

Galleri Riis

Fredrik Söderberg
At the Feet of the Guru (Revisited)

May 28 - June 27, 2026

We are pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Fredrik Söderberg, his eighth with the gallery. He 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.

I held my first exhibition at Galleri Riis in 2012. Now, fourteen years later, I find myself returning to a kind of dialogue with the past – my own past.

*The title of the exhibition, *At the Feet of the Guru*, borrowed its name from the book of the same title by the English writer and occultist Kenneth Grant. The book is a collection of texts written from the 1950s onwards and recounts Grant's encounters with, and studies of, Eastern mysticism and Indian teachers and gurus. Its central theme is the exploration of a synthesis between East and West. It highlights how Grant integrated Indian tantra and philosophy into his own system, the Typhonian tradition, and how these influences shaped his interpretation of the magical work of his mentors, Aleister Crowley and Austin Osman Spare.*

The paintings shown in the 2012 exhibition revolved around a central motif: the house of the psychoanalyst C.G. Jung in Küsnacht, Switzerland. The works depicted his house from various angles and perspectives, based on his own architectural sketches. From the chimney of each painted house emanated a mandala-like form, which I understood as a kind of psychic energy emerging through the chimney – Jung's thoughts, or thought-forms, if you will.

*When I made those works, I had never visited India. I was living in London – a place with many connections to India, both constructive and problematic. There was therefore a certain logic in naming this new exhibition *At the Feet of the Guru (Revisited)*. The exhibition is both a return to a bygone time and an encounter with my younger self – with the concerns and interests of that earlier stage of my life.*

Much has happened since then, yet the search for an inner clarity has continued.

The works in this exhibition were painted during an extended stay in Adyar, outside Chennai in India, where I spent four months at the headquarters of The Theosophical Society together with my wife. Our studio was located in what had once been Madame Blavatsky's working room. Spirits and ghosts seemed constantly present during our late nights of work.

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The new paintings are a kind of distillation of my first exhibition. They are small and compact, rendered in luminous colours. There is a clear kinship with the earlier works: the form we now see is the isolated circle, roughly corresponding in scale to the details in the previous paintings. Fourteen years later, what once emerged from the chimney has now broken free and become a painting in its own right – the spirit travelling freely across the earth and through time and space.

My nocturnal companions during those late hours were not only apparitions. As in London, my work was accompanied by the mind-expanding music of Alice Coltrane and Sun Ra.

- Fredrik Söderberg, Stockholm, May 2026

Fredrik Söderberg (b. 1972) lives and works in Stockholm. His paintings contain images from a variety of sources that have been woven together in an ornate story. His meticulous working processes can be seen as tools for meditation on the existential queries that infuse his works. Söderberg has exhibited at Magasin III and the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm, and his work is represented in public collections such as Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Magasin III Museum & Foundation for Contemporary Art, Stockholm, Public Art Agency, Sweden and The Nordic Watercolour Museum, Sweden.