

Nanna Hänninen

It has erroneously been assumed that a photograph doesn't lie. But **Nanna Hänninen** uses photography to play tricks and lie very convincingly; like Gaál she plays with the observer's sense of proposition. In pictures of something white, indistinct and unstructured which dissolves the sense of space, one begins to doubt the scale of pictorial content: is it a grand panorama of snowy landscape with clouds, or a close-up of crumpled piece of paper? The picture plane's lack of definition and sharpness creates a sense of uncertainty and disorientation in the observer; the scenarios seem at once very distant and close, real and unreal at the same time. The photographs of clean, white sheets of paper are very difficult to decode at first glance. Viewed at a distance, a space slowly and gradually establishes itself, seeming to be cloud or a mountaintop. At closer range, the picture turns out to be a photograph of a sheet of paper, made so tangible that it seems to be the sheet of paper itself. Thematically, Hänninen touches on the eternal discussion of art- especially photography- of the relationship between the object and its representation. One invariably thinks of the famous René Magritte's painting of a pipe, which in Hänninen's case might well be rephrased as *Ceci n'est pas du papier*. She plays games with the observer, since the picture is in fact made of (photographic) paper.

Although many of Hänninen's pictures suggest landscapes, her minimalistic visual spaces remain abstract and uneventful, as pictures of nothingness. Or rather, they waver between the figurative and the abstract, which makes the observer unsure. Hänninen's subdued photos depict everyday life, but in a far from boring way- quite to the contrary, they are very thoughtful and meditative. Her systematic compositions, influenced by Bernd and Hilla Becher and by the student projects at the Düsseldorf School, are based on a stringent concept: the gathering and ordering of limited material, a minimalistic and factual depiction of her subject, with a preference for details and ornamental patterns. Like the minimalists of the 1960s, she empties her subject of all content, creating the pure object. Her photography is thus related to that of Andreas Gursky, Jörg Sasse and Thomas Demand- especially the latter who, with his life-size, paper and cardboard models of rooms, simulates real ones. Hänninen is even more ethereal. With her white sheets of paper, she seems to almost breathe fake rooms or landscapes.

By Jens Friis, Curator and Editor, Brandts Museet for Fotokunst in Odense