

Press release

Ivan Andersen

How to get to there from here

27 August – 27 September 2025

It is with great pleasure that we open the exhibition *How to Get to There from Here* by Ivan Andersen.

The exhibition *How to Get to There from Here* presents a collection of eleven new works. For this occasion, we have invited curator Linnea Mølbak Szilas from Kunstmuseum Brandts to write an introductory text for the exhibition. from Kunstmuseum Brandts, to write an introductory text on the exhibition.

“Before Ivan Andersen begins a new work, he first looks through his large digital photo archive of personal snapshots mixed with screenshots from streaming services and the results of countless image searches. The archive has been amassed over many years and new images are constantly added.

Andersen's road from digital photos to sensuous paintings is long and winding. While the digital photos have a seamless quality, his paintings' abstract colour fields mingle across wood, textiles, spackle and concrete. As the exhibition title implies, the road to the final work is rarely straightforward. In the process, Andersen uses digital tools to dissolve the photos' realism, and his materials further disrupt the legibility. The works invite us to look carefully to discover for ourselves the picturesque landscapes and exquisite quotidian details emerging from clear-cut materials and abstract imagery.

Some works originate from images saved long ago, others from more recent searches. After the initial query, Andersen lets himself be led astray by the search engine's continuous suggestions. For *Trickle Down*, a general search for “gardens” led to images of “rock gardening” featuring flower beds terraced into human-made rock formations and with artificial streams branching from bed to bed. In *Trevor*, a personal vacation photo of a stone bridge morphed into a nearly concrete abstraction with blocks of colour shot through with luminous blue lines.

Once Andersen has landed on his reference image, he edits it in Photoshop, slowly changing its original colors and appearance. Since Photoshop editing is strictly technical and oblivious to representation, the resulting colours are no longer realistic. Through several iterations, the artist works with the software's suggestions to assemble new planes, silhouettes and fragments into abstract subjects. Next, he uses a projector to cast the image onto the canvas. This is when the real work of painting begins. Sometimes the artist's brush follows the projected line, sometimes not. His process is always alternating between digital intervention and human mark-making.

Alongside the digital work, another process is going on, involving the materials. Andersen's often-unconventional materials are an essential trait of his works. The present works are painted on materials like wooden boards and concrete, while the oils and acrylics are augmented by textiles and spackle, even dirt and coffee. As numerous as his materials are the techniques Andersen uses to work them.

He paints, glues, cuts, hammers, casts and sands. Setting aside his digital tools, the artist now grapples with the physical materials.

Andersen picks materials that push back, both on the image and the process. Just as the digital tools disrupt the image's legibility, the materials degrade the figuration. From a distance, a painting may look like a landscape, but at close range the image changes. Through muted layers of colour, the wood asserts itself. Woodgrain and knotholes blend with the subject. Textiles fray. The concrete mould imprints fresh lines on the images. Otherwise finished images are sanded down to appear diffuse. Moreover, some materials don't react as expected, changing the artist's process and the work's expression. All of this may not be apparent until you stand before the work. The green-blue in *Isn't Anything* looks like a weathered copper plate, but closer inspection reveals it to be painted fabric. The materials, too, affect how we read the work.

Working in dialogue with both the digital and the material is essential to Andersen's process. The road from idea to finished work is not mapped out from the beginning. The artist takes surprising detours. Similar surprises are revealed to us when we experience his art. At first glance, we see one thing, at second glance another. Even the titles of his works are surprising, and often ask more questions than they answer about what is represented. His works vacillate between the recognisable and the abstract, the digital and the material, and between the initial idea and the experimental, unknowable path to the finished work. In ambiguous encounters, we are invited to explore a pictorial world that looks familiar, in glimpses, yet remains eternally unsettled and open to the eye.

The exhibition opening at Galleri Bo Bjerggaard marks a natural conclusion to Andersen's process. This brief introduction cracks open a window into how he "got from here to there", while the infinite interpretations of his art persist in those who experience it." Linnea Mølbak Szilas, 2025

Ivan Andersen (b. 1969, Tåstrup) is a Danish artist based in Copenhagen. He graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2005. Andersen's work is held in prominent public collections, including ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, KUNSTEN Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art in Luxembourg, the New Carlsberg Foundation, and Skive Kunstmuseum.