

PRESS RELEASE

Torbjørn Rødland
Slow Life Strategies

September 6 – October 25, 2025

Opening on Friday, September 5, 11 am – 9 pm

Lichtenfelsgasse 5, A-1010 Vienna

Extended opening hours during curated by 2025:

Friday, September 5, 11 am – 9 pm; Saturday, September 6 & Sunday, September 7, 11 am – 6 pm

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *Slow Life Strategies*, the gallery's sixth solo exhibition with the Norwegian-born, Los Angeles-based photographer Torbjørn Rødland.

When it comes to cracking the egg of reality, Rødland is a seasoned chef in the cosmic kitchen. In his photographs, familiarity and strangeness, interiority and emotionality, tenderness and violence combine and separate like rich ingredients in skilled hands. Paradox comes to life in images that conjure mixed feelings like desire alongside distaste, or serenity where one might be sure suffering is at hand. In this, Rødland's work captures both the existential kink of individual experience as well as the staying power of the many moral codes that bind us.

Itinerant for much of the past three decades, Rødland roots his work in a deep knowledge of ancient archetypes as much as contemporary culture. Photographs including *Cinnamon Roll* (2015) and *All our Pretty Songs* (2021-2023) operate not unlike seventeenth-century memento mori paintings, which depicted objects and compositions meant to heighten viewers' awareness of their proximity to death and decay. In *Turnstile Gate no. 1 and no. 2* (both 2020), the artist similarly applies a historic lens to picture-making while extending the notion of a morally principled universe through layered visual suggestions of an upside-down crucifixion, the hanged man of tarot card legend, and – perhaps most recognizably – a gender bender. What's interesting about these varied avenues of interpretation is less one than the other, and more how they coexist; always constructed within immaculate formal compositions, Rødland's photographs have the distinctive quality of being both highly descriptive and mythological. They bridge inner and outer worlds, simultaneously emphasizing the sacred vastness of it all.

All the while, Rødland's photographs edge viewers into the fantastical realm of fairy tales – a genre governed by a strong sense of good and evil, by wonder, and the supernatural. In *The Ring* (2017), for instance, one might be drawn to hands as a symbol of healing or perpetration, or perhaps concretely reminded of the various allegories involving magic rings (stolen or given). In Rødland's image, we see young and old, light- and darker-skin in what one could understand as an alchemical marriage, a union of opposites.

Yet if viewers find magic, religion, and paradox in the works, Rødland's photographs also undoubtedly operate in the realm of the real. Each piece tethers us to a specific sense of self and a relatable mood, and rarely does the artist depict anything we don't encounter in our daily lives. Nevertheless, looking at the photographs on view, one is often struck by the inability to answer the who, what, why, where, and how. Reality in Rødland's work is prized for its asymmetry; the quotidian, for its abiding uncanny. These photographs give viewers the feeling that we are engaging in the action taking place and, at the same time, that it's all just happening by grace.

At a moment in which one is just as likely to summon a picture of reality through Chat GPT or a guided ayahuasca meditation as by walking down the street, Torbjørn Rødland's photographs testify to a careful, multidimensional construction of experience. Looking at his images is a reminder of what it might mean to actually believe in something and to let go of our conscious mind's negative judgements: wrong, right, beautiful, ugly. Spending time with this work – a slow life strategy in itself – offers the chance to enter the eternal game of hide and seek with ourselves that can, if we have patience, define a lifetime.

Isabel Parkes

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER

Torbjørn Rødland was born in Stavanger, Norway in 1970, and lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, US. In 2025, an institutional solo exhibition is held at the Tank Museum in Shanghai, CN. Previous institutional presentations include *Oh My God You Guys* at the Consortium Museum, Dijon, FR (2023), *Bible Eye* at the Contemporary Austin, Austin, TX, US (2021), as well as the traveling exhibitions *Fifth Honeymoon* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, FI (2019); the Bonnier Konsthall, Stockholm, SE (2018); and the Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, NO (2018); and *The Touch That Made You* at the Fondazione Prada, Milan, IT (2018) and the Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2017). Further solo exhibitions have been held at the Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo, NO (2015); the Kunsthall Stavanger, Stavanger, NO (2014); the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, JP (2010); the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis, MO, US (2010); and MoMA PS1, New York, NY, US (2006).

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