

Alexander Tovborg madonna

November 4, 2022 - January 14, 2023

Galleri Nicolai Wallner is pleased to present *madonna*—a solo exhibition of new works by Alexander Tovborg.

Navigating history, mythology, religion, as well as written and oral narratives, Tovborg's practice draws on the stories that have come before us in order to re-contextualise where we find ourselves today. With *madonna* Tovborg shows us his growing curiosity with the visual language that has created the iconic Madonna figure—a figure whose archetype has dominated so much of art history and Western culture.

As the God-bearer the Madonna figure literally carries the power of salvation hereby harbouring an immense meaning to the faithful. She personifies the possibility of change with the devotion of the believer. As an icon her image has become the visual symbol of comfort and solace; whether the issue is of a simple and every-day-like nature or more existential. Here Tovborg presents a new set of Madonnas adding to the tradition, and by that encouraging you to say a prayer as you walk through the exhibition.

As ever Tovborg treats Christianity with duality, and brings forth its complexity; adding Madonnas to an already vast index is a way of paying tribute to that deeply personal rite that is the prayer. Its inwardly potential almost unmatched in modern society is personal to Tovborg, but with *dea (salvator mundi)* as the key to understand the exhibit, the traditional image of Mary as the virgin mother of a male is challenged. With Dea taking the place of Christ, the patriarchal depictions put forward by the church is quietly eradicated, and replaced with the belief that the saviour of the world is a female.

The intensity of the colour palate, which shifts with each work, and boldness of the shapes conveys a dynamic, almost electric, energy. Her presence fills the canvases up to their edges, compelling us to pay attention and guiding our focus. Each work puts forward a new aspect of the Madonna, echoed in the titles of the paintings. They add to the growing multitude of narratives swirling around her—*madonna of solitude*, *madonna of mystery*, *the emotional madonna*, *madonna of the coin*.

Alexander Tovborg (b. 1983, Denmark) has had solo exhibitions at Overgaden (Copenhagen), GL Strand (Copenhagen) and Rudolph Tegner Museum (Dronningmølle) among others, Tovborg has notably shown at ARKEN (Ishøj), ARoS (Aarhus), IMMA Museum of Modern Art (Dublin), Spiritmuseum (Stockholm), Holstebro Kunstmuseum (Holstebro), and KØS (Køge). His works are represented in the public collections of Kunsthalle Bremen (Bremen), Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), ARKEN (Ishøj), ARoS (Aarhus), and Museet For Religious Kunst (Lemvig). In 2023, Tovborg will open a solo exhibition at Kunsthal Charlottenborg.

In connection with this exhibition, Alexander Tovborg and writer Ulrikke Bak have released a catalogue, *madonna*.