



"leaving", c-print, mounted on aluminium, 1.80 x 1.20 m, 2004

No. 15: Edith Flückiger, leaving Baby you can drive my car

«The dense foliage around muddled the shadows./ No way of telling from what direction or distance the oriole called./ It was enveloped in a great heaviness / from which to escape once again didn't enter its mind. (Anne Duden, I am your only surviving memory. From: „Steinschlag“ („Rockfall“), Cologne 1993, page 25)

Edith Flückiger's works tend to build on incidental occurrences, on fleeting moments at the periphery of events, on unremarkable incidents. With a strong focus and analytical eye, she approaches the seemingly unimpressive and ephemeral, and seeks out unimportant, commonplace situations. It could be a boy on a merry-go-round, girls on swings, a walk in a wooded landscape, or language rhythms. Edith Flückiger consolidates these „images“ in clearly structured, multi-faceted photographs, videos and texts. With methodical precision, she uncovers their condition (both visually and in terms of content) and sheds light on their perceptible characteristics. At the same time, she subjects the constituents of her media to a scrupulous analysis, seeking to get to the bottom of their technical, (cultural-)historical and theoretical condition.

This shows that Edith Flückiger always works with „time-based“ means and techniques, or rather uses temporality as a category of perception. Hence, not only the video and photographic processes must be considered when viewing her work, but also the split-second neuronal activity of reading itself. So, time and standstill, acceleration and deceleration, but also an individual's experience and perception of temporal dimensions form the fundamental parameters of Edith Flückiger's works.

In the middle of a forest, a yellow car got stuck front first in a hollow. The wings, side doors and seats are strewn about in a diameter of several metres; the back door is flung open, the bonnet folded several times. As if fallen directly from the skies, rammed into the ground, this wrecked Renault Dauphine forms the mysterious centre in the picture of an otherwise idyllic forest scene. No tracks whatsoever leading to the car, nothing that would explain how the car got to where it is now. Rays of sun paint bright little circles on to the foliage on the ground, the trunks of the beeches glitter in the light filtering through the canopy. There is a calm and stillness, no breath of wind, no sound. A landscape in saturated green, interrupted by specks of brown in the foreground, that big yellow lump of the car body, and the red of the seats nearby. There is an air of unreality, of abandonment about the picture, a mysterious atmosphere, removed from both time and space.

Edith Flückiger subtly interweaves various levels of form and content in her large-size photography. With it, she explores traditional types and genres of photography as well as media-inherent topoi such as the photo-historical concept of the „pencil of nature“. Despite the technical limitations, the moment in which the picture was taken does not seem like one frozen in time, just very much slowed down, an expanded moment that lasts longer than the shutter speed. And while the demolished car itself evokes cineastic visions of catastrophe and the apocalypse, the composition of the image recalls 19th-century paintings depicting forest scenes.

Yet this imaginary glimpse of nature remains a constructed image, strangely artificial and inaccessible, seemingly unaffected by physical forces or time changes. Onlookers remain on the outside, are thrown back onto their own physicality, their own mental and physical place in the world.