

Galleri Riis

HÅVARD HOMSTVEDT

Nærmere Enn Hva Du Vet

April 19 - May 26, 2018

Ra ra Rasputin

Lover of the Russian queen

There was a cat that really was gone

Ra ra Rasputin

Russia's greatest love machine

It was a shame how he carried on

- Bobby Farrell/Boney M

Like the song randomly bounced from the depth of your mind to your tongue, images are constantly recalled from a collective image bank. Associations are made owing to a simple hint - as with in Rasputin; or in the painting *Harlequin*. In this painting, the figure is, in fact, merely hinted at. It appears as a flat sign more than a rendering. The singular painted pattern holds the composition together and points to centuries of folklore, mythology and stories in the history of European painting and theatre.

Inspiration for these new paintings is drawn from the artists' notions of his family and tableau-like compositions. The strength of the archetypes that inhabit our collective consciousness, has been on his mind. Masks and portraits are thematic cornerstones in his compositions with face-like images hovering in the deep space of loosely articulated landscapes. The face-like images repel and attract, and something hides beneath the surface, bringing attention to the figure and the ground simultaneously.

The masks and faces invoke ceremonial powers. A ceremony is participatory, and often one is well aware of its' codes and rites. Similarly, there is a power bestowed by the viewer onto the artwork; and the reading of images and paintings is a deeply embedded instinct. In Homstvedt's works, in these highly textured - almost wooly paintings, there is a focus on the building blocks of pictorial language; the weave, pixels and dots. The artist has explored ways of creating obstacles for himself, to challenge his usual modus operandi. Many of the paintings have thus been made using a masking-fluid, allowing lines and stains to reappear through layers of oil paint and pumice. The resulting pictures are fractured and on the verge of collapse. In this fluid environment, nothing is impenetrable. This is not about knowing. This is closer than what you know.

Håvard Homstvedt (b. 1976) lives and works in Oslo. Homstvedt received his artistic education from Yale University School of Art and Rhode Island School of Design. His paintings have been characterized by their textile-like surfaces and thoroughly treated canvases with varied materiality. He has simultaneously worked with multifaceted sculptural expressions, surreal painted bronze busts, idiosyncratic silhouette figures and reliefs intertwined with paintings in ambitious installations. Sculptures and paintings with a crafted treatment span the gamut from 'high' to 'low' in art, and also points to his interest in finding a method of rendering felt impressions rather than reality.