



Andreas Mogensen. Painted by Maria Wandel, 2024. Acrylic and mixed media on glass.

## Spectacular Astronaut Portrait of Andreas 'Andy' Mogensen Revealed

A spectacular astronaut portrait, painted on glass and depicting Danish astronaut Andreas 'Andy' Mogensen – maybe – holding the secrets of the universe in his hands, was unveiled on Saturday 4 May. Andreas Mogensen revealed the portrait at the Danish National Portrait Gallery at Frederiksborg Castle.

Danish artist Maria Wandel breaks all the conventions of traditional astronaut portraits with a new addition to the Danish National Portrait Gallery at Frederiksborg · Museum of National History. On glass, Wandel has created an experimental astronaut portrait of European Space Agency astronaut, Andreas Mogensen, surrounded by an abstract interpretation of the universe.



The unveiling took place on Saturday morning by the Danish Minister of Culture Jakob Engel-Schmidt and Andreas Mogensen himself at Frederiksborg Castle where the Danish National Portrait Gallery is located. After the portrait was revealed, a clearly honored astronaut Mogensen was introduced to the artist's thoughts on the portrait.

By using glass, Maria Wandel has encapsulated Andreas Mogensen in the space module, Cupola, where Mogensen appears seated, weightlessly floating while calmly and gently meeting the viewer's gaze. The glass can be interpreted as the membrane that separates the astronaut and the infinite universe. Behind the glass, lies the universe—in Wandel's interpretation, an abstract, colorful space. Andreas Mogensen holds a box with an infinite perspective and a circle of gold leaf in his hands. The riddle of the universe? Our own dreams? The artist leaves it up to the viewer to imagine what Mogensen is holding in his hands.

The astronaut portrait was completed while Andreas Mogensen was stationed on the International Space Station, ISS. Maria Wandel, participating in inflight calls with Danish scientific institutions, followed Denmark's first and only astronaut, pilot, and commander aboard SpaceX's Crew Dragon and the ISS for 200 days in space. Mette Houlberg Rung, Head of Collections and Exhibitions at Frederiksborg, is delighted that the museum can showcase not just any astronaut portrait, but one that breaks from tradition. Typically, American astronauts are portrayed post-return in full space gear, broadly smiling with their helmet in their lap. Here, the Danish astronaut is uniquely depicted floating in space, through a female artist's perspective on the astronaut portrait genre:

*"Wandel's depiction of Andreas Mogensen offers a completely new and experimental take on how an astronaut's portrait should be approached. Starting from a painted portrait, but in its design, executed on glass with backlighting, the work takes on the character of an installation. In addition to being a faithful likeness, the piece, with its abstract background and the infinity box, also serves as a work of art that poses questions and invites us to reflect on the universe and ourselves,"* states Mette Houlberg Rung.

The portrait gallery at Frederiksborg features a long series of portraits of Danish scientists who have pushed the boundaries of humanity, including Tycho Brahe, Niels Steensen, H.C. Ørsted, P.O. Brøndsted, Niels Bohr, Aage Bohr, and Ben Mottelson, Georg Zoëga, and Ole Rømer. With this new astronaut portrait, Andreas Mogensen is now part of this prestigious group of Danish scientists portrayed at the museum.

Denmark's first astronaut portrait will be on display until September 16th in a special section of Frederiksborg's modern and contemporary art department, along with photos of Wandel's process, her sketches, and a film about the creation.

## About Maria Wandel

Maria Wandel (born 1977 in Aarhus, living and working in Copenhagen) graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in 2005. She has primarily focused on painting and has completed several portraits, most recently of Bertel Haarder for the Folketing (2023).

## About Frederiksborg · Museum of National History

Since its establishment in 1878 as part of the Carlsberg Foundation, Frederiksborg · Museum of National History has been located at Frederiksborg Castle. The castle, with its impressive ceremonial rooms and richly decorated interiors, provides a unique setting for the historical narrative, telling over 500 years of Danish history and housing Denmark's National Portrait Gallery.

## Press Material

The astronaut portrait and other press materials are available on the museum's press site. For further information and interviews with Mette Houlberg Rung, Head of Collections and Exhibitions, as well as artist Maria Wandel, please contact Head of Communications Sara Juel Andersen at email: [sja@dnm.dk](mailto:sja@dnm.dk) / tel. +4529747553.

