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Into the Green
Marit Tingleff

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Opening Reception: Friday, May 8, 6–8 pm
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HB381 is delighted to announce *Into the Green*, a solo exhibition by one of Scandinavia's leading ceramic artists, Marit Tingleff (b. 1954, Norway). A painter among ceramicists, Tingleff is known for her gestural application of slips and oxides on monolithic coil-built clay slabs. By marking her surfaces with turbid, scrawled lines and streaking rivulets of slip, she produces roiling, epistolary abstractions on vast ceramic surfaces. Their blunt linear markings and dark, circuitous contours bear the quality of writing or sketch; in their proportions, her ceramics mimic the slow kinetics of natural forces etching landscape. The alternations of dense rhythmic patterning and areas of muted erosion are intrinsic to her process. Tingleff applies manganese, cobalt, chromium, and iron oxides over the earthenware clay body, only to selectively wash away sections, leaving a translucent imprint of her actions. As these traces accrete, they leave stains on the surface of the clay. The process of working and reworking, making and unmaking, produces an indeterminate yet complex visual inscription of her daily labor.

Whereas Tingleff's sculptural forms are substantial in scale, they are rooted in the commonplace implements of domestic life and the traditions of fine porcelain crockery. Often, their edges retain the scalloped silhouettes and raised lips of dishware, producing a friction between delicacy and weight. At other times, her pieces rest in specialized wooden displays, stacked in a semblance of familiar storage racks for dinnerware. In this manner, Tingleff's presentation speaks to the various forms of maintenance work associated with the vessel, from production pottery's repeated contours to domestic work's tedium: the endless obligation of washing dishes, stacking cupboards, and setting the table. The central work in the exhibition, *Into the Green, Large Plate Rack*, is arrayed as a gargantuan rendition of a plate rack. At over nine feet wide and with each plate extending roughly two feet in diameter, the installation transforms the elements of the kitchen into monumental landscapes of color. Twenty-four circular clay tablets rest against one another, each coiled from clay pinched and kneaded into a phantasmagoric stand-in for an ordinary dish. Together, the mineral glazes coalesce into a vision of dense, unchecked vegetation, rife with the natural world's infinite variations of umber and ochre, viridian and charcoal layered one atop another.

As design and craft historian Glenn Adamson notes in his essay for the exhibition catalog, Tingleff's ceramics give an "impression of the natural world beyond human-made walls, made powerfully and palpably present. All normal sense of scale is suspended. Each composition could represent a few rivulets in a streambed, a glimpse upward through a tree canopy, or the aerial view of a mountain range. And so too, our sense of time. The pieces are springlike, certainly, bursting with new life, but in actuality their constituent materials and fired forms are eternal, existing on the vast temporal scale of geology rather than botany. All one can say,

really, is that Tingleff's work is in one-to-one relation to itself. It is a map of the complex methods of its own making, a drama already unfolded that we nonetheless can still witness."

Tingleff's material choices and sensibility make reference to the great 19th century Danish architect and artist Thorvald Bindesbøll, whose stark use of freely applied brushstrokes with glaze washes introduced a graphic, expressionist sensibility to Scandinavian ceramics. Like Bindesbøll, Tingleff gives preference to thick, reddish earthenware walls that buttress her ceramics with a utilitarian sense of heft. She locates her aesthetic between the richness of layered mark-making and the barrenness of the clay substrate in its unadorned simplicity, a reminder that ceramics is fundamentally a material dug from the earth. It is this condition of ceramics as earth which reappears in her preference for vast scales, as in her series of *Standing Tiles*, coil-built rectangular substrates nearly four feet across with a single slight bend toward their base. By taking simple sculptural gestures and forms and enlarging them, Tingleff's works relate to the body less as implements of use and more so as imposing and relational architectonic forms. They frame and define the space we move through, producing constructed landscapes that the viewer engages with through physical and tactile means.

In her works for *Into the Green*, Tingleff works through repetition, allowing her plates to accumulate in an ongoing cycle of making and labor. In her hands, the dish, which has so often served as a substrate for storytelling and iconography, is stripped down to its essentials as a rough-hewn tablet. Her reserved color palette gives her work over to an abstract sensibility, whether in the sensation of color running over clay, streaked and spattered, or as a document of a prolonged engagement with making and unmaking. Actions are recorded and preserved, mediating between order and entropy. Ultimately, Tingleff aims to enter into a dialogue with the material of each dish and vessel, remarking, "My painting process is a mixture of spontaneity and slow, patient building up of the surface." In doing so, she produces what Adamson terms "works so capacious that, when you stand before them, they seem to hold all that's worth knowing."

Tingleff is a ceramic artist based in Hønefoss, Norway. She studied at the National College of Art and Design in Bergen, later becoming a professor and head of ceramics at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts from 2013–2016. Her work is held by a number of museums including the National Museum in Oslo, the Designmuseum Danmark, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. She has been awarded several public commissions including work for the Norwegian Government Representation Buildings in Oslo, Norway.