

myten er en tilstand

Galleri Nicolai Wallner is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Alexander Tovborg. The exhibition, entitled *myten er en tilstand*, features 8 paintings on wood panel, each depicting a nearly identical image of the greek god Prometheus, as well as a sculptural element.

Linked to the idea of creation and knowledge, an elementary reading of the myth of Prometheus tells the story of how he brought fire to mankind, angering Zeus who, as retribution, chained Prometheus to a rock where he was to be eternally punished. Depicted in profile on the rock, Tovborg's symbolically laden Prometheus evokes a variety of thoughts and emotions, yet when the paintings are seen in tandem with each other, their turn to the metaphysical is revealed.

The title of the exhibition, *myten er en tilstand*, translates to "the myth is a state". To understand the myth as such, is to understand how it is interlinked with the idea of how we experience it. It is not just a question of a mental or an emotional state, but rather something that goes above and beyond, something that transcends even the physical. To talk of myths as states is to talk of myths as moments of complete immersion—a moment of living or rather of embodying the myth. It is a process, an active participation. A question of being.

Through this active participation Tovborg takes on the myth, becoming part of it, adding another layer of meaning onto an already charged narrative. As such, the myth can be interpreted as a myth of origin, not in the sense that it explains our coming into existence, but rather that it explains a kind of intellectual coming into being or liberation. It is a vehicle through which we explore, we witness and we create. Mythical narratives are perched precariously between reality and fiction, between the possible and impossible, showing us what is known, while at the same time also showing us what could be.

This enveloping understanding of myths as states can be seen as a mirroring of Tovborg's actual work process. In his desire to know his subjects, Tovborg takes them on completely. Through Prometheus, Tovborg becomes Prometheus. Illuminating this idea, is the sculptural work of the exhibition, a baptismal font placed at the entry of the exhibition. In gold, it reads *credo quia absurdum*—believe through the absurd, or rather, I believe *because* it is absurd. Its sacred water was collected by Tovborg in Georgia, in the caves where Prometheus was believed to be chained by Zeus, tying it back to the paintings, as well as to Tovborg's process. Through repetition of imagery, of thought and of action, Tovborg believes and therefore becomes Prometheus, just as he becomes his own work.

It is a reciprocal and never ending relationship in which Tovborg, and subsequently the spectator, are baptised into these beliefs.

Alexander Tovborg (b. 1983, Denmark) has participated in many group shows and solo shows, notably at Overgaden (Copenhagen), Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin), and Hospitalhof (Stuttgart) among others. In the coming year, Tovborg will have solo shows at Kunsthalle Sao Paulo (Brazil), Gl. Strand (Copenhagen) and State of Concept (Athens) among others.