

GERT & UWE TOBIAS

*Enough Room To Swing A Cat*

March 23 – May 11 2019

Preview March 22 17h00 – 19h00

**Nils Stærk is pleased to present *Enough Room To Swing A Cat*, the first solo exhibition by Gert & Uwe Tobias in Scandinavia.**

Large-scaled woodcuts on canvases occupy the space together with fragments of body parts, made in ceramic and installed on pedestals. The fragmented placement of a leg, a foot and a head on the floor echoes the figurative imagery shown on the walls. Scattered through space like a puzzle creating a physical demand on the viewer to move through the space in order to reconstruct a narrative. Drawing on such diverse sources as pop culture, folk art and historical movements and here mainly Surrealism, their canvases and ceramics are both playful and haunting. Despite using rather classical media, their work is highly contemporary in scale and in the way they engage one's own sense of reality. Working like scientists, Gert & Uwe Tobias alchemically filter traditional techniques and media through a twenty-first century mindset, in constant dialogue with history across time. Based on found images, the exhibition *Enough Room To Swing A Cat* is a contemporary matrix of figurative fragments portraying the way we freely find and apply images today. With a rich set of references, their works reflect a contemporary reality and touch upon the future of image making.

With their self-developed technique, their woodcuts on canvas consists of hundreds of layers of paint coming from small hand carved pieces of wood are placed in a geometric grid structure. Transforming both classical painting and the long tradition of woodcut, Gert & Uwe Tobias play with genres to find new ways of creating space within the surface. In their recent woodcuts on canvas, the main figure is a twisted personage caught in an endless space. This exaggerated imagery draws parallels to the central figures in Francis Bacon's large-scale triptych *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* from 1969. A similar half figurative, half abstract matrix of fantastic and jarringly animistic remnants is the foundation in Gert & Uwe Tobias' colored woodcut on canvas.

In other works, the strong presence of history is shown through the classical composition of figurative fragments. Especially in a large, horizontal woodcut on canvas, the constructed narrative demands for a more symbolic reading; A hand seems to be moving freely through the image space next to a female personage. Reminiscing Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* from around 1490s where a similar hand, detached from any of the bodies represented, is cutting through the neck of Maria Magdalene. Using a comparable format, Tobias' monumental canvas in 200 x 300 cm are looking like our new history painting.

*Gert & Uwe Tobias (b.1973, Transylvania) are collaborators and twin brothers. Working as one brain, the left and the right side by side, handcraft is essential to their practice when working in their Bauhaus home-studio in Cologne. Since graduating from the art academy in Braunschweig in 2002, they have been seeking to redefine ways of making art. Enough Room To Swing A Cat is their first solo exhibition at Nils Stærk, at the same premiering in Scandinavia. The exhibition continues a large number of international exhibitions amongst others; Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, DE; FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, FR ; Gemeentemuseum of contemporary Art, Den Haag, NL; La Conserva, Ceuti/Murcia, ES; Kunstmuseum Bonn, DE; MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA. Their work can be found in museum collections worldwide such as UCLA, Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA; Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany; FRAC Auvergne, Clermont Ferrand, France; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany; MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA.*

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