

Neumeister Bar-Am



Doppelseite aus: Henrik Strömberg, *Mashti*, 2016, S. 114–115.

zeigt zwischen 2006 und 2016 entstandene Arbeiten Strömberts – und die schon mit den Bildern empfundene Zeitlosigkeit setzt sich fort in einer klassischen und unaufdringlichen Buchgestaltung: Hardcover im Halbleinen, handliches Lesebuchformat, ein kurzer Text über Strömberts künstlerische Arbeit, anschließend längere essayistische Assoziationen von Jens Soneryd in jeweils kurzen Abschnitten, die sich mit der Ding-, Zeichen- und Sprachwelt beschäftigen und dazu unter anderen Platon, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Pierce, Barthes und Sontag heranziehen. Dann die »Plates«: Einzelnd und mittig auf die Seiten gesetzt, gelegentlich auf Doppelseiten gestaltet, entfaltet sich Strömberts Universum der Dinge, gebaute und abfotografierte Skulpturen, ausgeschnittene, zu Collagen zusammengesetzte Negativfetzen, Negativumkehrbilder, manchmal eine »klassische« Schwarzweiß-Fotografie – fast als Vergewisserung ihrer selbst. Schon in seiner Form der kurzen Abschnitte beschreibt der Text eine Annäherung an die Bilder: ein erkenntnistheoretisches, assoziatives Umkreisen der Möglichkeit eines Eigenlebens, zu dem Strömbert seinen Motiven verhilft.

Einer der Abschnitte erklärt auch den Buchtitel: Der Begriff »mashti« stammt aus dem Quichua, der Sprache der ecuadorianischen Runakuna-Bevölkerung, deren Vorstellungswelt sich aus »lebenden Zeichen« zusammensetzt, die in ständiger Interaktion miteinander stehen, einer

Welt, in der Objekte zu Subjekten werden und umgekehrt. »Selbste [...] können in uneindeutigen Räumen existieren, in denen sie keine vollkommen interaktiven Subjekte mehr sind, die man benennen kann und die [...] potenziell sogar auf ihre Benennung reagieren können, aber auch noch nicht ganz zu unbelebten Objekten geworden sind [...]. Vielmehr können sie sich irgendwo zwischen Leben und Tod verfangen, in dem uneindeutigen Raum des ›Wie-nennt-man-das?‹ (*mashti*, in Quichua).«¹

Mit diesem Titel stellt sich Henrik Strömbert mitten in einen Fotografiediskurs, der sich seit der Erfindung des Mediums beziehungsweise dem Beginn einer Theorie der Fotografie um eine Signifikanz seiner selbst bemüht, in die Problematik eines Subjekt-Objekt-Verhältnisses und die Frage, um was für eine Art der Transformation es sich bei dem fotografierten *Ding* auf der zweidimensionalen Fläche des Bildträgers handelt, in welcher uneindeutigen Sphäre es aufgehoben wird: »Es ist nicht mehr die dingliche Vorlage, deren Umrisse sich als Lichtspur im Film niederschlagen. Es ist die Subjektivität des kameravermittelten Sehens, die sich auf der Oberfläche des angeschauten Körpers bricht und reflektiert.«² Strömbert verwendet die Fotografie als bildgebendes Medium, nichts will hier einen dokumentarischen Anspruch erfüllen, solche Strategien verhandeln oder sich zueignen machen. Zentral scheint gerade die Unbenennbarkeit dessen zu sein, was gezeigt wird. Selbst wenn in vielen Bildern Konkretes wie Steine, Glocken, Schalen, Teile von Denkmälern und Monumenten scheinbar identifizierbar (und benenbar) ist, verweigern sie sich durch Strömberts Inszenierungen einer vergewisserten sprachlichen Zuordnung, oder, wie Jens Soneryd im Begleittext schreibt: »Die Worte verschwinden nach und nach bis nur noch das formlose Wort ›Ding‹ übrig bleibt«.³



Henrik Strömberg:
Mashti.

Namenlose Dinge

Henrik Strömberg: Mashti

Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin 2016

von Rebecca Wilton

Es ist der Eindruck von Zeitlosigkeit, der sich vordergründig beim Betrachten der Fotografien Henrik Strömberts einstellt. Einige der Bilder könnten in ihrer Anmutung durchaus auch der Frühzeit der Fotografie zugeordnet werden. Selten tauchen Motive auf, wie etwa eine zeitgenössisch anmutende Architektur, die auf ihre tatsächliche Entstehungszeit und eine Zeitgenossenschaft hindeuten. Das Künstlerbuch *Mashti*

Mit Textbeiträgen von Katharina Wendler und Jens Soneryd (eng.).

Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin 2016.

140 Seiten, 17,5 × 24 cm, zahlreiche SW- und Farabbildungen.

€ 35,- / ISBN 978-3-9817933-0-7

1 Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think. Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*, Oakland: University of California Press 2013, S. 103–104. Übersetzung: W. P.

2 Wolfgang Scheppé, »Franco Vimercati und die Dinge des Lebens«, in: Wolfgang Scheppé (Hg.), *Die Dinge des Leben / Das Leben der Dinge. Franco Vermaut & George Kubler. Der Terrinen-Zyklus, 1983–1992*, Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden 2013, S. 10–11.

Henrik Strömberg

Loving the negation – a text by Sarah Rosengarten

19.01.2015, KubaParis

Henrik Strömberg's work makes me a little bit suspicious in the way that I am led to believe that there must be more than I can see. It is hard to look at it briefly. It has the effect of sucking one in. Exploring one image provokes asking for more and continuing to wonder and wander.

In many of the images shown in recent series I sense a statue. In quarter of a kind, it seems that this feeling comes from an isolation of the object in an undefined space. It makes me wonder where the object is located. Is it outside? Is it inside? Is it legitimate to use these simple distinctions? Does the realm of the work possibly include a white cube itself, before it even enters the „neutral“ gallery space? In this series it is as if there is a geometrically shaped hole in a white sheet, and what one can grasp looking through it, is only a small part of a giant. This giant could be an enormous multiplicity of what Strömberg shows us, or it could be an enlargement of tiny layers of paper that he zoomed in on.



Henrik Strömberg – quarter of a kind Installation view, 2013
Courtesy Neumeister Bar-Am



Henrik Strömberg Untitled 01, 2013 Courtesy Neumeister Bar-Am
Henrik Strömberg Untitled 02, 2013 Courtesy Neumeister Bar-Am

The directness of titles, such as top part on wood, or top part on legs or simply covered, contrasts with a mysterious world of darkness and sculpturality. The titles are not even meant to explain more, they rather reinforce a curiosity for what is negated. In top part on legs it is as if the ingredients that may have been used for the creation of the object depicted, make a step back and what I see is something alive, a moving self confident little guy caught on its way out of the frame.
top part on wood

The artist tells me that he does not like the questions of how, where and what. But it seems that these questions are not even necessary to experience his work. Actually, it seems essential to rather not define the arrangements depicted with terms that come from a world of practically useful language.

The partial reflection of objects hints at their environment such as the notion of slickness of the surface they are standing on. One realizes that there is a floor and one senses the spatial surrounding, like a room or a shelf. At the same time the shadow becomes part of the actual figure. It intensifies the feeling that what one sees is about to fall or move but seems to be stable for the moment, as if an elephant is elegantly balancing on a safety pin.

Due to a Black and White reverse that Strömberg applies digitally, the figures gain a look of illumination and clear defined contours. In some images it feels as if the objects are made of ice, eternally frozen, fragile and delicate. The surrounding space appears like a warmly black landscape, stretching out so much further than the viewer is able to see inside the frame of the picture. Again, it is as if the artist allows you merely a narrow peak inside his mind, giving you the opportunity of imagining the rest by yourself.



Henrik Strömberg Figure Head Piece, 2013, Courtesy Neumeister Bar-Am
Henrik Strömberg Top Part on Mirror, 2013, Courtesy Neumeister Bar-Am

In Figure Head Piece and Top Part on Mirror the observer faces the images as a group. They form a body of work by communicating with each other through their similar aura, but seem to each have a life on its own. A little army of extraordinarily dressed characters lure you into their inner circle but never quite let you in.

As much as it is possible in photography, Strömberg's work is extremely haptic. I feel a desire to engage physically with what is depicted. Caused by the partial revelation out of the black and by a kinkiness I find in the material, I am tempted to explore further with my body, to lay my hands on the unusual forms and surfaces. Luckily, that is restricted through the two dimensionality of the medium.

One work from a series of works called SOURCE depicts seemingly burning material that reminds of thin foil, although it seems of no importance what the utensils consist of. Unlike in more recent works, the darkness of the surroundings and the figures are less separated. The light is in a dialogue with the material and both are communicating with me, as the

observer. I imagine the light as a small white creature that swallows up its opponent and it grows from nourishing its stomach with its find. Again, I want to participate in the actions I see by chewing, swallowing...

The series is named Source and it seems to describe this lightening power, the gloomy ghost constructs or destructs at its whim.



Henrik Strömberg fig. 1, 2007, Courtesy Neumeister Bar-Am

Henrik Strömberg fig. 7, 2007, Courtesy of the Artist

Fig. 7 of this same series seems to show the adult version of the smaller light. It leaves one wondering what is hidden behind the wall of white dusty body or what capability it contains. It's a frozen moment full of questions for the person encountering this image. It looks as if a process is turned into a monument. These images seem to come from a different part of Henrik Strömberg land where things are in action. For us as observers, there is only this small window that gives a view on the fulminant procedures which we cannot completely grasp and which we therefore have to complete behind our eyes – in imagination.

One of Strömberg's photographs shows a human figure. It's nearly the only time one can find an actual person or a reference to human life. The person seems wrapped in textiles. The material is intriguing, shiny in the upper part and dark and soft in the lower part. Here the artist demonstrates in an obvious way his skill to turn movement into a statue-like condition. Maybe the person in the image had been dancing and fooling before and after, possibly trying to impersonate a ghost-like creature, maybe it had been a silly hiding game. But all of sudden there is simply an elegant shiny figure. One would not even be certain that it is a human that is inside the wrapping, if it was not revealed by the quarter of a hand at the bottom of the image. I find this to be a funny and tender hommage to the beauty of perspective. It seems as if the object I see is clearly defined but at the same time describes endless possibilities of perception.



Henrik Strömberg Human figure Courtesy of the Artist

In his body of work, the medium of text is another way to open up the atmosphere created by his photographs. Strömberg uses theatre and set instructions that he cuts out of the original context in order to isolate and rearrange them. As a viewer, I can immediately see a room and space, and get the feeling of something about to happen. My senses wake up; I start to listen, to smell and to imagine light changes. Simple instructions create a moment without dialogues or grand human action. This is more relevant than the story it might belong to. The unnecessary is negated. To me these sentences are like a match enflaming my mind. I would not ask from which box the match comes from or what it looks like after I have burnt it, and so I do not care where the text is taken from or where exactly the location is supposed to be.

In Henrik Strömberg's work the negation tells us the soul of the work. It provokes more than it explains and leaves us with assumptions and emotions. In his world things are animated that somewhere else would not have a life, while every trace of human action turns into stone or ice.

human figure

Henrik Strömberg Human figure Courtesy of the Artist
text installation

<http://www.henrikstromberg.com>

<http://www.neumeisterbaram.com>

Henrik Strömberg

EN | DE

Work in Progress · Nov 11, 2013

On a sunny day we visited Swedish artist and photographer Henrik Strömberg at the top floor of his new studio and apartment at Köpenickerstrasse in Berlin. Originally from Sweden, he grew up in a small town near Malmö and moved a lot before settling in Berlin. After school he started his career in London doing a preparation course to actually apply for the art academy in Stockholm, but while studying in London he was accepted for the Fine Art BA at Camberwell College of Art and therefore stayed. Concentrating more and more on photography he decided to do his Masters in Photography at FAMU in Prague before going back to Sweden. As he has a lot of friends and galleries in Berlin which he was working with, it felt natural to move here in the end. Living and working at the same place gives him the freedom to go in and out of the world of the studio, gather material, sketch a bit and transform it to something substantial in the end.

We got an intimate insight and a momentary glimpse of his personality and vision as he opened the door to his apartment full of shiny objects, found and reused materials, trophies, cast material and strange things, from which you can't really tell what it is. We spent the afternoon discussing about his view on photography, the deconstruction of reality and this work as a process.



Neumeister Bar-Am



IGNANT, November 2013

Neumeister
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IGNANT, November 2013

Although Henrik Strömberg's medium is photography, it actually deals with the deconstruction and transformation of the photographic image. Most of his images are monochrome. It's a subconscious conscious approach to move away from certain questions which often arise in photography - where, when and who. 'I want to reduce as much information as possible from the usual role of photography and what photography usually does. To use black and white further this idea to go beyond the subject and create narratives without the specificity of story telling'.

In his new work series he uses parts of deconstructed trophies which are stacked vertically and interlaced with materials such as mirrors, wood, feathers, rocks and paint and then documents them in various stages and in a negative reversed way. The photographs and sculptures are shown in a state of flux, allowing for the possibility of reconstructing and photographing them again and again. It's a dialogue with the process, a process in which the image is removed from its actual context. The photos are documentations of sculptures that aren't objects, but occurrences. He explains 'I work with the idea of photographically documenting something where in the end the photograph itself becomes an object.'

It's about the ambiguous relationship between what a picture shows and what it really is. His pictures have this reality corrupting force as Henrik Strömberg repeatedly questions the medium of photography. What is a photograph? Is it the explosion of magnesium as camera drenches its subject in artificial light? A piece of paper? How can a photo be more than a photo, be less than a photo, purely a medium, elusive and elemental? In each picture he is committing to art as a puzzle that might never be solved. He invites us to see his pictures as if they were not photographs, to excite us; something that makes sense, but not quite makes sense. In his work lies this somewhat tension, this black material.

You can see his works in his upcoming exhibition at Neumeister Bar-Am, starting the 22nd of November.

Pictures and Text by Anke Nunheim

Neumeister Bar-Am

HENRIK STRÖMBERG - Second Life - First Place
November 2 - January 12, 2013

Opening: Friday, November 2, 2012, 6 - 9 pm

Konrad Fischer Galerie Berlin is pleased to announce the exhibition "Second Life - First Place" as part of our series FISCHER OBEN. In our first floor space we will show black-and-white-photographs by the Swedish artist Henrik Strömberg.

In his new photographs Strömberg uses parts of deconstructed trophies which are stacked vertically and interlaced with scrap materials such as mirror shards or organic materials like coral, wood, feathers, and rocks. While these assemblages stay true to the original modular construction of the trophies, their form, function and most importantly, their meaning, has been reconfigured.

These seemingly fragile objects are shown in a state of flux, allowing for the possibility of reconstructing and photographing them again and again. Strömberg fixes each assembled object through the photographic process. Based on classical sculpture practice, where every cast requires a mold, he then presents the negatives of the photographs, evoking similarities between sculptural and photographic processes. This also serves to further the distance between the original object and its recording. As a consequence, the photograph no longer serves to function as objective documentation but as an object itself. The whole series of thus far thirty pictures represents a typology of curiosities, giving an ironic twist to the photographic principles of New-Objectivity, which emphasized a sharply focused, documentary quality within the realm of photography.

"My work deals with the deconstruction and transformation of the photographic image, both in terms of surface and content - combining seemingly disparate images, adding pigment, paint and/or cutting out parts of the image, initiating a process in which the image is removed from its context, its referent and expected narrative. I further explore this through the arrangement and combination of works with the intention to create narrations, formations of details, or a kind of temporary entropy."

(Henrik Strömberg)