

The Visual Universe of Charlotte Haslund-Christensen

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The Photography of Fleeting Perceptions

In the visual universe of Charlotte Haslund-Christensen one discovers a unique, simultaneous presence of the personal and the political. Whether depicting anonymous spaces or individuals, all her images are marked by a personal presence and engagement that makes the private universal and the personal significant. Haslund-Christensen has an immediate, direct attitude made visible in her style and choice of motif. Her presence can be felt as a driving force: establishing contact with those she portrays, creating an atmosphere, and generating sensual moments that are frozen in a split second.

This can be seen in the series *Jump* (2003). Taking years to create, here the artist combined a large number of photographs taken during travels both in Denmark and abroad. The images form a visual diary in which intimate interiors are juxtaposed with cityscapes and landscapes. The grainy aesthetic, (allegedly) inadequate lighting, and apparently coincidental framing emphasise Haslund-Christensen's method as an artist: her spontaneous and intuitive approach through the lens.

In the artist's latest series *Natives: The Danes* (2006) Haslund-Christensen enters new territory. The artistic process is in many ways the same: on an expedition or journey around Denmark she has a series of coincidental meetings with Danes – 'natives' from the North and South, from the East and West. The main focus of the project is an investigation of Danishness – what Danes actually look like. But Haslund-Christensen wants more. Her aim with this 'expedition' is, like the work of the Indonesian-born artist Fiona Tan, to question - to challenge documentary photography with an investigative gaze that asks whether photography is capable of registering any 'Truth' about the concept of Danishness, or if it can only offer interpretations and (subjective) versions.

Haslund-Christensen uses photography to explore the world through images. Not through the structured and systematic methods of the scientist, but by sensing and seeing. Her work gathers her perceptions and experiences of the world into a visually coherent whole – a whole that is both interrogative and challenging.

Translation: Jane Rowley