

Anneè Olofsson

(Hässleholm, Sweden, 1966)

Family relationships, the passing of time and the impermanence of the body are just some of the themes that Anneè Olofsson explores most frequently in her video and photo works. The domestic environment, meant both as a physical and a mental space, is the stage of choice on which she sets her theatre of obsessions, of which she is a protagonist together with a close circle of people. As well as turning the camera lens onto her own body, other recurring subjects are her mother and father, friends and ex-boyfriends, while only more rarely does she allow external models to infringe on this private cosmos. Impeccable from a formal point of view, her works recreate the intimacy of relationships through an almost cinematographic lighting, which lets the figures emerge from restricted spaces and ones immersed in compact darkness.

The Mourners – My Last Family Photo (1996) is one of the first photographs in which she is portrayed together with her parents and grandparents. They all have a very serious expression and wear dark clothes, as if they were about to set off for a funeral, while she – sitting in the centre – offsets the tone with a funny polar-bear costume. The mournful atmosphere is explained by the fact that the image was shot a short while before her parents' divorce, in some way marking the end of the family as Olofsson had considered it ever since she was a child. The works that feature her father and mother as protagonists are among the most perturbing in her production. These are works that attempt in vain to narrate the innocence of those little acts of love and care that a parent adopts before their little girl, but that the passage into adulthood compromises and endows with a sense of transgression. Both when she films her mother reading her private love letters as if they were bedtime stories, and when she photographs her father helping her to take her dress off, Olofsson is reflecting on the impenetrability of personal relationships and the possibility that each one of us projects a different meaning onto the image on the basis of their own baggage of memories or life experiences.

Shot in the frosty winter of Northern Europe, the video in the collection *Cold* (1999) belongs to quite another research path. Here we see the artist motionless on the shore of the Baltic Sea with the upper part of her body laid bare, while for the entire length of the film she lets the cold act on her face, until her skin is red and her eyes start to water. The same framing, close up on her face, is also adopted in a series of works investigating the unsettling implications of the passing of time, from ageing to boredom, from the loss of identity to death. This is the case of *The Thrill is Gone* (2002), which through the firework show reflected on the contact lenses she wears, she celebrates the sense of dissatisfaction for the transitory nature of things, or of *Say Hello Then Wave Goodbye* (2004), in which an ice bust that looks like the artist melts away little by little in front of the camera.

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