

Öjbro Vantfabrik

Pattern # Gotland Öjbro Vantfabrik

Gotland is Sweden's largest Island and the home of the "Gutes" tribe occupied since prehistory and home to the Gotland pony called "Gotlands Russ". Wild horses have lived in the forest regions of the island of Gotland from time immemorial. The Gotland Russ is an old Swedish pony breed claimed to descend from now extinct Tarpan ponies that lived on the small island of Gotland after the last ice age. The Gotland Russ is the only breed of pony native to Sweden. Today they live free on Lojstahed, Gotland



The history of the Gotland russ is shrouded in mystery and fascinating. Excavations from the stone age shows that the pony has existed on Gotland for 5000 years and perhaps longer. Thanks to decisive intervention on the part of the local inhabitants, Sweden's most primordial ponies still live as they have for thousands of years on the wooded Gotland moors. Because they are so small and strong they are nicknamed the "Skogsbyggarna".

Designer Åse Öjbro, founder of Öjbro Vantfabrik, have created wearable art with mittens as her starting point. Åse worked as a painter in many years before she decided to express herself in wool. Åse has created a decorative horse pattern on the front of the mitten, which is thought to illustrate Gotland russ running free with their pack on the wooded moor. The cuff has a two colored rib to illustrate tree trunks.

I visited Gotland many times as a child. I will never forget these respect giving russ. It was amazing listening to the folk stories about these SKOGSBAGGAR and their mythical history. Now a days there is one herd left that is being kept on a 650 HEKTAR area. Lojstahed, where the russ lives in wilderness. I wanted to capture the feeling of unity with the horses and our common history, human and horse, our beloved, strong and enduring Gotland Russ ponies, called "Skogsbyggarna" by the Gotlanders.



Exactly how long mittens have been knitted in Scandinavia is unclear, but there are preserved mitten fragments dating back to as early as the 13th century.

** This pattern is inspired by all of the Gotland Russ at Lojstahed and then we have colored it in traditional colors.*

Öjbro glove factory is passionate about passing on our different knitting traditions to other people.