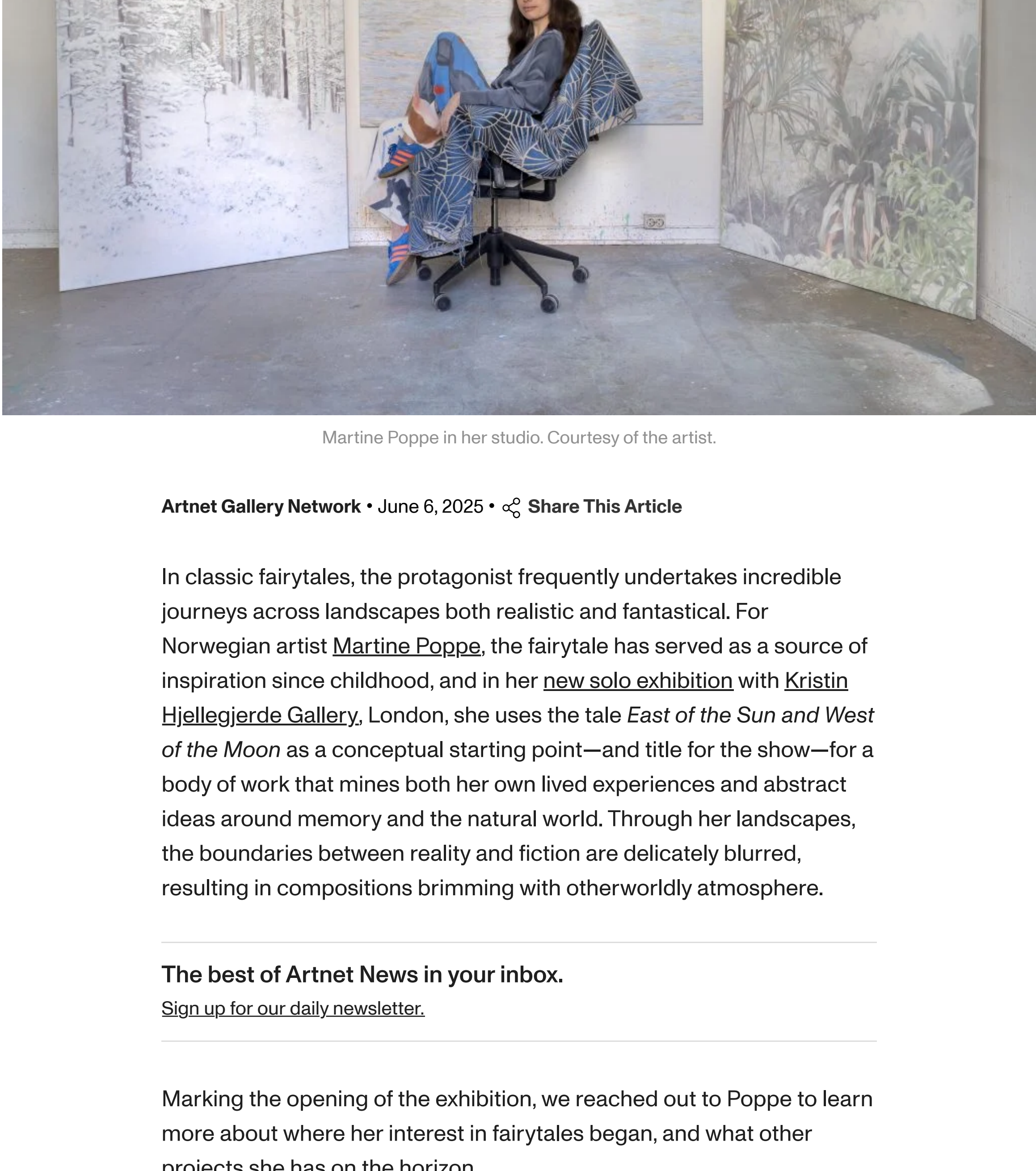


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Martine Poppe Taps a Classic Nordic Fairytale for Her Magical Landscapes

Poppe's solo exhibition in London at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery combines the tradition of landscape painting with the fantastical.



Martine Poppe in her studio. Courtesy of the artist.

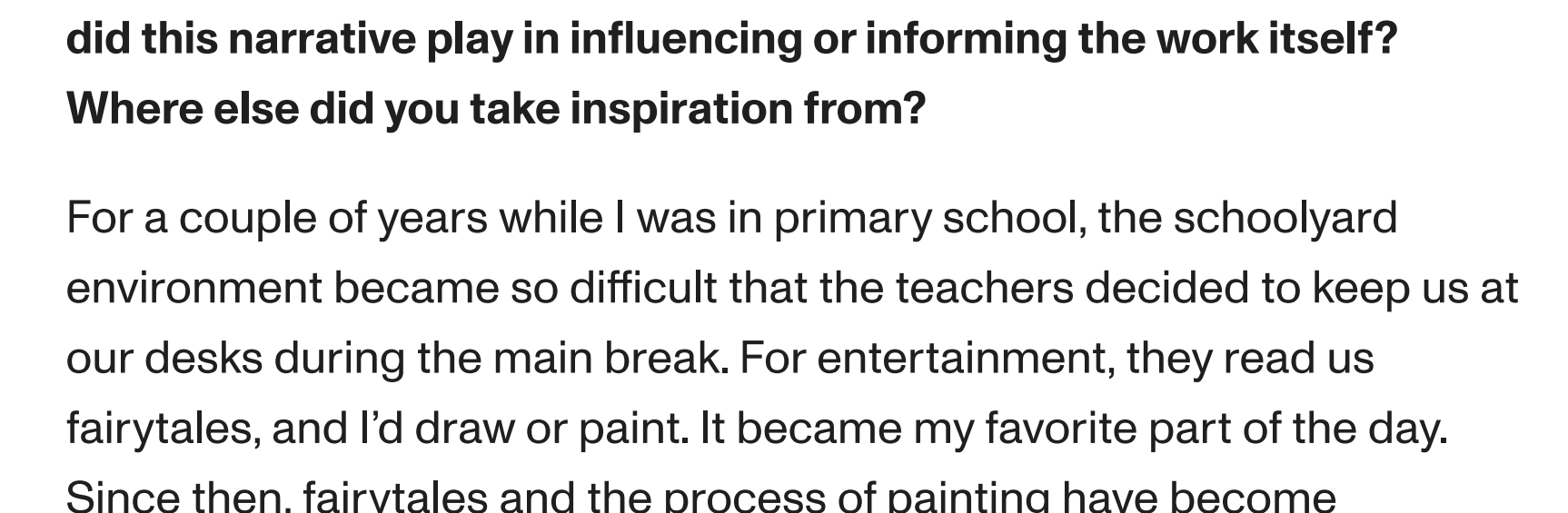
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In classic fairytales, the protagonist frequently undertakes incredible journeys across landscapes both realistic and fantastical. For Norwegian artist [Martine Poppe](#), the fairytale has served as a source of inspiration since childhood, and in her [new solo exhibition](#) with [Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery](#), London, she uses the tale *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* as a conceptual starting point—and title for the show—for a body of work that mines both her own lived experiences and abstract ideas around memory and the natural world. Through her landscapes, the boundaries between reality and fiction are delicately blurred, resulting in compositions brimming with otherworldly atmosphere.

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Marking the opening of the exhibition, we reached out to Poppe to learn more about where her interest in fairytales began, and what other projects she has on the horizon.



Martine Poppe, *I will go as far as the blue sky* (2025). Courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery.

In light of your show opening at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, “East of the Sun West of the Moon,” can you tell us a bit about the body of work that’s on view and some of the core themes?

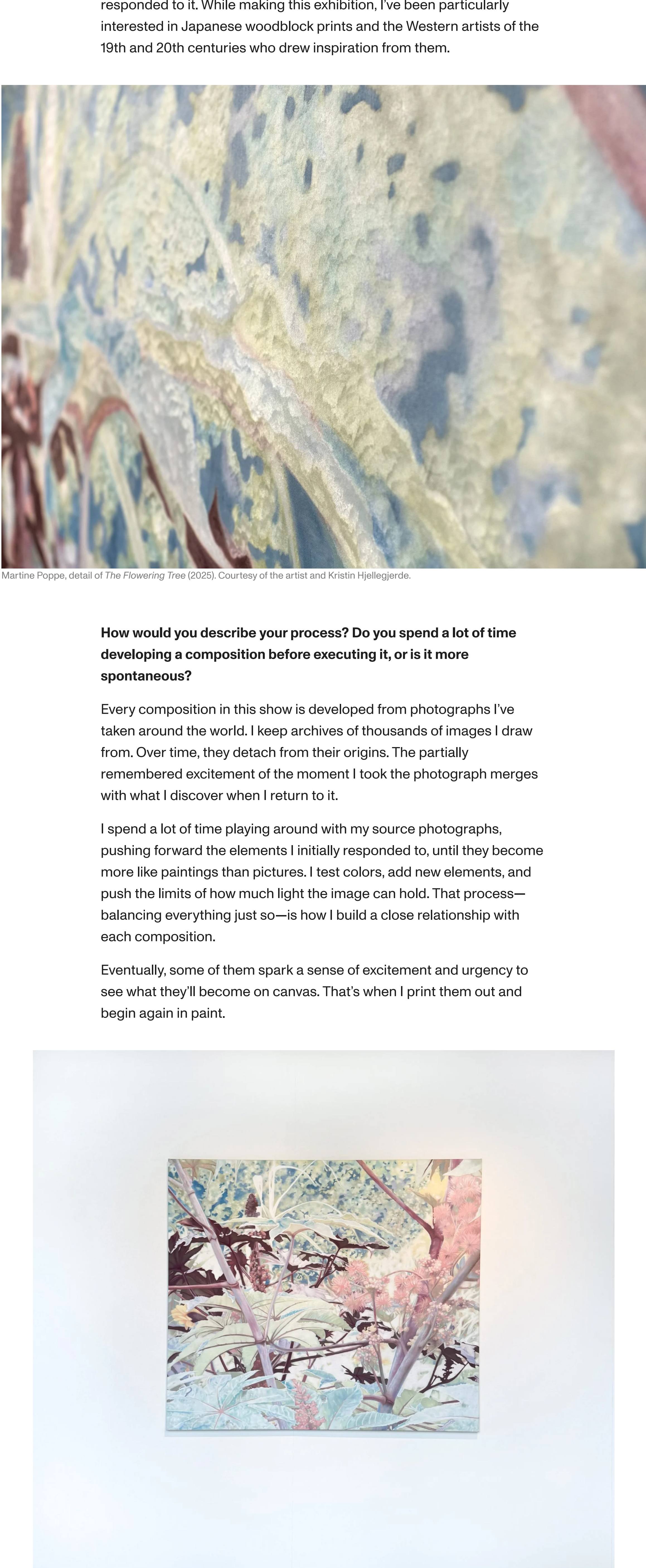
The show works with the concept of fairytales as a metaphor and narrative structure for the exploration of landscape painting, memory, and nature.

With the title of the show drawn from the classic fairy tale, what role did this narrative play in influencing or informing the work itself?

Where else did you take inspiration from?

For a couple of years while I was in primary school, the schoolyard environment became so difficult that the teachers decided to keep us at our desks during the main break. For entertainment, they read us fairytales, and I’d draw or paint. It became my favorite part of the day. Since then, fairytales and the process of painting have become inextricably linked in my mind.

The fairytale I used for the title of this show was one of those read to me during those lunch breaks. It remains one of my favorites—not so much for the plot, but for the poetic quality of the title and the way it once conjured images of freedom, distance, and the mystical wildness of the landscape.



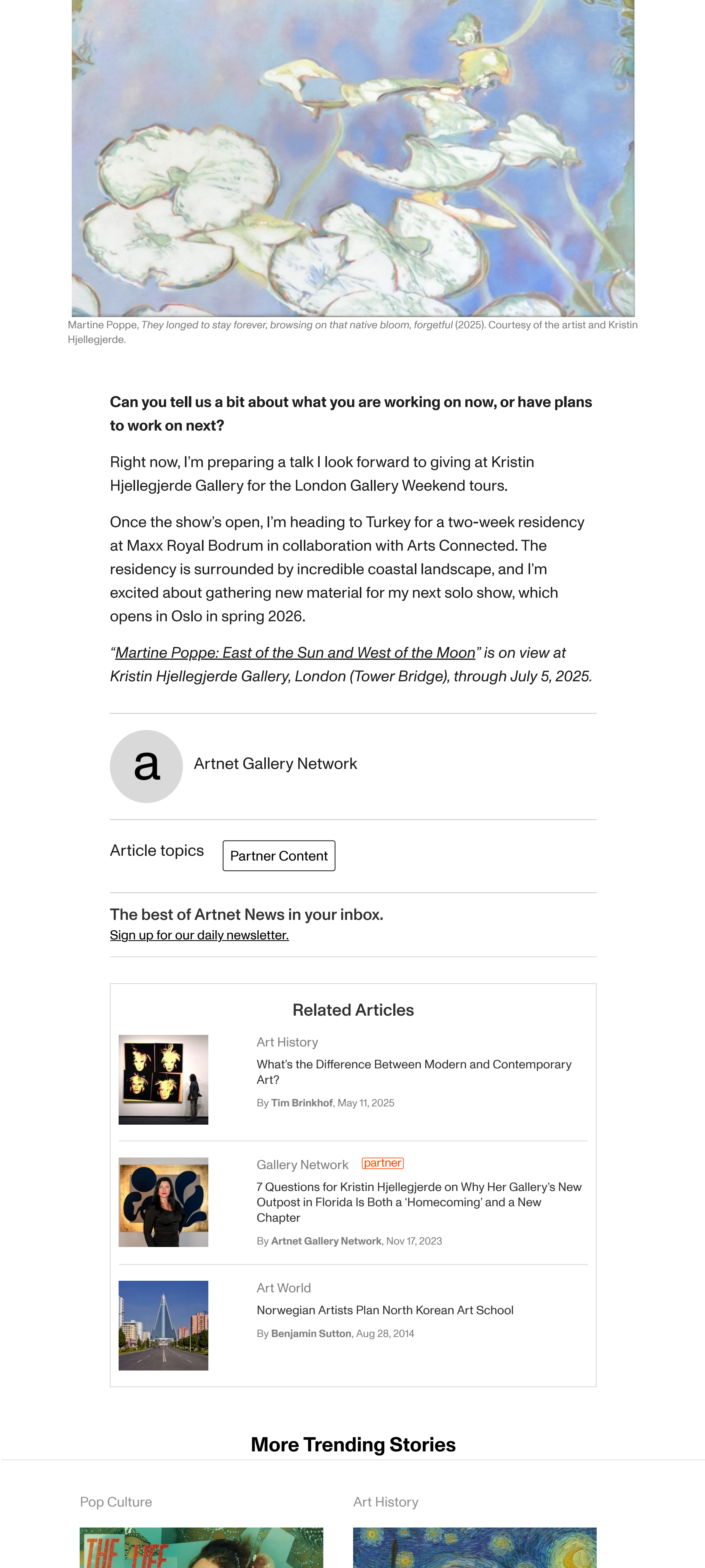
Martine Poppe, *A coast that none of them knew* (2025). Courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde.

What about the natural world do you find makes it such potent subject matter in your compositions? Do you find yourself drawn to certain types of landscapes over others?

I’m drawn to paint what I need to be surrounded by. When I work on a show, I rarely leave the studio, and that inspires me to create worlds that sustain and energize me.

The source images for this show are photographs I’ve taken over the past decade—some from places I visited once, others from the landscapes that matter most to me. The latter are places I spent much of my childhood and where I first experienced independence.

Painting landscapes lets me approach the work more playfully, because I know the motifs so well. At the same time, nature feels so complete as a subject that I become curious about how other artists have responded to it. While making this exhibition, I’ve been particularly interested in Japanese woodblock prints and the Western artists of the 19th and 20th centuries who drew inspiration from them.



Martine Poppe, *The Flowering Tree* (2025). Courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde.

How would you describe your process? Do you spend a lot of time developing a composition before executing it, or is it more spontaneous?

Every composition in this show is developed from photographs I’ve taken around the world. I keep archives of thousands of images I draw from. Over time, they detach from their origins. The partially remembered excitement of the moment I took the photograph merges with what I discover when I return to it.

I spend a lot of time playing around with my source photographs, pushing forward the elements I initially responded to, until they become more like paintings than pictures. I test colors, add new elements, and push the limits of how much light the image can hold. That process—balancing everything just so—is how I build a close relationship with each composition.

Eventually, some of them spark a sense of excitement and urgency to see what they’ll become on canvas. That’s when I print them out and begin again in paint.

Martine Poppe, *The Flowering Tree* (2025). Courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde.

What do you hope visitors of this show take away with them?

Every time I look at an artwork, the encounter holds the potential to experience another person’s point of view and inner landscape. I want to see what the artist regards as worthwhile, and how they put it together. That makes each experience unique and personal.

When looking at art, I think the openness it asks of me, the connection it creates, and the insight it offers come together to form something that’s hard to define verbally, but nonetheless invaluable. For me, it’s a celebration of differences, and of the fact that worth isn’t limited to what’s easily defined or measured.



Martine Poppe, *They longed to stay forever, browsing on that native bloom, forgetful* (2025). Courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde.

Can you tell us a bit about what you are working on now, or have plans to work on next?

Right now, I’m preparing a talk I look forward to giving at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery for the London Gallery Weekend tours.

Once the show’s open, I’m heading to Turkey for a two-week residency at Maxx Royal Bodrum in collaboration with Arts Connected. The residency is surrounded by incredible coastal landscape, and I’m excited about gathering new material for my next solo show, which opens in Oslo in spring 2026.

“Martine Poppe: East of the Sun and West of the Moon” is on view at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London (Tower Bridge), through July 5, 2025.

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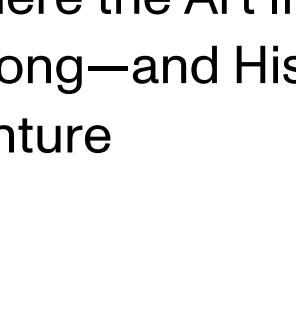
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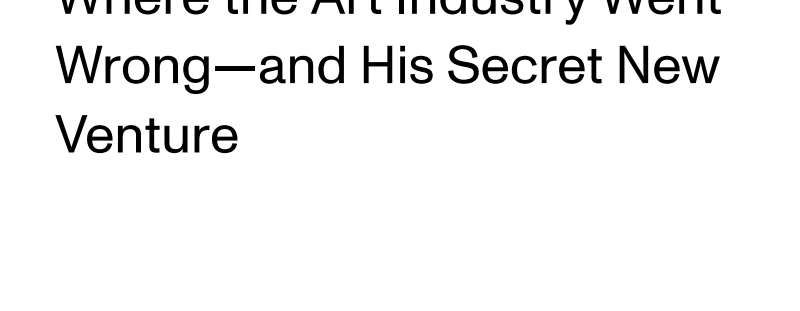


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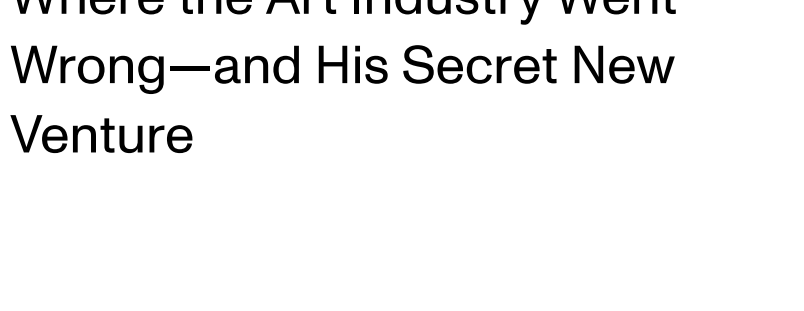
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