



Lübeck  
St. Mary, Beautiful Madonna, Master of the Darsow Madonna, around 1420

The Madonna of the soft style, donated by the Lübeck councilor Johann Darsow and his three nephews Bernhard, Gerhard and Herrmann, was for a long time the focus of scholarly efforts to determine the identity of her unknown master. On March 29, 1942, she shattered into thousands of fragments and was re-created from these. She is, above all, entirely of herself; all the particles found themselves and back to her again.

Photo: June 2012



Tangermünde  
St. Stephen, Madonna on the Crescent Moon, 1490

This expressive sandstone relief occupies a segmented arched niche on the outer wall of the baptistery on the southern transversal arm of the Gothic hall church. Its donor has immortalized himself as the kneeling figure on her right and has since lost his head, and some damage gives the Madonna a downright uncanny impression. She has lost her nose, which gives her face a strange, mask-like quality. Of the Boy Jesus, only the lower body has survived, which she holds onto with finely articulated fingers that are nevertheless furrowed by time. The gaze of the observer now finds rest on her hands.

Photo: March 1993



Nordhackstedt  
Village church St. Jürgen, The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne (Anna Selbdritt), around 1450

The folding altar, the shrine of which housed Mary, Mary's mother Anne, and the Jesus Boy, was only rediscovered in 2009. The veneration of St. Anne was very popular in the late Middle Ages, and since 1854 the dogma of the immaculate conception has officially applied to the birth of Mary. Her girlishly scaled-down depiction is quite common—what she reads could be her own legend, the life of Mary; the boy Jesus probably carries rosebuds in his basket, and with his left hand he presents to Anne a chubby little bird. Through their expressions, Selbdritt conveys the mystical idea of the Trinity very vividly: one self, at the same time in threes.

Photo: July 2013



Gudow  
Village church St. Mary's, Madonna, Lübeck region workshop around 1430

She belongs to the Woman of the Apocalypse or Madonna of the Crescent Moon, but she renounces the uplifting corona of rays and the elegant, boat-like crescent and stands on a full moon with the little boy on her arm. Both are pensive, a little spunky, smiling. The meanings and roles ascribed to the moon in these contexts are as varied as its nature. Here, the moon carries Mary as Queen of Heaven with simple-minded tolerance, a quiet fellow who has neither demands nor expectations, but knows very well—better than any other—but does not divulge anything.

Photo: March 2016



Leipzig  
Grassi Museum, Maria of a Coronation Group, South German, around 1470

Mary in the full expectation of her coronation. I would have rather seen the moment of the Annunciation reflected in her, but she is tired, devoted, completely turned in on herself, immersed in a vision, and what she foresees is already written, and she probably sees it from the end, in the helplessness into which she will fall at the cross.

Photo: June 2011



Grimmen  
St. Mary's, Late Gothic Pietà

The Pietà—placed in the tower hall adjacent to the Romanesque limestone fifth, a simple sacrament house, and a whale rib—is damaged. Because the damage left him no peace, a copy was re-carved from limewood by the Polish artist Edward Szatkowski in which the missing face and right leg were restored.

Photo: March 2016



Habelschwerdt (Bystrzyca Kłodzka)  
St. Michael, neo-Gothic Madonna, around 1910

The crowned Virgin Mary with Child standing upright on her pedestal in front of the parish church in the south of the city was probably erected after 1914 on the occasion of the church's expansion. The Silesian county of Glatz, to which Habelschwerdt belongs, was also called *Marienland* because of the many portraits of the religious figure and their pious veneration by the people. The somewhat melancholy facial features of Mary, who wears her long hair down because she is not yet married, reflect the local ideal of beauty. Or so says my mother, and she would know, because she was born there.

Photo: April 2014



Telgte  
St. Mary's, pilgrimage chapel, *Painful Mother of Telgte*, Pietà around 1370

The thick, 750-year-old lime tree standing in front of the northern city gate of Telgte is called *Marienlinde* and is venerated because the *Painful Mother of Telgte* is said to have been carved from a block of its wood. In reality, however, the Pietà is made of several blocks of poplar wood. It is assumed that she first decorated the parental grave of a citizen of Telgte (a sculptural roofing is attested for the year 1466). Crowned and wrapped in a precious cloak, the soon-to-be-venerated miraculous image was carried forward in processions through the countryside until 1651 when, after the devastation of the Thirty Years' War, the first pilgrimage to the Pietà took place. In 1654, the foundation stone for the pilgrimage chapel was laid. The octagonal, domed building has housed the Pietà since 1657, the year of its consecration. The image of grace is no longer carried around, but visited at its permanent home.

Photo: August 2017