

## **BERÄTTA**

**EVA DOUHAN LUNDKVIST | MARTINA LUNDKVIST**

**9-24/11 2024**

Arbetet med projektet *Berätta* tar avstamp i ett gemensamt intresse för värdet hos det till synes betydelselösa och obegripliga. Restbitar och upphittat material tas tillvara och undersöks som potentiella ledtrådar till bortglömda eller åsidosatta aspekter av verkligheten och historien. I de begagnade textilierna och i de gamla teknikerna finns tiden ständigt med som en besynnerlig faktor att vrida och vända fram och tillbaka.

Under arbetet med utställningen har Eva och Martina, mor och dotter, undersökt betydelsen av det förflutna, både deras gemensamma och det bortom genetiken. Folkkonst, minne, tradition och skröna har sammanfogats till en ny berättelse om en möjlig hemhörighet utanför den gängse historiografin. Det obegripliga är en nyckel och osanningen en förutsättning.

I utställningen bjuds besökaren in att vara med och berätta.

Eva och Martina har båda en bakgrund inom det textila fältet men inkorporerar gärna andra material såsom trä, metall, plast och prylar. I utställningen visas skulpturer och installationer där sammanfogandet av olika objekt och material är den huvudsakliga metoden. Med hjälp av bl.a. textila tekniker såsom tovning, väv och sömnad, kopplas delar samman som vid första anblick kanske inte hör ihop.

Eva är bildterapeut och textilkonstnär, medlem i Uppsala konstnärsklubb.

Martina läser just nu masterprogrammet Craft-Textil på Konstfack och har tidigare läst kandidatprogrammet Textil-Kropp-Rum på HDK-Valand Steneby.

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The work with the *Tell* project originates in a common interest in the value of the seemingly insignificant and incomprehensible. Leftovers and found material are seized and examined as potential clues to forgotten or neglected aspects of reality and history. In the used textiles and in the old techniques, time is constantly present as a strange factor to twist and turn back and forth.

During the work on the exhibition, Eva and Martina, mother and daughter, have investigated the significance of the past, both their common and that beyond genetics. Folk art, memory, tradition and legend have been combined to form a new story about a possible belonging outside the usual historiography. The incomprehensible is a key and the untruth a prerequisite.

In the exhibition, the visitor is invited to join in and tell the story.

Eva and Martina both have a background in the textile field but like to incorporate other materials such as wood, metal, plastic and gadgets. The exhibition shows sculptures and installations where the joining of different objects and materials is the main method. With the help of e.g. textile techniques such as felting, weaving and sewing, connect parts that at first glance might not belong together.

Eva is an art therapist and textile artist, member of the Uppsala konstnärsklubb.

Martina is currently studying the master's program Craft-Textile at Konstfack and has previously studied the bachelor's program Textile-Body-Space at HDK-Valand Steneby.

## Berätta – Storytelling

Claire, my wife, has a friend who embroiders and makes beautiful textile pieces. She invited Claire to join a free-embroidery group. The group is run by Eva who is a member of the Uppsala konstnärsklubb. I am envious of any member of the UKK, as you have to be a professional artist to be able to join, which I'm not. Still, it is the one community of people I feel at home with in Uppsala. So, when Eva and her daughter Martina put up an exhibition in the club's Galleri 2, of course we go to the opening.



### Thinking about ...

As soon as I enter the gallery space and see the main installation, the title 'Berätta' falls in place, or rather: a place. A place of already available words, the things I can readily say.

Berätta – Vertel – Tell. 'Tell' is too short a word for an exhibition title. 'Berätta' has a fulness and intimacy to it that evokes all the depths of storytelling, in human existence, and beyond. Like these textiles. They surely tell many stories with all their histories, transformations, interconnections, unfoldings and new arisings.

Maybe in English I would refer to this set of works as 'Stories'. But that misses a very essential aspect of both the works and the artists. Berätta, is a verb, not a noun. *Storytelling*.

There is much I can say about the telling of stories and aspects of words, their origins in embodied experience and use in culture. And how all of nature *is* storytelling.

I need to distinguish between conceptual-based storytelling and embodied storytelling.

Some telling happens in the consciousness of mainstream language. Words with fixed meanings spoken in linear sentences, like this one. Words that use language placed in our thinking minds by media, books, education. Words that imprison our thinking, because we cannot place ourselves outside them. Not that. And certainly not here in Galleri 2.

To tell is to share. The telling needs a listener. There is a meeting. Telling and listening is a reciprocal interaction. There is an exchange that goes both ways. The interaction is always way more than what can

be put in words, more than what we can think, more than what we can feel. There is at the base of my embodied living an ongoing felt sensation of this moment. My entire being lives the unfolding of this moment.

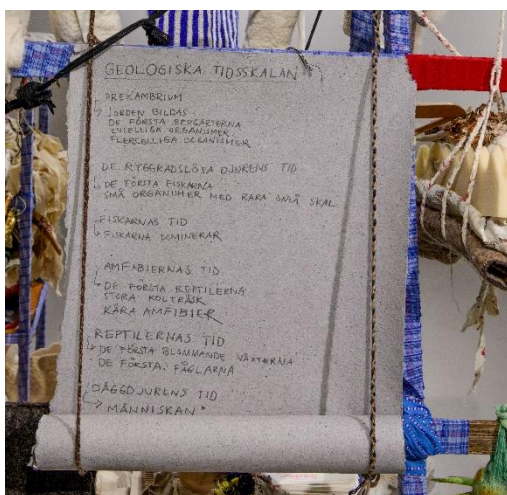


To tell is to bring into expression. But that happens also in dance, sculpture, painting... all creative movement is to tell. This is the way the entire universe unfolds. All phenomena on earth are in process, unfolding at their own pace and manner. Everything in interaction with everything else. Not already-formed objects that interact, but interaction first, arising and unfolding, in what we call life. It is through the interactions we have in our lived environment that life, creative process, unfolds. Every-thing is process, is its own unfolding, arising, transforming, releasing.

To tell is an embodied process. The thinking mind is the last to know. Only once life has expressed itself does it obtain shape and form. C.G. Jung said that human consciousness offers a second creation of the world. Now, the world perceived has become a kaleidoscope of myriad objects, a grand orchestra of things. It is through our embodied cognition we obtain a grasp of the world. But all such phenomena are also metaphors, allegories, of what they stand for.



Rather than seeing the tree as an object, consider it as a living process, an emerging/unfolding/arising of self-in-environment. Its entire life unfolds in interaction with the ever-changing situatedness of wind and weather, soil and seasons, day and night, and the entire ecosystem within which it is embedded. The bark beetles that suddenly explode beneath its skin, the storm that rips an arm off, the lush warm summer so that new growth bursts forth...



And every tree in its unique situated moment of living has *a very precise next step* in response to the shifting conditions in the environment in which it finds itself embedded, and so becomes its own unique self. The evolving shape of the tree tells you its entire history of living, the adaptations, challenges it met and how it could respond *just so* within the range of its embodiment. And so, it cannot be other than that all manifestations on earth have consciousness, the capacity to unfold in the most precise way allowed by its embodied existence. Thus, out of the responsive interactions of unfolding life, the perception of time is created.

Everything tells its story.

## A textile mind

I am told the materials used are leftovers, parts from previous works, textiles bought at flea markets. But then Eva shows the various techniques used on this piece of wool, and that one started with a traditionally hand-woven gauze and became a lady figure resting on a bed of foam. Balls of wool that were lying out in the garden were shaped and encapsulated in material, then processed in the washing machine.

Martina is working towards her final Master's project in textile. She read this morning about "Thinking like a textile". How do you get your head around that?!

Most encouraging is that Eva 'just started without formal training', 20 years ago. She is a member of UKK. And whenever I say something that took me years to figure out, they both say: "Yes of course".

The big surprise and entry point for my learning from this exhibition, comes through the structure and texture of the textiles and other materials, their tactile qualities. Claire assures me that it is ok to touch the installation fabrics when I admonish her not to do so – it is art after all. But during the photographing of the exhibition I start opening up beyond the visual. That deepens during the conversations with both Eva and Martina.



From here, the whole conversation becomes potentially very complex. For example, each element used in Fynd 1 has its own historical telling. Pieces of material with their own backgrounds, origins and histories. In their arrangements together, they combine into a new telling, a tapestry of new telling of many parts-in-parts. In addition, the creative hands of the artists manifest their own unique telling by means of these fabrics.

Paraphrasing myself: "Participation of the artist with the materials requires negotiation, a fine balancing between listening to the material and one's own engaging presence." The artworks arise out of this intricately negotiated complexity.

And me, the visitor, engages with it all from the whole life context I bring with me. Whatever my inner life resonates with in the interaction with the artwork becomes known as a felt sensation, a felt sense. The pleasure of engaging with art is being with, and learning from, this felt sensation.

Fynd 1, detail

I don't know the histories of the art elements used, I don't know anything about embroidery technique, I don't know the intentions of the artists. All I know is how I am stirred by the works and words offered.

What stands out from this reflection are i) the tactile and other qualities of the materials used, ii) the embodied quality of creative process, iii) my own embodied response, iv) fabric and time, fabric of time. And it all combines and integrates in the individual works.

## Textile qualities – Fynd 1

Wool – sheep – farm – countryside

Wool – soft – warm – care – feminine

Wool – jersey – cover – holding – skin - body - yielding into - surrender

Embroidery – textile – patterns – tradition – folklore – culture – imposition – rebellion – free expression

Embroidery – freedom – self-willed – my stories – healing – forward living

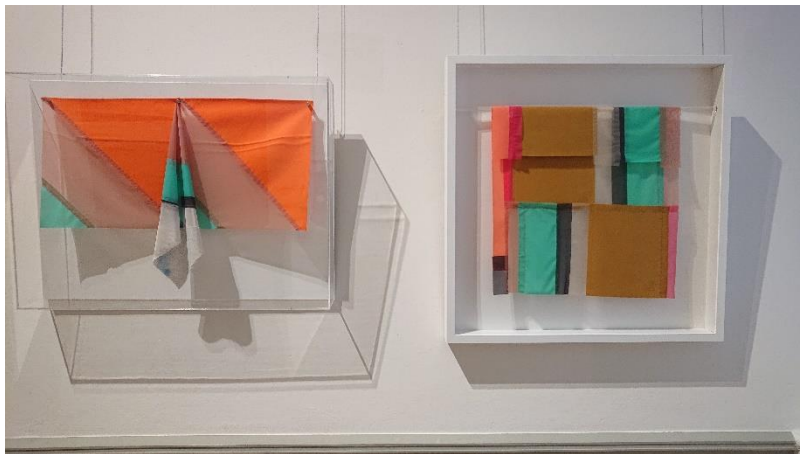
Embroidery – textiles – patterns - histories – time patches – time scales – fabric of time



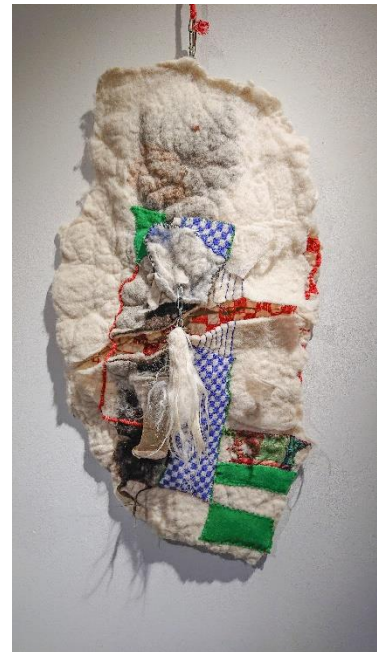
The free-embroidered wool of Fynd 1 possesses an inherent visual and tactile softness that is enhanced by the textured treatment of the wool. Its colours maintain an organic, natural feel. Its texture and wild borders give it a self-willed feminine power. The woollen surface holds with its feminine strength and care a warm-hearted presence for all else that is added. Including the tear that exposes its vulnerability and capacity to be wounded. The contrast with the dyed green, red, blue-checked patterns that live like cultural overlays, a constructed life pattern, over the state of embodied natural living. A rift, a ring, a chain, a being, a narrative held by the compassionate presence of wool.

### Textile qualities – conceptual versus embodied

I further explore the embodied quality of Fynd 1 by placing this work in contrast with a work by Anna Nyberg at the Uppsala art museum. Nyberg presents two wall hangings ‘without title’ with carefully framed transparent and elastic fabrics. ‘Without title’ and ‘Fynd 1’ both evoke a felt sensation, but what a contrast in their qualities! Annas works are visually strong, carefully arranged and engage me mentally through perception. On the other hand, they feel sterile and intellectual as there is no response in my inner life below the neck. In contrast, Fynd 1 engages me directly in the torso, as described above. Conceptual versus organic., Masculine versus feminine. And of course, both evoke an embodied response and both evoke thoughts. To me, Anna’s art work starts with perception as a given, whereas in Fynd 1 perception is an outcome of a more primary emergent process. The wool holds and welcomes a part of my inner life with a care and warm-heartedness that the artificial fabric leaves untouched.



Anna Nyberg, 2023, without title. (photo: 241126, Uppsala konstmuseum)



Fynd 1

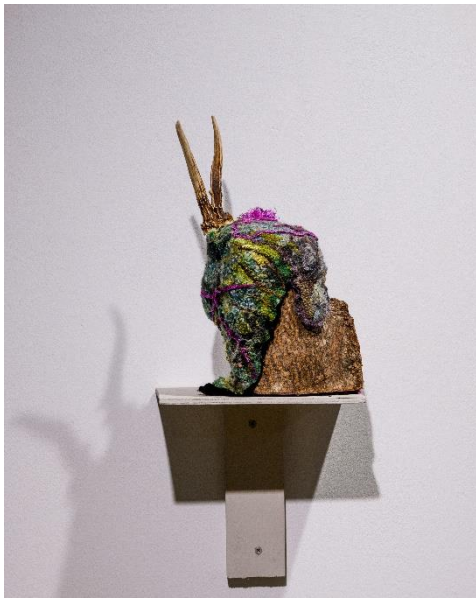
### Grattis på hundraårsdagen – Congratulations on the hundred-year’s anniversary

Eva tells me this work commemorates her mother.



And you know,  
I will not comment this work other  
than with a bow of respect.

## Textile qualities – Fynd 2



Deer antlers on wood block with wool-knit art into helmeted head shape.

I need to approach this work slowly: it fills me with an immediate spiritual reverence.

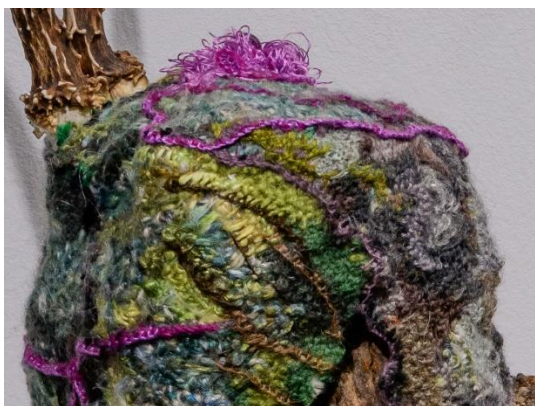
“Beauty without purpose is beauty without virtue”, I read in a poem by Mary Oliver. Here is purpose and virtue in ample measure.

The work’s context needs to be with: a simple white-painted board pedestal screwed unassumingly against a soft-white wall. It stands free as a single artwork along this wall, and rightfully so. Double shadows are cast from the work that want to be considered – they speak of the further depths within and beyond the work’s mind.

First tentative words so as not to offend acknowledge its antlers, deer spirit, its matching wooden torso, forest spirit, but mostly your animistic, wild warrior forest mind. There is a masculine fierceness here, determined and self-willed strength.

I approach further along the wall to face him more directly, but he turns facing the wall. Closer up, everything else fades into a dull grey background as his presence rises.

Still closer, I meet the woolen mask draped over his being. A mask presents a chosen identity to the world: “I want to be seen like *this*.” Like... What?



Multilayered, multicoloured, earthy like the forest floor: deeply layered moss, soil, humus, blueberry, smultron, waterlogged ground, grey stone, twigs and branches. The embodied spirit of forest.

Close up now, all turns into ordered movement, with purpose and virtue. The rich textures of the wool-knit, their layered structures, the wavy lines: a truly complex intricacy that is vibrant, alive, wild and very precise in its *just so* expression. This is unfinished-finished, complete-incomplete, like life is movement and form. It cannot be caught in static shape without losing its life.



And the highest expression of its life are its purple mindstrings. This is such an accomplished expression of embodied consciousness, it leaves me weak at the knees. Its mind radiates throughout the gallery space. A space filled with a kind fierceness, as in the fierceness of a love that stands up for all forest life. My whole being says: Yes!

### Förråd – Storage

A large and multi-faceted installation. As I face its images I realise it is too complex for me to do a reflective writing about. A simple, single element would work better. That is just the state of my mind. The images you have, so there is my gift.



### Tactile textile

To yield into the soft visual and visceral touch of wool is felt in the torso, it doesn't affect the thinking mind. The embodied response happens below the neck. The hands that work it bypass thinking and display an intellect of their own. The outcome becomes more visceral. A primary organic unfolding manifests that make the storytelling authentic, direct and therefore trustworthy. They bring a welcoming comfort, particularly the woollen sculptures. I notice a vulnerable place within myself gets welcomed, finds a refuge, creates a comforting experience within. A welcoming invited into the artwork that is totally embodied. That is the power of this art – it is interactive at a felt sense level that I seldom experience so directly in other more modern conceptual art. It makes this art quite unique.



## Ord, Text – Word, Text



The pendulum smashes the fixed meanings of words  
The pendulum smashes through the order of time

Lose fragments of meaning remain



Constructing something like a life



And yet  
We are more



Words, the lowest denominator

If  
a stitch were a word  
A thread turned a sentence  
What fabric do we weave together?  
Does tradition define our range of thinking?  
Does its pattern allow for something new to be said?

Then  
From the fabric of my life history  
The loose unfinished ends  
A new unexpected texture  
A tactile response  
That leads inward  
Cloth that holds its essence within

Now this  
A library of leftover rags  
A whole world of culture  
Of the already manifested  
This, and that  
Then, and then  
And me, now  
Stirred  
Forward

Matter is an outcome of process  
Process an outcome of intention  
Intention an outcome of something sensed  
Felt sensation arises from interaction  
*Nothing exists in isolation*  
An interaction turns into felt sensation  
Something sensed turns into intention  
Intention turns into process  
Process leads to manifestation

### Final word

Thank you so much for the journey you have allowed me to follow with your works! I have never engaged with textile art before, other than once the very different, graphic art of Jenny McMillen. Here, the tactile qualities of the materials and the direct, embodied expression with them became so tangible. I continuously had this image with me of a hand at work, a hand with its own intellect, independent of conceptual interference. And the freeing rebellious experiments of two women at work from which I learned some courage to break out of convention, to find the soul strength of wool, to go your own way with respect and deep relationality with the world. I found a place of welcome and healing. Thanks again, and warm greetings,

Jan Boelhauwers

4 December, 2024, Lilla Ålbo

## Translation of Text

(pp 1-5)

Time moves in peculiar patterns

- the *linear*:

a series of events one after the other,  
a rattling rosary of more or less unanswered prayers  
or teeth that have fallen out and settled in a line

- the *circular*:

A wheel on a cart pulled by some old animal

Then there is the *irregular* time,

the one that seems to well up completely disordered, unplanned  
shifting, prying, arching

the time that can arise when you find yourself using the word  
*fager mö* instead of *attractive woman*,  
old-fashioned,

a kind of confusion for yourself and the years that have passed  
the years that passed long before you were born,

a confusion about the fact that there was a world before yourself  
got there

and that you just ended up somewhere, in a line of others

the incomprehensible irregular time is a kind of vacuum on  
the timeline, a shadowed point without further information;

a nun's round mouth when she accidentally comes into contact with the wrong power.

the time that is missing from historiography,  
that ended up outside memory



... reports of landslides  
a mass in free fall out of the slopes  
bygone matters at high speeds  
through time

Maybe you feel that you are cut off from this development of events,  
that one floats around like an anointed body, isolated  
in an avalanche of phenomena, memories, situations

and that one finally gets a shock from some old event  
and, like an embalmed little old man,  
shoots off over the world

a situation and then a new;

completely fresh locations  
against additional fresh,  
transient

new mode, now

new name, now

they escape the mess

these transitions are not chronological,

what has not yet happened stretches back

against what just happened

and lies wrapped around, joins itself

the joint (like a bird and like the overlap,

the border against the added

how something turns into something else

and right in between both)

is your new face

imagine having a joint as a face,

with the plate tectonics of the head

and the small shifts of time

now/now/now )





....fires  
the house is like rubble  
a tower of smoke against the sky  
a swift right there, right then  
it has some overview  
now it will be quiet,  
seconds flicker in the heat  
now billows the smoke  
now the calls on the rampart fall silent, the beast stands still  
now the water recedes over the rocks  
(put on hold out at sea  
to eventually gather itself to a new path)  
now

was it the fire in Umeå 1888?  
or Kårböle 2018,  
or Stockholm 1407  
or a completely different antique case  
now in hindsight it's hard to remember,  
the fire is the same