

Torbjørn Rødland

Eva Presenhuber, Zurich

With a keen knowledge of lighting, composition and the litheness of flesh, Torbjørn Rødland has crafted a photographic cathedral of the droll. Aptly titled “Matthew Mark Luke John and Other Photographs,” the show at Eva Presenhuber is a windfall of the banal and the bizarre in subtle and graceful ways that alternate constantly between the here and the otherworldly.

Rødland's human compositions flirt with the erotics of danger. *Picket Fence* (2015) shows a nubile leg resting on a section of the titular object, the sharp wood puckering the soft skin in a way that is felt, although not uncomfortably. Similarly, *Blades* (2014–16) shows hands clutching the ice skates of another unseen sitter, with no cuts or fear. The soft backlighting is seemingly natural, and the settings are nondescript, as if each was taken in an empty suburban home with the blinds partially drawn. This eerie feeling of the strange behind nearby closed doors is constant.

First Abduction Attempt (2014–16) is a transcendent image of a girl bracing herself as she's yanked through a doorway. Her body is firm and stretched, with a surface like porcelain and a face shifting between the horrific and the orgasmic. *Midlife Dilemma* (2015) shows a bare-chested man, with the face of a boy and the body of a god, holding an elderly man against the wall. Waxy and weak in his oversized suit, he is an object manipulated by the youth, who faces the viewer with an alluring look of evil and enticement.

Whereas someone like Gregory Crewdson relies on cinema, and thus fiction, for an association with the otherly, Rødland obtains his through a commitment to the real. Each work shows a psychotic perfectionism and an expertise at every angle: lights, setting, casting, construction. Whether it is a broken piggy bank or a child praying, he elevates the images he captures to icons of both heaven and earth. Within them, the uncanny is everything.

by Mitchell Anderson

Marie Angeletti

Édouard Montassut, Paris

Phantasmagoria, the late-eighteenth-century mobile projector based on the magic lantern, which threw morbid images of ghosts, demons and skeletons onto screens, walls and wisps of smoke, was a technology of temporal discontinuum. Time and consciousness similarly erupt in Marie Angeletti's exhibition “Citadelle” (all works 2016 and eponymously titled). Buddha statues from the Musée Guimet, and a woman with downcast eyes are recurring figures in a suite of nine acrylic drawings on acetate sheets. These motifs are disrupted by transhistorical genre scenes — of gendarme patrolling a Parisian street, and a copy of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting *The Blind Leading the Blind* (1568). The transparency and swiftness of brush strokes evoke half-finished manga animation frames. Amid our current social forces and cultural fortress, Angeletti seems to ask how we might situate ourselves in the choke hold of history, under the specter of anxiety.

The gallery is situated in two double-story spaces, *face-à-face*, in a Benjaminian Parisian arcade. On one side, a video projection looms large, with frenetically edited scenes of what might constitute the parameters of daily life: flashes of the river Seine, a fire that broke out in front of the Louvre during the recent flood, an altercation between a driver and a pedestrian, random people at random restaurants and cafes. Nothing *and* everything spectacular. Yet, with eighty percent of the video's duration taking the form of a blue screen, it denies its status as a centerpiece and offers itself up as a disruptive space for reflection and deflection. As stasis in movement, this blue in return casts a glow that hovers, like an apparition, over the deep blacks of the drawings. Upstairs, a marionette, mood-lit by two table lamps sitting on the floor, stands in repose with razor-sharp attentiveness. Perhaps this is how we seek refuge: by gazing toward the edge of the possible, waiting to be animated.

by Jo-ey Tang

Systematically Open?

LUMA Foundation, Arles

“Systematically Open? New Forms for Contemporary Image Production” is the inaugural exhibition of La Mécanique Générale, a new venue renovated by Selldorf Architects in the Parc des Ateliers of Arles. The show is curated by four artists — Walead Beshty, Elad Lassry, Zanele Muholi and Collier Schorr — and hosted in an architectural environment designed by Philippe Rahm.

The show investigates the condition, the presentation and the distribution of images in various contexts of cultural production: What kinds of engagement are possible with pictures? How can certain images be redeployed or restaged in ways that address their original function in the world? Do we read pictures or experience them? When is my experience at odds with my reading? How does an image's meaning arise from both the means of its distribution and the material form that it takes as a result, collapsing the separation between materiality and representation?

The entire show is divided into four parts: three are individual exhibitions, respectively dedicated to works by Elad Lassry, Zanele Muholi and the duo formed by Collier Schorr and Anne Collier. The fourth is a group show, organized by Walead Beshty, titled “Picture Industry,” which gathers more than thirty artists and examines how multiple modes of distribution influence reproduced images. Elad Lassry's exhibition “Untitled” presents a series of dental pictures that question our relationship to the utility and meaning of medical imagery: “Such utilitarian images expose the fact that photography was in fact always married to technology, always married to advancing life,” Lassry states. In “Somnyama Ngonyama” Zanele Muholi uses self-portraiture to “celebrate blackness as a commentary on political and cultural issues in Africa and its diaspora.” The dialogue between Collier Schorr and Anne Collier, titled “Shutters, Frames, Collections, Repetition,” combines mostly portraits of women that examine the relationship between “proximity, the nude and the camera.”

by Timothée Chailou