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Fredrik Söderberg

Swedish artist Fredrik Söderberg (1972–) is one of the more prominent names in the revival of esoteric themes in contemporary art. He has exhibited solo and in group at several reputable venues in Sweden and abroad, and his paintings sell at high prices. Until 2016, most of them drew on esotericism for inspiration. Educated at Sweden's two most prestigious art academies (Konstfack and the Royal Institute of Art), he primarily paints watercolours in monumental formats. Unlike the majority of his peers from these academies, Söderberg's painting technique is often traditional and naturalistic (even when fantastic motifs are depicted). In a manner that could be interpreted as a postmodern bricolage, Söderberg frequently integrates pastiches of turn-of-the-century artists in his own creations and has entered into "creative dialogue" with greats like Carl Larsson (the subject of an entire 2008 exhibition at the art museum Magasin 3 in Stockholm) or more obscure (in mainstream artistic contexts) figures like Fidus, Franz von Bayros, and Austin Osman Spare. He also ventures into abstract territories, with references to Hilma af Klint and other non-figurative artists and is fond of depicting buildings (like Rudolf Steiner's Goetheanum or C.G. Jung's house) or taking photos of people like Aleister Crowley or Ernst Jünger as his starting point in explorations of cultural memory. Together with →Carl Abrahamsson, he founded and operated the publishing house Edda from 2011 to 2016. Among their many books were two collections of poems by Aleister Crowley, lavishly illustrated by Söderberg. He is married to →Christine Ödlund, who has pursued similar sources of inspiration. In 2016, Söderberg announced he would no longer draw on esotericism for his art due to having converted to Catholicism. However, in more recent works there are certain esoteric references, such as motifs drawn from Roman Polanski's occult thriller *The Ninth Gate* (1999).

Per FAXNELD

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