

ARKEN

PRESS RELEASE

Baron Rosenkrantz The Wonder of Colour

This autumn, ARKEN tells the story of the overlooked Danish artist Baron Arild Rosenkrantz. He became famous for his magnificent stained-glass creations and enigmatic paintings abroad, but in Denmark he was he was something of an alien figure. Today, Rosenkrantz's spiritual quest and mysterious imagery are as topical as ever, and his fascinating life's work is now being unfolded for the first time ever in a major museum exhibition.

An eccentric colourist, a questing soul and an unconventional baron: Arild Rosenkrantz (1870–1964) was all these things and more. For many, the name of Rosenkrantz will be new, but in the 1890s the Danish artist repeatedly exhibited at the occult author Joséphin Péladan's legendary Symbolist salons in Paris and also became a prominent figure in the English Arts & Crafts movement. Opening on 3 October, ARKEN presents *Baron Rosenkrantz – The Wonder of Colour*, inviting visitors to enter the experimental baron's unique artistic world, a realm filled with brilliant colours and enigmatic fantastic creatures.

A questing soul

Rosenkrantz's interest in the occult and spiritual is a common thread throughout his life and work. He sought to achieve a deeper understanding of human existence and the mysteries of being. At the tender age of sixteen, Rosenkrantz set out for Rome and Paris to study classical art and the French masters. The mysterious imagery of the Symbolism movement held a particular attraction for the young artist, who would later exhibit his work at Péladan's Symbolist *Salon de la Rose + Croix*. While spending time in the United States to study, Rosenkrantz learned the art of working with glass and went on to win great acclaim for his beautiful stained-glass windows for British churches and mansions. Rosenkrantz settled in Britain for many years, and during this period his commissions included illustrations for short stories by the famous American author Edgar Allan Poe. However, the acme of Rosenkrantz's artistic development came when he met Rudolf Steiner and became enthralled with Steiner's interpretation of Goethe's colour theory. Using the seven spectral colours of the rainbow and a highly distinctive painting technique, Rosenkrantz found a new idiom that let him give palpable, visible form to the invisible and spiritual dimensions of life.

Renewed relevance

Rosenkrantz's spiritual outlook branded him as an outsider on the Danish art scene of the time. Today, however, his spiritual quest resonates with a new current in Danish contemporary art, with several young artists displaying interest in the occult and the mystical. The international art scene also shows a growing interest in Symbolist art. In 2017, for example, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York re-actualised Joséphin Péladan's Symbolist salons, and in 2019, Tate Britain presented a large exhibition of works by the mystic William Blake.

First major museum exhibition

Encompassing oil paintings, pastels, illustrations and 1:1 designs for brilliant stained-glass windows, *Baron Rosenkrantz – The Wonder of Colour* will be the first-ever major museum presentation of Rosenkrantz's artistic oeuvre. For the exhibition, the podcast magazine Third Ear has created an evocative world of sound, bringing to life Rosenkrantz's hair-raising illustrations for Edgar Allan Poe's horror stories. Extending the exhibition's themes further, you can also immerse yourself in an interactive colour and sound installation created by the design and art collective YOKE in collaboration with Third Ear. Here visitors are surrounded by undulating patterns of colour – and have the opportunity to add new colours to the installation through the movements of their own bodies.

Most of the works on display are on loan from Rosenholm Castle, which is owned by the Rosenkrantz family and served as Baron Arild Rosenkrantz's home during much of his old age. The exhibition is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue, featuring a range of essays that include contributions from artists Erik Steffensen and Alexander Tovborg on Rosenkrantz, the spiritual and art today. The exhibition is on at ARKEN from 3 October 2020 to 2 May 2021.

For more information please contact:
Head of Communications Marie-Louise Dunker
Tel. +45 40 87 27 47
E-mail: marie-louise.dunker@arken.dk

Press Coordinator Lea Bolvig
Tel. +45 30 45 67 18
E-mail: lea.bolvig@arken.dk