

Anouk Kruithof - BECOMING BLUE

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From 12 March to 1 May 2010 Galerie Adler is putting on its first show of works by the Berlin-based artist ANOUK KRUIHOF (*1981, Dordrecht, Netherlands). The exhibition BECOMING BLUE was already shown in 2009 at Het Domein Museum in Sittard, NL, and at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin.

The people in Anouk Kruithof's photographs have a vulnerable look, perhaps due most to their expressive faces, which tellingly lay bare their emotional state of mind. Dressed in blue and posed before a background of the same colour, they have difficulties asserting themselves, seeming almost to dissolve into the blueness that surrounds them.

But what is most disturbing about the images is how Kruithof waits to press the shutter until a moment when her subjects have no conscious control over their facial expression, gestures or posture. We see them in that brief space of time when their body reacts without the conscious influence of the mind – a situation that renders them defenceless and helpless.

These “in-between momentary emotional states”, as the artist refers to the effect she is trying to achieve, drastically reveal how easily the facade we normally guard so carefully can be breached. Kruithof brings about this loss of control by deliberate feints. The “snapshots” she uses to capture the sensibilities of her sitter constitute a documentation of exceptional human emotional states.

In some of the portraits in BECOMING BLUE, Kruithof turns on its head the positive aspect of the colour blue, which is in general associated with calm and relaxation. She emphasizes instead the moment conveyed by the expression “out of the blue”: the instant in time when a situation suddenly changes and we don't know what will happen next. The artist deliberately creates situations in which her protagonists are abruptly startled, in order to capture this precise split second on film. Even when she shows people in more relaxed states of mind, however, she has a way of pinpointing the moment of deepest reverie, when the subject forgets to monitor what he looks like and to control his facial expression and pose.

As the viewer contemplates the carefully installed set of works in BECOMING BLUE, ostensibly uninvolved in the scenes portrayed, the tables are turned and he, too, is put at risk of losing control. Alongside the portraits, he finds himself confronted with a wall of 4,000 books, complemented by a video projection of a similar book wall. The sameness of the blue-on-blue photographs juxtaposed with the colourful and structurally inhomogeneous book barrier generate an atmosphere that oscillates between static tranquillity and hidden dynamics.

An arc of tension emerges: the visitor feels a nagging sense of uncertainty and lack of orientation, which however gives way to a vague feeling of security when nothing untoward happens for a while. Just as the tension is waning, however, a loud bang rings out and the projected wall of books tumbles down. The shock at the sudden noise turns the viewer – without him being able to stop it – into an equivalent of the people in the photos.

BECOMING BLUE builds a fascinating interplay of spatial, pictorial, installational and conceptual components whose impact is at once irritating and arresting. Anouk Kruithof takes a very active role here, setting the scene, documenting what happens, and in some cases appearing as a ghostly apparition in the pictures. But above all, she acts as stage director of our existential mental states.

Galerie Adler is focusing on new and fresh international talents with a unique handwriting going along with strong and

challenging themes.

The artists reflect the self-image, the desires and dreams of human beings in today's society. They explore topics like youth culture, social conflicts, life and death, faith and despair as well as angst, loneliness, violence and other kinds of human abysses. Their work can be described as morbid, provocative, bizarre but also as ironic, mystic and grotesque. They provide a link between drama and humour.

Our program covers all media: paintings, drawings, photographs and especially videos and performances.

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