

ALLÉ ALLÉ!

For immediate release

Allé Allé is delighted to announce the opening of the gallery's inaugural exhibition *First Class Curtains* with new works by Fredrik Vørslev. The exhibition marks the Norwegian debut of Vørslev's most recent series of works, the curtain paintings, previously seen at Galerie Mehdi Chouakri in Berlin and Andrew Kreps in New York.

From the Renaissance to Neo-Classicism in the 18th Century, a painter would typically be judged on their mastery of creating illusionary spatial depth by using the central perspective. A painter's ability to depict drapery, was, however, almost equally important. Ever since early Antiquity and through medieval painting, artists have strived for the realistic, but also sensuous representation of soft fabric, its materiality and textural qualities, as well as shadows and reaction to gravity. While the sections showing drapery, veils, dresses and the like were certainly part of the figuration of these artworks, they were also areas of paintings where these pre-Modern artists – much like in for example the depictions of the sky in works by Velázquez or the pebble beaches in the foreground of landscapes by Hans F. Gude – had the chance to approach something akin to abstraction in their work.

In literature, or film or theatre, curtains often symbolize something liminal: thresholds and borders, intersections between intellect and feeling, knowledge and ignorance, between nature and culture, or life and death. Henry James in *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) writes the following sentence: "With all her love of knowledge she had a natural shrinking from raising curtains and looking into unlighted corners." Light and darkness, conscious and unconscious thoughts, curtains form passages between all these different parts of life. Sometimes they're beautiful, often they are hideous.

Of course, curtains are also instruments of keeping things hidden, something to hide behind or something that might be used to keep things out of view. In recent years there has been discussions of how, in certain parts of cities, you can tell which apartments are inhabited by immigrant minorities because those are the ones closed off from the outside world with fully curtained windows. Similarly, in small villages in Norway one might encounter the view that people keep their curtains drawn so that their neighbors "won't see what we have inside."

This mundane, domestic aspect of curtains is what most closely aligns the curtains as a motif in the wider practice of Vørslev's work. Curtains are now simply the latest form of surface lifted from the artist's everyday surroundings that have been churned through the process of being turned into paintings.

Fredrik Vørslev's *First Class Curtains* opens on Black Friday and also marks the gallery's first Black Friday Sale. During the opening, from 6 to 8 p.m., all works in the exhibition are half-price.

First come, first reserved.

Bygdøy allé 28B, 0265 Oslo
Visit by appointment
bygdoj@allealle.no

Fredrik Vørslev – First Class Curtains
Friday 29 November