

**Elina Brotherus**  
**inova**

**March 8 – May 26, 2002**  
**Curator: Victor Zamudio-Taylor**

**Selected works from *The New Painting* series**

For our spring season we are exhibiting new work from Elina Brotherus' on going series, *The New Painting*. Based in Paris and Helsinki, Brotherus began this body of photographs in the summer of 2000. *The New Painting* addresses historical issues –formal, thematic and conceptual— that have engaged painting and its dynamic relationship to the other visual arts since last century.

Since modernist photography fashioned its autonomy from painting, the latter has necessarily dealt with the impact of the former. Today, at the crossroads of hybrid forms and experimentation, artists are revisiting traditional topoi and themes as a means to revitalize established media –in this case photography— and to open up the horizon of the quest for a personal language to articulate experiences as well conceptual concerns.

According to Brotherus, in *The New Painting* series, the artist revisits key aesthetic aspects that have concerned painting as such over time: "light, color, composition, figures in space and, projection of the three-dimensional into the two-dimensional space". This formal quest articulates personal themes such as her surroundings, travels and those with whom she shares her time. Conversely, the personal is a pretext to enter a new stage of formal/conceptual quests that revolve around the evocation of subjectivity and desire by means of the traditional genres of the landscape and the model.

The landscape component of *The New Painting* photographs is reminiscent of the work of David Casper Friedrich (1774-1840) and Scandinavian genre painters. The portraits, on the other hand, evoke the bathers and women at their toilette as depicted by Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and Paul Cézanne (1839-1906). Like the modern painters, Brotherus uses such commonplace figures as a means to dwell in formal concerns while depleting the picture of narrative. This is particularly important for her: it allows her to depict herself as a model without the references and weight that are inherent to self-portraiture, a quest and genre that had occupied her work until *The New Painting* series.

In her prior series of works [(*French Suites 1 & 2*; and, *Das Mädchen sprach von Liebe* (*The young girl speaks of love*)) Brotherus investigated aspects of self-portraiture in poetic as well as documentary manners. Ruthless in her self-portrayal but stopping short of irony and self-deprecation, the works established Brotherus as an artist whose photographs were imbued by issues pertaining to gender, representation, and the negotiation of cultural histories and their shifting locations.

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***The exhibition of Elina Brotherus is the second in the series Contemporary Art from Finland series, collaboration between inova and the FRAME, the Finnish Fund for Art Exchange.***