

Nick Theobald

Tarot reading, intuition, and world religions

By Julie Horne Møller

Nick Theobald was born in Los Angeles, grew up in Singapore, and has lived in London, Colorado, and New York. He is a well-established part of New York's pulsating art and fashion world. On the fashion scene in recent years, he has engaged in collaborative ventures with, for example, the designer Francisco Costa.

In the summer of 2021, he bought an unused Catholic school in the small town of Palmyra in upstate New York and has now remodelled it into a combined studio and home. A change of scene that, in every way, has influenced his artistic practice and provided new inspiration. This transformation is evident in the new works in the exhibition created by Nick Theobald in hitherto untested media such as bronze, photography, and charcoal on canvas.

Nick Theobald is an aesthete to a fault, and aesthetics always forms the underlying framework for his artistic work, regardless whether we are dealing with sculptures suffused with symbolism, small thought-provoking photos, or abstract paintings. Always based on a characteristic precision and a deep aesthetic appreciation. Nick Theobald is inspired by the various world religions, chiefly Shinto and Buddhism, world views and eras, which goes in tandem with tarot reading, intuition, great diligence, and a dedicated urge to create. In recent years, Nick Theobald has worked intensively with the Shinto religion, Japan's original religion. Shinto means 'the path of the gods' which, with some knowledge of Nick Theobald's practice, would seem obvious, since the artist uses intuition as a significant part of his artistic work. Daily meditation, tarot reading, and general spiritual balance is an important part of the creative process.

The new path, bronze, charcoal, and photography

In connection with this exhibition, Nick Theobald will present a series of new works, to be experienced outside the studio's four walls for the first time.

The bronze *Last Light* hangs from the ceiling as a reference to Nick Theobald's earlier work with the Japanese bondage practice of Shibari, evident in many of the artist's earlier works, including *The Hanged Man* from 2019, now part of Horsens Kunstmuseum's collection. The title *Last Light* points to the end of life and the world, but the title can also be interpreted on a more positive note and may imitate the last light in the dark as an extra opportunity or a final hope. The bronze rope is rife with symbols despite its light and almost floating form.

The new series of paintings created with charcoal and beeswax has moved Nick Theobald's artistic practice to a new place, both in terms of choice of materials and motif. The charcoal paintings are expressive and abstract,

however, with titles such as No One Around to Hear It, Demon Poetry, Shelter, and Rainy Days, the artist points to clear visual references relative to his well-known poetic melancholia.

The paintings are created as an intense snapshot of built-up energy in a cohesive process where the choice of material means that changes are no longer possible.

Afterwards, the works are treated with beeswax in a slow process lasting many hours before a perfect result can be achieved. The outer edge of the canvas is left raw, framing the paintings appearing to virtually float inside their frames.

A balance between wild nature and Nick Theobald's bodily imprints on the canvas can be experienced in the works' composition.

Moreover, the exhibition presents a series of photos, all taken upstate New York with an analogue vintage Canon camera. The photos are experienced as snapshots of momentary inspiration and show unfiltered moments in Palmyra seen through Nick Theobald's lens. Each photo tells a part of the overall story.