GOTHENBURG STUDIES IN ART AND ARCHITECHTURE 28

Contemporary Feminist Studies and its Relation to Art History and Visual Studies

Proceedings from a Conference in Gothenburg, March 28-29, 2007

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UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS

ISBN 978-91-7346-647-9
ISSN 0348-4114

LAYOUT: Elin Lundén, Elanders
FONT: Adobe Garamond, Arial
PRINT: Elanders 2010

DISTRIBUTION: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis
Box 222, SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden
MAIL: acta@ub.gu.se

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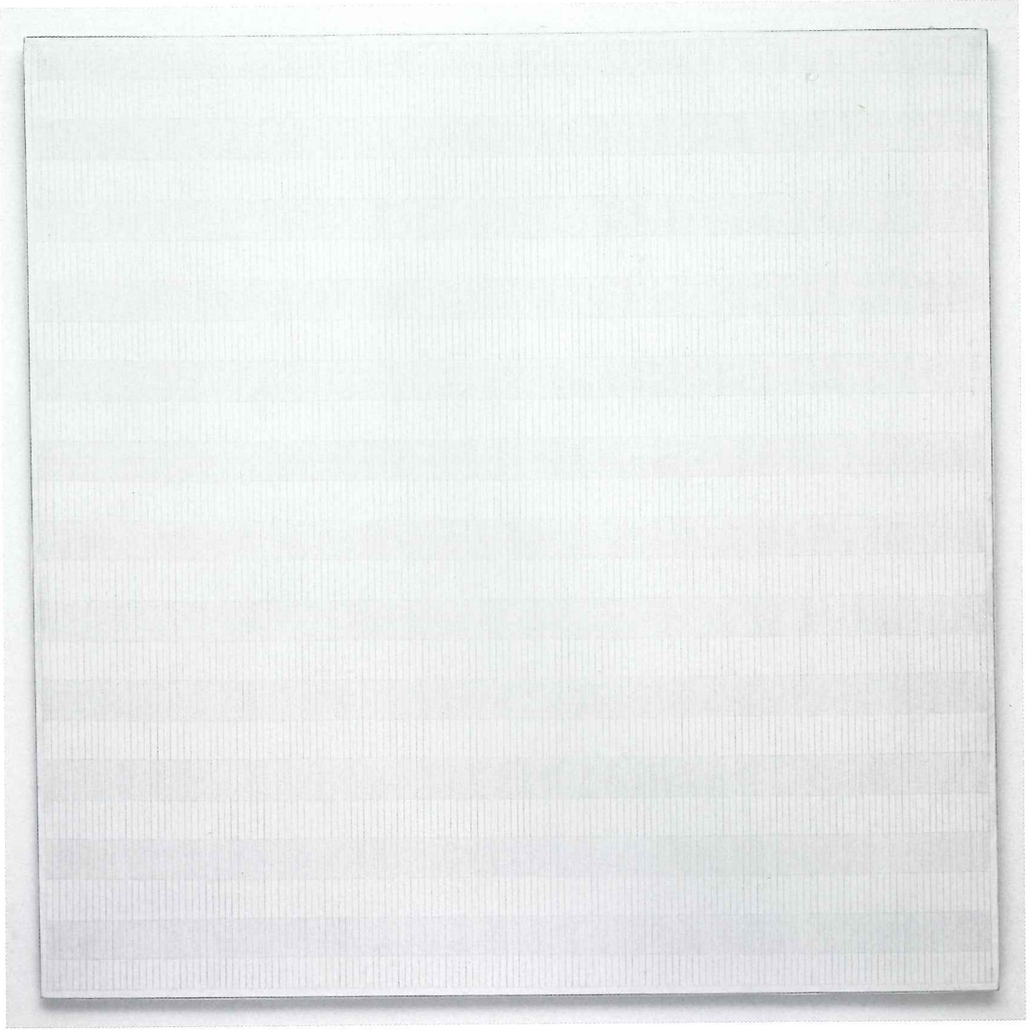

Agnes Martin
The Tree, 1964
Oil and pencil on canvas
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
The Larry Aldrich Fund.

Sigrid Lien

Stories about Invisibility and Stardom: Accounting for the Position of Female Photographers in the Norwegian History of Photography

On the 8th of March 2007, two Norwegian artist photographers, Marte Aas and Hedevig Anker, posted an invitation to a large number of their female colleagues – all working with photography as their medium. They invited these artists to pose for a group portrait. This happening, however, did not result in just one image, but in a small series of three group photographs, which shortly after were exhibited in "Kunstnernes Hus", Oslo, under the title "Group Photography 2007". The exhibited portraits were all in keeping with the established conventions of the genre. The subjects posed in front of a neutral, white backdrop – in a spacious studio with an interior corresponding to the contemporary taste for pure white walls and natural lighting. Some of them were sitting, others standing: The group portrait , however, was organized in a manner that opened up for individual poses, although all the women had their attention smilingly directed towards the camera, as in old-fashioned school-portraits (fig.1–3).

How are we then to understand this initiative, this strong urge to manifest adherence to a community – to a group? The choice of the International Woman's Day as a date for sending out the invitations for the portrait event, speaks for itself, and the letter of invitation confirms the reading of the initiative as a gender political statement: The text points to the emergence of several strong female artists working in photography during the last decades. But it also claims that women nevertheless tend to be under represented not only in the most important exhibitions but also in public acquisitions. Women artist photographers have also, according to the letter, become invisible in art- and photography histories – written" for and by men".

However, only a month before the group shot was taken, a new national history of photography was published in Norway – and as the author of this essay was also one of the authors behind this Norwegian History of Photography,

it can hardly be said to be written for and by men.[1] I will therefore take up the challenge presented by the group portrait initiators and direct a (self) critical gaze at the representation of women artists in the writing of history (ies) of photography, using some observations I made in the process of working on the Norwegian History of photography as a starting point.

More precisely, I want to discuss some perspectives that came up during the work on the last chapter, which deals with photography in the Norwegian art of the last three decades. A striking feature when looking at photography's entrance onto the Norwegian art scene, is the dominant position of female photographer's work in the contemporary art of the 1990s and onwards. Today the work of, for example, Vibeke Tandberg (b.1967) – who entered the Norwegian art scene in the early 1990s, is shown in galleries and museums all over the world. In one of her early and most famous photography series, *Living Together,* the artist in her own person, presented two young women, in the language of the private album – and through digital manipulation (fig.4). Judging by the identical appearances the young women were twins or sisters. The female photographer in other words presented herself as her own clone – in fictional form. Thus the work could be seen as raising questions about identity, originality and authorship. But at the same time, the digital hybrid character of Tandberg's images could be read as an ironic comment on photography as bearer of truth and as a mirror of reality. With works such as this Tandberg has risen to international stardom over the last fifteen years. And she is not the only successful photographer in Norwegian contemporary art. Others are following in her footsteps.

One of them is Christine Hansen (b.1969). In continuity of the postmodern discussions on the relevance of the context for the production of photographic meaning, Hansen, who is trained as an art historian as well as an artist and a photographer, has taken a special interest in family photographs – as genre and language. An example of her artistic approach to this theme is to be found in a series of large format photographs titled "Family-topographies" (fig.5). Tandberg and Hansen are, however, working in a context which is very different from the situation about 25 years ago, in the 1970s and 80s – where female photographers were absent or invisible in the Norwegian art arena. But there were nevertheless exceptions to this rule – and photographer Thera Mjaaland (b.1955) was one of them. A self portrait first shown at an exhibition at the National Museum of Photography in Horten in 1983, may serve as an example of her early and perhaps most important work (fig.6). In her artistic practice, Mjaaland has explored the limitations of the psychological portrait and photography as a medium. Un-

like Tandberg, Mjaaland worked in a context which the artist herself has described as a male stronghold with very few active women.

But why has the situation changed? Why have women artists lately been able to conquer the earlier so male dominated art scene? And how does this relate to particular artistic strategies they have chosen? Today women artist's strong presence, even though it is a very recent phenomenon, has become something that we take for granted. So how are we to understand the changes briefly described above? The breakthrough for women art photographers in Norway appears to have been closely connected with a corresponding breakthrough of postmodern aesthetics. Therefore the American art critic Craig Owens' theoretical reflections, as presented in his widely known essay "The Discourse of Others " from 1983, will serve as a point of departure for a discussion on the questions raised above.[2] In this text Owens points to the connection between critical feminism and postmodernist aesthetics – and a short outline of it will be presented before I return to the issue of the position of female photographers in Norwegian art.

The Discourse of Others

Owens not only defines postmodernist art as something which undermines the representational systems of the West – systems which only allows one vision: "that of the constitutive male subject". He also argues that "one of the most salient aspects of our postmodern culture is the presence of an insistent feminist voice".[3] That voice is according to Owens, on the one hand to be found in the *critical or theoretical writing* of feminist artists – writings that may be seen as a kind of strategic intervention. His example here is Martha Rosler's critical texts on the documentary tradition of photography – texts which represent an important part of her activity as an artist. On the other hand he states, with reference to Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document,* that postmodernist feminist *practice* also questions theory – and not only aesthetic theory. He argues that Kelly's use of multiple representational systems demonstrates that it is impossible for one single theoretical discourse to offer an explanation for all forms of social relations or for every mode of political practice.

Owens also describes the crisis of representation which is connected with the challenges to the domination and control of the West: The foremost of these being the challenges coming from Third World Nations and the women's movement. He suggests that this loss of mastery has resulted in very contrasting artistic responses. One way to cope with the situation has been to simulate mastery – for example by the massive deployment of the signs of artistic labour, such as

violent impassioned brushwork. Expressive painting is thus seen as a symptom of the western male artist's loss of virility, masculinity and potency. This is what Owens sarcastically refers to as the "new official art of the west" – an art which has been warmly received by society. Another way to artistically relate to the loss of mastery is to celebrate it – as some critical feminists artists have done. Furthermore they have investigated the particular interests vision serves in culture – and presented a critique which links the privileging of vision to sexual privilege.

This critique has according to Owens, manifested itself in works that explicitly address the issue of representation and sexuality – both masculine and feminine. He states that while some male artists have tended to investigate the social construction of masculinity, female artists have begun the long overdue process of deconstructing femininity. The focus of this deconstruction has been on the issue of what representation does to women. Owens makes this point with reference to the work of among others, Sherrie Levine, Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger. But he also states that even though the deconstructive impulses that characterize these female artist's work – have many affinities with post-structural textual strategies, they still have very different meanings. Their works have a clear address – as it is an art that is always gender specific. So, ironically enough, according to Owens, the postmodern feminist artworks insist on difference – at a time which otherwise has been characterized by a seeming indifference to every fundamental distinction; original/ copy, authentic/ inauthentic, function/ornament.

Owens did however write this over twenty years ago. We are now supposed to be at a nameless point in history that regards itself as "after postmodernism". But does that mean that the reflections he presented have lost their actuality in relation to contemporary photographic art – made by female artists? Are the works of female artists still to be seen as counter paradigmatic to a dominant male discourse? And if so – how does this kind of critical opposition manifest itself in the actual artworks? I shall follow up these questions as I take a closer look at the works and contextual settings of the three Norwegian female photographers presented above. Respectively they represent three different phases in the late history of Norwegian art photography.

Thera Mjaaland's art: A quiet rebellion

Owens' text was written in 1983, the same year as the earliest of the three above mentioned female Norwegian artist photographers, Thera Mjaaland, presented her also previously mentioned self-portrait. At that time, photography was not institutionalized as an art form in Norway – as it was on the American arena – where

the artists whose work Owens discusses, were active. There was not as yet any institution established that offered education at a higher level for art photographers. So, the young artists of Mjaaland's generation, who worked with photography as their chosen medium, were either self-taught or educated abroad. It was at the time particularly photography and/or art schools in Great Britain that attracted Norwegian students. When they later returned to their home country, these young artists really had to fight for the acceptance of photography as an art form.[4]

Some of the Norwegian male photographers of that generation, who later became very prominent, were educated at Trent Polytechnic in Nottingham, UK. There they became acquainted with a new generation of American and British landscape photographers, among others Paul Hill, Thomas Cooper and Raymond Moore. One could say that these artists had one foot planted in late modernism and the other in contemporary conceptual art. With historical photography as a reference, these photographers tried to renew the tradition of landscape photography. With focus on the particular place – and the specific features of the place, they presented photographic views from their homely environments in England. The images they presented were rather unconventional landscape fragments – timeless in character and often without sky or horizon.

Influenced by this development, one of their Norwegian students, Per Berntsen (b. 1953), declared that "all landscapes are equally interesting and that everything in every landscape is interesting".[5] And landscapes also represented the central motif in Berntsen's artistic production. Most of all he photographed the landscape in the valley where he grew up. It was not, however, the sublime landscape, with grand majestic nature, which was visualized in his photographs. Berntsen presented images without any form for dramatic light effects: Landscape fragments with a bird's eye perspective – snowy hills with some pine trees here and there. The absence of a horizon gave the images a character of flatness and a non-hierarchical pictorial structure. While letting the eyes sweep over the surface, the spectator is momentarily caught up with the graphical outline of the single trees – and the shadows which appear in delicate grey tones on the white snow. Berntsen thus visualizes the beauty of the ordinary Norwegian landscape.

Unlike Berntsen and others, Mjaaland was educated as an art photographer at Bournemouth & Pool College. And while many of the male photographers of her time concentrated on the landscape as their primary motif, she chose to explore the human face and the female body as a landscape. But her work nevertheless had a common feature with that of her male contemporaries: They

seemed to belong to an intermediate phase between modernism and conceptual art. Thera Mjaaland approached the portrait from the platform of a fundamental, modernist belief in the genre as a reflection of the psychology of the individual. This conviction has above all manifested itself in her self-portraits. What she seeks to clarify in her exhaustive examinations of her own role as a portrait-subject, are the possibilities for authenticity. In her self-portrait series from 1983 Mjaaland, with closed eyes, mercilessly exposes herself to the gaze of her own camera. She does so attempting to find an answer to a basic question: Is it at all possible to lay the face defencelessly bare during the act of portrayal?

But her self-portraits with their blue, red and golden shades also come over as a discrete rebellion against the black-and white dogmatism of the established modernist art photography. Harsh criticism from modernist oriented critics in Norway at the time (among them Per Torgersen and Ann Christin Eek) indicates that they also were received as such.

Furthermore Mjaaland's blurred images challenge the notion of the photographic image as sharply focused, straightforward realism. The flame-like vertical stripe in the centre of the image may for example at first appear to be an occasional technical failure – but then again it can be seen as a calculated compositional element. Mjaaland has later continued her portrait work and identity explorations, in a series called *Mothers and Daughters* (1993-2002).

How then are we to understand these images as statements? As already mentioned, there was a strong male dominance within photography right up to the 1970s and 80s. So, when female artists finally entered the field, they were, according to the artist herself, expected to come up with something new and completely different – or more precisely – some kind of gender-specific art. Thera Mjaaland's answer to this unspoken demand was as already mentioned, first to choose portraiture as an oppositional stance towards what was the dominant male paradigm of art photography at the time: The conceptual examination of the landscape genre.

Secondly her quiet rebellion took the shape of an attempt to break down the strong focus on technical perfection through experiments with blurred images – even though her artist training from Bournemouth (which also comprised exercises in the visual language of advertising and fashion) had given her a strong confidence in the technical side of photography. She chose for example to work with an old camera with a bad lens in order to put pressure on her images – or rather to see how much visual information you really need in order to convey a message. Thus Thera Mjaaland's particular kind of conceptualist photography

carried an implicit feminist message. Her portraits not only spoke about entering photography as an art form, but also about conquering an art arena as a woman.

Vibeke Tandberg's art: "what it is being a woman"

While the photographic conceptualists, the experimentalist generation of the 1980s, still displayed a fundamental belief in the authenticity of photography and in the genres they were exploring, a more critical and consequent attitude became visible in the works of the next generation of Norwegian artists working with photography as a medium. Most of the artists of this generation were educated at the Institute of Photography in Bergen, Norway's first, and so far only, educational institution for photography as an art form. The Institute was established in 1990 – and the first groups of students were full of the confidence which only comes from being the first to be accepted at a new and prestigious institution.

In addition they had, under the supervision of their British theory professor, David Bate, made themselves familiar with postmodern theory. The basic idea behind Bate's theoretical training was simply to make the students aware about photography's broad functional role in society – in other words to make them understand that photographic practices exist both inside and outside of art. These insights were often translated to artistic practice in the form of staged photography. As the majority of students worked in this genre, the Institute in Bergen at a certain point of time – as a joke and very unofficially – was renamed "Institute of Staged photography".

The rhetoric of these young artists clearly mirrored their American predecessors in postmodern photography. The idea that there is always another image to be found behind every existing image, was for example the underlying principle on which one of Tandberg's contemporaries from the Institute in Bergen, Ole John Aandal, based his artistic production. In a television interview Aandal (f.1960) argued that there were already too many pictures in the world – and that the time had come to recycle these already existing images. He also stated that photography never has been trustworthy – and his artistic practice clearly demonstrated such points of view. He produced, for example, digital montages where he placed himself into already existing and culturally "overloaded" images. In a series called *The Samaritan* from 1995, he presented himself in the character of Michael Jackson's assistant while seducing a little boy, or was seen helping out the notoriously famous Norwegian Church arsonist, murderer and satanist "The Count" with his hairstyle – or protecting Woody Allen from paparazzi photographers.

The most prominent exponent of this kind of staged photography in the early 1990s, was however, Vibeke Tandberg. Rather than accepting the portrait as an arena for authentic self-representation, she activated the role stereotypes to be found in private and official portraits of women – by entering them in her own persona. In her graduation work from 1994, Tandberg presented a series of digitally manipulated images of herself as a self-sacrificing nurse and relief worker in Africa. Tandberg who had never actually been in Africa, posed in front of the camera in a studio and then mounted these images into already existing photographs – taken by a photographer working for the Norwegian relief organization, NORAD, in Kenya. This series had the character of being an account of this woman's life. One of the images even had her funeral as a motif. As an accentuation of this biographical aspect, Tandberg inserted her own death notice and obituary in a number of papers – with the following text: "Our dear Vibeke Tandberg died in the service of humanity, on April the fifth, 1994. The funeral has taken place in Kenya according to the wishes of the deceased." In other series the artist in a similar manner appropriated the image of the bride (1993), princess (1994) – as well as entering the role of a female astronaut (*Valentina* 1996) and a handball-referee *(P-11*, 1997).

Such works do of course emphasize the conventionality of the images of women that are circulating in culture – while at the same time raising questions about the construction of identity. But Tandberg's digitally manipulated staged settings may also be seen as a deliberate way of undermining the objective and truthful character which traditionally has been ascribed to photography. It could also be added that her photographs contribute to a critical focus directed at the myths of the artist subject's privileged role in the creation of art. Not only has she applied already existing image typologies in her work, she has also left the act of taking the photographs to others. In an early interview Tandberg stated, that she considered this as an extension of her appropriation strategies – using other people's images in her own work.

In all these aspects, Tandberg was quite on a par with the group of American artists, discussed by Owens – among others Sherrie Levine, Cindy Sherman and Louise Lawler. Underneath the playfulness, the well directed «happenings» and the multi-medial illusions, was a critical, and very typical of the time, reminder of how the images which we are surrounded by in our daily life are contributing to the shaping of our identities and behaviour.

Tandberg's tireless examinations of the self – which for example are to be found in the project where she digitally doubled as her own identical twin (

Living Together, 1996) or manipulated her own facial features into portraits of people close to her (*Faces*,1998, *Line* 1999 and *Dad* 2000), also conveys an experience of vulnerability. In her artistic practice the digital photography thus represents something far more than a sign of advanced technology. It becomes an important tool in the process of reflecting the frail, underlying uncertainty which in our time is associated with fundamental categories as identity and subject.

Christine Hansen: New ways of looking at the world

Christine Hansen whose family-portrait was presented in the beginning of this essay, is also trained at the Photography Institute in Bergen. Even though her approach to photography is very different from that of Tandberg who graduated a few years before her, Hansen started off as an artist applying many of the same strategies as her now so renowned predecessor. Inspired by the important exhibition of the work of Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons and Louise Lawler in Oslo in 1993, Hansen began creating a kind of counter image. Her early photographs were intended as reminders of the artificiality of the images of women in art and movies. It was all about revealing the image as an image. Using herself as a model in staged photography (in this case images photographed directly from a television screen) she conveyed a common postmodern disbelief in so-called "ordinary photographs". To Hansen and her postmodern contemporaries such images only apparently depicted "the real world". Ordinary photographs represented, they believed, no more than lies – and should therefore be revealed as such.

Her work did nevertheless take another direction after having been introduced to landscape photography in the tradition of the New Topographics. The photographers working in this tradition – among them Stephen Shore, Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz and Nicholas Nixon, did however have something in common with the practitioners of staged photography, as they were concerned about the way photography had been used ideologically. In opposition to the so-called subjective documentary photographers, they argued that the objects depicted should speak for themselves. In order to do so, the personal signature of the artist had to be removed. And to achieve an optimal look of neutrality or objectivity, the New Topographic photographers chose to work in a style which accentuated frontality.

Hansen began photographing landscapes, but continued for a while to appear in person in her images. According to the artist herself, she no longer had any idea why. After Tandberg, Aandal and others – staged photography still had a strong hold. But gradually this artistic strategy started to be considered as res-

trictive and confining. It had become a dominant paradigm – something to revolt against.

To Christine Hansen this experience opened the way back to what she calls ordinary photographs. She started producing produced images that were meant as documents – but nevertheless *not* to be understood as indications of a return to a naive and banal belief in photography. In the course of the last ten years, she has produced a number of photography series – all done in a seemingly objective, matter of fact style.

One of them was a series from the quays in Florø, a town on the western coast of Norway. On one level these photographs may be seen as personal documents – as they depict the place where the artist grew up. On another they seem to speak about the relationship between the local and the international – an aspect which becomes very evident in a small place like Florø. Quays like the ones to be seen in her Florø-images, resemble each other all over the world, but they still bear some kind of local marks. Thus they also form a part of the site-specific topography. In a later project, "Norwegian Madhouses"(200), Hansen documented the exteriors of psychiatric institutions. And the following work "Heaven" (2003) had international airports as motifs. These projects were both intended as attempts to bring about reflections on the kinds of images that already exist of such places - and to come up with alternative ones. The artist's point was no longer to reveal photographic lies – but to direct the attention to new ways of looking at the world.

Lately Hansen, who is, as already noted, in addition to being a trained artist and photographer, also an art-historian, has continued her examination of so-called ordinary photographs in a project on family photography. On the theoretical level this project started off with the observation of the low esteem of the genre. This poor reputation has according to the artist, probably to do with their seemingly conventional and rigid form of expression. But at the same time family photographs are the ones dearest to us. It is these kinds of images that we are most afraid of loosing, just because they also convey experiences of richness of expression and authenticity.

This span between boredom and deep fascination – and between conventionality and experienced closeness, is thus as Hansen sees it, the very essence of the way we relate to this genre. And with reference to the American philosopher Stanley Cavell, she argues that family photography represents a kind of photographic every-day speech. It speaks its own language – an aspect which Hansen even more clearly has accentuated in her own art production. In a series

of colour photographs in large format, she has brought forth what she calls the aesthetic of family photography – through motives, places and people she has a strong attachment to. Thus she shows us the street where she grew up in Florø, the window-pane factory where her father worked, the garden of her uncle in the countryside, the fluttering curtains of her grandmother's bedroom seen as reflected through a mirror (fig.7) or husband, children and in-laws posing by a swimming pool in The Canary Islands (fig.5).

This work bears references both to the so-called Becher-School (of which she is very familiar after studying for several periods in Germany) – and to the previously mentioned American New Topography photographers. The artist herself, tellingly enough, characterises these images as "family-topographs". But for herself and her family – these are most of all scenes that must be dear and well known. Thus Christine Hansen's family-photographs also speak about the sorrow that is attached to them in their capacity of being a photographic every-day language.

Celebration rather than deprivation?

After this presentation of photographers belonging to three different generations of female artist photographers in Norway, I will return to the questions raised in the beginning of this essay: Why have women artists like Mjaaland, Tandberg and Hansen been able to conquer the earlier so male dominated art scene? And how does this relate to the particular artistic strategies they have chosen? With reference to Craig Owens essay one could say that the work of these Norwegian female photographers partly seems to confirm his view on postmodern aesthetics as liberating feminist aesthetics. Postmodern strategies were applied by Norwegian female photographers to convey their particular experiences as women. To be able to work in such a way, seems in other words to have triggered the process of undermining the art arena as an area of male domination. But Mjaaland, Tandberg, and Hansen's work nevertheless show signs of being situated in different phases of this process.

To Thera Mjaaland who started her career in the late seventies/early eighties, being a female artist working with photography, in itself represented an act of rebellion. Her quiet revolt also comprised choosing what may be labelled anti-modernist artistic strategies: Blurriness and colour photography, Contrary to what was considered to be the dominant paradigm at the time, landscape photography, she chose the portrait and the female body as her motives. And she did so to explore the issue of identity – particularly female identity.

Vibeke Tandberg is however the artist who comes closest to the female postmodernists presented by Owens. But as we seen have seen, for example in the work of her male contemporary, Ole John Aandal, staged photography, digital manipulations and appropriations – were also used in identity projects made by male artists at the time. Tandberg and Aandal both belonged to an artistic environment where questions like "the nature of photography" and the role of images in society – were under continuous critical discussion.

Like Mjaaland before her, Tandberg's way of posing such questions nevertheless involved a feminist perspective – and her early work in particular was also informed by feminist theory. She has on several occasions stated that she wanted to make an art that said something about being a woman.

Tandberg thus paved the way for others. But to Christine Hansen the postmodern strategies of the kind Owen describes – have become a dead end. Her work does however still involve a critical approach to the way we conceive the world around us through images – as well as to how images work as a language. But her art is not gender-specific. Neither is it directed towards accounting for particular female experiences. One may wonder why: Perhaps it no longer seems necessary? Or because the deconstructive feminist strategies now form a dominant paradigm which calls for alternative critical voices?

At the time Christine Hansen was a student at the institute in Bergen, the women had shown that they were just as good and in fact often better artists than their fellow male students. It was actually a problem to get men accepted – because the female students delivered the most interesting work. In many respects one could say that women conquered art photography – but postmodern feminism had, as Owens pointed out so long ago, been an important step on the way to this victory – and to the development of new critical strategies.

With this in mind one could argue that the feminist rhetoric that followed the invitation to the group-portrait presented in the beginning of this essay may be seen as slightly outdated. It may be true that the art world in general is still a male dominated arena. But when looking more closely at the merits of each of the women represented in the group-photograph, one does not exactly get an impression of these women as underprivileged and overlooked. Their artistic achievements, judged by exhibitions, critique, prizes etc. are nothing but impressive. The women presently also form a majority by representation in FFF – the artist photographer's organization in Norway. The group image may thus be seen more as a celebration of power than a statement of deprivation. Nevertheless, the

image also serves as a reminder of the importance of a history writing which can inform us about how present privileges are a result of the fights undertaken by women of earlier generations.

Notes

[1] Peter Larsen and Sigrid Lien, *Norsk Fotohistorie. Frå daguerreotypi til digitalisering,* Det Norske Samlaget: Oslo 2007.
[2] Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmoderism", in: Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognitions. Representation, Power and Culture,* University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, London, England: 1992.
[3] Ibid s.171.
[4] Larsen and Lien, op.cit. p.276.
[5] Ibid p.289. Gruppefotografi 2007 (Norske kvinnelige fotokunstnere)

References

Craig Owens: "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmoderism", in: Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognitions. Representation, Power and Culture,* University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, London, England: 1992.
Peter Larsen and Sigrid Lien, *Norsk Fotohistorie. Frå daguerreotypi til digitalisering,* Det Norske Samlaget: Oslo 2007.

Fig. 1
Hedevig Anker and Marte Aas
Group portrait, 2007
(Female Norwegian Artist Photographers)
From the left:
Line Fasteraune, Anne Lise Stenseth, Anne-Grethe Thoresen, Tinna Lúdvíksdóttir, Katja Høst, Ane Hjort Guttu, Andrea Lange, Lene Ask, Thera Mjaaland, Jenny Rydhagen, Verena Winkelmann, Guri Dahl, Una Line Ree Hunderi.
By courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 2
Hedevig Anker and Marte Aas
Group portrait, 2007
(Female Norwegian Artist Photographers)
From the left:
Eline Mugaas, Herdis Maria Siegert, Lill-Ann Chepstow-Lusty, Vibeke Sjøvoll, Hedevig Anker, Mette Tronvoll, Heini Hölttä, Signe Marie Andersen, Margareta Bergman, Hilde Maisey, Helga Bu, Josephine Lindstrøm, Marianne Blankenberg.
By courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 3
Hedevig Anker and Marte Aas
Group portrait, 2007
(Female Norwegian Artist Photographers)
From the left:
Vibeke Tandberg, Line Bøhmer Løkken, Heidi Sundby, Birgitte Sigmundstad, Marit Anna Evanger, Heidi Wexelsen Goksøyr, Katinka Maraz, Astrid Johannessen, Else Marie Hagen, Annette Sletnes, Camilla Sune, Marte Aas.
By courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 4
Vibeke Tandberg
Living together, 1996
By courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 5
Christine Hansen
The Paulinetti/ Wittusen family, Patalauaca 2004,
from the series *Family-topographies,* 2003-2004
By courtesy of the artist.

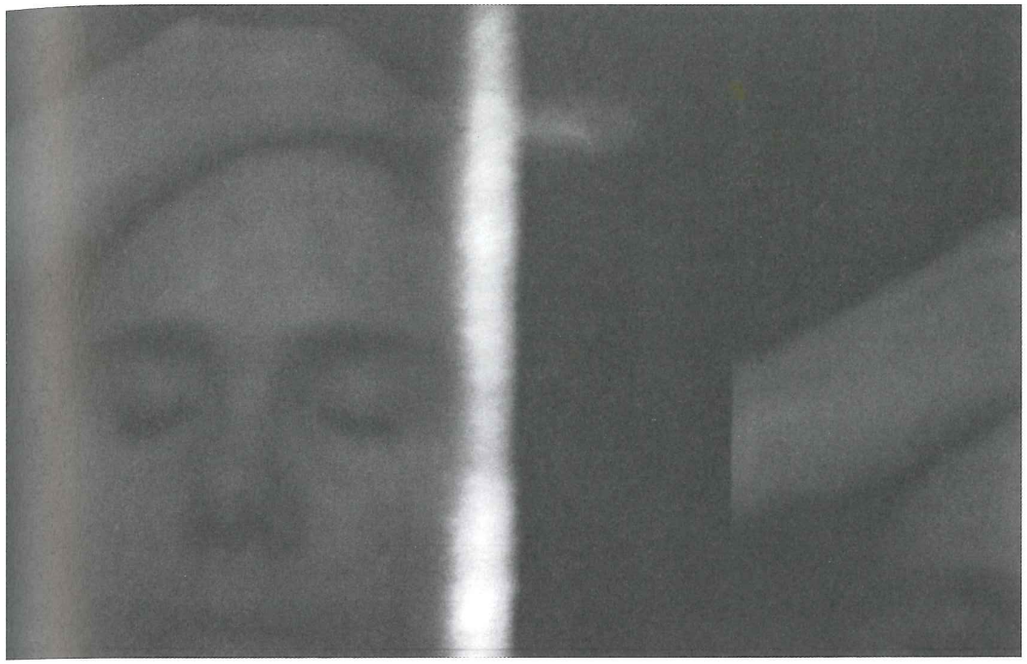

Fig. 6
Thera Mjaaland
Untitled-1, 1983
By courtesy of the artist.

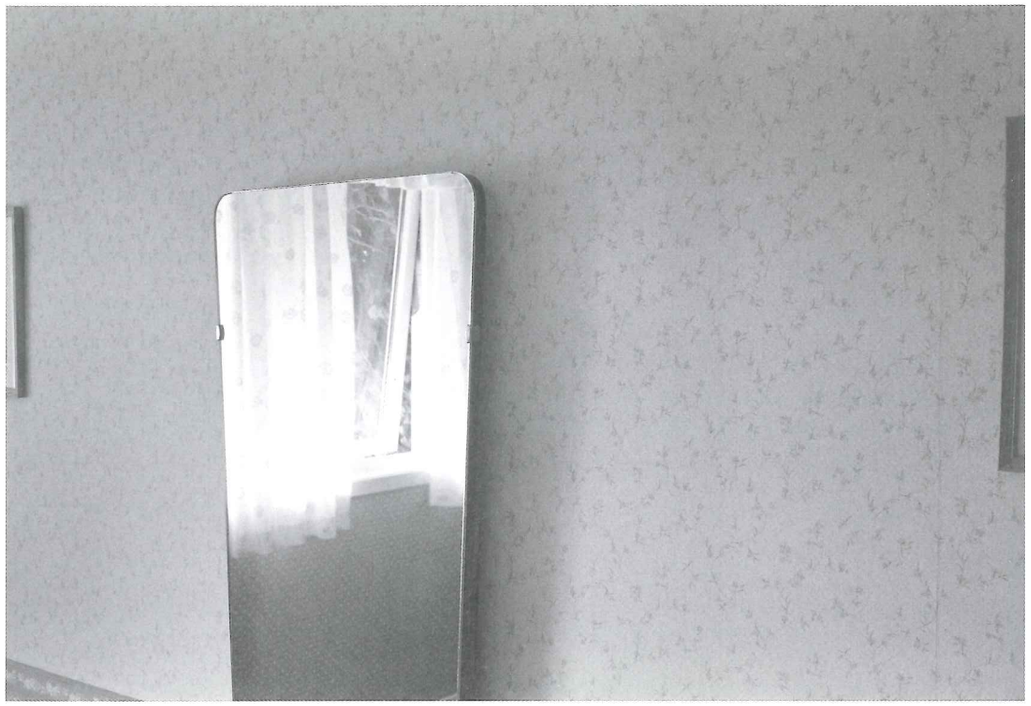

Fig. 7
Christine Hansen
Grandma's bedroom, Sogn 2003,
from the series *Family-topographies,* 2003-2004
By courtesy of the artist.

Kirsi Saarikangas

From Images to Lived Spaces: Feminist Approaches to the Analysis of Built Space

Introduction

Architecture and built spaces can be approached as encounters among the environment, planners and users, as well as between the past and the present. Built space is architectural, material, social and emotional space, a collection of heterogeneous cultural and historical practices, images and thoughts, which can be analysed from the points of view of production, representation and use among other things. Built space consists of several overlapping, intertwined spaces. The relations between architecture and sexual differences are also multifaceted and linked with the levels of planning, use and the architectural space itself and furthermore with construction technologies, as well as representations of and writings about architecture. Consequently, relations between architecture and sexual difference raise questions about architectural spaces and their representations, spatial practices and planning as gendered and gendering processes.

Over the last two or three decades, both the focus of architectural research and an understanding of the notion of building have undergone notable shifts. The impact of feminist theories together with a spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences have been essential to the refraction of the prism. Instead of static, physical and visual wholes created by planners, buildings are increasingly approached as dynamic, multilayered, multisensory spaces, processes instead of completed structures. On the one hand, the scope of research has broadened from a focus on monumental or extraordinary buildings to include ordinary spaces, domestic and commonplace buildings as well as vernacular architecture. On the other hand, buildings are approached as the results of complex collaborative processes among several actors instead of as works of art by an architect-creator, inflecting the very notion of the author of architectural space.[1]

Moreover, the shift from an aesthetic and visual approach to architecture to a historical and cultural approach has emphasised architectural spaces as networks of power and focused increased interest on spatial practices and the use of built spaces.[2] The feminist focus on gender and sexual difference together with the idea