

**Katja Davar - *Magnetite*****Opening:** Tuesday, 12 May 2026, 6 – 9 pm**Exhibition duration:** 13 May – 20 June 2026

In this chapter of Katja Davar's work—her second solo exhibition at the gallery Bernhard Knaus Fine Art—the artist shifts her focus to the navigational abilities of birds and the routes they follow during their annual migrations. *Magnetite*, the exhibition's title, refers to a naturally occurring mineral known for its magnetic properties.

Recent research suggests that migratory birds orient themselves through subtle material sensitivities. Magnetite in their beaks, trace amounts of copper in their brains, and cryptochromes in their eyes enable them to translate the Earth's magnetic field into visual patterns. Through this process, their movement is guided by an otherwise invisible geometry.

In five new globe works, Davar references wetlands and floodplains—critical stopover habitats for migratory birds. These environments provide essential spaces where birds can rest and replenish their energy during long journeys. Rich in food and shelter, such areas function as vital nodes along major migratory flyways, which Davar also depicts in her work.

Oversized plant forms populate these landscapes, evoking berries and floral structures. Migratory birds play a crucial ecological role: they disperse seeds, pollinate plants, and help sustain biodiversity. In this sense, they can be understood as gardeners, caretakers, and storytellers within a fragile ecosystem. Davar also draws on the phenomenon of murmuration—collective flight behaviour in which birds move in coordinated formations without a central leader. Each bird responds to a few nearby neighbours, producing complex, dynamic patterns that suggest shared navigational knowledge. This idea resonates with her references to the Earth's multiple magnetic poles.

Davar's practice explores unseen networks—biological, technological, and social—as quiet structures that organize and connect both human and non-human life. The birds' invisible compass suggests movement as a process of negotiation rather than linear progression. Their indifference to human-made political borders also informs Davar's thinking, challenging the relevance of nation-states and pointing toward more fluid, interconnected ways of understanding the world.