

# Galleri Riis

MORTEN ANDENÆS

*The space around the chair*

October 26 - December 22, 2023

Vernissage: Thursday, October 26 from 6-8pm

*The space around the chair* is Morten Andenæs' 7th solo show with the gallery and picks up where *Child smiled. Blank stares* (2021) left off. The chair which was the subject of a photograph in that exhibition has now become a literal image, a presence despite it being absent in the space. The photographic works on display depict landscapes and still lifes, faces, objects, animals and spaces, and even though the world Andenæs presents us with is familiar, there is nothing ordinary about it.

Light is the precondition for any photograph, and in *The space around the chair*, its' role is more explicit than earlier. In one part of the gallery the works are characterized by a flat, institutional light that lends a sense of immanence to the images. This somewhat reticent light that seems to emanate from within is markedly different than the more textured, sacred quality of light prevalent in the gallery's other space. The images are demarcated by light and shadow, bearing witness to the daily cycle of the home and hinting at the space that exists beyond the picture frame, or chair, if you will.

Morten Andenæs (b. 1979) lives and works in Oslo, Norway, and received his BFA from The School of Visual Arts in New York City. For more than a decade his concise, poetic imagery and literary texts on images and their place in the culture at large has made an impact on the Norwegian photography scene. Andenæs' work investigates the role of images on how we view the world and ourselves, and his dense photographs of people, animals, landscapes and objects hint at our fantasies, longings and desires.

In addition to his numerous exhibitions over the past decade and a half, he has published two photo books, *Skyldfolk* (2013) and *We live in the house across the street* (2021), a novel, *Du, jeg, og Erik* (2019) in addition to numerous articles and a book on contemporary photography. In 2019 he held his largest solo exhibition to date at Kunstnernes Hus, titled *I remind me of you*. Morten Andenæs' work is represented in numerous public collections like The National Museum, Henie Onstad Art Centre and Oslo Municipality.

## THE SPACE AROUND THE CHAIR

Three apples. Five carrots.  
Cups, books, a rumpled tablecloth.

The room is dark, the valley green, the apple yellow.

A pair of black eyes emerge from a darkened face. The shadows enveloping a stack of books suggest a space within. It's about hope; you have to adjust and let the dark become the new light, right?

A dying plant on a kitchen counter, the face of a girl concealed in the surface of an image. You planned on speaking of death from the vantage point of middle age, and maybe say something about how photography as process and practice mirrors all this?

*New dawn,  
setting sun.  
As the evening sun caresses your face, darkness closes in from behind.*

Well well.

When your mother was hospitalized last year, after a car accident, a flyer in a waiting room left you puzzled. *How long does death last?* it asked, in bold black letters against a background the color of blue skies.

A doctor came in and told us that things had looked dark there for a while, whilst those that've met her in the aftermath of the devastating impact speak of a new light emanating from her face.

Ideally the face of a parent is both a mirror and a window. Much like a photograph it accommodates both this and that; her light, my shadow, your beliefs and my lack. You know.

The lighter the casket the darker the space beyond.

Vast, dark and empty.

You sense that whatever is rustling around out there in the dark is watching you. Like the proverbial deer in the headlights you're stunned by how tiny you are, how insignificant.

Death too is a window you say pensively.

Your platitudes are strewn across the nightstand like mother's pearls.

There are deep valleys and new beginnings. A round apple, flat light.

You recognize yourself in the aging dog and the young actor.

In the dirty windows and the bright colors.

You are in there and out here, a reflection in the window as it darkens outside, a fuzzy outline in a dusty mirror as you walk past.

Much like the white chair no longer in use, you too will return to that dark room; the colors will fade, the outlines blur and the stories once told from the bathroom, in the bedroom and around the dining room table will disappear.