

Carla Åhlander

Carla Åhlander (born 1966) grew up in Lund, lives and works in Berlin, mainly with photography but also with audio installations, text and performance.

Recently, she made the billboard installation Perspectives in the Berlin underground station Schwartzkopffstraße. She has earlier participated in exhibitions such as *Immortality*, TENT - Center for Visual Arts, Rotterdam (2009); *Police The Police*, Biennial for Young Art in Bucharest (2010); *Touched*, Liverpool Biennial (2010); *Gradual Change!*, Nordin Gallery, Stockholm (2011); *Boredom*, Essays and Observations, Berlin (2012) and *Anyone for cricket?*, Kunstverein Horn (2013).

In Carla Åhlander's photographic images, narratives are ongoing. Some situations feel somewhat familiar, but we cannot really read the whole story. Something is going on, a sort of proceeding in this time fragment, a piece of life. She presses the button at the right moment and then lets the story in the picture continue.

Åhlander herself says that her pictures often are about states of forced patience, and about empty, lost time. Perhaps also about the inadequacy of people, and about the skewies of existence. Her pictures also talk about rooms. About rooms of discipline, organized rooms, rooms where people somehow have felt forced to adjust.

*"My work often consists of observations of various systems, which are not always directly visible in everyday life. I'm looking for situations that can tell a story on several levels, and that usually has no beginning or end. Several of my projects I have realized in spaces or environments that in some way form part of, create or are integrated into structures and hierarchies in society. It has for example been classrooms, public waiting room communal meeting rooms, but also illegal cigarette sales and women carrying bags. I am fascinated by how structures and power relationships occur in everyday life and how we become part of them. It may be about groupings and divisions that we create to then relate to them, or upbringing and formation of individuals, about belonging and exclusion, inside and outside. "*

The series now shown on Skepparholmen is completely new and has not previously been shown. It carries traces of Åhlander's exploratory approach and shows human shortcomings but in this work it gets more personal. It's a story about a trip and a search for a mountain. A mountain she found on an old slide in a box of photographs she had inherited. She sets out on a journey to try to find the mountain from the picture. The journey takes her around Europe in search of the place. She finally finds the mountain and tries to figure out from what perspective the photo was taken. It's not easy. While she is trying to find the right spot, we get to follow her process, we see pictures of photographs on a table and are taken back and forth in time, room and space. This approach makes me think of French artist Chris Marker and his way of working with memories and pictures, both his own and collective ones. Like Marker's, Åhlander's journey is taking us inward, to memories of a past which lies so close and far away at the same time. At the center of this work is the photographic medium itself. It's the hub of the story, but paradoxically, it both obscures and clarifies our memories and it also points to a longing for something that is no longer available and that may never have existed.

*Kajsa Lindskog (April 2016)*