

# TOBBE MALM metalArt



## Press Kit

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Tobbe Malm MetalArt on Facebook

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# Artist Statement



I create art to share my experiences with others. Growing up in a small town that relied on heavy industry, the ground often shook underfoot as the miners dug further. The rawness of the ore being brought up from the mines shaped my world view. I see everything as trying to return to an original state, to be born again. There is a beauty in that kind of destruction. I aim for my art to capture this dynamic nature in sight and sound.

My work is how I live my life. I draw strength from the excitement and drama found in our memories and experiences. The passion of encounters drives me. We are all part of one universe, and our shared connection is most obvious during encounters. An encounter can be fleeting, but each one begins a new path in my life. In this way, moments are timeless. When the iron in my forge is hot and malleable, there is just a single moment in which to encounter a raw, shapeless state. A story emerges, and I freeze the expression to a form.

## Biography: Tobbe Malm (b. 1960, Sweden)

Tobbe Malm is a blacksmith artist born in Norberg, Sweden, in 1960. Norberg is a small Swedish mining town, where the industry is thought to date from the 12th century. The very earth shook day and night from explosions in the mine tunnels far below the streets. The iron ore was boiled in a blast furnace, the smoke from the huge chimney licking the sky day and night. Malm cites this perpetual presence of heavy industry throughout his childhood as an influence on his work. The constancy of birth and rebirth of substance fascinated him. The town's blast furnace closed down in 1981. Now nature creeps over the crumbling buildings, regaining control over its domain. The inherent beauty in this destruction strikes Tobbe deeply. His work is characterised by explorations into this subject of returning and rebirth.

The Malm family held a space for creativity and Tobbe took inspiration from both his parents. His mother worked in healthcare and published several medical books throughout her career. His father worked in the town's heavy industry, while indulging a silversmith hobby in his spare time. Tobbe explored art and design, working with different materials such as ceramic, wood, textiles, and silver. Eventually training as a social worker, it was natural for him to be drawn toward art as therapy. For Tobbe, the creative process is a powerful and transformative journey for both the artist and the viewer. Tobbe's working process begins with a small feeling or thought, usually triggered by an encounter. Drawing on his own memories and experiences, a theme emerges. A sketch. Then to the forge. The iron is heated to 1,000 degrees, at which point it becomes malleable. There is a brief moment in which the iron can be shaped. An encounter between Tobbe and the iron, brief and fleeting, then the metal is plunged into cold water and the expression is frozen.

In 2008, Tobbe moved his workshop to Bærums Verk artist community in Oslo, Norway. He partook in many exhibitions and collectives, receiving awards for his contributions. In 2011 the city and country was shaken deeply by the attacks on Oslo and Utøya by Anders Breivik, which left 77 people dead. Tobbe, together with a blacksmith friend, put out an international call to blacksmiths. Inspired by the roses laid all over Oslo as a symbol of mourning, Tobbe asked that people forge roses from iron. Hundreds of roses flooded in from all over the world. Some were delivered by hand from as far away as Australia. Meanwhile, Tobbe

worked with survivors, their families, and those close to victims, to forge iron roses. The artistic process provides the opportunity for healing by creating a space where grief can be shared and thus lightened. Each rose forged in this way was added to the growing collection of iron roses arriving from international blacksmiths. To date there are more than 900 pieces in the collection. Tobbe was awarded the 2014 Alfred Habermann Memorial Prize for the project, titled Iron Rose for Norway.

From this experience, the Bolt Poetry series evolved. Tobbe had found old, rusting bolts of all sizes on a farm in Sweden. He felt they had something to express, so packed as many hundreds of kilos of them as he could into bags and brought them to his workshop. What emerged was strikingly human in form and emotional expression. The pieces had no title and are gender neutral, yet the viewer assigns all those details and more. As the series grew to four parts, it received international recognition. Tobbe's work aims to capture the dynamic nature of moments. The cold, hard, silent, still, pieces seem to speak a thousand warm words and move in a million ways. The experience of the encounter has moved people all over the world. The bolt people, as they are affectionately dubbed, have toured in Sweden and Norway, and internationally to the UK and America.

Tobbe is now turning his attention toward igniting a new paradigm of metal as interior design. He is also developing his musical project, Tubal Cain and Lilith. The band of blacksmiths and artists makes instruments from scrap metal and creates music that reflects the rhythm and spectacle of the smithy.

# Exhibitions and Awards



## CURRENT EXHIBITION

2016 Jernskulpturer Utstilling, Baerums Verk, Oslo, Norway

## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

2016 Sandvika Bygård, Oslo, Norway

2016 Kunsthandverkerne, Oslo, Norway

2016 Scrap Guitar Workshop, Arthouse Limburg, The Netherlands

2017 Workers Gallery, Wales, UK

## PAST EXHIBITIONS

### Selected Solo Exhibitions:

2016 Ögonblick och evigheter, Borlänge Bibliotek och Konsthall, Borlänge, Sweden

### Selected Curatorial Projects:

2015 Julutställning, Baerums Verk, Oslo, Norway

2015 On the Sixth Day, Sandvika Dommunegård, Oslo, Norway

### Selected Group Exhibitions:

2015 Windows into Souls, JedMalitz2, New Orleans, USA

2015 Art in Mind, Brick Lane Gallery, London, UK

2015 Summer Exhibition, Rottneros Sculpture Park, Rottneros, Sweden

2015 Kunst Sorted Vest, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, Norway

2015 Kultursmedjan, Samsö, Denmark

2015 Interpretations of the Kalevala Verses, Fiskars, Finland

2014 Stunning Pictures, Drammen Collective, Norway

2014 Gallery Iron Made, Gothenburg Collective, Gothenburg, Sweden

2014 Back to Nature, S9 Oslo Collective, Oslo, Norway

2013 Artista Sandvika Collective, Oslo, Norway

2013 Abraham Estate Norberg Collective, Norberg, Sweden

2013 Gallery Östermalm, Stockholm Collective, Stockholm, Sweden

2013 Gallery Vanntårnet, Nesodden Collective, Oslo, Norway

2013 The Rolling Mill, Smederevo Collective

## COLLECTIONS

Works held in private collections in Sweden, Norway, Finland, USA, Germany, France, Slovenia, Denmark, Italy, Australia. .



## AWARDS

2014 Alfred Habermann Memorial Prize

2006 Olle Norberg Memorial Fund

2002 Norberg Municipality's Culture Prize

## PAST PUBLICITY

Fabbio Canto, "parafusos 'humanizados' expressam emoções na série bolt poetry, de tobbe malm", Ideia Quente, April 2016

Xi, Chen: "他用生区的螺区· 区了一首区于孤区和依靠的区", Phoenix InfoNews Channel, March 2016

Contemporary Art Curator October 2015 <http://www.contemporaryartcurator.com/tobbe-malm/>

Bennai, Chloe: "Bolt Poetry/Tobbe Malm", Spinocchia Freund London (Online Magazine), November 2015

"Working the Medium of Metal – The Art of Tobbe Malm", Aesthetica Magazine, issue 64, April 2015, p. 152

Jobsson, Christopher: "Bolt Poetry: A Blacksmith Evokes Surprisingly Human Forms from Single Steel Bolts", This Is Colossal Online Magazine, March 2015

Keogh, Elaine: "Blacksmiths create roses for Norway massacre memorial", Irish Independent Newspaper, December 2011

Torheim, Egil: "Lager jernroser til minne om terrorofrene", NRK Newspaper, August 2011

Ihme, Henrik: "Får inn jernroser fra hele verden", VG Newspaper, January 2012

## Past Press Release

### TOBBE MALM BOLT POETRY SERIES IV EXHIBITION

Viewers invited to interpret the stories of the “bolt people” at Borlänge Konsthall.

OSLO, NORWAY, 14 January 2016 – Bærums Verk blacksmith artist Tobbe Malm opened an exhibition of the fourth in the Bolt Poetry series this week in Borlänge Konsthall, Sweden. Titled, “Moments and Eternities/Ögonblick och Evigheter”, the exhibition is an exploration of human vulnerability, wrought in raw iron. Malm has been developing an idea he calls “creation theory”, exploring the timeless nature of the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The exhibition runs until February 3rd, and is complimented by a special online exhibition, allowing people from all over the world to see the collection. His permanent gallery is at Bærums Verk, where pieces from the entire Bolt Poetry series are on show.

The theme of destruction and renewal has always fascinated Malm. Years earlier, at a time when death was prominent in his life, Malm often spoke with a friend who was entrenched in a similarly dark period. The conversations centred on dying, yet soon the pair realised they had come full circle, and were talking about renewal and life. Malm was at the time working on the Iron Rose for Norway project, which he created following the terror attacks on Oslo in 2011. The project used the creative process to help the survivors and other victims to process their grief. “Meeting with people in grief had left me with this palpable sense of loss,” said Malm. He wanted to express the universal humanity of these encounters. Soon afterwards, he began crafting the “bolt people”, who came to embody this subtlety in all of us. The rough, cold exterior cannot hide the softness of the child in all of us.

Malm had found old bolts of all sizes on a farm in Bergslagen, Sweden. They had lain there a long time, and might well have rusted away entirely, returning to their original mineral form. Malm was struck by this. He describes the encounter: “The bolts reminded me of human forms, and I felt they had something to tell. I heated them, forged, bent and twisted them. I tried to create relations, meetings and situations and suddenly stories emerged about sorrow, joy, pain, warmth and humour. A kind of poetry was created.” These emotions and stories touch something universal. None of the bolt people, as they came to be called, have names. Malm leaves it to the viewer to tell their story.

The current exhibition showcases the fourth in the Bolt Poetry series. The theme is moments and eternities, expressing the timelessness of our experiences, though the moment is fleeting. The first series was simply called “Bolt Poetry”, followed by, “Songs from White Archive”, and “Wondrous Voice of Love”. The species is finite, and soon all of the bolts Malm collected will have gone through the cycle of renewal and been forged into something new. These are the ones who will remain to tell their stories, while the others rust and dissolve. The challenge to the viewer is to look beyond the exterior.

The exhibition is open daily Monday through Saturday in Borlänge. If you can't make it, visit the exhibition online by clicking here. For sales enquiries, contact the artist at [jernmalm@gmail.com](mailto:jernmalm@gmail.com).

#### EXHIBITION DETAILS

Dates: 12 January – 3 February 2016

Venue: Borlänge Konsthall, Huvudbiblioteket, Sveatorget 5, Borlänge SE.

Online: <https://www.behance.net/gallery/32550561/OEgonblick-och-evigheterMoments-Eternities-Exhibition>

#### Quotes

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I wanted to forge something that was inspired by the “Iron Rose” but wanted it to be something different. Meeting with people in grief had left me with this palpable sense of loss, and I wanted to express that in my festival contributions. In my luggage I had three old bolts from Bergslagen and forged the first bolt sculpture, “Absent”. (Tobbe Malm)

## Past Press Release

# IRON SCULPTURES WITH SURPRISINGLY SOFT HUMANITY

Artist Tobbe Malm brings Bolt Poetry exhibition to Oslo.

OSLO, NORWAY, 17 March 2016 – The Bolt people have existed as a species for some time, but it is only now that the Norwegian people are discovering them. Swedish blacksmith artist Tobbe Malm, who has been living in Oslo for the past five years, created the silent yet meaning-rich sculptures using old bolts he discovered on a farm. Following a hugely successful exhibition in Borlange, Sweden, this year, the Bolt people have come to Oslo for an exhibition at Malms gallery in Bærums Verk. The exhibition is open daily until the end of March and features a special guest, Norwegian painter Solveig Skogseide.

Malm felt that the bolts had something to say. He remembers, “The bolts reminded me of human forms. I heated them, forged, bent and twisted them. I tried to create relations, meetings and situations and suddenly stories emerged about sorrow, joy, pain, warmth and humour.” A kind of poetry was created. Hence the name of the series: Bolt Poetry. Yet, people naturally began to use the term bolt people as the emotions of the figures were so human-like.

It is not surprising that the Bolt Poetry series was created in response to a highly emotional moment in Norways history: the attack on Utøya island on 22 July 2009. The first piece, with the name Absent represented Malms meetings with those who had lost family and friends on that day. “Meeting with people in grief had left me with this palpable sense of loss,” says Malm of his inspiration for the piece. Absent will form part of an exhibition taking place this summer commemorating the terrible events

of five years ago, along with over 800 roses forged in metal as part of the Iron Rose for Norway project,

Capturing human emotions is also a driving force for Skogseide. Like Malm, she is inspired by relationships. Her paintings show scenes of the ordinary through her unique lens. The hazy blend of colours invites us to look closer and see what we think we know in a new way. Malm extends the same invitation to the viewer, though his sculptures ask you to look past the hard, cold, iron surface, and see the beauty through another eye. Apart from Absent, the Bolt Poetry sculptures have no title. It is left to the viewer to create their own story.

The contrast between the paintings and the sculptures in the Bærums Verk gallery is striking. Skogseides slightly surreal, colourful landscapes provide the perfect backdrop for the raw iron sculptures. You can see the bolt people sitting in a world that seems their own. It is a special and mysterious place, but a place that exists inside each and every one of us. This place can sometimes seem very far away as we go about our daily lives. This exhibition, titled “Moments and Eternities”, shows us that we can all get to that place if we just look a little closer. One moments glimpse can last a lifetime.

The exhibition is entering its final week, welcoming the last visitors on March 31st. The artist village at Bærums Verk is a beautiful place to spend an afternoon, especially now that Spring sunlight is beginning to shine.

### EXHIBITION DETAILS

Dates: 13 February – 31 March 2016

Venue: BVerkgata 6A, 1353 Baerums Verk, Oslo, NO

### Quotes

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# JERNSKULPTUER SOM ER OVERRASKENDE MYK OG MENNESKELIG

Kunstner Tobbe Malm bringer Bolt Poetry utstilling til Oslo.

OSLO, NORGE, 17 mars 2016 – “Bolt People” har eksistert lenge, men det er først nå de har blitt oppdaget her i Norge. Den svenske smedkunstneren Tobbe Malm, som har bodd i Oslo de siste fem årene, skapte de stille, dog meningsfulle skulpturene med gamle bolter han fant på en gård. Etter en vellykket utstilling i Borlänge, Svergie, i januar kommer “Bolt People” nå til Oslo for en utstilling på Malms galleri i Bærums Verk. Utstillingen vil være åpen hver dag til slutten av mars, og den norske maleren Solveig Skogseid stiller ut sin kunst sammen med han.

Tobbe Malm følte at boltene hadde en historie å fortelle. Han husker, “boltene minnet meg om menneskelige former. Jeg varmet dem, smidde, bøyde og vred på dem. Jeg prøvde å skape relasjoner, møter og situasjoner, og plutselig dukket det opp historier om sorg, glede, smerte, varme og humor.” En slags poesi ble skapt. Derfor fikk utstillingen navnet “Bolt Poetry”. Men på folkemunne ble skulpturene fort omtalt som “Bolt People” da følelsene de vekke var så menneskelige.

Det å fange menneskelige følelser er også en stor pådriver for Solveig Skogseid. Som Malm er hun inspirert av relasjoner. Hennes malerier viser vanlige scener gjennom hennes unike syn. Disige farger inviterer oss til å se nøyer og til å se kjente ting på en ny måte. Malm gir den samme invitasjonen, selv om hans skulpturer ber deg om å se forbi den harde, kalde overflaten og se skjønnheten under med nye øyne. Bortsett fra “Fraværende” har ingen noen av “Bolt Poetry” skulpturene fått et navn. Det er opp til betrakteren å skape sin egen historie.

Kontrasten mellom maleriene og skulpturene på Bærums Verk er slående. Skogseids litt surrealistiske, fargerike landskap gir den perfekte bakgrunnen for de rå jernskulpturene. Du kan se bolt skulpturene sitte i verdner som ser ut som deres egne. Det er et spesielt og mysterisk sted, men et sted som finnes inne i hver og en av oss. Dette stedet kan av og til virke veldig langt bort når vi går gjennom vårt daglige liv. Denne utstillingen, som heter “Øyeblikk og evigheten”, viser oss at vi alle kan komme til det stedet vis vi bare ser litt nærmere. Et øyeblikk der kan vare livet ut.

Det er ikke overraskende at “Bolt Poetry” serien ble skapt som en respons på en veldig emosjonell hendelse in Norsk historie: angrepet på Utøya 22. juli 2011. Den første skulpturen, med navn “Fraværende”, representerer møter mellom Malm og de som mistet familie og venner den dagen. “Møte med folk som var i sorg ga meg en nesten følbare følelse av sorg”, sier Malm om inspirasjonen til “Fraværende”. Denne skulpturen skal bli en del av en utstilling til sommeren, sammen med over 800 jernrosor som ble smidd i Jernrose prosjektet. Den utstillingen skal minnes de forferdelige hendelsene sommeren for fem år siden.

“Øyeblikk og evigheter” utstillingen går snart inn i sin siste uke, og velkommer de siste besøkende den 31. mars. Kunsterlandsbyen Bærums Verk et et vakkert sted å tilbringe en ettermiddag, spesielt nå når vårsolen har begynt å skinne.

### Om Utstillingen

Dato: 13 februar – 31 mars 2016

Sted: Verksgata 6A, 1353 Bærums Verk, Oslo, NO

### Sitater



Mine skulpturer har ingen tittel. Jeg vil la betrakteren skape sin egen historie. (Tobbe Malm)



Jeg ønsket å skape noe som var inspirert av Jernrosen, men ønsket at det skulle være noe anderledes. Møte med mennesker i sorg hadde etterlatt meg med en følbare følelse av sorg, og jeg ønsket å uttrykke dette i min kunst. I bagasjen hadde jeg tre bolter fra Bergslagen og fra dem smidde jeg min første bolt skulptur, “Fravær”. (Tobbe Malm)

# Bolt Poetry Series

The bolt people are collected into four series. The first, Songs from White Archive, the second, Bolt Poetry, the third, Wondrous Voice of Love, and the fourth, Moments and Eternities. The fascinating experience of having an empathetic, highly emotional reaction toward twisted bolts created a sensation and spread Malms name and work all over the globe.

