

STANDARD (OSLO) is pleased to present "Andy Capp Variations", an exhibition of new works by Torbjørn Rødland. For his second solo exhibition in the gallery, Rødland employs the comic strip character of Andy Capp as the starting point for a series of 12 small-scale black and white photographs. Repeating the same drawn image of this character, these photographs seem motivated by an interest in nivellation; an attempt at having the photographs neither appear as portrait, nor landscape, nor still life.

"Common sense is genius dressed in its working clothes". The claim made by writer Ralph Waldo Emerson would not automatically extend to serve as a description of the comic strip character Andy Capp. However, 'common sense' and 'working clothes' - strictly speaking being two out of three - would at least make a decent score. Torbjørn Rødland's recent body of works centres around a trademark portrait of this British comic strip character (whose strip has been running in daily newspapers since the late 1950s). Here the working class figure is rendered with his iconic pose: cap tipped down and cigarette dangling from his lips. Rødland located this drawing printed onto a souvenir mirror. The mirror was then applied to make a rhythmic reappearance of the same motif, but also to serve as a tool to tweak the logic of photographic flatness and pictorial space. Throughout these twelve photographs Rødland seeks to obscure the relationship between foreground and background, while never extending this play beyond the limits of analogue photographic techniques.

"Andy Capp Variations" could both be seen as a hard return to repetition and as an attempt to dissolve the classical genres that Rødland has been preoccupied with in recent years: the still life, the portrait and the landscape photography. These recent photographs apparently relish the arbitrary combination of elements from all the above genres. In isolating this pleasure from reason, Rødland would claim, these photographs are 'perverted': "Perverted photography doesn't sell a product or communicate a message. It's not meant to be decoded, but to keep you in the process of looking. It's layered and complex. It mirrors and triggers you without end and for no good reason, and that is erotic". Thus these photographs take an obvious interest in a limited play: the staccato insistence on the same image on the one hand and the continuous and restless re-contextualizing of the very same image on the other.

The choice of Andy Capp as the centre of this play could partly be explained by an interest in Andy Capp as a representation of the 'common man' or the comic strip as a representation of 'common sense'. Being about the people and for the people it does not rely on any education or esoteric knowledge. In fact the continuous juxtaposition of "the people" with "the elites" seems essential to the plot, not only proving a certain populist sentiment but occasionally also proving itself as a

convenient and commonly accessible illustration for political parties, which at some point had former chairman of the Norwegian neo-liberal Progress Party, Carl I. Hagen, claiming that Andy Capp represented the party's ideal supporter.

Torbjørn Rødland (b. 1970) has exhibited extensively in Europe at venues such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the 48th Venice Biennale, Venice; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Recent and upcoming solo exhibitions include Air de Paris, Paris; Michael Benevento, Los Angeles; Sørlandets Art Museum, Kristiansand, and Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels. Recent group exhibitions include Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich; Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; and Malmö Art Museum, Malmö.

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