

TANJA POL GALERIE

ROBERT ELFGEN

More Than Anything

02/05/13 - 15/06/13

For his first solo show at Tanja Pol Galerie Robert Elfggen created a completely new body of work: MORE THAN ANYTHING.

Small and medium-format collages, some of them made by the artist using a mirror, show animals, found objects such as cigarettes, fabric, plants, curtains. A few oval mirror-images feature life-sized female torsos collaged with hair and fabric.

Obviously, the setting is a particular place, a story is being told, the roles are played by women, cats, birds, owls. Where does the story take place?

The trailer house appears as a motif: it's obviously about prostitution. It is localized in an in-between space—not legal, not illegal, on the edges of the city, on the periphery of the socially acceptable; in a trailer placed temporarily on a path through a field, the prostitutes live and work. This is the scenario alluded to here.

It is a special place: in so-called nature, among hedges, trees, and grass the women hang up their blankets and clothes during the day. They build a world of their own for themselves; stray cats are a part of it, as are twittering birds, alongside dirt, improvisation, defenselessness. At the same time there is a clear sense of autonomy, a certain independence from the city, as well as the fact of being excluded.

It is the role of the outsider that the women take on, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Their lives consist of rituals and rules, which, seen from the outside, seem strange and yet also familiar. Laundry is hung up in the morning; you get a little air, smoke a cigarette outdoors. "There was Coffee" (Kaffe gabs), according to the title of one of the works.

Elfggen's view of the "scene" is respectful, never voyeuristic. On the pillar in the middle of the exhibition space hangs a silver trashcan, like the ones seen in the street. Here, the theme of value is very directly addressed. Yet the trashcan is also part of the setting; the women stand on the street, the trashcan hangs on the streetlight pole next to them. An everyday scene.

Robert Elfggen, born 1972 in Bornheim/Cologne, D, lives and works in Cologne and Berlin. He studied with John Armleder at HBK Braunschweig, and with Rosemarie Trockel at Kunstakademie Duesseldorf.

In May, 2013 his first monograph was edited by Sprueth Magers Berlin London, Tanja Pol Galerie Munich, and Marianne Boesky New York, published by DISTANZ.