

TORBJORN RODLAND

Air de Paris

13 September - 8 November

MUSIC CASSETTES (BILL HALEY, Elvis Presley, Fats Domino) scattered across a parquet floor, lonely looking churches, a derelict farm in a wood, an adolescent girl wearing bunches, spectacles and white ankle socks. As often with shows at Air de Paris the first reaction is one of bewilderment - you peer through the brass porthole into Elmgreen & Dragset's installation at Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin next door, you wander by accident into the office, you pause to watch the miniaturised video in Barbara Sturm's Galerie 1:10.

Norwegian photographer Torbjørn Rødland's latest photos 'More Songs, Buildings and Girls,' images of girls, churches and music cassettes, are neither the grainy blacks and whites or velvety darkness of classic photography, nor the high-production values, gloss and cinematic-looking, staged approach of his previous colour prints on aluminium. Instead, they are a deliberate non-aesthetic of greys - no strong contrast, pale skies, wintery branches - mounted in small white frames. 'To me black and white seems more banal, more problematic, more beautiful,' says Rødland.

Rødland first attracted attention in Paris for his work in the art-style-fashion magazine *Purple*, which was responsible for the 'Elysian Fields' exhibition at the Centre Pompidou. In 'Elysian Fields' Rødland's photos of trees gave a strong sense of northern landscapes. He still likes trees but in the current show they are leafless, providing a wintery screening for his church spires. He is

making a less romantic statement than before and the photographs are more distanced than his aestheticising series, such as *Nudists* and *Priests*, which created a physical relationship between man and nature. Even if the churches - like the priests - refer to religion, these images have a sparser, emptier feel than his earlier pinewoods, and the only hint of any human presence is felt in buildings, which Rødland describes as 'houses of irrationality', the place of tradition and superstition. Black and white offers a different form of reality, suggests Rødland, with his cluster of three photos (two churches, one studious-looking girl) hanging on a background of idyllic blue and white cloudy sky.

If at first sight the only link between these photos seems to be their inconsequence, perhaps what they have in common is a form of anachronism and outmodedness - the church as a symbol of superstition, the outdated technology of cassettes and nostalgia for golden oldies, the ageing schoolgirl-look of the girl - and a deliberate distancing from today's colour-saturated popular culture. *NE*



2. **Torbjørn Rødland, *White Tapes***, 2003, black and white re-print on aluminium, 76 x 96 cm edition 3. Courtesy Air de Paris