

Laleh Kazemi Veisari / *Compass*

22.08 – 21.09.2024

There are works of art that impose a sense of existential challenge. They disturb and ask, pointing to realms of ethics and the unknown. What will I hear, loose, know – if I expose myself to their way of speaking? The encounter with artist Laleh Kazemi Veisari's works leaves me with an experience of heightened intensity and space. Light is felt as negation and a prompting to enter into new spheres of insight. An ethical urgency surfaces and a sometimes tormented but agile kind of playfulness. Kazemi Veisari's practice embraces complexity, but simultaneously seems to act as a lowering anchor. Her art draws up a search changing with time, a continuously shifting compass needle penetrating the lens of memory. Distant stories merge in the background, touching biographical threads spread over many countries and with a deeply personal setup of symbols. And so, it is perhaps consistent, that these artworks speak to me from a position on the ground. Not surprisingly, Kazemi Veisari's working process often takes place on the floor, beginning in the tangible.

An abstract tapestry by the artist's grandmother constitutes the point of departure for the exhibition *Compass*, exploring issues of memory, materiality, time and loss. Drawing in her grandmother's house in the woods of Norra Österbotten in Finland, the artist experiences an entrance into the glance of the weaver. The event hints towards a process of touching down and finding one's vertical line. Meeting Kazemi Veisari in her atelier, she describes an orientation towards grounding in an environment, outer and inner, and in a present where the real is destabilized. Here, the original work *Den som visar mig skogen (The one who shows me the woods, 2023)*, based on the tapestry mentioned, is displayed together with new works, creating letters through time. The measures of the former work are scaled up or down onto larger surfaces or smaller canvases, where thin graphite lines transmit the basic structure of the tapestry. Variations indicate subtle alterations. Fugitive, watery layers of colours destabilize each other in a commutation between nightly darkness and pale daylight, suggesting mirage. The abstract landscapes, focusing on broken horizons and aura, mediate the interplay of distance and intimacy.

Entering into a dialogue with deeply personal myth, *Compass* forms an invitation to reflect on the conditional uncertainty of the creative process and also of our time, in the search of a possible direction. Evolving around fragments of family history, the work series becomes a meditation on transformation, sifted through the silences of the past. With information disorder escalating and unreality leaking into the area of relationships and life experience, these works raise questions of the possibility of connection and communion.

Marie Tonkin, Stockholm, 2024

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Laleh Kazemi Veisari (b. 1983) in Stockholm, Sweden, where she lives and works.

Kazemi Veisari's interdisciplinary practice embraces drawing, painting, sculpture and writing. Her work with archives, memory and language leaves traces in spatial, visual and literary expressions. In her practice she documents and uses found material and stories to study these fragments both intuitively and methodically through different media: the montage of image, objects and text hold new connections in space.

Among Kazemi Veisari's solo exhibitions are Bror Hjorths Hus, Uppsala, Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm, Oktogonen, Göteborgs Konsthall and GIBCA Extended – Galleri Konstpedemin, Gothenburg. She is the recipient of the 2018 Bror Hjorth Drawing Grant (Bror Hjorthföreningens stipendium för unga tecknare), the 2019 Bernadotte Grant and the 2022 grant holder of the Beckers Art Award (Beckers Konstnärstipendium). Laleh Kazemi Veisari holds an MFA in Fine Arts (2019) from Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. Upcoming exhibition's include *What's in Your Suitcase* – a group show at Röda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg.