

Press release

Janaina Tschäpe

À flor da pele

26.08- 3.10.2026

Galleri Bo Bjerggaard is proud to present *À flor da pele*, an exhibition of new works by Janaina Tschäpe.

The Brazilian-German artist Janaina Tschäpe works between studios in New York City and the Brazilian forest. The series of paintings presented in this exhibition was made in her studio deep in the Atlantic Forest in Minas Gerais in Brazil. The specifics of her studios, their location and architecture, affect the work she makes in them. Her Brooklyn studio is windowless and surrounded by the city and its noise. Her Brazilian studio has large windows, bringing the surrounding forest almost into the room as she works. Her work in both spaces deals with nature. In New York it enters the work filtered through memory. In Brazil through direct, daily confrontation, event, incident.

When describing the area around her studio in the forest, she spoke of events rather than places: a shockingly violent summer hailstorm, sudden darkness in the middle of the day, red earth running like a river following heavy rainfall, chickens drowning, crops failing. Unexpected incidents that disrupt and disturb. She experiences the landscape in time, as flux, not as a fixed vista. To her, nature is force, energy; she is part of that force, her energy is nature.

Tschäpe had worried that working there might lead her towards making pictures of nature — mountains, trees, landscape. Instead, nature entered the work in another way. Wind became gesture. Weather became movement. Colour acquired the intensity of red earth after rain. She says, "*I paint in the tension between gesture and drawing.*" The distinction is important: drawing is of something; gesture is something. The paintings do not describe natural events so much as find an equivalence for them in paint.

She describes making them as a continual negotiation between control and its loss, between gesture and drawing, accident and decision. A deliberate mark can turn out to be a mistake; an accident can become essential. Correcting one part destabilises another. A detail changes the whole and the whole demands something new from the detail. There is a repeated call and response. The image is negotiated into existence.

The Danish painter Per Kirkeby spoke of the danger of protecting the most beautiful or 'successful' part of a painting. Painting around it in order to preserve it can leave it isolated and unintegrated, at odds with the painting as a whole. Every part has to be in service to the whole. For Tschäpe, beauty, taste and the artist's facility can become forms of control, ways of resolving a painting before it has discovered what it needs to be. She resists the temptation to rescue a painting by making it harmonious. She allows it to remain unstable,

awkward or unresolved until a different kind of coherence emerges, one generated from within the painting rather than imposed upon it.

Tschäpe talks about what she calls **"the spooky place of painting."** The phrase describes something uncanny about the relationship between a painter, a painting and its authorship. Despite the painter having made every mark, at a certain point the thing she has made confronts her as something other than herself. It becomes itself, develops its own voice and makes demands. She responds. Authorship becomes reciprocal and strangely unstable: the artist is completely involved and yet no longer completely in control.

The paintings made in Brazil are the results of these negotiations. They are not representations of the forest in any straightforward sense. Rather, the conditions Tschäpe encounters there — unpredictability, force, suddenness, flow, instability, growth, destruction — become conditions of the painting itself. She is embedded in the immediacy of nature rather than remembering it at a distance, just as she is embedded in the process of making the painting rather than standing apart from it as its controlling author.

Her painting, like the weather, is an event.