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Torbjørn Rødland

I am a Photograph

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Halos of milky light and long contemplative shadows envelop Torbjørn Rødland's subjects. The mood feels saturated with emotion, a parley of inner and outer worlds. Like being in the womb— calm, warm, and protected—Rødland's models nevertheless emote a certain inquietude: anticipation coupled with an anxiety of events that lie in waiting.

And yet, it is the tactility of Rødland's photographic method that looms in his immersive, often elusive narratives. In one work, strawberries emerge from a bath of cream. A photograph ripe with sensuality, sure, but also a photographer's photograph—one that nods to Rødland's analogue process in which form materializes from liquid. In other works, the acuity of formal details seem to betray the drama they build into a scene: A white stretch limousine attempting a Hollywood Hills hairpin turn in *The Curve* is subtly mirrored by a bright red stiletto caught in freshly discarded gum by way of the long, foregrounded shadows both subjects cast onto the scene.

A portrait series of Paris Hilton accompanies these photographs. A personification of American goal-orientation and image consciousness—of being-as-image—Paris' public persona is the stuff of tween girl fantasy, but shrewdly masks an empire of perfumes, EDM parties, and TV appearances. Photographing Hilton at her home, Rødland seems to search for an inside to the facade of her camera-readiness.

Ultimately, the photographs presented in *I am a photograph* are democratized by the light they all contain: An introspective Paris, her backlit coiffed blonde waves and undulating grey coat in *Bright Doorway* melds with the winding, delicately lit path of the white limousine. His subjects swathed in the din of light encroaching from behind, Rødland speaks to the psychological weight of his subjects. In his *Sentences on Photography* originally published in *Triple Canopy*, Rødland speaks of the backlit object as "a pregnant object". To this, we are left asking, "pregnant, but with what?"

About the artist

Torbjørn Rødland (b. 1970, Stavanger, Norway) lives and works in Los Angeles, USA. He has recently had solo exhibitions at Hennie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo; Standard (OSLO), Oslo; Kunsthall Stavanger, Stavanger; Albus Greenspon, New York; Nils Stærk, Copenhagen; Air de Paris, Paris; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis; and MoMA PS1, New York. Rødland participated in the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999, and has recently participated in group exhibitions at Casino Luxembourg Forum D'art Contemporain, Luxembourg; Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Centre Pompidou, Paris. In 2016, Rødland will participate in Manifesta 11, Zurich.