

## Nya Åland



Horses are a central motif in Marie Sand's art. Photo: Jonas Edsvik

## Portraying Human Inner Life Through Horses

French artist Marie Sand fell in love with horses when she was eight. When she in adult age started painting, after a serious disease, she realised the fundamental importance the horses held for her and her creativity. The hypersensitive animals became a lifeline of a sort for Sand, and the horse portraits are central to her exhibition "Talk a Walk on the Fairy Trail", opening tonight at Galleri Skarpans.

"Horses speak the language of emotions, they reflect the human's inner life," Sand says.

Marie Sand grew up in the Calvados department in Normandie, in north-western France. After having, among other things, lived in Washington for several years, she moved to Paris. In the urban environment there was no possibility of horseback riding, and some three or four years ago, Sand realised how much she missed the horses, the scent of them, and the affinity she felt when younger. After falling sick with a life-threatening disease, Sand realised that she had to make the most of life and give herself the opportunity to create art for real. Then she started painting horses based on memory.

"The language of horses is the language of emotions. Their senses are finely tuned; their hearing, sense of smell, and sense of touch. They really are sensitive animals."

Herself being highly sensitive, in a society that is not always very accepting of strong displays of emotion, Sand feels a connection with the hypersensitive animals and with nature. She has developed her own niche, which she has trademarked, where she creates a sort of "emotion portrait" which serves to make visible the deep, silent, and emotional bond between human, horse, and nature. Through this, Sand wants specifically to encourage sensitive

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persons to better get in touch with their emotions – by portraying them as horses. The creative process starts with an interview, where the person being portrayed gets to express their emotions and perceptions. The interview is the raw material for the portrait, and the intention is that the picture of the horse should mirror the person's inner life.

The concept seems successful. Apart from private customers who want to be portrayed like horses, Sand also arranges workshops and teambuilding events for companies as a part of strengthening unity and teamwork between co-workers. Investment companies, for example, usually get in touch, according to Sand.

Last Sunday, Marie Sand held a workshop in the pavilion in Badhusparken, Mariehamn, where the visitors got to try horse portrait painting. **Milla Rosenberg's** Gotland pony Pärla, from Haddnäs farm, was on-site in the pavilion as model. If there is enough interest, more workshops can be arranged in Åland in the future, according to Sand.

## Painted in Lumparland

Marie Sand does not only paint and draw horses, but also nature and landscapes. For two years now, she lives in Helsinki, and she has also spent a week visiting Lumparland and painting landscapes.

“Åland and Lumparland are really interesting in my painting journey. It reminds me to some extent about my home district in Normandie, with the sea, the greenery, and the countryside. It's so beautiful. But what made the strongest impression was the light and the colours – Åland is so pink! In the south, such as Italy and France, the landscape is dominated by orange and blue, in Helsinki the light and colours are characterised by yellow and violet, while Åland is emerald green and pink.”

The exhibition “Talk a Walk on the Fairy Trail” opens tonight between 17:00 and 19:00, at Galleri Skarpans, and lasts until June 22.

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*“Pour la vie”. A tribute to life, love, and the HBTQ-community. Photo: Jonas Edsvik*



*“Åland is so pink!” Marie Sand has spent a week in Lumparland, where she painted landscapes. Photo: Jonas Edsvik*