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I will tell what I have photographed.

Here is an sms from Hannele, the « assignment » I asked her to give me.

« In that painting series of yours could fit...do you remember Goya's works Maya nude and Maya Maya dressed ? You could rework them. Woman's gaze on herself is so different than that of a man...The assignment would be that gaze. You would look at yourself so tenderly that the spectator could not bear it. »

1

The wall in the office of Contretype, with purple crocuses on ceramic tiles. I made a self-portrait against it in which I am completely, down to the socks, dressed in orange. On the floor, there are flowers : two orange Gerberas, yellow roses (three), and small purple chrysanthems.

In beforehand, I thought it could be a « le Printemps #2 ».

But that day I was so sad, we had be fighting again, I was hopeless and had been crying, so i'm just standing there, like so often, facing the camera frontally with an unhappy and inwards turned faces, amidst all those flowers.

2

Airport.

On my way here, on the train, I did some planning. I wrote like this: « A dream of leaving, of eternal travel, without bounding and responsibility; stagnated life is so difficult. Being constantly on the move is tiresome, but it's an escape from all the unbearable. Airport is a vast space, an open horizon, a perspective of the runaway. »

If one wants perspective pictures of runaways one should probably shoot from an airplane window. We went trying on two days without finding a view like that. I ended up photographing a red and white kilometerlong fence that surrounds the airport and runs in the landscape like a work of Christo.

The idea of photographing the emptiness of an airport comes partly from likka Tolonen. I remember him telling me how in Berlin he went on adventure somewhere behind the Tegel airport and found some amazing places. On the other hand it comes from this frequent experience of mine to sit on a plane and next to me is this windy field scattered with lines, beautiful, in the rain, in the fog, lit. Often it looks extraordinary.

Otto Dix, Picasso, etc : Artist and his (her) model. The work by Otto Dix, where the painter is buttoned up to his chin, stiff and expressionless, and beside him a fleshy, fat, ugly, naked female model. Using power, and a stripping gaze. In Picasso's gravure series, like « Rafael and Fornarina », the painter always fucks the model. In them too, the model is naked and the artist is dressed. Being a model is thus associated to revealing one's body and assuming a subordinated position in relation to the artist. The artist is « man » and the model is « woman ». Male artists have throughout the history made women undress themselves and made them into objects for exercising male power, either sexually or simply by stating the males' superiority. When I put O sitting naked on the sofa and stand myself beside dressed (in orange again), it is not a tender picture.

I'm the one with possessive attitude, the one who's got the power. By doing so, I take back, on a general level, something that has been taken away from my gender in earlier art. In that sense it is an angry picture, a spit on mens' faces.

On the other hand, for those who know, it describes my particular situation with O, who accuses me that in our story it's me who uses power/plays a game/has money/wants to win/wants to be right, always. So this is how I show us : artist-oppressor and model-oppressed, completely helpless in his nakedness.

My ex-husband would not have accepted to pose for me the way O does ; K could not, because of the nature of our relationship. O accepts and does not ask questions.

A woman is always shown passive. A reclining woman is already an invitation. However, a man should be shown as an active protagonist. If a man is lying on the bed, the scene is not associated to sex, unless perhaps homoeroticism.

I don't want to make nudes about myself, unless as completely detached; studies of the figure, like « Femme à sa toilette » (2001), where the subject matter is the beauty of light, color, form and surface. I don't want to show myself the way men want to see. Naked man-dressed woman feels immediately good. It has the taste of a justified vengeance.

What if I photographed other women artists with their companions in a similar pose ? Gosh, when I start to think who it could be, I realise what a stunning number of the female artists I know are alone.

4 Reclining figure (Henry Moore), Nu couché, etc...

There is damn little light in this cellar. I photographed O lying on his side, don't know if it worked out, had to expose 15 seconds with full aperture.

5

Parc.

On two evenings I have been to Parc de Forest close from here. I have exposed completely « au pif » as I don't have a watch, and besides, the sensitivity of the light meter is not sufficient. When it has become dark, I have switched to NPL (tungsten film). Let's see what it produces in terms of colour. Darkness falls terribly quickly; yesterday I walked the Avenue de la Jonction, blackbirds everywhere. Felt happy, content. In the parc I had time for two pictures and it was night already.

6

Face.

This morning by the bathroom window using the red towel as a backdrop. Difficult to say anything. I was thinking of what Hannele said : « Look at yourself tenderly ». It is difficult at the moment. I feel impatient and unhappy about myself, not like at times when I have loved myself and felt beautiful. I barely ever watch myself in the mirror nowadays. I shot six sheet films and moved in some of them : shook my head, rolled my eyes. The exposure time was 8 seconds so the movement should have an effect. It was a kind of an experiment, like everything actually that I'm working on now.

7

Nude behind plastic.

The door leading to the garden from the bedroom has been insulated with a piece of bubble wrap because of the draft.

I went standing behind the plastic, as in « Homme derrière un rideau » (2000). I tried both back and front. Tedious to measure the light and to sharpen...

(from the sketchbook of Elina Brotherus)