

ART & DESIGN

Review: Torbjorn Rodland Mixes the Religious With the Evocative

By KEN JOHNSON JUNE 11, 2015

A Norwegian artist who lives in Los Angeles, Torbjorn Rodland creates photographs that are formally acute, conceptually playful and psychologically evocative. The most intriguing of the large color prints in his show have eccentric religious overtones.

“Drunken Man” depicts a large-bodied, balding and bearded fellow, naked from the waist up and evidently happily inebriated. A young woman is glimpsed to either side of him, and that brings to mind the biblical story of Lot, whose daughters conspired to get him drunk and then laid with him in order to have children and continue the family line.

“The Mirror” is the curiously ambiguous image of a naked woman apparently taking a picture of herself in a mirror with a smartphone. Presumably, the photograph we’re looking at was taken by Mr. Rodland, though it could be a print of the picture that the woman shot. It’s a conundrum. There’s something else: The glare from an electric light strategically placed behind her simultaneously obscures and draws attention to the place where her legs meet. This brings to mind thoughts about photography and voyeurism. But also, as in an image of the Annunciation, the burst of light suggests the miracle of human life’s conception in the female body.

In “This Is My Body,” a young girl looks up. A man uses his hand to hold her at her neck while, with his other hand, he inserts his index finger behind her lower lip. The gesture and title suggest the administration of a communion wafer, yet the image of a child submitting to a man’s dominance also hints at something far more disturbing.

Albus Greenspon

71 Morton Street, near Hudson Street, West Village

Through June 20

A version of this article appears in print on June 12, 2015, on page C21 of the New York edition with the headline: Review: Torbjorn Rodland Mixes the Religious With the Evocative.