

Since the late 1990s, Torbjørn Rødland (b. 1970, Stavanger, Norway; lives and works in Los Angeles) has been renegotiating the real in photography, bringing a surgical sensuality to an eroticism of danger that mingles pure pleasure with authentic disquiet. Whence the narrative strangeness of this fourth solo exhibition at Air de Paris, with works whose subtle, repeated oxymorons generate an undeniable mix of attraction and repulsion. Titled «*Birthday Sleep*», the exhibition celebrates and place the penis in the (glass) head, the pencil through the nose (of the globalised exhibition curator), the sleeping post-pubescent teenager cuddling his (giant soft toy) bear and the pivoting teeth filling a (star-shaped) ashtray whose title and enigmatic shape embody the artist's enneatype. (1) It also orchestrates a flirtation between bodybuilder veins and (flesh-toned) fishnet mesh, and presents a Venetian blonde evoking the tracks of a (bigfooted) Sasquatch. We've all dreamed of this mythical creature, living in the forest, bereft of all education and socialisation, and as far as the scientific community is concerned a matter of the purest folklore. As beautiful as they are scary, Rødland's new photographs expand our vision of the image's intimacy and credibility with a proximity that subtly and fundamental eludes one-track interpretation and unilateral emotions. Asked «What does an image consist of?», he replies «Layers upon layers of perception and identification.» Indeed, what seems accurate is inseparable from what is not. The same goes for what is true. One particular element may be common to several prints and give rise to different emotions; ultimately its properties and aesthetic qualities will come to haunt them, without becoming the main subject.

Birthday, then, is simultaneously a component part of the exhibition title, the context for the appearance of the drawing by this child, and a pretext for slipping on his pink platforms. As a result the viewer's eye is affected by a sense of the uncanny which he or she immediately goes along with. In principle we are sensitive to and definitively associated with this eye-catching montage – this pure application of Sergei Eisenstein's theory of nonindifferent nature and the collaging of scenes according to their visual power and impact. In precisely this way «*Birthday Sleep*» continues the Russian director's ballet, exploring a form of psychological realism, a face to face confrontation with with our own knowledge of the image.

Torbjørn Rødland (b. 1970, Stavanger, Norway, lives and works in Los Angeles) has been the subject of a number of institutional solo-exhibitions, including shows at Henie-Onstad, Oslo, Norway (2015); Kunsthall Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway (2014); Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, Japan (2010); Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, United States (2010) and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, United States (2006). As well as numerous group exhibitions such as *What People Do For Money*, MANIFESTA 11, Zurich, Switzerland (2016); *LIT*, 9th Berlin Biennial, Berlin, Germany (2016); *Billboard*, Whitney Museum of American

Art, New York, United States (2016); *Altars of Madness*, Casino Luxembourg Forum d'art Contemporain, Luxembourg (2013). The Serpentine Sackler Gallery, in London will dedicate him a solo exhibition from September 29th.

*1. Originally an esoteric figure and now used as a personal growth technique, the enneatype came to the fore as part of the humanistic psychology movement in the United States in the 1970s. 2. Maurizio Cattelan, Torbjørn Rødland, Interview, Purple Magazine, Volume III, Issue 27, Paris, pp.115-118. MC — What does an image consist of? TR — Layers upon layers of perception and identification.*

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