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**Helena Papadopoulos**

Erica Baum Annette Kelm Josephine Pryde

*Pictures extra and other*  
17 February-16 April 2011  
opening  
Thursday 17 February, 7-10pm

*Pictures extra and other* explores through the work of Erica Baum, Annette Kelm and Josephine Pryde the operations of seemingly straight depiction. The pictures are frontal, precise, factual. They are close-ups of objects- library catalogue cards and book indexes (Baum), garments (Pryde), still lifes (Kelm); but in excess of their formal structure that allows for comparisons to the dispersed methods of documentary, fashion and advertising, they convey, instead of an inclination for taxonomy, expressionless objectivity and emptiness, something other and beyond the naked representation of objects.

Apropos Josephine Pryde's *Reflected Upon In Its Absence* and *Integration is Not the Opposite of Alienation* (both works 2010): "Pertinent here is that things, objects, and ideas, representations of them, are produced, named and circulated as 'art' for use. For this exhibition, Ms. Pryde tried to imagine who might be guardians and supporters of these tender expressions of the vast, otherwise unindexed, informing complexities. She pictured a creative lady, tough because responsive, who might fit the bill. This woman would slip into a technologically advanced blouse of an evening and, while gliding through rooms holding glasses of water or occasionally wine, would tirelessly promote the artefacts of her computations, things in whose formal use she believed. Her clothes would be simple and easy to pack and not immediately readable as selected from a terribly recent collection by a famous designer. They would speak of fluid and open movement and, at the same time, suggest in their intricate cut and fold that life is a maelstrom of emotions, hidden, too complex ever fully to be comprehended. The artist would photograph these garments under the apprehension that they could say more to a viewer about such a lady, she felt, than an image of her person ever could"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the press release of Josephine Pryde's solo exhibition *Therapie Thank You Thank You* at Galerie Neu, Berlin.

The nine Erica Baum works, part of three distinct projects realized in several university and public libraries in and around New York City, originate in a particular love of words. The Frick series are photographs of cross referenced notes on the back of index cards in the photoarchive catalogue of the museum. The notes correspond to the subjects of the photographed paintings in the collection: *Nude figures*, or *Daggers, Cloaks*. The Frick, Index and Catalogue Card series can be read as a form of found concrete poetry. Baum has described the photographing of the Catalogue Cards as a “very ordinary quotidian thing replete with physical qualities (the wood, the paper, the writing) that contained signs of use and occupied a central place in research”<sup>2</sup>. Equivalent to Michel de Certeau’s reflections on the activity of reading as a “distinctive space of appropriation which is never reduced simply to what is read” where “readers, like renters, make comparable changes in an apartment they furnish with their acts and memories”<sup>3</sup> Baum’s photographs of book indexes produce new linguistic and formal compositions, by the simple act of selection. “I look for typo’s and handwriting and smudges, things that suggest the trace of their creation and use. I’m looking for humor and absurdity, a certain rhythm. Cumulatively I’m trying to create a voice that suggests history and philosophy and popular culture. It’s all there in the drawers if I look long enough....These small interventions I employ when I photograph follow in the tracks of actual usage. In all of these projects I’m looking for something that in some sense already exists and has the potential to yield something else”<sup>4</sup>.

Such confluences of history, popular culture and personal memories characterize Annette Kelm’s photography. Here, a deadpan picture of an artificially generated precious stone in a museum display case sits next to a staged combination of objects. The origins of the flower, the contents of the Priority Mail box, the tribal fabric and the makeshift vase may have specific resonance for Kelm, but the picture is open. Beatrix Ruf describes her process concisely: “she always begins her works by researching the objects in detail, but ultimately she departs from the actual thing or the actual place, and adds something – fabric ornaments or additional objects such as fans, pictures, hats .....She contaminates the factual. Perhaps one can say she lays “false trails” and, in the process, opens up the interplay of intuition, composition and the constructed in the picture.”<sup>5</sup>

Please contact us at [gallery@helenapapadopoulos.com](mailto:gallery@helenapapadopoulos.com) for further information.

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<sup>2</sup> Cecilia Alemani interviews Erica Baum, *Dog Ear Poems*, *Mousse*, Issue #22, February, Milan 2010

<sup>3</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, 2002

<sup>4</sup> Cecilia Alemani interviews Erica Baum, *Dog Ear Poems*, *Mousse*, Issue #22, February, Milan 2010

<sup>5</sup> Susanne Pfeffer, Beatrix Ruf, Nicolaus Schafhausen (ed), *Annette Kelm*, Koenig Books, London, 2009