

Galleri Riis

Arne Malmedal

Paintings from the late 1990s and early 2000s

March 14 – April 25, 2020

In collaboration with Arne Malmedal's estate, we are pleased to show a selection of monochrome paintings from the late 1990s and early 2000s, opening on March 14.

Since the late 1980s, Malmedal has explored the problems around figure / ground / image / frame in several large paintings that were mainly executed in earth colors with clear references to the natural world. These works were shown at Kunstneres Hus, Oslo in 1994 together with monochrome paintings on fiberglass scrim, canvases framed by a window-like grid, and paintings where a boxy frame structure was fully integrated into the painting. This exhibition manifested his position in the Norwegian art scene as a vital and experimental abstract painter with a playful look at the history of the medium.

In the paintings from the early 2000s, light became an important motif for Malmedal. He was preoccupied with portraying color as pure light, resulting in images where a monochrome field resides in a spatial arrangement framed by a white surface, reminiscent of American artist James Turrell's light installations. Several of these works were central to Malmedal's retrospective exhibition at The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo, 2003, demonstrating his delicate treatment of color and its' associations with nature and light and its' own materiality on the canvas.

The starting point is always a white canvas. Then comes the midfield. The shape in the middle can be an open window or a color that hovers in front of the picture plane. Although the image gives a spatial impression, the shape can also be perceived as being level with the white field.
- Arne Malmedal

This exhibition includes twelve larger paintings in oil and acrylic on canvas from the late 1990s and early 2000s, thereby utilizing all of the gallery's exhibition rooms. We are also showing two monumental monochrome images executed with egg tempera in 1995, pointing to Malmedal's dominant theme around this time.

Arne Malmedal (1937-2018) attended the Norwegian National Art and Craft School from 1956-1960 and made his artistic debut with an exhibition of graphics at Holst Halvorsens Kunsthandel in Oslo, 1963. In addition to working as an artist, Malmedal was also head of the Graphics Department at the Norwegian Academy of Fine Arts during the 1970s. In the 1980s, as chairman of Kunstneres Hus in Oslo, he helped to introduce many important international artists to the Norwegian audience. In 2003/04, Malmedal was honored with a retrospective exhibition and accompanying monograph at The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo that traveled to the Bergen Art Museum.

From 2007 to 2013 Malmedal show four separate exhibitions with Galleri Riis, including what became his final exhibition. The exhibition was a major effort for the artist who already was struggling with Parkinson's disease. The works in this exhibition contained several experimental methods and expressions, and in hindsight could be seen as both a summary of his artistic endeavors but also a will to go new ways.