

## The potential of painting

We see images everywhere. We see the world in images, and we are inundated by a constant flow of visual impressions. Many people try to get away from our hectic, image-saturated world into art museums, dreaming of finding artworks that offer experiences of intimacy and authenticity. We scout around and look for something that will 'move us'. What can painting do that other images that surround us do not offer?

A painting is created by a person with a purpose. The purpose may be a matter of craftsmanship – a wish to transform paint on canvas into visual expression. Some painters may have a story they want to convey or a time on which they want to comment. Paintings differ. A simple painting may have a simple purpose – for example to be in nice colours and without surprises each new time you see it. A good work of art has multiple purposes, for example combining craftsmanship, colour, line, brushwork, narrative, references and the times in a masterly unity. Works like this may be immediately accessible, but they may also be complicated to take in. The central thing is that they involve more than we see directly, and offer us more each time we make the effort to receive it. The work has an agenda. The agenda of the work is what the painting wants of us as viewers. The work is not something we must penetrate and decode. It comes to us and unfolds for us if we give ourselves time and the painting our attention.

Maria Torp's works contain this kind of multiple layering. At first glance you can directly read off the fact that this is a figurative painting. We often see a person or figure in an immediately recognizable situation. But when we look more closely, there will be surprises. With craftsmanlike precision Maria Torp combines her figurations with surrealistic elements, a visual presence and intense energy. The subjects seem immediately recognizable and picture-perfect, but as we let the work open up and affect our senses, we can feel as viewers the satisfaction of appreciating the craftsmanship, the dance of line and colours, the intensity, the narrative potential of the motifs and the sense of current relevance that the works reflect.

Figurative painting has aroused new interest and status in recent years, and Maria Torp is one of the painters who are helping to renew and develop the field.

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