

ARKEN

PRESS RELEASE

MARTIN BIGUM

3 Sept. 2016 – 15 Jan. 2017

With Martin Bigum in ‘memoryland’

ARKEN’s big autumn exhibition unfolds the art of Danish painter Martin Bigum in a sensory bombardment of works, suburban history and seventies culture. The exhibition presents over 130 works and the brand new series of paintings *The Ocean*.

Martin Bigum is one of the most striking and popular painters on the Danish art scene. From 3 September he is on show at ARKEN in the exhibition *MARTIN BIGUM*. Here Bigum takes the visitor on a personal journey through his artistic production: from the early, exploratory works to his breakthrough with the characteristic comic-strip-like painting style and on to his more recent works where angels, devils and demons populate the canvases. The exhibition culminates with Bigum’s latest series of paintings, *The Ocean*, shown here for the first time; all viewed through the prism of memories of the Copenhagen western suburbs, cultural history and the life and times that have left their mark on Martin Bigum’s art from the outset.

Memoryland and monster

Martin Bigum spent his childhood and youth in the western suburbs of Copenhagen in the 1970s and 1980s, more specifically Brøndby Strand. From the kitchen window of the family home he could see the new Brøndby Strand housing project rising up before his eyes – a project which in Bigum’s own words was ‘a memoryland and a monster’ – a place and a time that inspired him, but which also offered fertile soil for a wish to create a different world.

A personal narrative

The exhibition at ARKEN offers rare insight into Martin Bigum’s own understanding of how he became an artist, and into what he calls “the flow of inspiration”. The more than 130 paintings, drawings, video works and sculptures in the exhibition are framed by Bigum’s personal and culture-historical narrative – of blocks of concrete housing and social realism, the feminist knitwear of the seventies, happenings, Christmas exhibitions at the department store and James Last. In Bigum’s art personal memories meet inspiration from both art history and the present. At the same time the encounter with each of his paintings is an invitation to the audience to participate in the narrative that the subjects set in motion. *MARTIN BIGUM* can be experienced at ARKEN from 3 September 2016 until 15 January 2017.

About Martin Bigum

Martin Bigum was born in 1966 and lives and works in Copenhagen. He is best known for his paintings, but has also worked with printmaking, photography, installation, video art, poetry etc. Bigum has a wide range of solo and group exhibitions in Denmark and abroad behind him, and is represented in the collections of a wide range of Danish museums, including ARKEN, ARoS and Statens Museum for Kunst. Many people also know Martin Bigum as an outstanding communicator – of his own works, but also of the history of art – among other things as a contestant in Danish television's *Art Quiz*. Over the years he has written a number of essays in *Weekendavisen* and in 2014 he published the book *Min personlige kunsthistorie* (My personal history of art), of which he has sold more than 10,000 copies.

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