

## Closer to Nature

### Allan Otte

PRESS RELEASE

**Opening: Friday 16.2. 2018 5-7 pm**

Duration: 16.2. – 17.3. 2018

Allan Otte is known for his landscape paintings picturing crashed vehicles and dead animals, but in his new exhibition “Closer to Nature” living cows and humans replace the static, desolate motives. For the first time Allan Otte concentrates on a specific, central part of contemporary agriculture, which is milk production. In a factual and unsentimental way he shows us the mechanical industry and optimized operation of agriculture. The exhibition is a showdown with the food industry’s romanticized commercials depicting grazing cows, and with art history’s genre motives – like Theodor Philipsen’s animal paintings. Contemporary agriculture has not really been realistically represented in Danish painting for the last 100 years.

Allan Otte challenges Golden Age painters’ tradition of depicting nature idyllically, and he reinterprets classical and biblical motives such as van Gogh’s and L. A. Ring’s *The Sower* and Michelangelo’s and Abildgaard’s motives of Creation. In Otte’s version *The Sower* has turned into a GPS-controlled maize-sowing machine, gazed upon from a drone. *The Creation* is now a cow being inseminated. And in an updated version of J. Th. Lundby’s famous farm paintings picturing tethered cows fed in a barn, a robot now pushes fodder to cows moving around in a loose-housing system, while a super effective, heavy Mixer Feeder has replaced Lundby’s slender wheelbarrow.

By using Arla’s (the largest producer of dairy products in Scandinavia) old slogan “Closer to Nature” as title, Allan Otte exposes the national romantic self-image of the agriculture industry and the quixotic display of nature in the producers’ marketing. For once we see the place most often inhabited by the cows – indoors – and we get closer to the actual nature, because we are not let to believe that people are doing manual labour in close contact with the cows, nor that the cows should return to their “natural” way of life.

**Allan Otte** (1978) is educated from the Royal Danish Academy of Arts in 2001-2007. He has exhibited his works at Gl. Holtegaard, Kunsten - Museum of Modern Art Aalborg and Skive Art Museum among others. His works are represented in the collections of Kunsten - Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, Arken, HEART - Herning Museum of Contemporary Art and Skive Art Museum.