



Emily Gernild, *Dolls* (2023). Detail. Photo: Malle Madsen.

EMILY GERNILD *Aunts and Dolls*

17th NOV 2023 – 18th FEB 2024

Exhibition opening: 16th November, 17.00-19.00
Gammel Holtegaard

Gammel Holtegaard proudly presents Emily Gernild's exhibition *Aunts and Dolls*, the Danish artist's biggest solo show to date. Compelling works with a distinctive palette explore memories from Gernild's family past and the stories that have been passed down the generations. *Aunts and Dolls* is an exhibition about the lives of women, the layers of memory and sisterhood.

In *Aunts and Dolls* Emily Gernild (b. 1985) focusses on how we relate to family stories that get passed on – and the ones that get lost between one generation and the next. Gernild uses the many layers of painting to probe the bleak, ambivalent and disturbing psychological traces lurking beneath the surface. Taking the story of Aunt Inger and Aunt Eva as her starting point, the works in the exhibition explore cross-generational stories, sorrow and sisterhood.

Emily Gernild only has vague memories of the aunts from childhood. What she knows about Inger and Eva's lot in life is limited to family conversations, family photos and heirlooms. A melancholy universe of marzipan beige, raspberry red, cream and shades of plum presents Emily Gernild's take on her family past.

Sisters Inger and Eva were born in 1919 and 1921. They grew up in a gentrified villa in Vanløse, where they lived together until their deaths. Their father ran a successful luxury bakery, and the aunts loved it when he brought large cream cakes home from work. Inger and Eva never married. They led an isolated life in the family house, leaving only rarely.

Inger suffered long bouts of bedridden illness during her life and Eva dedicated herself to caring for her sister. As a teenager Inger was considered a rebel and unruly because she went against her evangelical family in refusing to be confirmed. Afraid of growing up, she rejected this rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. In the teenage novels she read she carefully whited out any words referring to gender, age and religion. Inger grew increasingly disturbed, started hearing voices and developing OCD. She had a lobotomy in her thirties. The controversial surgical procedure left her listless, depressed and subdued.

Emily Gernild's paintings are works of construction, interweaving cream cakes, interiors, floral wallpaper and the scent of Lux soap in open narratives that approach the aunts' shared life with curiosity, wonder and doubt. A life that played out parallel to the dawn of women's liberation in Denmark, and prior to the development of modern psychiatry. Gernild also draws on the generational stories passed on in conversation, photo albums, heirlooms and disconnected memories. In doing so she sheds light on some of the lives of women that have been hidden from history.

BIO – EMILY GERNILD

Emily Gernild (b. 1985) lives and works in Copenhagen. She studied at the Funen Art Academy and Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. She has exhibited both in Denmark and abroad and is represented in major collections. Gernild's compelling works with their distinctive palette have made her one of Denmark's leading young painters.

She uses a wide range of materials in her paintings, including rabbit-skin glue, oils, watercolours, gesso, pastels, oil crayons and pencil. Her visual language bridges the abstract and figurative. Both the motifs and the indefinable atmosphere of the works give them an absorbing drive.

EXHIBITION OPENING

You are cordially invited to the opening of the exhibition from 17.00-19.00 on Thursday 16th November.

There will be refreshments, speeches and free entry to the exhibition. The artist will be present. Please sign up to participate.

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS FOR ALL AGES

Gammel Holtegaard's creative workshop is open throughout the run of the exhibition for visitors of all ages to use the inspiration they find in Gernild's works. On selected Saturdays the workshop will have a host providing creative input and guidance. All workshop materials are free of charge.

PROGRAMME

The exhibition is accompanied by an events programme based on its themes. Visitors are also welcome to join our guided tours and shorter Art & Cider tours.

EXHIBITION DATES

The exhibition runs from Friday 17th November to Sunday 18th February 2023.

Opening times: Tuesday-Friday: 12:00-17.00, late night opening Thursday: 12:00-20:00,
Weekends and public holidays: 10:00-17:00. Closed Mondays.

Gammel Holtegaard is closed from 23rd-25th December, 31st December and 1st January 2024.

PRESS VIEWINGS & CONTACT

Individual press viewings of the exhibition are available by appointment.

For more on the exhibition, previews, interviews with the artist, etc. please contact:

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Press material and photographs can be downloaded [here](#).

The exhibition has been generously supported by:

The Beckett Foundation and the L. F. Foght Foundation

Gammel Holtegaard's 2023 exhibition programme is supported by:

The Augustinus Foundation, the Obel Foundation and the Danish Arts Foundation.