

Birke Gorm



*let me stop
you right there*

(O-O)VE
Oooo



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Birke Gorm
let me stop you right there
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O—OVERGADEN
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overgaden.org

INTRODUCTION

It is a great pleasure to introduce this publication as a companion to Birke Gorm's solo exhibition *let me stop you right there* at O—Overgaden. Since 2021, O—Overgaden has, with the generous support of the Augustinus Foundation, published a monographic series in conjunction with our large-scale solo exhibitions, aiming to expand the conversations around each show and produce new, offspring material.

In this particular case, Mai Dengsøe, Curator at Gammel Strand, has contributed an essay on Gorm's motifs, objects, and processes, while author Jonas Eika has contributed with a piece on parenthood and (care-)work in a near future Copenhagen, and we're pleased to be publishing an excerpt from Ghislaine Leung's book *Bosses* (2023). A warm and heartfelt thank you to all contributors. I wish to thank the whole team at O—Overgaden for their efforts in realizing the exhibition, as well as the graphic design team at fanfare for their always dedicated work, and of course not least the artist, Birke, for generously sharing conceptualizations and co-thinking with all of us, through both the exhibition and this publication.

Trash, consumption, control: Birke Gorm collects scrap and flotsam from her surroundings and the public dump, then sculpts, sews, and assembles the residue material that is often cast out (or dead) from a capitalist society's point of view.

Entering Gorm's exhibition, rusted iron elements—used pitchforks, nails, industrial construction tools, saw blades, barbed wire, hooks—are hung from the ceiling in elongated swung clusters. Hung at varying heights, from dangerously low to secure and high, the series reflects on the show's title *let me stop you right there*, asking what rules apply within our communal spaces: what's kept out of reach and what's close to, say, a small child. Defying classical sculptural monumentality,

the "mobiles" are rustling, fragile, and brittle in their dark contours, like eerie broken chandeliers placed in the center of O—Overgaden's majestic former dining hall. The upside-down treatment of the unsafe, sharp materials testifies to Gorm's anarchist, even surrealist pull, insisting on creating value or seeing beauty where there—at least from a financial perspective—is none.

Another work that creates value from next-to-nothing is a collection of dolls that sits on the surrounding panels. Each is tied from used tea towels, rags, or napkins—reviving an old, vernacular way of creating figurative bodies from used materials—and dyed brownish red. The red tone is cooked. The dye is created from a so-called "dirty pot"—an almost witch-like brew, where rusty iron (found in the adjacent works), water, and vinegar slow boils repeatedly. Against today's expeditious production, the small dolls are thus forwarding hands-on and traditional, often female, circular crafts of binding, coloring, and figure-making—a place from which to work when parenthood makes glossy standards difficult to meet.

In the second space is a floor installation extending wall-to-wall, made from waste cardboard and quotidian materials, recycled into a miniature city. Created on site, to be torn apart after the show, the work is undoing itself, dissolving as a singular "art object" in the vein of the art movement Arte Povera. The poor assemblage creates a tiny world emulating questions of chaos and order, territory and property, as understood by a child, through play. The accumulation of material becomes an image of the structural do's and don'ts of public behavior—the unpicking of what's high and what's low, what's dead and alive, what's right and wrong, what's trash and what's not.

Rhea Dall,
Director and Chief Curator, O—Overgaden,
June 2025

SQUARES OF DEMARCATION

Mai Dengsøe

Sometimes art is difficult to understand; sometimes it's not. That depends on so many things. Communication is key, not just in the shape of a suitable mediation text or a talented guide, but also as a fundamental chemistry between work and audience. Something can be understood totally rationally: bits and pieces are moved from the bin into the museum, and so it is art. But you can also approach it more intuitively, sensuously, and something appears: in a piece of crammed paper, the contours of something living are drawn up. In the folds of a coarse discarded sack of linen, a body grows.

It's Monday afternoon and the installation of Birke Gorm's exhibition has just begun. A technician lets me in at the temporarily closed institution. I find Gorm upstairs. She just arrived from Vienna and already progressed more than expected with the installation. Arcs of heavy, corroded chains hang from the ceiling. Long rows of doll-shaped cloths are mounted on panels. They look desperate, with their arms to the sky. The still unfinished exhibition has something bleak and raw to it. Something feverish about the little napkin teddies that seeps in and out of the installation's simple strategies. Here you sit, doll doll doll, and here you hang, chain chain chain. It's quiet in here and an order prevails. Sunlight pouring through the windows, it plays with the brown and rusty shades in Gorm's work. There is a spatial peace, a chilly composition. It's a bit like stepping into a barn far out in the countryside where no one has been for a long while and where the door creaks when you open it, while large machines and smaller tools appear between the narrow slits of light. A cunning landscape. Dead and yet theatrical.

I ask Gorm if she thinks about time a lot, but this is too big a question. I can hear that myself straight away. Not the best way to get deeper into the conversation. Her work is so concrete and that is actually where I want to go. That it has to mean something, not just that the aesthetic is so dry-looking, but also why traditional methods are put to use: like dividing, categorizing, washing, dyeing, corroding, leaning, arranging, folding. Elastic, string, knot. It all takes time. Physical time.

When I browse through the existing texts about Gorm, her work—particularly the textile work—is often linked to feminist contexts and women's history. That makes sense. The craft, the needlework, the embroidery has not only been the women's domain but a context for their creativity to unfold. Creativity! A word mentioned by Gorm herself when we meet. A word I think I'm often running into these days, both within myself and out among others. After a longer period of focus on "the cultural worker"—and all the institutional thoughts on conditions, responsibility, and administration that term implies—a more archaic artistic vocabulary seems to be knocking: creativity, the urge to create, various scales.

On the floor at the other end of the space, Gorm builds up a landscape of cardboard and ballpoint pens. It's a matter of demarcation. Here we're all the way down on child premises. Who doesn't remember imagining a landscape? Who doesn't remember utilizing the available means to build your idea? Every little section is distinct, she explains; like in real life, where any house stands out with its own style, its own characteristics. Gorm has collected things that she is familiar with: rulers, wooden spoons, bags of sugar, and similar accessories that don't attract much attention besides being a more or less close-knit part of everyday life. Small-scale objects that are used to ascertain communities and boundaries; power and immediate environment; control and play. In fact, it isn't Gorm's work in itself, its aesthetic and rather peaceful connotations, that seems intriguing; it's all the appliances and the rows of associations accompanying the work, that smolder with something mystically uncanny. In some ways, the elementary approach to material is childish and innocent. Thus, and like the pitchfork dangling from the ceiling, its (finger) tips flexed and coaxing, Gorm is capable of channeling the humanness of human beings into objects, into things. She tells me that she is preoccupied with the menacing. She is raising a child and it seems that thoughts and requirements in this regard are reflected in her artistic practice. When is something big? When is something coherent? She twists and turns things. When is something fiction and when does it really count? These are thoughts that also possess a philosophically anchored tradition. Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, among others, speculated on how many houses it takes to form a city and whether a city with only one house would indeed be a city if only a city sign was put up. At times, the distance between the weightiest ideas and naïve impulses is short. It's been an extremely long time since I last thought about Wittgenstein, but here he suddenly appears, perhaps because somewhere in Gorm's work there is a keynote, ringing concurrently with this language of philosophical thinking; perhaps because below the soft layers of cardboard and textile, arcs and waves, something extraordinarily hard and conceptual exists.

Perhaps it's these contradictions that make it difficult for me to focus my attention on Gorm's work and practice. On the one side, her expression

is homogenous, intact, rhythmical; on the other, conceptions of the rhythm of the world throb at the heart of it all. Death and destruction are placed right beside blossoming and hope. It is simple and complex. Quiet and spatial.

I walk around for a few days with Gorm's exhibition in my head. Envision how she pushes around her sorted stacks of stuff. Adjusts here and there. I don't know anything about her process, but I imagine that precision is important. I try to become aware of what is particularly worth accentuating. Considering what I can do to make the text come off as less caricaturing, more scrutinizing. Feeling an insidiously bad conscience about not being able to draw out more feminist perspectives, as I'm sure these are the project's cornerstones. Tying up the loose ends.

But something here is hermetically closed and difficult to enter. Things have indeed been jointed in Birke Gorm's universe, I'm thinking. Closed circles. And it seems contrary to the words that otherwise arrive along with the material and the frazzled connotations that tie themselves to the sustainable recycling principles.

Maybe it is taking it too far, but the assignment of the work, if such a thing indeed exists, is much more centered around control and power than the more sustainable potentials inherent in the regenerative matter on display. The hierarchies that actually decompose are re-established in new formats and other spaces. The discarded and worthless—cardboard, a matchbox—is applied in constructive ways to create spaces, but still separate and barricade one area from the other. Perhaps this is where Birke Gorm's ideas on menace take place. What is constructive requires boundaries. Even candid thinking shuts something out and no human being is able to move freely around in the world.

Scale becomes a significant point here, because though the pace is there, neither the grand critique of society nor utopian dreams seem to be at the center of Gorm's practice. They sprout in everything but, most of all, Gorm's exhibition appears to be more concerned with the near, the small steps, the lesser gesture. And this is actually quite lovely: to think about how minor characteristics, small changes, the mere wringing of a cloth, can ultimately make the big picture look totally different.

WORK-CARE-PLAY / PARENTAL LEAVE IN THE COMPANY TOWN / ALWAYS PARTLY NEW

Jonas Eika

They're walking down the street. They and it. They in their wedges and the cropped shorts that almost wing at the hips; it in its bopping, lightly bouncing, almost hovering transformation pram: when it wakes up inside of that, it is always as something partly new.

But now tears are spurting from its round brown eyes. White-blue daylight spreads behind the plexiglass in the sky, above the vague reflections of Carlsbergbyen's copper towers. Danni looks around for a place to sit without having to pay for anything, hurries down to Enghavevej, hushes the baby and takes one step out into the pedestrian crossing. Stares at the approaching car, trying to make eye contact with something behind the driverless windscreen; stretches out a flat hand and is about to turn around when the car slows down with a reversed *zoom*, allowing them to pass, down to the little strip of pastel-colored benches where they take out the bottle, place it below the pram's integrated milk dispenser and lifts up the baby.

It doesn't have a name yet. Names mean nothing, but we need them.

While they're sitting there, bottle-feeding, a pack of youths saunters by, all of them swaying towards the long-haired one in the middle, who they are in turn smiling at, caressing, listening to with great attention. With a gentle but imperative gesture he makes them all stop, points at Danni—and their gazes feel like being cut forth from the thin air—and says: "That child lying there getting milk is like those who'll get in at the party tonight."

Bated breath, the morning heat buzzing with drone deliveries. "So are we supposed to become like children to get in?" one of them asks, suspicious

or fascinated, it's hard to tell. A tingling sensation on Danni's bare shoulders. This reluctant desire that starts appearing on their polished faces. "When you make the two one," the long-haired one says, "and when you make the outside look like the inside, and the inside look like the outside, and when you make the upper as the lower..." Danni lowers their arm to move the baby a bit further away from their chest, so that it doesn't look like breastfeeding—so that no one might think that they imagine themselves to be a mother—but then again, the baby cannot lie horizontally when fed—the milk might slosh around in its throat, into the trachea or the middle ear—wasn't that what the health visitor said?—and stay there, fermenting, encouraging all sorts of bacteria, and they're all resistant now anyway, the bacteria, completely indifferent to antibiotics.

Suddenly the young ones burst into laughter, eagerly as if to dispel the slight insecurity from before. Danni didn't hear what the long-haired one said at the end, but in any case, it makes the group move on, throwing only a few furtive glances over their shoulders.

The baby up to the chest again, finish the feeding, the burping, hugging, stroking, loving, back into the pram again and move on—as soon as sleep starts swimming in its milky eyes Danni starts thinking about work: *All my limbs wide awake... lungs full of amniotic fluid... googling till I can't read anymore....* If only they could come up with a first sentence in advance, there might be some energy to carry them into the writing. Reluctance sits like a shut mouth in their chest.

A few nasal draws of breath and a sigh from the pram, a soft vulnerability beneath the already closed eyelids. A single available spot by the panoramic windows of the maternity café; Danni parks the pram, turns on the baby alarm, puts on their shirt and workbag, and enters.

Babble, laughs, whimper, and playful voices; lowered, focused voices, fingers on keyboards, coffee cups being placed on a metallic surface—the sounds are many but distinct, layered like the activities taking place in the space: on the floor, which is covered in pillows and drop-shaped islands of felt, the kids are playing and being cared for; above, along the narrow chrome tabletop, work is being done. A cool tranquility prevails in spite of the busyness. The acoustics are amazing, Danni thinks, just as the job consultant promised—but then can't help thinking about the job center after they've sat down with their laptop at the free seat by the window. Or about the abstract expectation she represents, the consultant, who suggested that Danni shouldn't only think of the essay as a duty—as part of the required skills development for the unemployed during parental leave—but also as a kind of help or care, both for themselves and those who might recognize themselves in their experiences, and not least for the municipality that indeed wants to improve conditions for people like... well, for parents like Danni.

Oh well. Something similar is probably expected from the editor's side. His reply was enthusiastic when Danni finally wrote to him and suggested an essay for the book section: "*Yes! We'll be happy to publish such a text! We need parenthood literature from the non-binary perspective.*" Danni sighs, straightens up, glances at the

pram outside the window, the heatproof foil cover hiding their child. A sudden melancholy occurs in their chest, transparent like the almost invisible window, the small and now almost dizzying distance between them and their child. Danni sits for a while, feeling the sensation soar into their face as well, moves their tongue around in their mouth to make it go away. Then swallows and tries to write it down instead:

A strange, actually quite unpleasant feeling here at the café, distanced for a moment from my sleeping child: that I don't really know it, don't really love it. That it hasn't yet fully become human to me.

I write this with a fear that something else, something more fundamental is wrong with me. That I never truly love, grieve, feel affection—but rather just taught myself those feelings, and now repeat them with a proficiency that makes it hard to tell the difference?

Or maybe there is just something objective, neutral, something animated-but-not-yet-human about infants? Something which, now and then, still flashes across my child's tired face and its fluttering limbs?

Danni stares at the sentences for a bit, takes a sip of the espresso tonic that was served while they wrote. Then they mark the text and move it to the end of the document, a residue. A frenzied energy from the woman in the seat next to them, an email being sent off with a nostalgic *swoosh*. She takes half a turn on her chair and sits down on the floor with the rest of the mothers' group, saying to one the children: "*There* you were, darling."

They must have established some kind of rotation system: The next moment one of the others sits at the window spot, places a computer at the conductive tabletop and slides straightaway into working. Danni forces their gaze away from the beige-rosy moodboard on her screen—while also dragging the shreds of their attention back from the pram outside the window—back to the empty document, trying to strike an opening scene, to recall what was actually being said in the delivery room. Yes, why not just start there?

"Should I hold it up so you can see what you've got?"

The objectifying quality of that question—

The alarm lights up, vibrating, buzzing, whizzing with the massive noise of a street sweeper outside. Danni jumps out of the chair, runs out and rocks the pram while the machine passes; catches themselves scowling at the driver in the little cab, as if he had a choice, as if he deliberately drove this way to ruin the child's nap and Danni's frail working hours along with it. Besides, he's probably getting paid close to nothing—90 percent of unskilled municipality tasks are now covered by juridical duty to work, Danni remembers reading the other day; and also remembers considering whether that turns the city into a corporation, one big open-plan office that somebody has to clean in order for others, like Danni, to produce themselves. And weren't these maternity cafés municipality-funded as well, at least partially? They blink the thought out of their head, checks on the child and rushes inside to continue writing while the words are still fresh on the tongue.

"Should I hold it up so you can see what you've got?"

The objectifying quality of that question is not in the word "it"—which quite precisely refers to the body lying all blue and bloody and, as far I can see, totally limp on my partner's chest—but in the "what" that must be answered, completed, erased right away.

In the situation, still panicked by how close to death both the child and my partner appeared to be only moments ago, I manage to say: "No! No, no! I just want to know that it's alive."

The indefinite that needs qualifying in order to be recognized. What's living versus what's gendered. Yes, this might be a productive starting point—but also a bit too simple, untruthful, that those two are opposed to each other? Yes, really Danni would prefer to write in the gray zone, where things are not as easily separated—about the days in the postnatal ward, about feeling their mouth becoming more pointy, their facial features more delicate, their chest softening from their involuntary imitation of their child's every little move, and how that, after three days with no sleep, made them think that now they wouldn't have to get diagnosed, now the child could provide them with all the hormones they needed—but then they end up writing something boring and explanatory about being neither a mom nor a dad, happily and solitarily freed of those titles.

Their espresso tonic has gone flat. A child that was whimpering somewhere in the background is now screaming and refuses to be calmed down. Their parent quickly carries it to the bathroom, but the crying has already made the sounds ascend from below, surrounding Danni in the clean, clearcut space above the tabletop. And then they feel the lower part of their body too, a restlessness in their lap causing their feet to jab against the chair, their nerves creaking, this constant, low-intensity panic about the baby, whether it's still breathing, if it's getting overheated, if grubs and insects could make their way into its airways. Danni closes their laptop and purposefully walks outside—though they were planning on staying until the baby woke up, also to avoid the worst midday heat—puts a flat hand inside the foil cover and feels the little dainty ribs rise against the palm a few times.

Yet, they need to hear the sound too, to lean their ear down into the darkness and hold their breath so that the baby drawing its own one is audible.

They click off the brakes, take off their shirt and walk through the city park on Istedgade, passing the shared gardens and the paddocks, the work-out facilities, the seaweed bars. The long-haired goats are grazing. A group of cottage-core teenagers walks by with their aprons filled with fruit. The temperature is lower here, the dense foliage lets only scattered patches of light in. A guard shakes a woman by the arm who fell asleep on the stone fence alongside a herbal garden. She wakes, mumbles, swears, and gestures while being escorted away. Danni lowers their gaze and avoids the scenario, walks through a clearing of scorching sun and hotheaded seagulls, loaded with a feeling of wanting something out of this nap, of this day, they don't know what. Maybe they could take

the child to the public swimming pool? That should be so stimulating, so good for sensory-motor control. There’s some fidgeting inside the pram now; they swing out of the park, walking towards DGI-byen while the foil cover starts bulging from little kicks. A few short, sucking breaths and then comes the crying, feverish and wronged. Danni hurries towards Halmtorvet, finds a blotch of shadow beneath a chestnut tree. They lift the baby and hold it tight, rock and comfort it, trying to find a rhythm, a calm in their hips and voice. Slowly it spreads to the child.

They sit down on the knee-high counter-terrorism fence. The grainy granite is cool against the back of their thighs, the baby warm in their lap. Its arms fluttering, lips smacking, it looks at Danni with a wondering smile. Danni mimes the smile and watches it grow—along with the foreign yet completely inevitable joy spreading in their own chest—while something approaches from ahead, at the fringes of their field of vision. They look up and make eye contact with a tall, slightly stooping man, perhaps in his late thirties, trudging across the square. Now he waves and starts approaching them, brightening up in half an exhausted smile. “Hey, hey there.” He puts his hands on his hips, kind of sassy—but perhaps also just to show that he doesn’t pose a threat?—and leans towards them. “Is it your child?”

For a few seconds, Danni looks at the man’s dry grayish face, his gray-black eyes, his gloomy mouth covered in a close-cropped beard, feeling there’s something familiar about him. “Yes. Yes, it is.”

“It’s a cute child.” The man squats down, holds out his index finger and waits for the baby to grab it before he looks back at Danni. “Do you also have money?”

“No, or—I don’t have any cash.” The baby smacks its lips elatedly and leans forward on Danni’s lap. They feel a discomfort about the closeness between the baby and the man, but also an urge to show that it’s okay talk to strangers. “There isn’t really anyone who has cash.”

“Yes, there is.” He states it as a fact, neither angrily or with hints of argument, then sighs and sits down on the ground. Sways a bit in time with the child pulling at his finger, while humming as to an underlying melody. “Goodnight to every—bird... and to every—cow...” The branches waving in the breeze, the shadows rocking in time. “And to every—ant... and to every—friend...” Danni suggests that they could buy him some food instead, but he shakes his head, he isn’t hungry. “Are you hungry?” he says and leans towards the child again, playfully. “Are you? Are you tired? Oh no, no you aren’t... You just want my finger—my *fingerprint!*” He laughs to himself and makes a sudden motion with his hand, as if trying to wrench his finger loose. The baby chuckles and pulls the other way. “But I already gave that away.” Then he looks up at Danni, blinking in the patchy light, mumbling: “The *meldepligt*, you know.” He smiles and gently wrenches out his finger, strokes the child’s cheek instead. “You don’t have any money, right?” “Unfortunately, no,” says Danni and excuses himself, they have to feed the child now. “Yes. Well, I also need to get going then.” He gives a serious nod, blinks his eyes awake, brushes his hands in his shirt. “Take care, you two.”

BOSSSES

Ghislaine Leung

Why do I seek to exploit myself? I often choose to be my own bad boss. There is a paradox in this situation. Given that I am my own worst enemy, why can’t I stop seeking to collude or even be complicit in these abuses? In pulling these labour conditions of exploitation into my own body, I became interested, in an expanded socio-political sense, in what it is not only to put up with our own exploitation, but even to love our own captor. A sort of Stockholm syndrome. The insidious ways in which we justify and validate harm and self-harm. Not only as individuals but as organisations. Specifically in the ways in which we seek to assimilate to and internalise conditions of high production, efficacy and visibility over maintenance and care. Then we’ve succeeded in being that kind of self, and that self passes and succeeds in what is understood as a meritocratic social construct. Thinking on my own labour, I wanted to think of ways that my work could address this not only through striking against my own self-exploitative tendencies, but actively cancelling them. To think of these as constitutive issues of labour connected to market viability, visibility and metrics. A privileging of visibility that compounds extractive forms of production and rides slipshod over informal or invalidated labours and communities. Against this priority of visibility, canonisation inclusive, I became interested, less in making visible, and so the cycle continuing, than in making palpable. In the ways in which informal and non-productive labours might be maintained. I began to stop speaking about labour relations in these terms and began to attempt to labour on these terms. Active as opposed to passive cancelling in sound, for example, works to subtract via addition. You cancel a sound with a sound. This only works in a perfect, closed system, such as in headphones. In an open system it does not work, there are too many variables, it cancels, clashes and moves around. This is where ambiguity is. Active cancellation can also occur in masking. This doesn’t block sound but layers it, creates another sound as a foil to conceal the first.

Plain flour
2 x unsalted butter
Caster sugar
Buttermilk
2 x full-fat block cream cheese
Icing sugar
Red food colouring
Caffeine coffee
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Green beans
Cabbage
Avocado
Peas
Cheese
Goat cheese
Lentils
Anchovies
Yoghurt
Corn thins
Crackers

When did I mistake a person for an object, a property for a home, exploitation for liberty?

7.00 change and breast 60ml
8.00 bottle 120ml
10.00 snack 60ml and sleep
11.00 change and breast 30ml
11.40 bottle 120ml
1.00 snack 60ml and sleep
2.00 change and breast 30ml
2.40 bottle 120ml
4.00 snack 60ml and sleep
5.00 change and breast 30ml
5.40 bottle 120ml
7.00 snack 60ml and sleep
8.00 change and breast 30ml
8.40 bottle 120ml
10.00 snack 60ml and sleep
11.00 change and dream feed 90ml

5 × 120ml
1 × 90ml
4 × 30ml
6 × 60ml

Wondrous tiny frame and weightless heavy limbs, tongue nested in unshod jaws. Lolling. The off ashen acrid scent of labour. Risk can be re-understood in this context as our dependency on, and care of, the collective body. This stands in stark opposition to the cultural prioritisation of for-profit speculative models of individualised financial independence. Such models exploit the porous and interdependent tissue of the social body. In order to access this exploitation, we must also be part of it. So, this exploitation is, in fact, a self-exploitation on a grand and all-pervasive scale. Counterintuitively the many do not outweigh the few, as the few are part of the many. Sacrifice, the imperative to continue, to push, against all odds, to risk life and limb for others is nullified if we question the binary it stands on, if we are others.

A body is not comprised of identical elements, or even only human elements, it is an infrastructure of dependency. A social body is likewise constituted by a raft of soft foldings into multiple groups and groupings. Self-care is social care, not because everyone is looking after themselves but simply because we are each other. The arc of the head, curved and warm-nebulous, the ubiquitous smell of earth, and dirt and life, mouth-shaped, pulsing and inaccurate. Thin hairs that coat, lustrous and sparse, more felt than seen. I spent a long time trying to expunge the pronoun ‘we’ from my writing. What ‘we’ was I writing for, who was I claiming to speak on behalf of? The onus is on finding your own voice in order to stake out a ground. It implies a singularity of perspective no one could totally claim to have. Not even the lonely. Especially the lonely. We are possessed my love, possessed.

7.00 wake bottle change
8.00 play
8.30–9.15 nap
10.00 bottle change
10.15/11.00 nap
11.00 walk
11.30/12.00 nap
1.00 bottle change
2.00 walk
2.30/3.00 nap
4.00 bottle change
5.00 story time
5.30/6.00 bath change
7.00 bottle bed
10.30 dream feed change 90ml
5.00 bottle change

It’s about being too close, proximate and thigh-deep as a form of lived embodied critique. A kind of low performance. Writing and rewriting structures, architecture and organisation. Working with new and wild, highly subjective forms of regulation against objectivising deregulated neoliberal for-profit algorithms. Liveness, generative practices. Acknowledging the relation between the individual and the group. Context, the situation around a thing, so less a thing but a material event. Unless all of us are free none of us are free. Fundamentally re-inscribing what liberty is outside of individual liberties. It’s about the capacity to notice how things are and as such imagine how they could not be as they are. Agency isn’t just privilege or merit, it is the very reality of our imaginative capacity, and the labour required to maintain those resistive acts. We need to regulate against those that would exploit us, including the policing internalized in ourselves, and we need to do that by wresting back our liberties, fought for, maintained, unknown and yet to fight for, from a totalitarian and insidious free-market neoliberalism.

23.20 cough vomit food, had water
Rest
23.50 cough vomit food
Rest
00.10 cough vomit liquid

Rest
00.32 vomit liquid 36.5C cold sweat
Sleep
00.55 gagging vomit small liquid sweaty
Sleep
1.25 gagging vomit small liquid sweaty
Sleep
2.05 retching small liquid
Sleep
3.05 retching small liquid
Sleep
3.55 retching small liquid
Sleep
5.10 wanted water threw it up
Little sips tolerated
6.15 sick small liquid
Little sips water
9.30 half banana
10.30 little bit of bread no crusts

The space around me that isn’t you. The soft murmur of radio four walls apart from me. The waistband of my jeans curving into my stomach. The heat of my own body reflected back against me, moving in my breath. The soft burr and dull ache of engines expelling fuel into the sky. The bend of my nape and gravity of my body here without you. The flash of sirens and humming and the shape of my newly cleaned teeth. The space of a time not yet assigned and weighty in potential, light in actuality. The sets of minutes that frame. The constant assessing of my own ineffectuality tied to some misconstrued fairy tale of achieving. Time that is mine moves away and was never mine. It is the speculation on the use of time that obliterates space. Not only in the metric benefit but the profit yield of that metric. The gains, again the gains. And so the losses. And held somewhere close to the spine the knowledge of the importance of something other than this playing field. Something as still and dull and newborn as the present.

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This text is an excerpt from Ghislaine Leung’s book *Bosses*, pages. 12-17. Published by Divided Publishing in 2023.

O—OVERGADEN
Overgaden neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org

Birke Gorm
let me stop you right there
Exhibition period: 24.05.2025 – 03.08.2025

Birke Gorm (b. 1986, DE/DK/AT) is a Danish-German, Vienna-based artist. She is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (2018) and has studied at the HFBK University of Fine Arts in Hamburg. She has recently exhibited at venues including Kunstmuseet i Tønder (2024) and Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2024).

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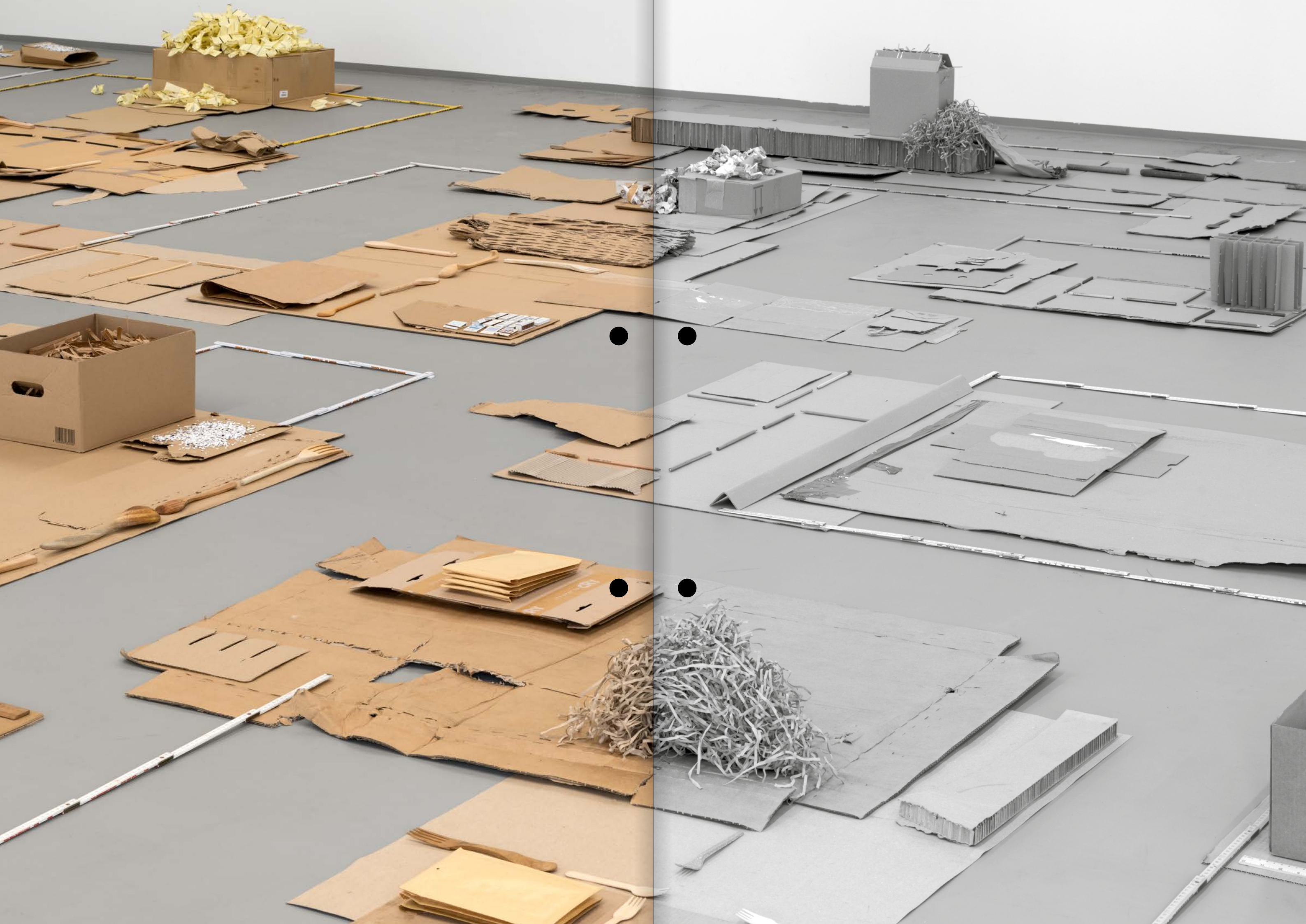
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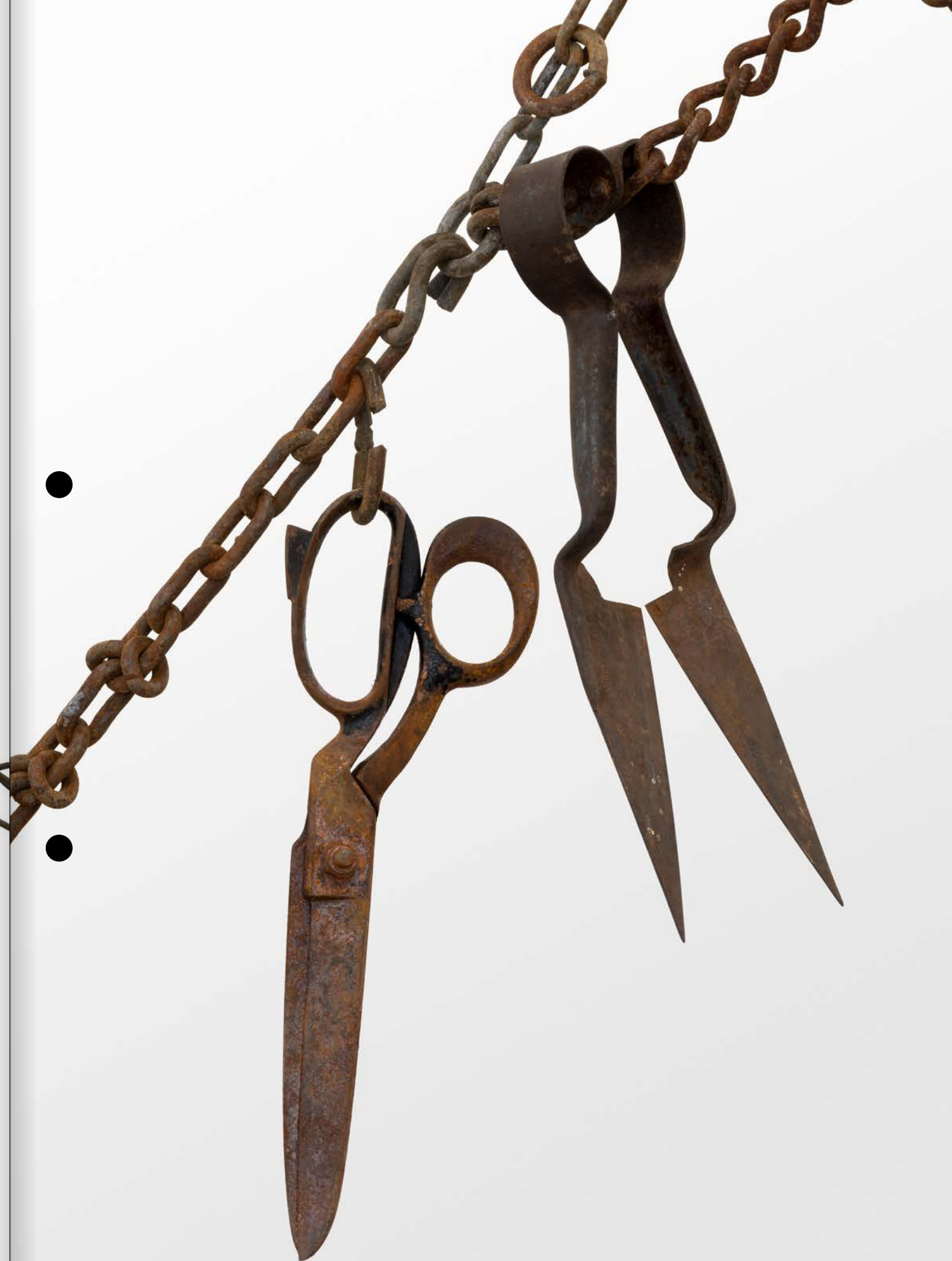
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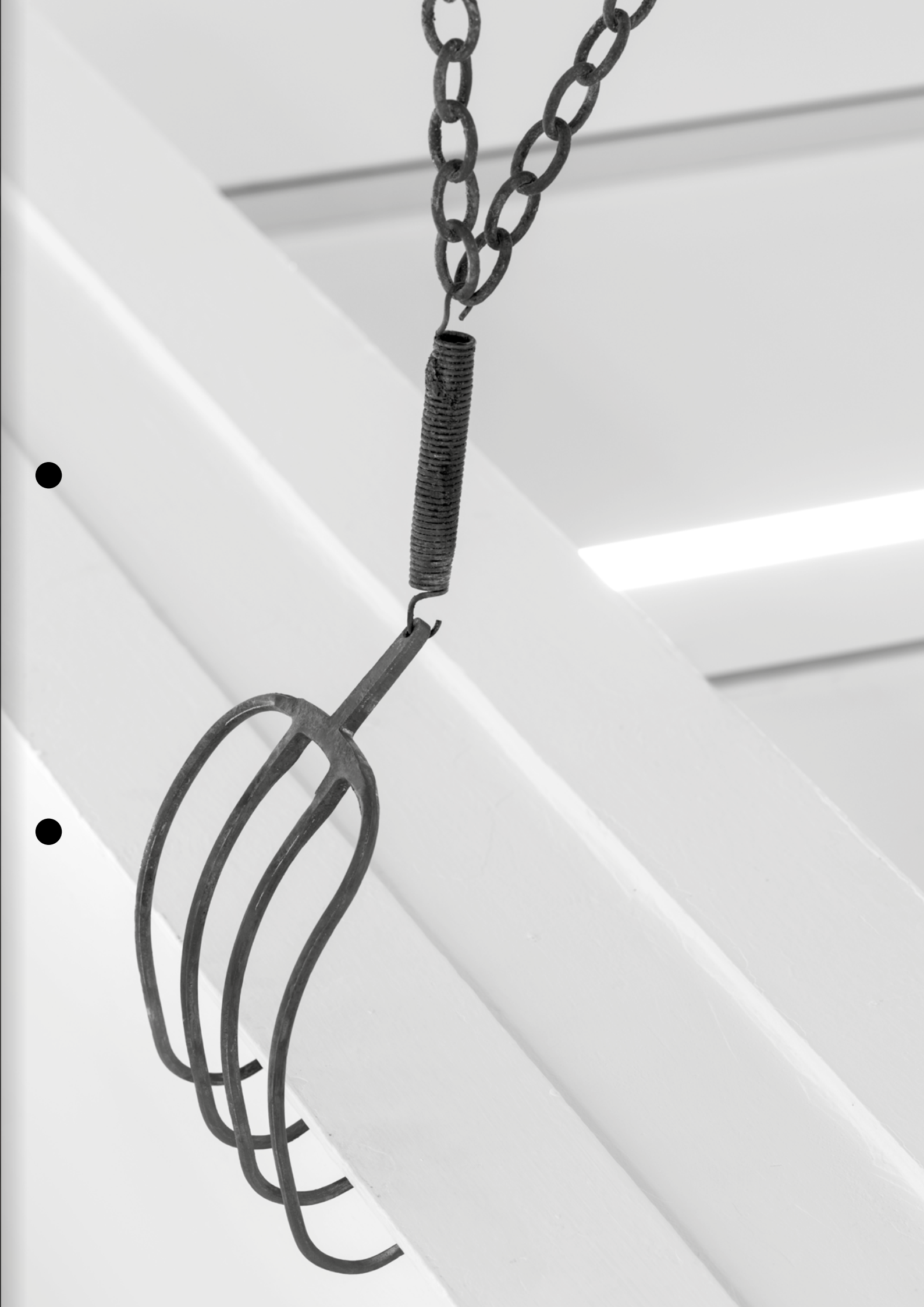




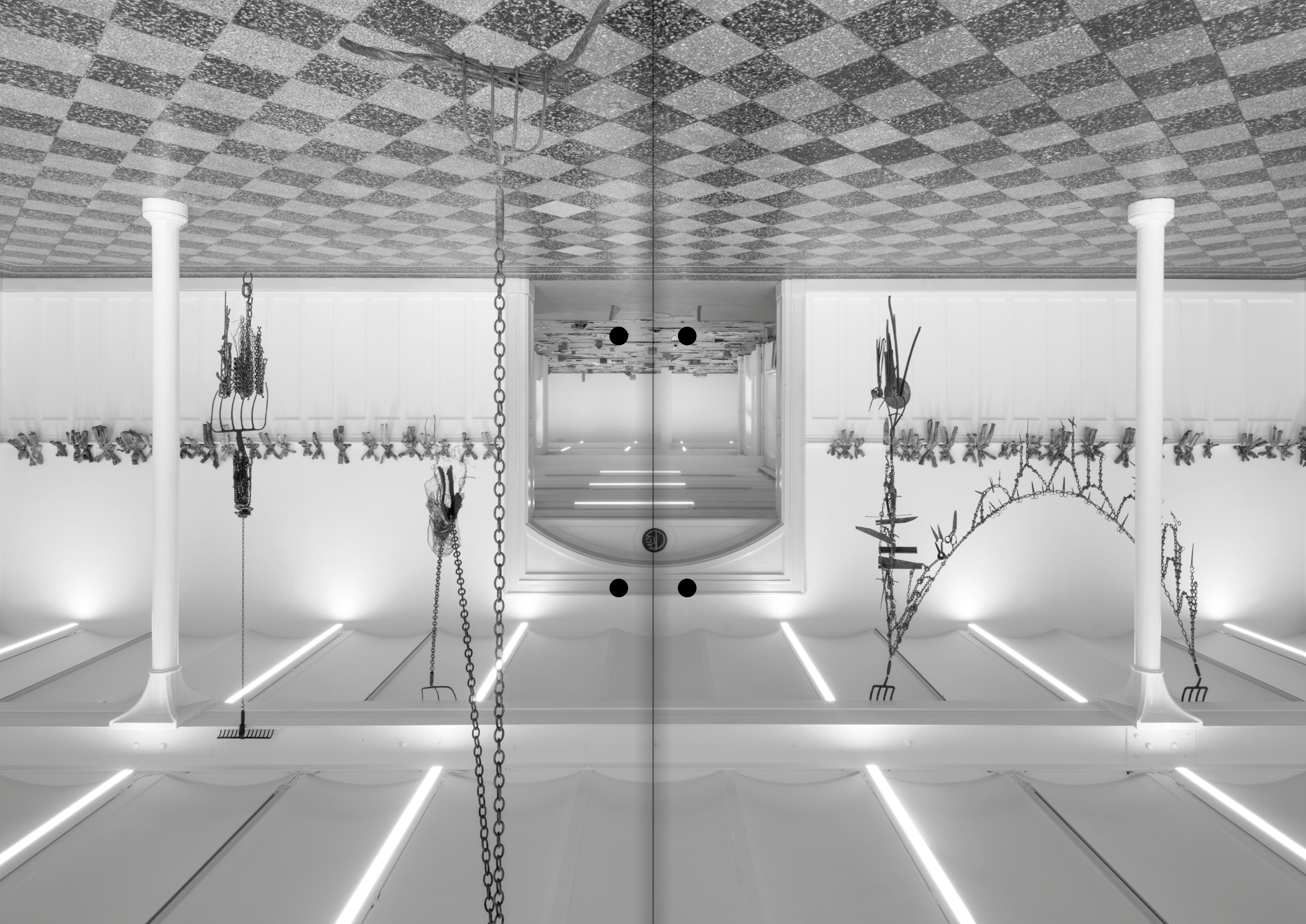












Danni minder det og ser det vokse – sammen med den fremmede, men også helt selvfølgelig glæde, der breder sig i deres bryst – imens noget nærmere sig skrat forude, yderst i synsfeltet. De løfter blikket og får øjenkontakt med en høj, lidt ludende mand, måske sidst i tredivern, der kommer traskende hen over pladsen. Nu vinker han og kommer herover, lysere på sine hofter, lidt sassy – men måske også for at vise, at han ikke er en trussel? – og læner sig ned mod dem. “Er det dit barn?”

Danni kigger nogle sekunder på mandens tørre, grålige ansigt, de gråsorte øjne, den triste mund med et tætklippet skæg omkring, og de synes, der er noget velkendt ved ham. “Ja. Det er det.”

“Det er et sødt barn.” Han sætter sig på hug, rækker pegefingeren frem og venter, til babyen tager den, før han ser op på Danni igen. “Har du også penge?”

“Nej, eller – jeg har ikke nogen kontanter.” Babyen smasker opstemt og læner sig frem på Dannis skød. De mærker et ubehag over nærheden mellem den og manden, men også en lyst til at vise, at man gerne må hilse på fremmede. “Det er der jo ikke rigtig nogen, der har.”

“Jo, det er der.” Han siger det som en konstatering, hverken vrede eller argumenterende, sukker og sætter sig ned på jorden. Svajer lidt i takt med barnets små træk i hans pegefinger, imens han nymner som til en underliggende melodi: “Godnat til alle – fuglene ... og til alle – køerne ...” Grenene vajer, skyggerne vugger i takt. “Og til alle – myterne ... og til alle – vennerne ...” Danni foreslår, at de kan købe noget mad til ham i stedet, men han ryster på hovedet, han er ikke sulten. “Er du sulten?”, siger han og læner sig frem mod barnet igen, legende, “er du det? Er du træt?”

Nej, vel ... Du vil bare have min finger – mit *fingervuftryk!*” Han ler for sig selv og gør et ryk med hånden, lader, som om han forsøger at vriste sig fri. Babyen klukker og river igen den anden vej. “Men det har jeg allerede givet væk ...” Så ser han op på Danni, plirrende i det pletvise lys, og mumler: “Meldpligten ...” Han smiler og vrider blidt sin finger fri, stryger i stedet barnet et par gange over kinden. “I har ikke nogen penge, vel?” “Nej, desværre,” siger Danni og undskylder sig, de er nødt til at give barnet noget at spise nu. “Ja, ja, men så er jeg også nødt til at gå videre.” Han nikker alvorligt og rejser sig, blinker øjnene vågne, børster hænderne af i trøjen. “Kan I have det godt, I to.”

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Birke Gorm
let me stop you right there
Udstillingsperiode: 24.05.2025 – 03.08.2025

Birke Gorm (f. 1986, DE/DK/AT) er en dansk-tyisk kunstner, der bor og arbejder i Wien. Hun er uddannet fra Akademie der Bildenden Künste i Wien (2018) og har studeret på HFBK Hochschule für bildende Künste i Hamborg. Hun har senest udstillet på bl.a. Kunstmuseet i Tønder (2024) og Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2024).

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WORK-CARE- PLAY/ EN BARSELSDAG I FIRMABYEN/ ALTD DELVIST NY

Jonas Eika

De kommer gående ned ad gaden. De og den. De i deres plateausandaler og crop-shorts, der kan give hofterne vinget; den i sin boppende, let hoppende, nærmest svævende transformationsvogn: Når den vågner deri, er det altid som delvist ny. Men nu sprøjter tårerne fra dens runde brune øjne. Hvidblåt dagslys breder sig bag himlens plexiglas, over de vage afspjlinger af Carlserbergbyens kobbertårne. Danni ser sig omkring efter et sted, hvor man kan sidde ned uden at betale for det, skynnder sig ned til sidde med uden at betale for det, skynnder sig ned til store dråbeformede øer af filt, bliver der legat og i rummet. På gulvet, der er dækket af puder og mange, men distinkt, lagdelte ligesom aktiviteterne der bliver stillet på et metalisk underlag – tydene er koncentrerede stemmer, tasteraturfinger, kaffekopper, Pludren, grin, gråd og legende stemmer; dæmpede, akustikken er fantastisk, tænker Danni, sådan som jobkonsulenten jo også lovede – men kan så ikke lade være med at tænke på jobcenteret, da de har sat sig ved den ledige plads i vinduet og slået computeren op foran sig. Ellier på den abstrakte forventning, hun repræsenterer, konsulenten, som foreslog, at Danni ikke kun skulle se essayet som en pligt – en del af den påkrævede kompetenceudvikling for arbejdsløse under barslen – men også som en slags hjælp eller omsorg, både for dem selv og dem, der måske ville kunne spejle sig i deres erfaringer, og ikke mindst for kommunen, der jo gerne vil forbedre forholdene for sådan nogle som ... ja, for foreldre som Danni?

Ja. Det er vel noget lignende, redaktøren forventer. Han svarede i hvert fald begejstret, da Danni endelig tog sig sammen til at skrive og foreslå et barselsessay *perspektiv* ... Danni sukker, ranker sig, kaster et blik ned på vognen udenfor ruden, det varmeanalvisende foliedække, der skjuler deres barn. En pludselig tristhed melder sig i brystet, gennemsnigtig som den næsten usynlige rude, den lille, nu nærmest svimlende afstand imellem dem. Danni sidder lidt og mærker følelsen stige op i ansigtet også, kører tungen rundt

Danni sænker sin venstre arm, så babyen kommer lidt længere væk fra brystet, for at det ikke ligner en amning – så man i hvert fald ikke tror, at de bilder sig ind at være mor – men barnet må jo heller ikke ligge vandre, når det får mælk, for så kan mælken skvulpe rundt i svælg, op i luftløret og ind i mellemøret, var det ikke sådan, sundhedsplejersken sagde? Ind og ligge alle sammen resistente nu, bakterierne, helt ligegyldige overfor antibiotika ...

Pludselig bryder ynglingene ud i latter, overstadigt som for at fordrive den lille usikkerhed fra før. Danni hørte ikke, hvad den langhårede sagde til sidst, men i hvert fald får det dem til at gå videre, kun med et par enkelte sydlne blikke over skulderen.

Babyen op til brystet igen, mæde færdig, bøvse af, kramme, ae, elsk, ned i vognen og af sted – så snart søvnen begynder at svømme i de mælkede øjne, begynder Danni at tænke på arbejdet: *Lysvågne lemmere ... Lungerne fulde af fostervand ... Jeg googler, til jeg ikke kan læse længere* ... Hvis bare de kunne finde på den første sætning på forhånd, ville der måske være lidt energi at glide ind i teksten på. Modvilligheden sidder som en lukket mund i brystet. Et par nasale sug og et suk nede fra vognen, en blød sårbarhed under de allerede lukkede øjenlåg. En enkelt ledig plads foran barselscaféens facadevinduer; Danni parkerer, tænder babyalarmen, tager skjorte og arbejdstaske på og går ind.

Pludren, grin, gråd og legende stemmer; dæmpede, akustikken er fantastisk, tænker Danni, sådan som jobkonsulenten jo også lovede – men kan så ikke lade være med at tænke på jobcenteret, da de har sat sig ved den ledige plads i vinduet og slået computeren op foran sig. Ellier på den abstrakte forventning, hun repræsenterer, konsulenten, som foreslog, at Danni ikke kun skulle se essayet som en pligt – en del af den påkrævede kompetenceudvikling for arbejdsløse under barslen – men også som en slags hjælp eller omsorg, både for dem selv og dem, der måske ville kunne spejle sig i deres erfaringer, og ikke mindst for kommunen, der jo gerne vil forbedre forholdene for sådan nogle som ... ja, for foreldre som Danni?

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i munden for at få den til at gå væk. Synker og forsøger så i stedet at skrive den ned:

En underlig, egentlig ret ubehagelig følelse her på cafen, her et øjeblik på afstand af mit sovende barn: at jeg ikke rigtig kender det, ikke elsker det. At det endnu ikke helt er blevet et menneske for mig.

Jeg skriver det med en frygt for, at der er noget ander, mere grundlæggende galt med mig. At jeg aldrig virkelig elsker, sørger, foler omhed – men blot har lært mig de følelser, og nu gentager dem med en pl, der gør det svært at kende forskel?

Eller også er der bare noget tingslig, neutralt, noget livligt-men-ndnu-ikke-menneskeligt ved spædbørn, som også nu og da bryder gennem mit barns trætte angst og flagernde lemmer?

Danni stirrer lidt på sætningerne og drikker en slurk af den espresso tonic, der blev serveret, mens de skrev. Så markerer de teksten og flytter den ned i bunden af dokumentet, et spilprodukt. En opkørt i øjeblik efter sætter en af de andre sig op til vinduet, bordplade og glider fluks ind i arbejdet. Danni tvinger sit blik væk fra det beige-rosa moodboard på hendes skærm – og halter også trevlerne af sin opmærksomhed ind fra vognen uden for ruden – tilbage til det tomme dokument, forsøger at få slået en åbningsscene an, at huske, hvad der faktisk blev sagt der på fødestuen, ja, hvorfor ikke bare starte dér?

"Skal jeg løfte den op, så I kan se, hvad I har fået?"

Det tingsliggørende i spørgsmålet –

Alarmen lyser op og vibrerer, summer, suser af den massive larm fra en fejtemaskine udenfor. Danni springer ned fra stolen, løber ud og står og vipper vognen, imens maskinen passerer forbi. Tager sig selv i at skule til føreren i det lille styrehus, som om han havde noget valg, som om han med vilje er kørt herhen for at ødelægge barnets lur, og dermed også Dannis spinkle arbejdstid ... Desuden får han opgaver i kommunen er dækket af arbejdspligten nu, husker Danni at have læst for nylig. Og husker også at andre, såsom Danni, kan producere sig selv ... Og et stort kontorlandskab, som nogen skal holde rent, for at have overvejet, om det så gør byen til et firma, mens ordene stadig er på tungen:

"Skal jeg løfte den op, så I kan se, hvad I har fået?"

Det tingsliggørende i spørgsmålet ikke i den –

Det tingsliggørende i spørgsmålet ligesom i den –

og for mig at se helt slap på min partners bryst – men i det som henviser præcis nok til den krop, der ligger blø, blodig 'hvad', der skal bevares, fyldes ud, fordrives med det samme. I situationen, stadig panikslagen over, hvor læt på døden både barnet og min partner har forekommet mig for et øjeblik siden, får jeg sagt: "Nej! Nej, nej! Jeg vil bare gerne vide, at den lever!"

Det ubestemte, der skal kvalificeres for at kunne genkendes ... det levende overfor det kommede ... Ja, lidt for simpelt, forløjet, at de to skulle stå i modsætning til hinanden? Ja, egentlig vil Danni hellere skrive i græzonen, der hvor tingene ikke så let kan adskilles – om dagene på barselsgangen, om at mærke sin mund blive spidser, ansigtsrækkens finere, brystet blødere, af ufrivilligt at imitere sit barns mindste bevægelser, og hvordan det efter tre døgn uden søvn fik dem til at tænke, at så behøvede de ikke blive udredt alligevel, så kunne barnet give dem alle de hormoner, de havde brug for – men ender så i stedet med at skrive noget kedeligt og forklarende om hverken at være mor eller far, glædeligt og ensomt befrtet for de navne ...

Deres espresso tonic er blevet flad. Et barn, der har kløvet et sted i baggrunden, begynder at skige og vil ikke dysses ned. Forælderen skynnder sig at lise ud i puslrummet med det, men gråden har allerede fået lydene til at stige op nedefra, op til Danni i det rene, retlinede rum over bordpladen. Og så kan de også mærke deres underkrop, en rastløshed i skødet, som får fødderne til at trippe mod stolebenet, en knirk i nervene, den konstante, underligt lavintense panik over, om babyen mon stadig trækker vejret, om den ligger og bliver overophedet, om larver og insekter finder ind i dens luftveje ... De klapper computeren sammen og går målrettet udenfor – havde ellers tænkt sig at blive, når babyen vågnede, også for at undgå den værste middagsheide – fører en flad hånd ind under foliedækket og mærker de små fine ribben hæve sig et par gange mod håndfladen. Og alligevel er de nødt til også at have lyd på, at læne øret ned i mørket og holde vejret for at høre barnet trække sit.

De klikker bremsen fra, tager skjorten af og går ned gennem byparken på Istedgade, forbi delchaverne og dyrefoldene, træningsfaciliteterne, tankebarerne. De langhårede gedder er kommet på græs. En gruppe cortagccore tecnagere kommer gående med forklæderne fulde af frugt. Temperaturen er lavere her, det tætte løvhæng lukker kun spredte pletter af lys ind. En vagt står og rnsker i en kvind, der er faldet i søvn på stensætningen langs et urtebed. Hun vågner, mumler noget, bander og gestikulerer, mens hun bliver ført væk. Danni slår blikket ned og går i en bu udenom, gennem en lysning med svitsende sol og hidige måger, fyldt med en følelse af at skulle have noget af luren, af dagen, de ved ikke hvad. De kunne måske gå i svømmehallen med barnet? Det skulle være så stimulerende, så godt for sansesoritorikken. Urolige bevægelser i vognen nu, de drejer ud af parken og ned mod DGI-byen, imens foliedækket begynder at bule af spæk. Et par korte, sugende indåndinger, og så kommer gråden, febrilsk og forurettet. Danni skynnder sig ned til Halmtovet, ind i den lille skyggeplet under et kastanje træ. De tager barnet op og holder det tæt ind til sig, vugges og trøstes, forsøger at finde en rytme, en ro i hofterne og stemmen. Længsomt forplanter den sig til barnet.

De sætter sig ned på den knæthøj terrorsikring. Den grynde granit er kølil mod baglårerne, babyen smasker og ser op på Danni med et undrende smil:

AFGRÆNS- NINGENS FELTER

Mai Dengsøe

Nogle gange er det svært at forstå kunst, og andre gange er det ikke. Det kommer an på så meget.

Kommunikation er nøglen. Ikke kun i form af en god formidlingsstekst eller en dygtig omviser, men også som en slags grundlæggende kemi mellem værk og beskuer. Man kan forstå noget helt rationelt: Stykker og stumper er flyttet fra skralderen og ind på museet; altså er det kunst. Men man kan også gå mere intuitivt og sanseligt til værks, og noget viser sig: I et stykke krøllet papir tegnes konturen af noget levende. I folderne af en aflagt og grov lærtredssæk vokser en krop.

Det er mandag eftermiddag, og arbejdet med Birke

Gorms udstillingsopbygning er først lige begyndt. En tekniker lukker mig ind på den ellers lukkede kunsthall. Jeg finder Birke ovenpå. Hun er ankommet fra Wien og er allerede nået længere med installationen, end hun havde forventet. Fra loftet hænger tunge rustne kæder i buer. På panelkanterne er lange rækker af dukkeformede klude monteret. Desperate i udtrykket. Med armene i vejret. Der er noget dystert og råt over den endnu ufærdige udstilling. Nogen febrilsk ved de små servicetabamser, som siver ind og ud af udstillingens simple greb. Her sidder du. Dukke, dukke, dukke, og her hænger du, kæde, kæde, kæde. Her er stille, og der er en orden. Sollyset vælter ind ad vinduerne og spiller med de brune og rustrede nuancer i Gorms installationer.

Der er ro i rummet, en sval komposition. Lidt som at træde ind i en lade langt ude på landet, hvor ingen længe har været, og hvor døren knirker, når man åbner, mens store maskiner og mindre redskaber træder frem mellem smalle sprækker af lys. Et listigt landskab. Dødt, og så alligevel helt teatralisk.

Jeg spørger Birke, om hun tænker meget over tid, men det spørgsmål er for stort. Det kan jeg med det samme godt selv høre. Ikke den bedste måde at komme længere ind i samtalen på. Hendes værk er så konkret, og det er egentlig det, jeg vil høre. At det må betyde noget, ikke bare hvorfor det æstetiske udtryk bogsstavelig talt er tørt, men også hvorfor gamle metoder skal i brug, som at opdele, kategorisere, vaske, indfarve, ruste, stille, ordne, folde. Elastik, snor, knude. Det hele tager tid. Fysisk tid. Når jeg orienterer mig i de tekster, der allerede findes om Gorm, knyttes hende arbejde, og særligt arbejdet med tekstil, ofte til feministiske kontekster og kvindehistorie. Det giver mening. Håndarbejdet, sytøj, broderierne har ikke bare været kvindernes felt, men et sted, hvorigennem kvinders kreativitet kunne udfoldes. Kreativitet! Et ord, hun selv nævner, da vi mødes.

Et ord, jeg synes at støde på mange steder for tiden – både inde i mig selv og ude blandt andre. Efter en længere periode med fokus på *kulturarbejderen* – og alt, hvad den betegnelse bringer med sig af institutionelle tanker om villkår, ansvar og administration – banker gamle kunstneriske begreber på døren: kreativitet, skaberrang, skala.

På gulvet i den anden del af rummet bygger Birke Gorm et landskab op af pap og kuglepenne. Det drejer sig om afgrænsninger. Her er vi helt nede på barnets præmisser. Hvem husker ikke at forestille sig et landskab. Hvem husker ikke at bruge de forhandleværende midler til at bygge videre på idéen. Hver lille sektion får sit særpreg, forklarer hun. Ligesom i virkeligheden, hvor enhver husholdning skiller sig ud ved egen stil og karakteristika.

Birke Gorm har samlet ting, hun er fortrolig med. Linealer, grydeskeer, sukkeroser og andre lignende remedier, som ikke gør andet væsen af sig end at være mere eller mindre fasttømrede dele af dagligdagen. Ting i lille skala, som anvendes til at efterprøve tanker om fællesskab og grænses? Nærmiljø og magt? Kontrol og leg. I virkeligheden er det ikke Gorms arbejde i sig selv, dens æstetiske og temmelig fredelige konnotationer, som virker besnærende. Det er anordningerne og de associationsrækker, som ledsager værket, der ulmer af en mystisk uhygge. Den elementære tilgang til materialet er på sin vis barnlig og uskyldstren. Således, og som høryven dingle med fra loftet med lokkende og bøjede (finger)spidser, formår Gorm at kanalisere det menneskelignende fra mennesket over i objektet, over i tingen. Birke fortæller selv, at hun er optaget af det faretruende. Hun er ved at opdrage et barn, og det virker, som om krav, og overvejelser herom, reflekteres i det kunstneriske arbejde. Hvorfor er noget stort? Hvorfor hænger noget sammen? Hun vender og drejer tingene. Hvorfor er noget fiktion, og hvordan gælder det virkelig. Tanker, som også har en filosofisk forankret tradition; blandt andre spekulerede den østrigske Ludwig Wittgenstein over, hvor mange huse der skulle til for, at der var tale om en by, og om en by med kun et hus kunne blive en by, hvis bare man satte et byskilt op. Afstanden mellem de vægtigste tanker og naive impulser er indimellem kort. Det er ekstremt langt siden, jeg har tænkt på Wittgenstein, men nu dukker han så op. Måske fordi der er et eller andet sted i Gorms arbejde findes en grundtone, som klinger i takt med det sprogløse tankegods, og at der under de bløde lag af pap og tekstil, buer og bølger, befinder sig noget ekstraordinært hårdt og konceptuelt.

Måske er det de modsætninger, som gør det svært for mig at stille skarpt på Gorms værk og praksis. For på den ene side er udtrykket ensartet, intakt og rytmisk. På den anden side banker forestillingen om verdens rytme i hjertet af det hele. Død og ødelæggelse placeres lige ved siden af opblomstring og håb. Det er simpelt og komplekst. Tavst og rumligt. Jeg går nogle dage med Gorms udstilling i hovedet. Ser for mig, hvordan hun går og skubber rundt på sine sorterede bunkre af ting. Justerer hist og her.

Jeg aner intet om hendes arbejdsprocess, men jeg forestiller mig, at præcision er vigtig. Prøver selv at spore mig ind på, hvad der er værd at fremhæve. Overvejer, hvad jeg kan gøre for at få teksten til at virke mindre karikeret, mere nærgående. Mærker en smigende dårlig samvittighed over ikke at finde flere feministiske perspektiver frem, som helt sikkert er hjørnesten i projektet. Ikke at samle de løse ender.

Men noget er hermetyisk lukket og faktisk svært at centrere. Der er netop samling på sagerne i Birkens univers, tænker jeg. Sluttede cirkler. Og det virker i strid med de ord, som ellers ankommer med materialet, og de flossede konnotationer, som knytter sig til den bæredygtige genbrugsranke.

Måske er det for langt at gå, men opdragelsen i værket, hvis der findes noget sådant, synes i højere grad at centrere sig om kontrol og magt end de mere bæredygtige potentialer, som ligger i det regenerative stof. De hierarkier, som egentlig brydes, genetableres i nye former og andre rum. Det aflagte og værdiløse, noget pap og en tændstikæske, anvendes opbyggeligt til at skabe rum, men adskiller og barrikaderer stadig et felt fra et andet. Måske er det her, Birke Gorms tanker om det faretruende finder sted. At det opbyggelige kræver grænser, at selv de åbne tanker lukker andre ude, og at intet menneske kan bevæge sig frit rundt i verden.

Her bliver skala et væsentligt begreb, for selvom taktierne er der, synes den helt store samfundskritik og dens utopiske drømme ikke at være centrum for Birke Gorms øvelser. De spirer i det hele, men mest af alt virker Gorms udstilling mere optaget af det nære, de små skridt, den mindre gestus. Og det er egentlig ret dejligt at tænke på, hvordan mindre særpreg, små forandringer, bare vriddet på en klud, ultimativt kan få det store billede til at se helt anderledes ud.

RGADEN

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Birke Gorm

let me stop you right there

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O – OVERGADEN

Overgaden neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K,

overgaden.org

Det er en stor fornøjelse at introducere denne publikation, der udkommer i forbindelse med Birke Gorms soloudstilling *let me stop you right there* på O – Overgaden. Siden 2021 har O – Overgaden med generøs støtte fra Augustinus Fonden produceret en publikationsrække, der udgives i forbindelse med kunsthallens soloudstillinger. Målsætningen med denne serie er at mangfoldiggøre samtalerne under og efter udstillingerne og åbne op for, at nyt materiale kan udspringe heraf.

I dette tilfælde har kurator på Gammel Strand Mai Døngsøe bidraget med et essay om Gorms motiver, objekter og processer, mens forfatter Jonas Eika har bidraget med en prosatekst om forældreskab og (omsorgs)arbejdsliv i en nær-fremtidsudgave af København, og endelig bringer vi et uddrag fra Ghislaine Leungs bog *Bosses* (2023). En stor og varm tak til alle bidragsydere. Derudover vil jeg gerne takke hele O – Overgadens team for den store indsats i forbindelse med udstillingen, og naturligvis også fanfare, vores grafiske designere, for deres dedikerede arbejde på denne publikation. Sidst, men ikke mindst, en særlig tak til Birke for at dele sit materiale – fra koncept til udvalgte samtaler – med os alle sammen, både gennem udstillingen og denne publikation.

Affald, forbrug, kontrol. Birke Gorm samler skrot og skrald fra sine omgivelser såvel som den lokale lossplads for derefter at sammensille, sy eller formgive de fundne materialer, der kan ses som dømt ude (eller døde) i et kapitalistisk samfunds optik. Når man træder ind i Gorms udstilling, hænger rustne jern-elementer – brugte højtyve, søm, industrielle konstruktionsdele, savklinger, pigtråd, kroge – ned fra loftet i svungne klynger. Værkernes varierende højder, fra farveruende lavt til sikkert og højt, spiller på, hvilke regler der gælder i vores fælles rum: hvad holdes fjernet og nært fra, eksempelvis, det lille barn? Fremfor at minne en klassisk skulpturel monumentalitet er disse 'uroer' eller mobiler raslende, spinkle og

skørnede i deres mørke konturer, som var de ødelagte lyskroner placeret midt i det, der er O – Overgadens majestætiske, tidligere spisesal. Den omvendte omgang med de farlige, spidse materialer vidner om Gorms anarkistiske, næsten surrealistiske metode til at skabe værdi eller skønhed, hvor der – i hvert fald set med økonomiske øjne – ingen værdi er.

Et andet værk, der skaber værdi ud af det pure ingenting, er en samling dukker, som sidder på de omkringliggende paneler. Hver enkelt er bundet af brugte viskestykker, klude eller servietter – en traditionel måde at skabe kroppe af brugte materialer på – og farvet i en brunrød tone. Den røde farve er kogt frem. Farvestoffet er fremstillet i en såkaldt 'dirty pot' – en ældgammel form for hedselignende bryg, hvor rustent jern (fra værkerne ved siden af), vand og eddike langsomt koges op ad flere omgange. I kontrast til samtidens hastige produktionskæder fremhæver de små dukker traditionelle, cirkulære praksisser og ofte kvindelige håndværksmetoder for bl.a. binding, indfarvning og figurskabelse – et sted at arbejde fra, når forældrerollen gør det svært at imødekomme polerede standarder.

I udstillingens andet rum ses en væg-til-væg gulvinstallation skabt af affaldspap og forhandlenværende hverdagsmaterialer, her gendrupet til at skabe en miniaturby. I tråd med kunstbevægelsen Arte Povera opløser værket sig selv som et enklestående 'kunstobjekt', idet det bliver destrueret efter udstillingen. Den 'pauvre' sammensstilling skaber i stedet en mini-verden, der sætter spørgsmålstegn ved forholdet mellem kaos og orden, privat ejendom og territoriale grænser, som indlæres af barnet gennem leg. Materialer som puder, der kontrolleret et billede på de systemiske påbud, der hvad der vores offentlige adfærd – en optræning af, hvad der kategoriseres som høj- eller lavkulturelt, død eller levende, rigtigt eller forkert, affald eller ej.

Rhea Dall

Leder og chefkurator på O – Overgaden,
juni 2025

INTRODUKTION

