

u. n. y. k. o. r. f. m. a. n. n

The Sleeping Hollow

Tina Rahimy

Human beings have vanished from the center of thought, from the center of reality. All that remains is the pure image in permanent self-reference. We are not the protagonists of images anymore, nor the essence of anything referring to something beyond those images. Images are not interested in our species as their Gods or Creators. Rather, they are the exploitation of another picture, another frame, and one basically has become the play toy of the image, shaping his thought and his image with a nose job.

This is the main theme of Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), describing the era of the image and its endless reference to itself. In *Means without End* (1996) Giorgio Agamben speaks of a becoming-image, an image of the spectacle. Neither the event of life nor its horror are shown or felt by the viewer of the images. What touches us is the spectacle, recoded images beyond realities of war, death or dearth, or as Jean Baudrillard's title so adequately puts it *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1991). The banality of the war, its gruesome color, is not fitted for the smooth operations of the spectacle, only images constructed as mainstream films and games remain. This trigger society is neither a defender of justice nor a representative of the politics of truth. What feeds it is the spectacle itself, the spectacle for the sake of spectacle. The truth of the spectacle is defined and argued within itself, in the function of its existence.

The language of the spectacle society is the communication of clarity, pureness, transparency, and binary lucidities like you are either with us or against us. Words do not carry the hesitations or uncertainties of life or the speech of men, but rather seem to be codified as a function of transportation, of information. A lie can become a consistent truth if it is provided with convincing and transparent images. But then: what is a lie? It is a matter of marketing and the calculation of the value of the object or the subject, for the sake of the circulation of the image. A transparency that can blind us like the sun and, as Agamben argues, prevents us from speaking, deprives us of our potentiality and communicability. The truth is enslaved for the sake of a lie.

But let us not despair. Guy Debord dedicated his life to breaking through the homogenizing and all-over power of the spectacle, by creating situations wherein the event, the mobility of life, could become possible. Agamben hopes that this extreme

lack of communicability in our time can provide us with the ability to demand it for the first time: a discovery of language through its fatal negligence. Language is the binding element and the separating ingredient of humans urge to relate to the other. We speak and our speech or communication is always embedded in the conflict between understanding and its opposite. Because somehow while we are speaking we do not comprehend the speaking act itself, we do not know what it means to speak. Being-into-language is an event that Agamben and Debord are searching for; it is the art of a gesture that visualizes the spectacle, a happening wherein the transparency unmasks itself.

Katrin Korfmann's work seems to react to this domination of the image by un hiding the assumed oppositions within the spectacle. By the exploitation of the contradictories that we uncritically take for certainties, her work derides the pretensions of an uncritical mind. Her artworks could be likened to how Agamben describes a gesture; they seek to visualize the world, not transform it. In this visualization the world remains the same, but at the same time the act of art radically breaks through its realities, or better, through its dishonesty.

One of the themes of her work appears to be emptiness, which is shown in walls of different colors. They stand in the middle of the road or the square, saying nothing, without words or direction. There is no guidance in treatment, no prescription how to walk and how to relate to the wall. It shapes and frames the public space, leaving the viewer in despair, but at the same time it demands reflection, it demands to be noticed, to be related to. As "The Pink Wall" somehow in its coloring reminds us of the symbols of homosexuality or the breast cancer foundations, "The White Wall" refers even more to a natural essence or pureness without any political or social demand. It claims the virginity of emptiness, it is not a signifying architecture, it does not belong to any specific place. Somehow it defines itself as universal or rather placeless. But at the same moment, however, its cleanness reminds us of the million ways in which every space has been specified and denoted with everlasting meanings. Pureness never refers to a reality or to a transcendent essence, but to a discourse which has defined whiteness, pinkness or any color. In this sense this work shows us, by just exposing the shape and the color of the walls, how any shape and blush have become political, even without statements.

The fullness of the semantic is even more explicit in the empty holes in "The White Wall" emphasizing the domination of the frames. The virginity is hollowed, penetrated by another indefinable definition. Katrin Korfmann insists in not defining these frames and instead leaves them open, a pure openness through the frame. The artist says frame and means frame alone and so the artwork states your eyes are bordered by any line. The viewer's perspective is in this manner always an unexpected or expected judgment of the other side of the frame.

The line is the politics of perspective, the politics of framing. In its classifying power, this reflection on the phenomenon of framing, declassifies it. By centering the frame the viewer becomes aware of his own act of viewing, and this minor change becomes deconstructive to the reflectionless structure of the frame, destructive for its obviousness. A fixating defixation. The struggle of these conflicting processes is in this sense not a happening after the work of art has been finished. Katrin Korfmann's work is never defined purely by the object of art but grabs the process as well.

The observation of this banality of judgment is the last brush of her artwork, or rather just another brush stroke in the process of her artistic expression.

These artistic expressions have neither a beginning nor an end. They are rather a pure road. The minimalist titles such as "The ...", puts thought into motion. The dots remind us of a story that has to come, a story that might never be told, leaving the viewing crowd with everlasting questions while nature demands its undefined space again. Katrin Korfmann does not comfort us with a direction or predictions and as her title so adequately points "I Did not Propose an Answer Yet", this 'yet' will never come to an end. The green walls leave you behind with new frames, new colors to define and other structures to liberate oneself from. Each wall pushes the passenger to search, a search without purpose, without goals or illusions.

Somehow the artwork is not the one which is exposed. Instead, it is the exhibition of the viewer itself. The viewer is viewed, his faciality is exposed. Agamben describes us as a face, as pure opening and pure communicability. It is not our visage that defines this face, but rather our passion to be exposed, the politics of the face. This urge of appearance is unveiling, unmasking, but not in the sense that it unhides the essence behind this appearance, rather it is the fact of appearance that is always hidden from us. So the face undresses the visage, leaves it behind without its characteristics. Agamben tempts us by saying "Be only your face. Go to the threshold. Do not remain the subject of your properties or faculties, do not stay beneath them: rather, go with them, in them, beyond them." ('The Face', in: Means without End, 1996.)

This process of undermining the opposition between the viewer and the viewed is a crucial element in Katrin Korfmann's work. It requires the watcher to be watched; asking for awareness and the experience of one's own visibility. So in the "The White Wall" the viewed and the viewer are one and the same, there is no hierarchical difference between inside and outside. The "Public Cube Schiphol" explicitates the relation between the framing and the viewing through the frame, with the process of being framed and being viewed. The "Night Watch" on the other hand seems to be the pure exposure of visibility, a pure face of communicability. Its center is not the famous object that has been watched with its historical value, it is rather careless, decentered by a multiplicity of other interests, through its widening legs, bended heads, pointing fingers and eyes in every direction. No one is identifiable in comparison with the other, it is being a face, being an exposure, wherein the homogeneity of the Rembrandt is lost. While Rembrandt's darkness somehow implicitly refers to a hidden passion, Katrin Korfmann's "Night Watch" is light, unhidden, unmasked and a pure exposure.

The "Flatten Images" however is about an opposite form of exposure, accentuating an unnoticed visible graffiti by hiding it. In this work Katrin Korfmann once more deconstructs the naturalness of common contradictions. By hiding the object it unhides the unhidden object, the visibility of the object that remarkably is reached by its untransparency. In this sense this work is an adequate example of the spectacle's transparency hiding the object from sight. Katrin Korfmann plays with the illusion wherein transparency is thought to be followed by acknowledgement. A simple objection to the politics of so called visibility, the clarity of us and them, the politics of friends and foes. The rebellious designifying graffiti does not place itself on the margins – in which they remain unnoticed, despite their clear appearance - but rather

it comes to the center of reflection by non-appearance.

Katrin Korfmann's art is the art of the process, reflecting on the motion, or the way the motion is processed in the perceiving act. Her creativity is played out on the playground of time and space, on the field of cinematic movement and the photographic pretension to fixate. The technique of slow shutter speed, or the framing of a film in frozen pictures, is not an attempt to capture the movement, it is not meant to disbar the motion, instead it argues for the transition and change that are present in any attempt of fixation. The implicit presence of motion in the fixated is a political act. This act explicates the illusion of an ideology, an ideology that believes itself capable of capturing the moving object, or rather moving life. It dismantles the opposition between movement and fixation.

There are no oppositions, there is only process and in this process every picture is a line to another image. The vehicles, the passengers and the beautiful people of the series "Count for Nothing" refer to thousand other similar images of moving cars and fancy people.

Different pictures, different times, empty colored spaces, fixation and movement. Somehow by being pure it refers to the non-existence of any reality. The walkers on the red carpet in "Waiting for Julia" are masked not only behind their make-up and beautiful dresses, but also behind the images they present. Their poses, but also the thinness and the exaggerated muscles, are in motion in their reference to the images of the ideological politics of the body. It is not the reality of the body but the pure exposure of the image. This work of art is in a sense universal, as it refers to the homogenic image of the body, but at the same time focused on small details. The reality of each detail is so boldly accentuated and as the result it elaborates on the illusion of these realities.

The reality of the society of the spectacle is a zone wherein man becomes unable to differentiate, especially between reality and appearance, a zone of indistinction, as Agamben puts it. Katrin Korfmann's work however is more than critical, it is more than the hope for a better life, or worse, a better world. It is rather the exposure of that which is, and at the same time that which, despite its presence, is not seen or observed. It is the frustration and the creation in the in-between, the interspaces, the zone of inter.

Works of art made in the interzones point at our ignorance, or our lack of desire to experience it. The transitzone is the empty colored space of red, pink and white. While common cameras are focused on the images of men, artists or tourists, Katrin Korfmann's lenses are in search of the unnoticed spaces and obscure plains that bind and distinguish elements. The plains of life without the clarity of destinations, paralyzing the subject. A numbness betrayed in the bored faces in elevators, or the sleeping airplane passengers. The thin air, dreaming of the places to come. So when the time comes for men to simply be, just to be alive, the eyes are shut. In these moments of snoring the lifeless camera is the only witness of transitions. Without explicit judgment it is urged to capture the event of passage, the shift. The ever present uncaptured moments, that despite the effort, will remain forever lost in the mouths of Stephen King's Langoliers, the unpresent past of the sleeping hollow.