

# Galleri Riis

Marte Johnslie

Lisa Tan

*Market Art Fair, Stockholm*

April 23 - 26, 2026

For Market Art Fair 2026, Galleri Riis will present a two-person exhibition featuring **Marte Johnslie** (b. 1977, Lillehammer, Norway) and **Lisa Tan** (b. 1973, Syracuse, USA). In a medium sized booth ca. 5 × 6/7 meters / 30-35 m<sup>2</sup> we will present four sculptures by Marte Johnslie from her project *Gaea Norvegica*, a series of sculptures made from glazed ceramic and compressed scrap metal, relating to her artistic research project *TiO<sub>2</sub>*, in dialogue with two large fine art digital print diptychs and wallpaper by Lisa Tan from her ongoing *Dictionary* series. A poetic exploration of picture and language in Tan's dictionary works meets alchemical symbols and material investigations in Marte Johnslie's sculptures.

**Marte Johnslie** (b. 1977) is an artist working with ceramic sculpture, installation, paintings, drawing and artist's books. She is an Associate Professor of Ceramic Art at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Department of Art and Craft, and holds a doctoral degree in artistic research from the same department (2020). In recent years, Johnslie has focused on tracing historical connections between mining industries, visual culture, and alchemy. The artistic research project *TiO<sub>2</sub>: The Materiality of White*, which she has led from 2022-2026, involves experimentation with titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) in ceramic processes, archival research, and field-work conducted with students at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Johnslie describes this as a method of bringing the immaterial colour white back to its earthly origin, in an attempt to deconstruct the colour white as a symbol of purity, power, and progress. Johnslie has exhibited regularly in Norway and internationally. Her works are included in the collections of the National Museum of Art, Oslo, Kode Art Museums, Bergen, Kunstsilo/Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, Kristiansand, Henie Onstad Art Center, Høvikodden, Lillehammer Kunstmuseum and Haugar Kunstmuseum, Tønsberg. She has created permanent public artworks for, among others, the Gulating Court of Appeal, Bergen, The Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, and Oslo Municipality/The City of Oslo Art Collection.

## **Gaea Norvegica**

In alchemy, it is said that all substances contain seeds of their own opposites, that there is a cosmic connection in that the whitest white can be found in the blackest stone in the darkest earth. In 1910, a man patents the production method for a white pigment with what appears to have endless potential; titanium dioxide, capable of covering all other pigments, making everything shine, a promise of a brighter world. In a series of works composed from glazed ceramic and compressed scrap metal, "*Gaea Norvegica*" from 2023-2026, Marte Johnslie explores and shapes the history and potential of titanium dioxide. The title is a nod to the scientist Keilhaus' book, known as the first geological survey of Norway. Johnslie explores the aesthetic potential of materials and substances from the titanium dioxide industry, such as iron sulphate and harvested local clays, by making them react chemically and spatially in new sculptural constellations.

The history of Norwegian soil is the story of mysterious minerals, seductive rock walls and the rise of a nation. But it is also the story of transforming it in the pursuit of profit, of extracting and refining, of the invention of a small pigment that changed the color of an entire world. In her work, material crystallizes, melts and crawls out and over itself, becomes familiar with itself in new forms, meets in its own possibilities. Digging, hammering, searching, Johnslie challenges established ideas, and forms new connections between the potential of a material, a young nation's industrial adventure, mythology, chemistry and power.

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**Lisa Tan** (born 1973, Syracuse, NY, USA) lives in Stockholm. Her work is imbued with personal narrative and marked by material and conceptual precision. Video, installation, text, sculpture, drawing, photography, performance, other gestures, are the different forms her work has taken. The complexities of individual subjectivity and the formation of the self occupy her, as she often turns to literature and the history of photography to contemplate how a person's relationship to the world and to others is shaped.

Her work has been presented in solo and group exhibitions at institutions such as Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Kunstinstituut Melly (formerly known as Witte de With) (Rotterdam), MIT List Center (Cambridge), Kunsthall Trondheim, Whitechapel Gallery (London), ICA Philadelphia, Kadist Art Foundation (Paris), Tabakalera International Center for Contemporary Culture (San Sebastian), Contemporary Art Gallery CAG (Vancouver), Artists Space (New York), ICA Philadelphia, Accelerator (Stockholm). Tan's work was presented in the 11th Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art (GIBCA) (2021), osloBIENNALEN First Edition (2019-2020), ever elusive, Transmediale festival, Haus der Kulturen der Welt (2017), Why Not Ask Again?, the 11th Shanghai Biennale (2016), Surround Audience, the Triennial exhibition at the New Museum (2015). Her work is in the collections of Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Malmö Konstmuseum, the City of Oslo's public art collection, Coleção Moraes-Barbosa, São Paulo, and Artium the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Basque Country, Vitoria-Gasteiz.

She is currently Professor of Art in the Master's program at Konstfack University of the Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. She received a MFA from the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles (2001), a PhD from Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg (2015).

## **The Dictionary Series**

The Swedish Language in the Dictionary, 2026 // The Norwegian Language in the Dictionary, 2025

"Is a lexicon a thing of universal objectivity or a specific claim to collective political subjectivity?"

Lisa Tan ponders this question in an ongoing series of works in which she gathers all of the words in a dictionary, in which definitions are supplemented by an illustration or image. She has so far dissected the English, Basque and the Norwegian dictionaries. Tan reproduces these images in diptych format: one print collects and then renders them as silhouettes labeled with the term they are meant to help explain, while the other print shows the pictures but redacts the words.

In the case of the Norwegian language, the dictionary's editors estimate that over 1000 words in total—certain tools, ships and objects related to war need help, a supplement. In doing so, they reflect a language culture's particular concerns and values, inadvertently (or not) speaking about the cultural preoccupations and history of Norway. The presentation at Market Art Fair will debut a new diptych in this series, The Swedish Language in the Dictionary.

"Transforming the empirical into the poetic and the poetic into the political"

The prints are framed and hung on an expanse of wallpaper, which is populated with all the illustrations found in the English language dictionary. On the wallpaper, there is no language, only pictures. A woman's head in profile wearing an academic tasseled cap drawn in a graphic style popular in the 1950s; a Chinese Buddhist pagoda drafted frontally and from a distance, like the icon of a building; a sea horse pictured from the side so that its anatomy is clearly traceable. What any viewer confronts, is the hegemonic English language, for better or worse, as a backdrop upon which all other languages hang.

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