

# rodolphe janssen

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## **Gert & Uwe Tobias**

### ***ladder without tree***

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Like the arsonist who watches his work smoulder, we humans are often compelled to keep our darkest, wildest instincts just within view. As if to see malefic energies beside us is to keep ourselves from assuming their form.

Gert & Uwe Tobias are masters of conjuring faintly perceptible desires as they ooze from cracks in our psyches. For their sixth solo exhibition at rodolphe janssen, mythological creatures make barely contained pets in portraiture. At times they appear to pose amenably, at others they wriggle free from their human counterparts, who counter candidness and mayhem with solemnity and seductively piercing side glances. These are portraits of the human infatuation with monstrosity, of chaotic symbiosis: a bearing of mythological alter-egos.

Influences of Symbolism are at play in the Tobias Brothers' paintings, what Huysmans, in his analysis of Odilon Redon's paintings, called "undreamed-of images". And yet, we rarely encounter the all-encompassing darkness of Gustave Moreau. Subject and object, fore- and background merge playfully in sepia and quinacridone washes. Figures are delineated as they emerge from murky spaces, the whiteness of their eyes and hands the focal point around which atmospheric gestures recall hair, ectoplasm, and mist.

In the 12th century zoological survey *Bestiary*, the characteristics of animals both real and supernatural are described in equal detail; Unicorns and griffins are provided the same ontological seriousness as horses and peacocks. Mythological creatures, in other words, have long occupied psychic space with the same fear and excitement as wild animals kept as pets, physical manifestations of what lies beyond the human. They sit tenderly close to our longing.

## **About the artists :**

Twin brothers Gert & Uwe Tobias (born in 1973 in Brasov, Romania) live and work in Cologne, Germany.

Recent solo exhibitions were held at Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Recklinghausen, Germany; Sprengel Museum Hannover, Hannover, Germany; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany; Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin, Germany; Team Gallery, New York, NY USA; Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; rodolphe janssen, Brussels, Belgium; Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK; Kunstmuseum Ravensburg, Ravensburg, Germany; Team Gallery, New York, USA; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden Kupferstichkabinett, Dresden, Germany; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy; Maureen Paley, London, UK and many more.

Tobias are included in several museum and public collections such as MoMa, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY USA; UCLA, Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA USA; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany; FRAC Auvergne, Clermont Ferrand, France; Kupferstich-Kabinett Dresden, Dresden, Germany; Kupferstichkabinett Berlin, Berlin, Germany and Sammlung Goetz, München, Germany.