



Torbjørn Rødland

Eva Presenhuber, Zurich

With a keen knowledge of lighting, composition and the liveness of flesh, Torbjørn Rødland has crafted a photographic cathedral of the droll. Aptly titled "Matthew Mark Luke John and Other Photographs," the show at Eva Presenhuber is a windfall of the banal and the bizarre in subtle and graceful ways that alternate constantly between the here and the otherworldly.

Rødland's human compositions flirt with the erotics of danger. *Picket Fence* (2015) shows a nubile leg resting on a section of the titular object, the sharp wood puckering the soft skin in a way that is felt, although not uncomfortably. Similarly, *Blades* (2014–16) shows hands clutching the ice skates of another unseen sitter, with no cuts or fear. The soft backlighting is seemingly natural, and the settings are nondescript, as if each was taken in an empty suburban home with the blinds partially drawn. This eerie feeling of the strange behind nearby closed doors is constant.

First Abduction Attempt (2014–16) is a transcendent image of a girl bracing herself as she's yanked through a doorway. Her body is firm and stretched, with a surface like porcelain and a face shifting between the horrific and the orgasmic. *Midlife Dilemma* (2015) shows a bare-chested man, with the face of a boy and the body of a god, holding an elderly man against the wall. Waxy and weak in his oversized suit, he is an object manipulated by the youth, who faces the viewer with an alluring look of evil and enticement.

Whereas someone like Gregory Crewdson relies on cinema, and thus fiction, for an association with the otherly, Rødland obtains his through a commitment to the real. Each work shows a psychotic perfectionism and an expertise at every angle: lights, setting, casting, construction. Whether it is a broken piggy bank or a child praying, he elevates the images he captures to icons of both heaven and earth. Within them, the uncanny is everything.

by Mitchell Anderson