

MONTANASALEN

#15

MALENE BACH  
*COLOUR TRANSITIONS*





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Montanasalen is an extraordinary meeting room at Kunstforeningen GL STRAND where visual artists, in changing installations, investigate the significance of settings and decorations for the meeting situation. The current decoration of Montanasalen has been created by Malene Bach.

Thanks to

## Montana

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Malene Bach's team:

Hildegunn Grønningsæter, Benjamin Rask,

Fie Bjørch, Signe Riis-Hansen









## ABOUT COLOUR TRANSITIONS. INTERVIEW WITH MALENE BACH

BY PERNILLE FONNESBECH, CURATOR

Pernille Fønnesbech (PF): *How have you tackled the job of creating an installation for Montanasalen?*

Malene Bach (MB): We're sitting in a house designed by the architect Philip de Lange in the 1750s, which is why the house has a certain architectural pondus and the area is full of Copenhagen history. From here we look across to the Thorvaldsens Museum, with Jørgen Sonne's frieze, which means a lot to me. The colours and decorations, both the ones inside and on the facade, are conceived as part of the architecture as in a *Gesamtkunstwerk*; an idea I share in my own approach to my work. Montanasalen is a meeting room where a table and 16 seats are a precondition, and where I have taken my point of departure in the function and location of the space. Quite specifically I have created a table with a pigment painting on wood, chairs draped as a kind of textile collages, and a white paper frieze on grey walls. The play of colours unfolds in the centre, and the surrounding walls form a background as negative motifs.

The table is a shared focus of our attention in the meeting situation. It is a kind of *war room* table, a map according to which we can navigate freely and intuitively. It is made of three ash planks, cut diagonally in order to make use of the whole width of the tree trunk. I have rubbed pigments into the surface of the wood with linseed wax. The technique brings out the structure of the wood and makes clear what the painting consists of. I have used this method of painting on wood for many years. Originally I began painting on wood to incorporate the long cultural history of painting. The inspiration came from the early icon painting of the sixth century. It was painted on wood so the painting was portable – unlike the pictures which at that time were painted directly on the building. As with icons, which were often composed as several pictures in one, I am very fond of structuring a surface and a space. I do not consider a structure limiting, but rather as a liberating system in which poetry can arise. The textiles for the chairs of the room similarly draw inspiration from the history of drapery, which is about how cloth falls and folds – a theme that is given much consideration in the history of art, and has references to something I work with – that is, layers and light. Layers and folds open up a wealth of angles, making the object constantly change with the light – you never see the same thing twice.

The colour palette in the installation draws on classic pigments from the Thorvaldsens Museum, but also on modern colour phenomena; in particular, the interference and metallic effect of the textiles are great fun for me as a painter, because they mix

the colours before our eyes, and are part of the play of the installation, which form transitions in the tactile qualities of different materials. Moreover, the colour effects of the modern textiles help to remove the earnestness from the more self-important of the classic colours. Not in a superficial way, but an inner tension arises that challenges our urge to categorize.

**PF:** *What figures or motifs have you worked with in your installation?*

**MB:** When you enter Montanasalen, you may look for the work in the room; what you encounter is a table with chairs around it. Here the draped chairs can give you the impression that there is already someone present in the room. They remind you of jackets or cloaks slung over the chair backs that function almost like characters in a drama. As a contrast to this colour drama, the walls are papered with light, monochrome volumes of paper. Set on the dark wall they have the effect of openings that lead out of the room.

I am greatly stimulated by the idea of the *open work* and the sketching process that is still open. Curiosity is my driving force. My work is therefore always an investigation driven forward in an open process by enthusiasm.

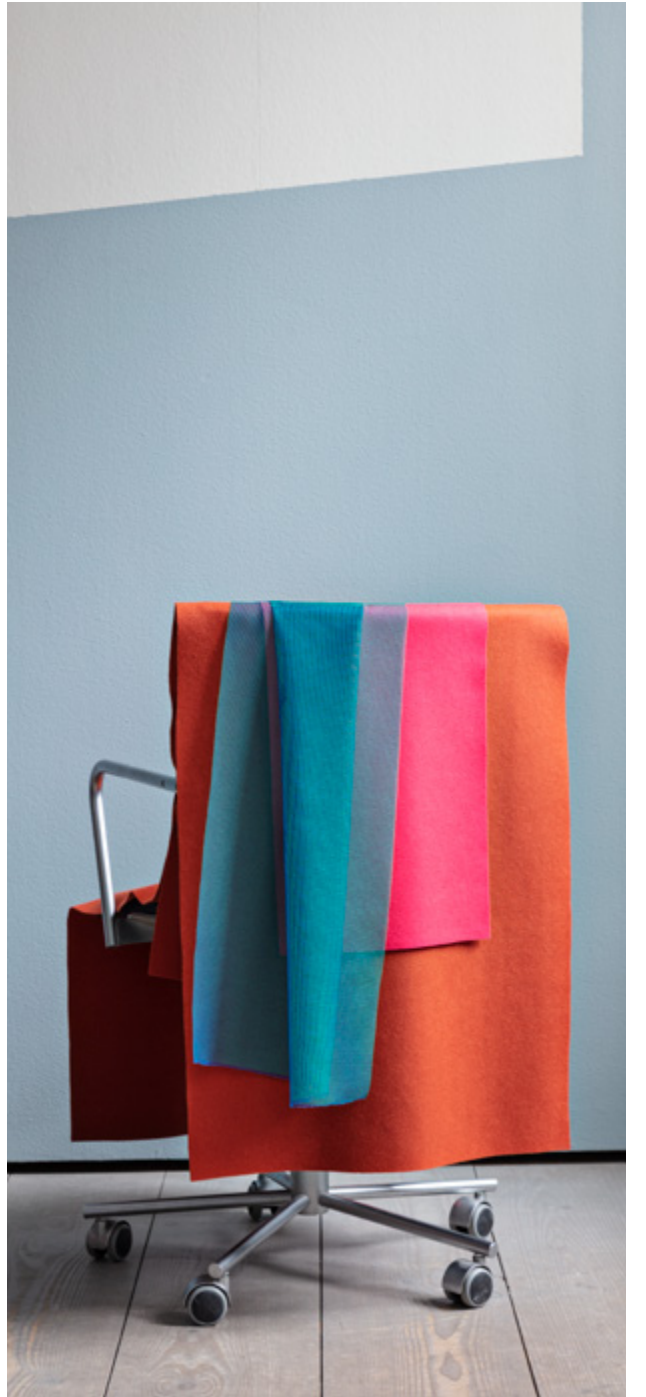
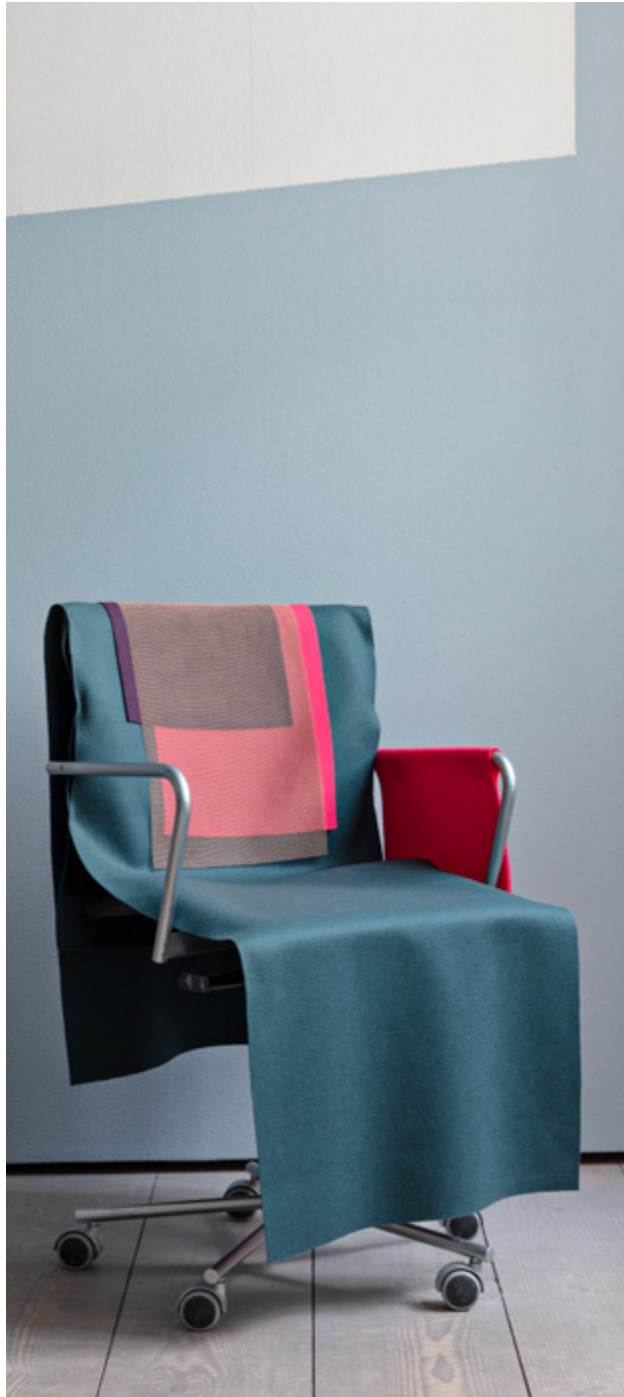
On the table, the wall and the chairs, I have worked with geometrical figures which relate in scale to the body. The figures too are interrelated, just as the space between them leaves room for the figures and materials to change or alter character along the way.

My paper frieze in Montanasalen can be seen as an extension of Sonne's frieze on the outer walls of the Thorvaldsens Museum, which take the form of a comic strip, with a parade of figures in black line drawings and filled-in colour fields on a dark grey background, where heroic workers carry Thorvaldsen's white sculptures into the museum and all the figures are carefully matched in their respective fields in the facade.

In addition I regard the painting on the wooden board of the table as a kind of landscape painting. The wood is part of the landscape and in this work the wood is part of the painting. The wood is not translated into a picture, it is here on a scale of 1:1, as a precondition for the composition of the colours – and thus creates a connection with the landscape in another way.







## ABOUT MALENE BACH

Malene Bach (b. 1967) lives and works in Copenhagen. Her artistic work unfolds in continuation of abstract painting and in an expansive painterly field. The focus of Bach's practice is investigations of the interaction of colours, light and a variety of materials in relation to a given context and situation which often play a crucial role. She creates works in the studio as well as works integrated in architecture or as site-specific decorations. Malene Bach has exhibited at several Danish and international exhibition spaces including the Architecture Biennale in Venice. She is the recipient of several honours including awards from Klara Karolines Fond founded by Aase & Poul Gernes, and the honorary grant of Anne Marie Telmányi, née Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen.









## FACILITIES

Montanasalen is a meeting room with character where remarkable artists create changing installations.

Guests of Montanasalen also have access to GL STRAND's cosy courtyard and free access to all GL STRAND's current exhibitions.

### CAPACITY

16 persons for a meeting / 25 persons for a reception

### AV EQUIPMENT

Projector  
Whiteboard  
Flipover  
Wireless internet  
Technical support

### MEETING OR RECEPTION

For further reading on possibilities and prices regarding meetings and receptions in Montanasalen please visit:  
<http://en.glstrand.dk/use-and-hire/the-hall.aspx>

### CONTACT

For inquiries and more information please contact Event Coordinator  
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**Edition**  
600

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ISBN: 978-87-7441-137-6

HRH CROWN PRINCE FREDERIK IS THE PATRON OF GL STRAND





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