

**Press release  
November 2017**

**Torbjørn Rødland  
First Abduction Attempt and Other Photographs  
November 4 to December 22, 2017  
39 Great Jones Street, New York, NY 10012  
Opening on Friday, November 3, 6 to 8 pm**

Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *First Abduction Attempt and Other Photographs*, an exhibition of recent color photographs and a significant earlier video by Torbjørn Rødland. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery, actually a reimagining of the first, and his introductory show at Great Jones Street.

Over the last two decades, Torbjørn Rødland has created a body of images in which precision and critical rigor are finely laced with an improvisational, and often erotic intensity. Evading the reach of language, his subtly double-edged allegories make visible a broad spectrum of sensory experience, as well as physical and emotional exchange, coalescing at his work's center the unpredictable physicality of our world.

Each reveling in visual detail, eliciting an almost iconoclastic charge, the works in this exhibition continue to expose layers of pleasure and discomfort lurking beneath the surface of aesthetic experience. Created not according to—and not to be read according to—a single interpretive framework, Rødland's images are rather dependent on a willingness to grapple with the diversity of life as a constantly evolving system, where physical phenomena, emotional reaction, and cultural exchange can shift and take precedence over one another at any given moment. Operating between these divergent modes—and between ever-negotiated social contexts—psychological meaning and moral weight rise and fall away from each scene and its meticulous surface.

The photograph from which the show's title is taken depicts a violent scene of a woman being dragged by her legs through a door. Sunlight pours across the back of her naked lower body as she is wrenched from the carpeted floor. It is at once an image of paralysis and poetics. Other photographs result from Rødland's treatment of traumatized objects. They're also resting on floors. Surfaces and materials vary but Rødland is persistent in pursuing healing through acknowledgement. Some of these outer objects could easily have been treated as humorous but here they are seen and rearranged to address inner issues.

Rødland's looped video, 'Non-progress' (2006), shown in the lower level of the gallery demonstrates the artist's approach to jokes: he wants to know what's in them when they're no longer funny. 'Non-progress' loops opposing seasons, places and times of day. Through it all wanders a trench-coated protagonist, thoughtfully counting and reciting Mitch Hedberg jokes in Norwegian. Time is shown passing as her body ebbs and flows with a breath through the confines of a belt loop, fish lips pucker catching air bubbles foaming up, pale skin begins to blush in the open breeze.

Here and recurring in Rødland's work, fluid, glistening, or sticky substances often negotiate the spaces between objects, animals, and body parts. Fluidity here, from intuitive modes of perception to its visceral depictions to the literal wetness of Rødland's analogue process, becomes the thriving, unpredictable quality that distinguishes mysterious life from the inert.

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Torbjørn Rødland (b. 1970, Stavanger, Norway, lives and works in Los Angeles and Oslo) has been the subject of a number of institutional solo exhibitions, including shows at C/O Berlin (2017); Serpentine Sackler Gallery (2017); 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).

Group exhibitions include What People Do For Money, MANIFESTA 11, Zurich, Switzerland (2016); 9. Berlin Biennial, Berlin, Germany (2016); Billboard, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, United States (2016); The Elephant Test, Lothringer13 Städtische Kunsthalle München, Munich, Germany (2014); Altars of Madness, Casino Luxembourg Forum d'art Contemporain, Luxembourg (2013); The Eye is a Lonely Hunter: Images of Humankind, Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg, Germany (2011); N'importe quoi, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France (2009); Disturbance, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa (2008); Trials and Terrors, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, United States (2005); Elysian Fields, Purple Institute, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2000); and dAPERTutto, 48th International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, La Biennale di Venezia, Italy (1999).

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