

# ADJUSTMENTS

by Sofie Arneberg

The most recent works of Stine Gonsholt have been exhibited in Gallery Artrransponder (Berlin), in the Bjørgvin prison, at the (Oslo) Biennial of Drawing and at By the Way - Gallery of Contemporary Art (Bergen). All works have been adjusted to fit the specific sites, and displayed under the working title *Untitled Adjustments*. What does it mean, this word adjustment, for this subject, whose eyes we are invited to see the world through, in the works of Gonsholt? And are there not, barely noticeably, changes and alternations that are taking place, just as we are looking? Wasn't it a hand there. A hand stretching out and touching the curtain between us and the city landscape outside the window? That man, balancing on the roof top. Did he just take another, hesitating step? In the part named *Human Nature*, consisting of an animated double-loop, portraying a man running in a seemingly eternal circle, and a rocket being launched repeatedly before finally exploding, what we actually see proves not to be a loop at all. These fine adjustments and shifts that are at work. Changes that at some times are observable, but more often only become apparent in retrospect, through our sudden awareness that what we are seeing no longer looks like we thought it would do. *Untitled adjustments* consists of works that are specific of both their time and place, and in that way repeat their shared awareness of a certain presence of being, here and now.

The pictures of city landscapes overlooked by large hoisting cranes were shown in what must be Bergen's smallest gallery, but for the duration of the exhibition transformed into the city's biggest. The works were displayed in two large windows facing the street. For the outside viewer, it was impossible to look at them without also seeing the reflections from the city behind them caught in the glass. The reflections happened to be a number of the same kind of cranes at work, just then, during a few weeks last summer, and there, in the streets close to the Gallery *By the Way* in Bergen. This fixation of time and place has become even more evident in the works shown in Berlin.

Gonsholt was, together with the two German artists Berit Hummel and Nicole Degenhardt, invited to create place-specific installations in the Gallery Artrransponder, for what was to become the exhibition *Finite repetition*. The works were not titled at the time. Only later, as in an attempt to hold on to that moment, did they receive their names: the dates of their making. Our memories are not always reliable, while constantly being moulded in our consciousness by alternating wishes of forgetting or hopes of remembering. The unreliability of memories is further accentuated in Gonsholt's *Work in progress*, where she makes physical alterations to her pictures after the end of an exhibition period.

Gonsholt's method reminds me of a certain photograph by Duane Michal: Under the image of a smiling couple, looking into the camera from their seated position on a bed, it is written: "This photograph is my proof. There was that afternoon when things were still good between us, and she embraced me. And we were so happy. It did happen. She did love me. Look, see for yourself!" The so-called proof of happiness in the hand of the owner is also a equally sad poignant proof of something good that is now gone. In Gonsholt's works, the subject of holding on to specific moments is treated in a more ambiguous way. Simultaneously, they tie themselves up with time (in titles like *11.01.08*) and places (*Brunnenstrasse, Berlin*), while also absorbing changes (as seen in the film that only appears to be a loop) and unsentimental alterations (her de-collages where the original image is partly blurred).

Is there a certain philosophical value connected to the word adjustment in *Untitled adjustments*, or is it to be considered neutral? These works do not idealise what has been *Before* juxtaposed to a worried "Look what the world has come to" *Now*. Nor do they point an excited, futuristic finger "Forward!" - although there is a certain brutal beauty in the cranes, the scaffolds and barren big city images of Berlin. This is the exact point from which my fascination for these works springs, in my uncertainty of the values they express. Am I constantly looking for signs of an attitude that will reveal how the seeing subject in Gonsholt's works only appears to be a neutral observer? Have I, for example, been thinking that he or she is not participating, is not present, or is unwilling or unable to attach to the moment or place of the pictures? If that is the case, then I might also have sensed a certain melancholy or feeling of loss. But at the same time, is not the very creation and fixation of just this moment in the works a yes? A "Yes, I am trying", a "Yes, I do. I want to be here, and remember this." So maybe is it so, adjustments may be left open as a neutral and uncharged entity in these works of Stine Gonsholt. If so, it is as if they are answering: "I hear that you are asking, and that is fine. See what you see. Look for yourself."

Sofie Arneberg.

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