They give us raw materials for building and generating energy, food to gather and eat, space for leisure and dreaming. We owe them everything. Sveinung Nygaard, who played in the Eskelandskogen as a child, has discovered that the forest can also be an art studio and even a gallery. For "Morfar," he bends a living tree to serve as the upper bar of a loom then constructs the rest from sticks. On it he weaves a simple but colorful textile out of secondhand fabric strips. "Samspill" was drawn on a large white sheet by dragging a felt football that had been dipped in motor oil; the resulting black and yellow stains recall the abstract expressionism of Franz Kline but with an eco-consciousness. In these and other works, Nygaard uses the forest as a place of making but also, importantly, display. Unlike in a conventional gallery, white-walled, silent and still, here the walls are trees, the ceiling sky, the ground green foliage or white snow, the sounds birdsong and wind. Oh, and the viewers! One can only imagine what the forest's creatures think.

—Lori Waxman



TOVE SUNDT-HANSEN

For all the changes in art over the past one hundred years, we are still so conventional when it comes to hanging paintings. They go on a wall, one side up, and should generally be perpendicular to the ground. And yet, Tove Sundt-Hansen has produced two 90-cm square canvases that announce no particular orientation. One is of a poppy, seen from above, and even though the artist presents it one way, it really could be any. As for the other composition, well, Sundt-Hansen has just turned it 90 degrees to the right. That changes everything, reorienting the two depicted figures so that they are no longer lying one atop the other but instead one rightside up, the other upside down. If she were to continue, they would lie down again, but with a different person on top; then they would be vertical but oppositely, and so on and so forth ad infinitum. Those positions connote very different relationships between two people, here depicted in an emotional palette of pinks and purples, caressed with wide, curved, sweeping brushstrokes. Which orientation is correct—and also, what about diagonals? Perhaps the problem is not with this changeability but with our bias towards the vertical. If pictures were shown on the ground, to be freely circulated, there would be no issue.

—Lori Waxman



HELENE ESPEDAL-SELVÅG

I could stare at the sky forever and have always done so, wherever in the world I happen to be. The slivers that peek through skyscrapers in Manhattan, the world above the clouds as seen from an airplane, the vast openness of West Texas, the low golden light of the Mediterranean. The sky is not the same everywhere, and yet of course it also is, a tension sensitively captured in Helene Espedal-Selvåg's installation *Felles Himmel / Common Sky*. Ten monitors spread out on the floor, each playing a video of the sky she filmed somewhere in the world, from Hiroshima to Stavanger. At the center stands a tall wooden platform, which can be ascended for better viewing. From up there, what do you see? The sky on the ground disorients. But also it is like a portal to another place, one of those holes children imagine digging all the way to China. Seeing so many at once suggests sameness as much as difference, like how we all need air to breath, but the quality of the atmosphere—due to climate, pollution, elevation—is nowhere exactly alike. One sky is available for the taking from a stack of free posters; visitors would do well to bring it home and hang it by their window, as a reminder.

—Lori Waxman



ANNE MARIE ARNØY

My favorite myth is Norwegian, telling of how trolls caught in sunlight turn to stone. It might explain the astonishingly colorful variety of rocks Anne Marie Arnøy has found in her homeland over the years, but even more so the charming animals, people and scenes she conjures from their fragments. She has turned shards of rosy thulite, Norway's national stone, into the most beautiful birds; limey serpentine into a wee child, cuddled up against its mother; glossy biotite into a voluptuous woman's gleaming hair. In her hands, a chip of slate can be a boat, the figure manning it, or a pair of chic balloon pants. To some extent, this is pareidolia, the human inclination to

find figurative meaning in the landscape, organic matter, and elsewhere. But also, and perhaps more so, it is the magic of an artist who communes deeply with her material, understanding what it is capable of, being unafraid to use it unconventionally, and knowing how to collaborate with it.

—Lori Waxman



JOHANNA WARBERG

It is a sad day when "wellness" becomes just one more trend enforcing toxic consumerism, environmental and bodily pollution, rigid beauty standards, and narcissistic self-hatred. That sad day is now, and it finds crafty expression in a tufted tapestry by Johanna Warberg. "SkinCARE," part of an ongoing series named *justgirlythings* for the 2010s internet phenomenon, illustrates a young woman engaged in her beauty routine at the bathroom mirror, an array of products laid out in front of her. Goop would style that scene as a minimalist self-care idyll; Warberg makes of it a terrifying monstrosity. The girl's skin is sickly green,

the patterns overwhelming, the product labels alarming. No one should want to participate in this situation, but social media tells us we should and we must, and many do, unaware that there are and have always been other options. Perhaps a *justgirlythings* guerilla intervention might be justified?

-Lori Waxman



ELLEN M KALVIG

Ellen M Kalvig paints atmospheric phenomena. Her large, raw cotton canvases, washed with watery acrylics, seem at first like landscapes, because that is the expected category, but their crucial aspect is the miraculous variety of the northern sky. Perhaps they are skyscapes? The ground, insofar as it is present, seems there mostly to balance or offset the air. Somehow Kalvig represents the impossible, the sort of visions that most of us would do well to just look at very appreciatively and not bother trying to record, even with special camera lenses. By eschewing realism, relying on washes of unexpected color and the power of high contrast, she succeeds in capturing the green glow of a far northern night; the crisp black outline of a mountaintop behind which the sun has just barely set; and the faint blueness of a cold, snowy evening. I recognize some of these environmental situations because I have had the privilege of experiencing them; it is moving to encounter an artist who knows them as well, or better, and has developed the means of putting them sensitively to canvas.

-Lori Waxman