

*Penetrating one's depths: Some reflections on Ann Frössén's marine motifs*

Capturing breaking waves and eddying currents on canvas - stopping something in constant motion - is a challenging project. Artist Ann Frössén's tenacious struggle with the water testifies to a temperament, to courage and to a willingness to penetrate chaos; as well as to an inner drama. Only by engaging with the dark water, by diving into the sizzling foam of the restlessly tossing waves, can we penetrate our own inner depths.

At the same time that the tsunami and flood water have, in concrete fashion, become harbingers of despair and helplessness in our own time, Ann Frössén reminds us of the healing power of the sea. Her angry and turbulent oceans appear just as timeless and existential as they are expressions of Romanticism's ideas pertaining to what is unfathomable and sublime. One readily thinks of August Strindberg as a spiritual and artistic conversant. His paintings of stormy seas in the Stockholm archipelago form a link with the field of tension apparent in Ann Frössén's paintings.

What was originally restricted to painting on canvas has now expanded to include film sequences as well as graphic, digital and multimedia techniques. Ann Frössén has cast off the traditional classifications of art history. She is concerned more with expressing emotions than with marine motifs as such. Timidly and out of habit we look for the focus or fixed point of a painting at its centre. But the breach between two waves often takes place in the upper half of the painting, in a sunlit and striking diagonal movement.

Muted tones in a minor key with a sombre grey hue as the ground testify to her skill as a colourist. Suddenly a dazzling white comb will rise up, as though to present us with an explanatory light. The scene is never calm, though there is not always a storm raging. In the midst of the foamy wave tops and the spray of the swell, Ann Frössén offers us a temporary pause so that we can get our breath back.

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