

GALLERI NICOLAI WALLNER

Clara Gesang-Gottowt

Waters

February 7 – March 15, 2025

Galleri Nicolai Wallner is pleased to present *Waters*, a solo exhibition by Clara Gesang-Gottowt. The exhibition marks Gesang-Gottowt's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Clara Gesang-Gottowt is known for her ethereal, introspective paintings that explore themes of memory, time and the fragility of the human experience. Her work is characterised by a dreamlike quality, often blurring the line between abstraction and figuration. In this new collection of works, the artist uses an intuitive approach to translate corporeal, bodily memories into impressionist landscapes.

Though the subject of the paintings can be described as landscapes, her colour choice reveals something more spiritual than depiction. Shots of fuchsia pinks and manganese blues burst through dark mossy mounds and grassy tufts, tearing open the imagination. Large works present reflections of raging orange skies, placing the viewer just out of reach of their own image reflected in the water. Other works bring the gaze closer to the ground, a childhood memory of a grassy stage for understanding our own selves.

Gesang-Gottowt's approach to landscapes involves a spacious and extended process within, rather than en plein air. She paints the site in which memories materialise; a shimmering, quivering lack of certainty where nothing is concrete, where mood and emotion tangle with light and colour. Much like the writer and eventual painter August Strindberg, Gesang-Gottowt, driven by intuition and emotion, often uses motifs from the natural world to explore the philosophical and psychological.

Blurring the boundaries between emotional landscapes and physical memories, the artists' expressions are a mode of processing, where control is relinquished and memories that cannot otherwise be conjured re-emerge on the canvas. These emotional topographies give way to fields of sensation and recollection, both intimate and vast, rendered in ethereal layers of pigment.

Gesang-Gottowt's painting style has an extraordinary subtlety and sensitivity to light, texture and mood. This allows her to create poetic compositions that chime of impermanence and the passage of time. Through a masterful use of thin, transparent layers of oil paint, she creates a luminous depth, where colours seem to emerge and dissolve in a calming, meditative rhythm. In so doing, she reveals the light refracting off stone faces and punching through low layers of dense clouds, evoking the fleeting quiet of sunrise or sunset. This tension between darkness and light in the works leaves the viewer to negotiate which is arriving and which is departing.

The artists' frequent use of the portrait format mimics not the wide gaze of the human eye, but rather a somatic portrait of the human figure moving through the natural world. The marks of each bristle bring a shimmering life-force to the paintings; the evidence of short and scratching strokes adding a vitality where the physical action of the painter is used as a visual vocabulary.

Rather than anchoring the eye to a single dominant subject, Gesang-Gottowt's paintings disperse their focus across the canvas. These compositions invite slow looking, where each detail reveals itself in its own time, transforming the act of viewing into quiet, immersive contemplation. The artist's return to landscapes as subject reiterates the timeless and enduring metaphors that the natural world holds for our inner worlds. Like the blooms of Emil Nolde, sunflowers become the faces of unseen spiritual entities. Horizons and storms allow us to project our own emotions into something physical, yet ever changing.

Clara Gesang-Gottowt (b. 1985), lives and works in Lund, Sweden. Gesang-Gottowt graduated from the MFA programme at the Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm in 2013. Her works are included in the permanent collections of Moderna Museet (Stockholm) and Malmö Konstmuseum (Malmö) among other institutions. This marks the gallery's first solo exhibition with Gesang-Gottowt.