

Press release

## **Anna Bjerger**

### ***The Dusk***

10.04- 13.05.2026

Galleri Bo Bjergergaard is proud to present *The Dusk*, an exhibition of new works by the Swedish painter Anna Bjerger. This is the artist's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery. For this exhibition, we have invited David Risley, former gallerist and a friend of Anna Bjerger, to write a short introduction to the exhibition and the works.

### ***The Dusk***

The title is inspired by the Swedish author Pär Lagerkvist's famous poem from 1919, "Det är vackrast när det skymmer." "It's most beautiful when it's twilight."

Amina Cain writes "I am not always writing a sentence to tell a story exactly but simply to be in that space of a sentence, to make things appear in it, to see what is possible" (*A Horse at Night*, Daunt Books 2022)

Could this apply to painting too? asks Anna Bjerger.

Anna told me that she always looks for the exit sign in a room. She can be in the room as long as she knows there's a way out.

She made a show at my gallery in London, *The Snail's Trail*, 2008, where each painting positioned the viewer somewhere specific, often somewhere odd, in relation to the subject- at eye level with a man's crotch, at the foot of a bed with an unknown sleeper's toes sticking out from under a duvet.

In these new paintings it's not the viewer's but the artist's position in relation to the subject that is in question.

For most of her career, during and since art school, she worked from found images. Other people's images that she selected and translated into paintings. When she used found images there was a fracture between their intended use and the resulting painting. Stripped of their context - holiday brochures, local history books, knitting patterns, nature photography - they became open for Bjerger's reinterpretation and the new layers of meaning she added through painting them. People told her the found images could almost be of her own life. Over time they became increasingly recontextualised into her language and biography, surrogate images for her own life. Shadows.

Originally, she chose to work from existing images to disengage herself from emotion and memory, in order to focus on the painting. Recently she became disengaged from that process. The new work cuts out the middleman. The images are no longer mediated. Now she is finding images in her real world and taking photographs of them to work from.

For the last 25 years she lived and worked deep in the Swedish forest. This became a part of her identity as an artist. She recently moved into the centre of Malmö, one of Sweden's largest cities. She's acutely aware of the mass of people around her, the number of eyes

that have rested on the things she sees in her daily life, the shared experience. What was once exclusive to her is no longer. Everything you see in the city is seen by thousands of people. One of many, not unique.

Her new studio in the city is a tabula rasa, not yet filled with the accumulation of objects and visual noise a life's work fills a room with. Every object or image that enters the new, unpolluted studio is amplified, hyper present.

So, where is she in these new paintings?

She's fleeting, passing through, ghostlike. Neither here nor there. Neither in nor out, up nor down.

The first painting she made for the exhibition, *Red Socks*, is a self-portrait without a mirror, looking straight down at her own feet, standing on the ground. I am here. The artist is present. It locates her as the eyes we are seeing through, exploring her new life with her, tentatively, standing on the stairs, outside the door, not sure whether to enter, present but looking for the exit sign.

The only other figure (partial) is the top of someone's head, wearing a fur hat in, *Studio Wall*.

There are paintings of shared, public spaces — stairwells, markets, museums, cafe tables. In *Magenta*, *The Flat* and *Uninhabited*, staircases, windows and doorways become thresholds rather than destinations. They don't have the homely familiarity Hammershøi or Anker had in relation to their interiors. Bjerger's doorways are more liminal, moments of hesitant lingering outside, rather than belonging inside.

Dusk has a way of suspending time, during the blue hour, when the sun is just below the horizon, blue light persists, shadows soften. Another space, an anteroom to the coming night.

Bjerger says that she is the bystander and the paintings are narrow passages through time.

In *Madrid*, a figure stands before *Guernica*, absorbed in looking; in *From Another Place*, we see a moment from a black-and-white film, a pair of hands, projected onto a gallery wall. The image is already mediated, already elsewhere. Looking itself becomes unstable, doubled.

*Pine* is a transitional painting, a single pine, isolated from the forest, exposed under harsh city lights, throwing off multiple shadows like an actor caught on stage. It recalls the jarring, otherworldly trees of Carl Fredrik Hill.

*Outside / Inside* shows a dark interior with windows looking at a brightly lit meadow leading to the edge of a forest. Bjerger is mixing genres and approaches, a slowly painted room revealing a quickly painted landscape.

A large painting, over life scale, titled *Exit* is the core of the show. A pool of light on a wall reveals a light switch, giving the option to extinguish the source of its illumination. Above it in the gloom, an Exit sign, which would glow on even in the resulting darkness.

The artist is present. Present but looking for the exit.