

LO·CO·MO·TIVE

SOPHIE TOTTIE

RITA MCBRIDE

15 AUG – 27 SEP

LO·CO·MO·TIVE takes as its starting point Lokstallet's tradition of bringing together diverse artistic voices and allowing their practices to engage in dialogue with one another. In this exhibition, Lokstallet itself has also been brought in as a participant of sorts in the artistic process. Drawing on the building's unique architecture and history, an interdisciplinary dialogue has emerged over the past six months between artists Sophie Tottie and Rita McBride and Lokstallet itself.

In preparation for the 2026 exhibition program, the idea arose to produce an exhibition exploring the concept of site-specific art. That is art that emerges through a dialogue with a particular location, where the work's form and content actively interact with the space's own material and cultural conditions.

Early in the planning stage, Sweden-based artist Sophie Tottie was invited to join the project. For decades, she has distinguished herself internationally through an interdisciplinary, process-based practice in which drawing, painting, objects, and spatial interventions combine to investigate how structural systems shape our perception of the world. Tottie, in turn, proposed inviting Rita McBride. An artist based in the US and Germany to participate in the exhibition. McBride has developed a practice centered on subjects such as social structures, architecture, and public infrastructure. Her work often takes shape through close collaborations with specialized workshops and practitioners in other fields; the artistic process is driven less by individual creation than by the orchestration of collaborative projects, where the influence, knowledge, and skills of all participants are taken into account throughout the creative journey.

Beyond their shared interest in site-specific processes, Sophie Tottie and Rita McBride also share a professional relationship dating back to 1990s New York. During that time, they shared a studio in Manhattan's TriBeCa district and participated in several joint exhibitions. Both have also combined their artistic practices with significant work in education; Sophie Tottie has served as a professor at both Malmö Art Academy and the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, while Rita McBride spent many years as a professor, and later Rector, at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in Germany. Their work is underpinned by a strong belief in experimentation, in learning as a methodology, and in art as a way of thinking. Now, decades later, a dialogue is resuming between these two artistic practices practices that have evolved in parallel, yet within distinct geographical and institutional contexts.

A two-week residency at the Artists' Collective Workshop in Bohuslän (Konstnärernas Kollektivverkstad Bohuslän) provided the practical framework for the open, exploratory process that defines LO·CO·MO·TIVE. The workshops' printmaking techniques and specialized expertise allowed the artists to integrate production into the investigation itself, rather than treating it merely as a final step toward a finished work.

We surround ourselves daily with systems that help us make sense of the world languages, maps, measurements, timetables, and symbols meant to represent the nature of things. Yet here in the gallery, you encounter spatial interventions that do not necessarily lead to clear answers or final destinations. Instead of searching for the "correct interpretation", follow your own train of thought. Allow the artworks, materials, and the space to open up a realm of free associations. You will find the artists' own words and reflections on their work later in this pamphlet, but this experience belongs to you. What you see and your initial associations are just as important as the artists' own experiences during their creative thought process.

Lokstallet was once built to repair and maintain the locomotives that connected people, places, and ideas across the landscape. And although operations have changed today, the original logic remains present in the walls, the ceiling, the floor, and the underlying concept. In LO·CO·MO·TIVE, the history of this space becomes a metaphor for artistic thinking. Creative thought rarely moves in straight lines; it takes detours, pauses, turns back, and links up with other ideas along the way. In the past, the depot's purpose was to sustain movement. Yet even today, one could say that the gallery space exists to lubricate the thought and facilitate the journey forward toward unknown destinations.

/ Jesper Andersson – Exhibition Producer Lokstallet Konsthall

RITA MCBRIDE

"Regata Beta" brings several interests of mine together in a number of divergent yet related materials and meanings. In Regatta Betta, public opinion, previously owned sailboat sails and deconstructed eyebrow calipers feature in the determining role of betting odds and eventual consequential results of the bets that proliferate in contemporary life. Opinions are everywhere, highly influential and fleeting. The sails, full of wind, act as metaphors of momentum that carry the opinions from one point to another with meaning dissipating into thin air, never arriving to any production of thought or happiness. Calipers are value attributing instruments of measure deconstructed to become elements of hieroglyphic utterances. They arrive as a symbolic language, printed on the sails by a robotic plotter, that measures the metaphoric expressive and asymmetric proportions of the face to provide a comparative syntax for placing bets on political elections. Opinion finds form in our faces, finds interpretation and meaning in the lines, the furrows of our foreheads and our brows. Imagine if facial recognition software ascribed to it's data emotional states like anger, fear, anxiety and happiness. What effect would this data have in predicting ratio of possibilities that impact our world.

/ Rita McBride

SOPHIE TOTTIE

The works in the exhibition LO·CO·MO·TIVE relate to the site, to one another, and connect to earlier and ongoing investigations. The work moves through experiments and questions about how different elements, such as lines, numbers, images, and physical materials, are both abstract and charged with information, and how they connect what may seem to be different ideas.

As in several earlier works,* the process has grown out of changing experiences of the world, available materials, and the places where the work is made and shown. Through shifting materials, sites, and perspectives, the work takes shape as a kind of concrete reflection on the present and on history, where the connections between changing times are altered by different systems of classification and beliefs. Ideas characterised, for example, by measurement and methods for gaining an overview and orientation. In the works, coordinates are, for example, barcodes, text, hand-drawn maps, calculations, and recycling methods that are, sometimes, placed in relation to images conveyed through the media.

The current works at Lokstallet are thus shaped by how images, tools, site, and discarded paper materials relate to shifting information, and how shifts in available data affect notions and representations of reality when we as viewers encounter them in physical, reworked form.

The large and newly made printed drawing The Machinery (Accounts) / Maskineriet (Räkenskaper) consists of image and numerical elements. It was made using relief printing (högtryck), and it relates not only to the space of Lokstallet and the railway tracks that are still visible outside the exhibition space, but also to the work Face Value (I) from 2014, a metal point drawing that is included in the exhibition. In Face Value (I), discarded metals, in the form of a lump of copper and (family) rings, leave physical traces directly on the wall as the work is made on site. The lines of image elements in The Machinery (Accounts) were printed using KKV Bohuslän's large-scale analogue printing press, while the numbers by hand and the "figurative images" with the weight of the body. The drawing has taken its outer form from the dimensions of the printing

press and from the recycled paper material from a local paper manufacturer, who donated their paper waste, so-called pappersknosingar, to the project.

In the exhibition LO·CO·MO·TIVE, the large-scale drawing encounters an ongoing body of work with photographs and related material from a more than one-hundred-year-old photographic collection. The collection also contains a range of measuring and drawing tools (above: "the figurative images") from around the turn of the twentieth century, when Lokstallet was also built (1903). The measuring and drawing tools coexist, as image elements, with numbers and measurements noting, among other things, the width and length of the paper, the placement of lines, the track gauges of different railways, and dates relating to the development of the train and different systems of time, alongside the emergence of the first steam turbines and visualisations of air and air flows.

In some of the photographic prints, text and images are brought together based on information that has emerged in connection with research into the photographic collection. Departing from the photos and correspondence, for example, with the Swedish War Archive, the works explore how perceptions of reality change. The photographic collection contains extensive material relating to military history, which forms the basis for The Sweeper (Accounts) / Sveparen (Räkenskaper) and the five prints brought together in Baracks (Accounts) / Kaserner (Räkenskaper). By coincidence, the latter work has a direct connection to the region of Bohuslän, where this exhibition takes place, and the nearby city of Uddevalla.

The photographic collection also contains countless portraits, one of which has given rise to the image in the work Face Value (Portrait).

All the works depart from an interest in how history, information, and accumulated data affect and shift contemporary experiences and perceptions. The works circle around the ways in which we move between abstract (or forgotten) information and concrete form, and how abstract information can be made into tangible material that affects and creates new experiences. The works circle around the desire to change and shape the world and the consequences that follow. Earlier and ongoing attempts to measure time, categorise, develop, and imagine reality, shape the ongoing work that is now shown at Lokstallet.

Ultimately, however, the pieces and the process are more than content. More than the stories we tell. It is an ongoing work, a movement of sorts, that simultaneously gives form and, paradoxically, highlights how the formless also has a value. A value that underlines the importance of letting go and of staring out into a knowing that lies beyond knowing. In this way, we begin without form and end in formlessness, but without attempts at concrete form to guide us, we cannot return and let go. Strangely enough, the formless can concretise and make formlessness graspable.

*E.g. *Abandonado*, 1997, *Isolario*, 2005, *The Tipping Point (Milano/New York)*, 2016/24.

** I am paraphrasing the writer Jeanette Winterson, who writes about her work: "But writing is more than content. More than the stories we tell. Literature is an engagement with our deepest selves, a shaping of a language to talk about who we are – away from clichés and approximations, away from generalizations and half-truths. And oddly, literature is a way, at last, of not having to talk about anything. The moment that you put the book down. The moment you stare into space. A knowing that is beyond ordinary knowing. Resolution? Or peace? Or illumination? To pass through language back into silence. We start with silence, and we return to silence, but without language to guide us we cannot return there because Words are the part of silence that can be spoken."

*** After visiting Lokstallet in Strömstad and Strömstad City Hall, whose unusual architectural dimensions are based on the years of birth of the builder and his parents, it struck me that the building resembles the working process behind my works. A series of numbers, measurements, and dates have, in a more or less absurd way, shaped both the physical and conceptual emergence of the works.

/Sophie Tottie

Artistic process documents related to the works *Machinery (Accounts)*, *The Sweeper (Accounts)*, and *Barracks (Accounts)* are available upon request at the reception desk

Sophie Tottie (born 1964) is a Swedish artist, who after many years living and working in cities including New York and Berlin, is now based in Stockholm. Working across media such as painting, drawing, objects, photography/printmaking, and video, Tottie explores subjects shaped by site-specific, existential, political, and historical references, examining the relationship between the individual and larger structural systems. Her work often develops both in direct response to the particular indoor or outdoor spaces, in which it is presented, and the methods where the traces of the hand, the tools, repetition, and the concentrated working processes are embedded in the works, leaving visible marks of their making.

For more information about Sophie Tottie, visit [**sophietottie.info**](http://sophietottie.info).

Rita McBride (born 1960 in Des Moines, Iowa) is an artist who lives and works in Southern California and Düsseldorf. Her practice operates at the intersection of sculpture and architecture, encompassing large-scale sculptures, site- and space-specific installations, performances, and text-based projects. McBride's work includes examining how the social and functional elements of urban environments and how these shape our interaction with public space.

In 2003, she was appointed Professor of Sculpture in the *Integration of Art and Architecture* programme at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where she taught for two decades. From 2013 to 2017, she also served as the academy's Rector.

For more information about Rita McBride, visit [**ritamcbride.net**](http://ritamcbride.net).

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Lokstallet Konsthall is a non-profit contemporary art venue in Strömstad, Sweden. The gallery space is situated in a renovated locomotive shed built in 1903. Now the space is used for presenting exhibitions of contemporary art during the summer season. The programme is operated by the Municipality of Strömstad and supported by funding from the Västra Götaland Region.

The art gallery is staffed by the exhibition producer Jesper Andersson (60%) and a team of hourly-paid gallery attendants and technicians who support daily operations, visitor services, and exhibition installation.

Adress: Lokstallet Konsthall, Uddevallavägen 1, Strömstad, Sweden

Open hours: Ons-sön
12:00 – 16:00
*only open during open hours

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