

ART BASEL TEXTS

HALL 2.1 BOOTH H12

KATE DAVIS

KARL LARSSON

MICHELE DI MENNA

SIMON DYBBROE MØLLER

ALBRECHT SCHÄFER

KATHRIN SONNTAG

CLAUDIA WIESER

KATE DAVIS

DISGRACE I - IV, 2012

In her series *Disgrace*, Kate Davis used pages from a 1972 catalogue of Amadeo Modigliani's female nude drawings, over which she then traced in shaky pencil lines the outlines of her body. By copying her entire body onto the page, the depiction of it as a female nude becomes an uncontrolled, fragmented and bewildering trace, which lies both within and over Modigliani's original drawing. The implicit question in the title, whether it is a disgrace to draw over a work of art historical importance, is what Kate Davis sees as the animating force of the work. What occurs when the ideal body meets the real, fragmented body? Kate Davis consciously imposes her own marks, to raise questions about the appropriation of history and its implications for our own identity.

KARL LARSSON

UMBRELLA POSTER (SHOW THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION), 2013

When writing for theater, to "show the problem, not the solution", is a well established figure to create tension and drama. To "show, don't tell" is a similar slogan used perhaps more frequently in an art context. Even though informal writing rules like these are useful as reminders one must be aware of the fact that the solution is sometimes part of the problem and telling, at times, the only way of questioning if there is even anything to show at all. As an example, to be able to speak about an institutional framework, one must sometimes start quite unflattering and clumsy, by talking about the most obvious (most easily disregarded) things like thresholds, doorknobs, walls.

The six screenprinted umbrella posters, are as much a repetitive word/image composition as they are the distances between these compositions. The unfolding of an umbrella is a direct reaction to a sort of emergency situation -- rain. Rain is a sudden condition, which requires action from those exposed to it. Large groups of people are shattered as individuals run for cover, new groups are formed under roofs and trees. There is a difference between being in it and out of it. It makes sense, just as an umbrella makes sense. Or at least an umbrella in the middle of a heavy rain makes sense.

Having a feeling the umbrella poster work is not non-sense -- as it is almost too much in the face to be non-sense -- the rain in the room where the umbrellas are unfolded must also not be non-sense. Yet there is no natural rain in the exhibition space. The question of what kind of senseful rain could be falling there, just as the question if the umbrellas on the posters should be considered a negative imprint on a spotless white background, or a positive outburst from the hegemony of white walls (-- have we decided? will we show or tell? --) should probably remain unanswered.

Karl Larsson

MICHELE DI MENNA
VESSELS, 2013

Containers,
Set in a space,
take over.

Travelling regenerations
of content and context
picking up new substance along the way
transcending hyperreal bodies
into outer space(s)

Remainders
being re-realized,
in a different existence,
emptied
to be refilled

coffin > flower pot > bench > fountain > ...

reused recycled reworked
and then; reconstituted, reapplied reemployed reappropriated reutilized
and reexperienced, readapted, reassimilated, reabsorbed, reintegrated
then some get retouched, repaired, restored
on and on and beyond

Michele Di Menna

SIMON DYBBROE MØLLER
MELODY MALADY, 2010

A person sits at a concert piano and is reading one of the books that are piled up on and around the piano, whilst with the other hand he is playing a seemingly random series of notes. Each note corresponds to a letter, the letters on the page dictating the order in which the notes are played. In this performance by Simon Dybbroe Møller called *Melody Malady*, the melody is the result of a phlegmatic spare time activity used to fill the emptiness of boredom whilst at the same time being a soundtrack to that feeling. Simon Dybbroe Møller strategically employs boredom as the lethargic adversary of our highly-developed free-time activities whilst also exploring different modes of artistic production and in part demystifying them.

SIMON DYBBROE MØLLER
RUMP, SHOULDER, SHANK, BELLY, SHIN, 2013

We all know the usual dichotomy of contemporary art production. An artist makes a "piece" - a photographer makes a "photograph" of it. We also know that it is through this photograph that most people experience the artwork. We might even understand some of this situations implications. At least it should be clear that a piece of art is often born in the body and mind of its author. In other

words it begins within someone. It is then somehow externalized. This process might involve sleepless nights, long conversations, limitless parties, sex, illness, boredom, hard manual labour or no sweat at all. The piece then leaves the studio or artists flat and enters the context of the exhibition; gallery museum etc. At this point it is not only outside of the body of its maker it has even moved geographically far away and into premises outside of the makers control. Now - at this point a photographer comes and turns it into a document. This document is then often put out on the world wide web. The ultimate seemingly bodiless vessel of our times. (Of course the internet only seems bodiless because of it being the ungraspable überbody that is our world, think underground server-parks)

What we encounter in these images is a movement not unlike the camera movement in Charles and Ray Eames' *The Power of Tens*. We move from the ultra within to just before the ultra without (the images are framed c-prints after all; arrested just before moving into the virtuality of tumblr accounts etc.)

These are Still Life images. Photographs of inanimate objects that exist on the border between lust and disgust. The photographs are of meat dishes. Of stewy dishes. Of Labskaus, Boeuf Stroganoff, Gulasch, Ragout. Dishes that are aesthetically, shall we say, difficult. It is only beef, but it is made of parts of the cows body that correspond to our bodies. Of Rump and of Shin. Of Belly and Shoulder. They are vanitas images. Captured at their peak we know that within days these meals would be uneatable, poisonous even. Flesh.

Isolated on a black background only the varying plates and the names of the photographers give hints to where in the world and under which circumstances these dishes have come about. The blue ornaments on one of the plates and the name of that photographer "Diego", might for example give us a clue to the context. Not unlike the way that spots in the ceiling of an installation photograph makes us believe that the location of the show must be outside of continental Europe. Possibly even in New York. But we don't get any information about the party of people who ate the meal, where the ingredients were bought. Actually we don't even know if it was a good meal or not.

Simon Dybbroe Møller

ALBRECHT SCHÄFER
SUNSET STRIP, 2013

The works by Albrecht Schäfer focus upon an engagement with the „inner logic“ of objects and situations. It functions as a crucial and integral part of the final work and of the process of its production. The material treated in this manner is rather minimal, such as pages of newspapers, paper lampshades and other industrially fabricated everyday objects. They reveal underlying and previously hidden layers of meaning through a process of disclosure, dissection and clipping. The basis of *Sunset Strip* is a piece of commercially available wallpaper which shows a large sunset. All we are presented with however is a thin strip of the wallpaper which shows only part of the picture of the sun, which subverts our automatic association with the term 'Sunset Strip'. Based on the literal meaning associated with the object, Albrecht Schäfer uses subtle changes to reveal the interrelated nature of things and thoughts.

KATHRIN SONNTAG

UNTITLED, 2010

MIMIKRY #10, 2011 / 2012

Kathrin Sonntag's photographic view of the inconspicuous in everyday life ushers the viewer into a miraculous world of similarities. Objects are duplicated, twisted and deconstructed from unusual perspectives to reveal new visions of the everyday. In "Mimikry", Kathrin Sonntag shows how easily the constructed fabric of meanings and values that we ascribe to things can be destabilized, whilst in her series "Untitled (Safari)" she examines the indeterminate boundary between the animate and the inanimate in photographic still lives.

Kathrin Sonntag invites us to question what and how we see, to consider how our perception is both culturally conditioned and yet always in flux, somehow both predictable and subject to chance. Sonntag plays with our perceptions, but she also provides us with the information to revisit and revise—and ultimately to take pleasure in—those initial moments of misrecognition.

CLAUDIA WIESER

UNTITLED, 2013

One issue that lies at the very heart of Claudia Wieser's work is: what is the status of sculptures that were designed as objects? The artist's body of work explores the boundaries between autonomous and applied art. *Untitled* brings together an ensemble of ceramic and a spatial collage, instigating a dialogue between them and relating them to the architectural context of an exhibition space.

Antique photographs proved exceptional sources for the work because of the pictorial power of the old reproduction techniques used in them. The artist brings together fragments of antique and own sculptures in collages and enlarges them to fit the a wall. Additionally small ceramic works are hanging on the wallpaper. The historical dimension of the photographs adds further meaning to Wieser's artistic principles, highlighting and manipulating the transparent line between a functional or applied object, and a 'purely' designed work of art.

With its pure studies of form and colour Wieser's abstract language is certainly indebted to the early twentieth-century Bauhaus. In her artistic research, Wieser appropriates the universally resounding and formal rules of early Modernist art and questions their objectivity, realism and functionality. In this research, she displays a tremendous fascination for traditional crafts and recognizes the qualities of basic mathematical forms and principles such as symmetry. In her studies she simultaneously seeks out the metaphysical dimension of subjective palettes and the contemplative aspects of forms, imbuing them with new and more layered meanings. These correlations between functionality, art and spirituality are an essential part of her work, which welds together sculpture, painting and architecture in one indissoluble whole.