

Galleri Riis

Chart Art Fair, Copenhagen
Per Berntsen / Marie Buskov

August 28 - 31, 2025

For Chart 2025, Galleri Riis will present a selection of works from Per Berntsen's extensive photographic projects, *Generator 1 and 2*, in dialogue with a newly commissioned sculpture in cast aluminum by Marie Buskov.

The first part of Berntsen's project, *Generator 1*, was photographed in 2007-08 with a large format analog camera, and consists of 100 black and white images from machine halls in hydroelectric power plants situated inside mountains in Southern Norway. *Generator 2*, which was completed between 2021-2025, includes photographs from an additional 100 machine halls which are mainly located in Northern Norway. These were photographed with a digital camera and the images are in color.

Together, the 200 images constitute a unique artistic project with many layers, partly influenced by the conceptual tradition of Bernd and Hilla Becher's typological works from the 1960s and 70s. It is also a unique document of Norwegian industrial history, in relation to technology, economy, legislation, design and architecture. This is the first time works from Berntsen's *Generator 2* are being presented.

Since its inception in the 1890s, the development of hydroelectric power has represented some of the most outstanding engineering and architecture in Norway. Berntsen's images invite reflection on what these installations signify for the development and prosperity of Norway after 1945, and the crucial role they will continue to play when oil and gas extraction is phased out. Since the late 1940s, most of the larger hydroelectric power plants have been built inside mountains, with water supplied through tunnels from higher elevation reservoirs or rivers. The machine halls inside these plants - where the cap of the vertically installed generator is visible, and where maintenance on the machinery is carried out - are awe-inspiring spaces which, in Berntsen's images, take on a solemn ceremonial character. Due to their function, all the machine halls contain the same elements, but with unique design and architectural elements which reflect the time they were built, including conditional adjustments in terms of construction and function as well as touches and traces from the plants' personnel. These structures are not visible in the landscape, and the facilities are experienced by very few people. New hydroelectric plants inside mountains are still being built in Norway, and several of the existing ones are undergoing upgrades and expansions.

"In 2007, I photographed generators in 100 power plants in Norway in black and white. The selection criteria were that the power plants should be located in the mountains, have vertical generators, and have an output of at least 10 Megawatts. There are about 100 more power plants that meet the criteria, and I have photographed these, but this time in color. I now use a digital camera that records color images whether you want to, or not. They can of course be converted to black and white, but I think that would be wrong. In addition, I now prefer to work in color."

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Per Berntsen (b. 1953) is a veteran of camera-based art in Norway and an important advocate for the medium's rise and acceptance on the local art scene. Berntsen was educated at Trent Polytechnic / Derby College of Art, England, during the second half of the 1970's and has exhibited actively since his debut in 1980 at Fotogalleriet in Oslo. Important projects include the 2008 publication and exhibition *Generator* at Galleri Riis, which featured 100 generator halls from hydroelectric power plants in southern Norway, and 'Down Under Up North' in 2010, a documentation and art project about the mining industry in Kirkenes. From 2013-2015, Berntsen undertook an artistic documentation of the Taiga, the landscape connecting the northern parts of Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. This project resulted in the publication and exhibition tour *Metsä* in 2018. In 2019, a new development in Berntsen's work was introduced, with a series of landscapes from the Veståsen area in Telemark. Resulting from field work in 2018 and 2019, these large archival inkjet prints on baryta paper represented a recognizable theme in Berntsen's oeuvre – the unpopulated landscape – but they also marked a significant new departure as they were the first color images that he had exhibited to date. Per Berntsen's works can be found in the collections of MoMa, New York, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Kode, Bergen, The City of Oslo Art Collections, Oslo. Per Berntsen lives and works in Atrå (Tinn Municipality), Norway.

In Marie Buskov's art, craftsmanship and digital tools come together in an alluring way. For our presentation at Chart 2025, she will create a new cast aluminum sculpture to be placed on the floor in dialogue with Per Berntsen's photographs. The sculpture has been drawn by hand and with computer-assisted design tools, sculpted into folded and sharp-edged 3D volumes. It is subsequently cast in aluminum and presented with a smooth raw finish, exposing the metal with marks from the manufacturing. The reflections of light on the surface animates the sculpture and exudes a mystic aura, as if it has travelled from another time and place. Buskov has always been interested in architecture and its surroundings, and lately she has investigated this further, with a focus on structures and rhythms, both visible and hidden:

"You could say that I am drawing new spaces based on structures and rhythms in the gap between intuition and abstraction. I look for the spaces that occur in the refraction between something known and something imaginary. I am curious about the connection between different positions, such as the random and the planned, the legible and the abstract, and a dialogue between the digital and the tangible. For me, the most interesting areas are those that cannot be easily measured, described or explained."

Through several exhibitions over the last decade, **Marie Buskov** (b. 1980 in Rosenholm, Denmark) has become well known on the Norwegian art scene for her vital abstract works on paper, wallpaintings and sculptures constructed from steel or cast in bronze, stoneware or aluminum. In her exhibitions, the various media interact in elegant and complex installations. She has executed several public commissions comprising stained glass, wallpainting, sculpture and liturgical furniture, of which the most comprehensive to date is her work for the new Sola Church, Norway, in 2020. Her works can be found in the collections of The National Museum in Oslo, Kunstsilo (Sørlandets Kunstmuseum) in Kristiansand, Lillehammer Art Museum, and the City of Oslo Art Collection. Marie Buskov studied at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen (2001-05) and holds a MFA from Oslo National Academy of the Arts (2005-09). She lives and works in Oslo.

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