

Galleri Riis

FREDRIK SÖDERBERG

*A friend told me my house was haunted. He's talking rubbish –
I've never seen a ghost and I've lived here for 150 years.*

New paintings

February 24 – March 26, 2022

We are pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Fredrik Söderberg, his seventh with Galleri Riis, since his first in 2012. Söderberg is well known for his intimate and monumental drawings and watercolors on paper, with motifs and references from art history, religion, philosophy and literature, as well as dream-like abstract images that point towards spiritual and existential quests.

In connection with the exhibition, Fredrik Söderberg's book *Sangraal* will be launched, containing works from the past three years and a comprehensive essay by the History of Religion scholar and author Per Faxneld, whose research in Western esotericism, alternative spirituality and popular culture coincide with many of Söderberg's interests and themes. The book is published by Cecilia Hillström Gallery in Stockholm, in collaboration with Galleri Riis.

The chapter in my new book Sangraal which relates to the works in this exhibition, begins with a painting whose motif has haunted me for a long time. A kind of house ghost who has inhabited both my mind and my images for a long time.

The ghost appears in the shape of the ferryman Charon who takes the souls of the dead across the river Styx. The painting depicts a stern and thin man with a beard rowing a boat straight towards the viewer.

Several of the exhibition's paintings contain motifs of tormented people, people who seem to make amends. Traitors and accomplices, both Sven Hedin and Knut Hamsun may well be said to belong to the latter category.

Sweden and Norway were in union between the years 1814 - 1905. Several of the images are a kind of meditation on the bygone times. Some would say the old and evil times and their symbols.

Galleri Riis

A passing from modernity – to what is now. How will one regard our enlightened time in a hundred years?

The symbolic world of paintings is a reminder of each time's belief in itself and the aesthetics and ideals of its time. Some of the paintings are reminiscent of tapestries and wall hangings. They display a homely appearance; Folklore patterns and design by Gerhard Munthe.

The watercolor paint is handmade: Amethyst, Ivory Black, Kyanite, Lapis and Malachite, alchemy and holiness.

Several of the paintings are subdued and colorless as I imagine the condition is on the banks of the river Acheron for those souls who have no payment to offer the helmsman.

The lost souls wander among the shadows forever.

- Fredrik Söderberg, February 2022

Fredrik Söderberg (b. 1972 in Örebro), lives and works in Stockholm.

Söderberg studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and has an MFA from Konstfack in Stockholm. In 2020, he was honored with a large retrospective exhibition and publication at the Nordic Watercolor Museum in Skärhamn, Sweden. His work can be found in the collections of the Moderna Museet and Magasin III Museum & Foundation for Contemporary Art in Stockholm.