

## Lisbet Nielsen

Before language fills us and we come to define the world through words, we live in a state of senses. They exist side by side, layered, without separation and borders. The pre-lingual universe can be likened to a camera's mechanism of mirrors and prisms - a space in which light and impressions gather, are reflected and displaced. Through language we draw borders and catalogue the world, through the camera we release and expose.

Where, in language, we slowly approach the word, so do we, through the camera, seek the picture. Our hand turns and focuses the lens, and there it is before us, the object, in its clear definition.

Lisbet Nielsen describes her first meeting with the art of photography through her meeting with the single lens reflex. Central to her artistic practice is how this meeting isn't defined by the moment in which she focuses the lens and *truly* sees the world. Instead, it is a meeting in which, through the viewfinder, her fascination with the possibility for distortion is born. The hand turns the lens, focus is broken, reality is dissimilated.

Here, a blue light enters a flowering fruit tree, windows mirror windows that reflect a sky, a white shirt is an opening into everything.

Nielsen's works exist in the borderlands between focus and dispersion, they move between the defined and distorted gaze, between reality and dream, between language and the senses.

In the series *Before* - subtitled *Earlier in Time, In Front of, Ahead*, we are presented with photographs of closeness, intimacy, simplicity. Nielsen's focused lens depicts woman, the body, the child, and various objects in a series of black and white photographs. They are works which, as early works often do, seek a sense place and belonging - in Nielsen's case as an artist, a mother and as a woman. Yet, despite this focus, the artist enters a landscape of disintegration through photographic details. The gaze we seek, as viewers, in the artist's self portrait, is replaced by a camera lens which conversely seeks us. The body is partly covered - and this by a white shirt which dissolves into and away from the confined space of the photograph. The child avoids us, her gaze fixed on an internal, timeless landscape. Objects are presented through fragments that only just manage to recall their own form or shape.

This work points towards a development which becomes more insistent and prominent in the artist's subsequent series of colour photographs. Like geologic fractures - ground surfaces that have shifted from their level surroundings - Nielsen's photographs emerge as new foundations and ground. Through the notion of deconstruction, she collates and creates a new and displaced layer of reality.

Such acts of visual shifts and displacements are particularly prominent in the series *sweet reality*, where the artist moves through a landscape of dissimulation. Windows, set in rough concrete buildings, mirror windows further displaced through this reflection, and clouded by transparent fabrics. A red lamp absorbs all the light of its surroundings, existing as a lonely, buzzing object in the dark. A drop-shaped candle recalls a celestial body broken by a sharp light.

From *Panoramic*, a similar shift of objects and gaze is experienced. A torn up magazine bathed in yellows, is transformed into the golden, greedy landscape of an indian summer. In *Cars and Birds - falling into your soul*, a view of a traffic sign is filtered through an orange light, perhaps the headlights of a car, perhaps a mirroring effect - and it transports us to an indefinable space, a cancellation of the boundary between inside and outside.

It is this no man's land that the artist possesses so effectively in her works - where, what is depicted, certainly recalls an object but, crucially, not in its original form or shape, and where the identifying word for the object is spoken, but in a foreign tongue.

In her use of reflection, clouding, pixellation, cut-out and focus, the artist deconstructs reality, shifts, and displaces all visual foundations. Layer upon layer they are regathered, in new forms and shapes, transcending borders into a space where language is in dialogue with the senses,

inside is in dialogue with outside, focus is in dialogue with dispersion. This is by no means an escapism. Rather, it is a question posed to us, the viewers, of what we are left with when we move from our familiar frame of reference and into Nielsen's psychedelic landscape - what we encounter in the dispersion, what we find in the mind-expanding space of the photographs.

In *In My Blood*, we are presented with a series of patterns photographed from cut-outs of scaffolding, industrial buildings, wire fences, and flowering trees. In this encounter with simple, yet intricate expressions, we stand before pictures of wide visual origin who all, however, share a reference to the body as presented on a cellular level.

As viewers we cannot escape the fact that we stand face to face with ourselves, with the invisible part of a body we live in and of, and we can, as a result, encounter calmness and beauty in these works, we can encounter trauma, serenity or indeed our own fear of death. This series, and Nielsen's practice as a whole, is therefore a reflection of the viewer themselves. Just like the borders between language and senses are dissolved, so is the separation between art and viewer. In this dissolution, we encounter our own reflection.

A new sense of direction can be sensed in the artist's most recent series *Butterfly Me*. Here, the notion of dissolution is less pronounced, while an indication of a binary mirroring, as well as a micro/macrococosmos, makes itself known. An insistence on dialogue and connection, however, is sensed in the series' depiction of butterfly and mountain. Additionally, an exploration of the psychedelic space that Nielsen has previously introduced, also emerges.

It is an exploration which, with a new lens and new ambitions, returns to the place where it all began - to the mechanisms of the single lens reflex camera, where prisms and reflections exist, where a blue light enters a flowering fruit tree, where window mirrors window, where a white shirt is an opening into everything.