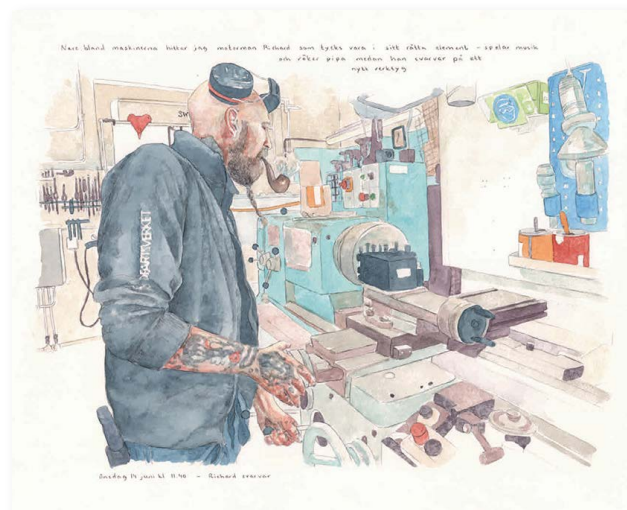
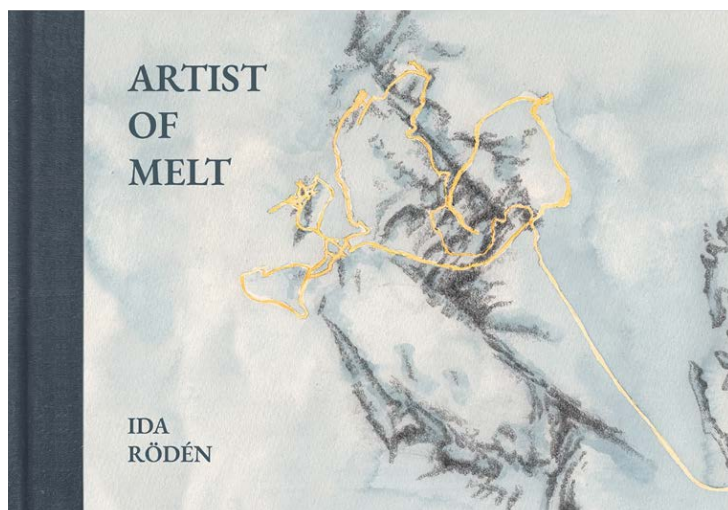


Artist of Melt

Ida Rödén



This an account from an expedition, conducted aboard the icebreaker Oden in 2023. The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat recognizes that artists have a distinct approach to reality, enriching life aboard research vessels and extending the expedition's reach beyond its conclusion. Ida Rödén became the 37th artist to participate in their artist program. By painting at least one image daily, she came to know the boat, the crew, the scientists, and the ice. Her collection of watercolors gradually increased, eventually culminating in this book – an artist's observations from a voyage through a dreamy and lingering world of ice.

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Detta är en berättelse från en expedition med isbrytaren Oden som ägde rum 2023. Svenska Polarforskningssekretariatet vet att konstnärer har ett unikt sätt att närma sig verkligheten. Det kan berika både livet ombord på forskningsfartyget och det som följer efter att expeditionen har avslutats. Ida Rödén var den 37:e konstnären att delta i deras konstprogram. Genom att dagligen måla minst en akvarell lärde hon känna båten, besättningen, forskarna och isen. Antalet bilder ökade successivt och blev till slut denna bok – en konstnärs iakttagelser från en resa genom en drömsk och tidsutdragen värld av is.

FACTS

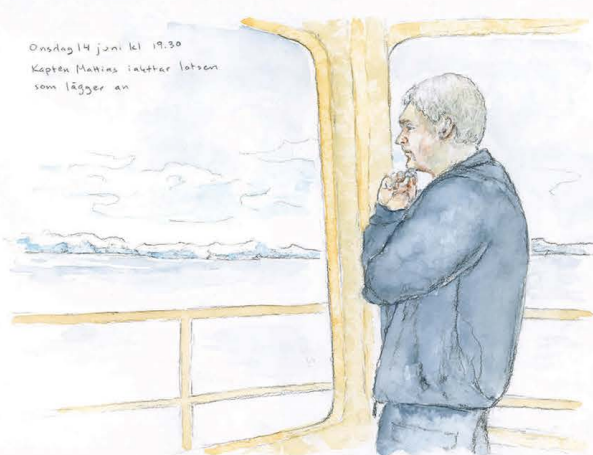
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transforming our journey into a warp-speed voyage through a celestial realm. Yet, these aren't stars twinkling but rather life that has awakened. Sometimes, a "star" unfurls into a worm that quickly swims away.

An hour later, I wander around the vessel and scan the landscape. I think I catch a glimpse of Philipp near the ice hole. He's back, barely visible behind the mound of snow. One of the SPRS's employees is standing guard against polar bears. It might be nurse Elisabeth, who obtained a hunting license solely to assist out on the ice. The sharp Arctic sun hangs low, casting *Oden's* blue shadow across the frozen waters.

Just after 16:00, I find crew member Fredrik in the room below the helipad. Over the table tennis table, he has spread out the cover for the helicopter. The cover has been damaged, and he is in the process of patching a hole. Many of the protective covers shielding *Odén*'s array of machinery have been designed and sewn by Fredrik. He enjoys the task, finding tranquility in the rhythmic motion of needle and thread, especially during the silent hours while others sleep. Sometime between 04:30 and 07:00 is the most likely time to catch him by the sewing machine.

The evening stretches on. I end up playing two games of *Dominion* before winding down in the sauna. The light makes it difficult to sleep.

Friday, June 2nd

The morning unfolds under radiant sunshine, and the researchers are out early at their stations. In my container, I sketch a new underwater island

with Gjálp as its highest peak, nestled just north of Atla and Eistla. Along the soft seabed encircling Gjálp, a diverse array of rough feather sea cucumbers thrives. These remarkable creatures boast a leathery midsection capable of lengthening into serpentine shapes, adorned with feather-like extensions. This organism belongs to the deep sea and may live in the vicinity of Gjálp.

We have been reflecting on the study of oceanographer William Beebe (1877–1962), a pioneer in the study of deep-sea creatures in their natural habitat. “Boredom is immoral,” Beebe declared. “All a man has to do is see. All we want as nature puts us on the most thrilling adventure stories ever created, but we have to see it three times.” In a bathysphere, a hollow steel sphere equipped with three small windows of 10 in. diameter, Beebe searched the depths of 923 fathoms. This historic dive took place on August 25, 1934, set a record that stood unchallenged for 15 years. As he descended into the abyss, the vibrant colors of the surface world gradually faded. After the first 100 meters, the deep ran vanished, followed by the green rays at approximately 1000 meters. Finally, only a few faint, blue-green rays remained. In the deepest pressure, Deep down in the water, Beebe said, was a world that “looked like the black pig-mind hell itself.” Upon resurfacing, he collaborated with artist Elsa Bostedman, who created detailed illustrations of the creatures he had encountered in the depths. Perhaps the rough sketches of the creatures he had searched in a similar manner, albeit by a different artist at another time?

There are theories that life on Earth originated in space, that microorganisms hitched a ride on meteorites and gradually evolved over eons into the diverse life we know today. Alternative narratives suggest that life emerged

Har under dagen assisterat Philip, ute på isen likväl som i hans vita skugga på vattenbänk. Vi har tagit roboten på en simtur under isen. När jag nu spanar ut över isen är han tillbaka vid vattenbänken knäppt synlig bakom snödrallen. En av Polars outställda test-iskryssare krasch år det sjuksyster Elisebeth.

