



Gallery Taik Persons is pleased to present **Tanja Koljonen's** solo show *Between Two Dots* as part of EMOP – European Month of Photography 2016 in Berlin.

A red line running through Koljonen's photographic works is the critical inquiry and artistic negotiation of polar opposites and complementary extremes: reason and instinct, rules and chance, communication and alienation, exposure and concealment. Based on objets trouvés and fragments of texts and images as traces of human inscription, the artist's work sees an increased dealing with language, and the visual, material potential of words and ideas. Questioning notions of "true and false", Koljonen's particular interest is in the meanings generated "in-between" text and image. Through methods of cutting, covering, editing, and erasing, she assembles, reworks, and reframes details of newspaper images, found objects and photographs. Employing techniques of omission, the initial visual logic and semantic order of text and image are disrupted. Detached from their original function and meaning, as floating signifiers, the remaining lingual and visual fragments are refigured into new constellations and con-texts of possible dialogue. How does the viewer's imagination bridge perceivable lingual-visual gaps? What kind of personal images are created in communicating with the viewed works? Which meanings do the unsaid, non-verbal, sub-vocal fulfill here?

Riddled with a subtly teasing humor, Koljonen contests language-specific ideas of lexicality, legibility, and intelligibility, and draws our attention to the ways in which language and reason are tied to one another, reminding us that we can never be sure of the truths and realities in things spoken and written, seen and heard. The exhibition title is thus to be comprehended as a reference to the signification processes and fields of tension at work "between two dots": these dots mark, for example, the beginning and ending of a sentence, as implied in the exhibited *Sentences Lie* (2016), whose coiling image of a seemingly treacherous snake embodies the imagined sequence of words in a sentence; or, considering language more generally as a semiotic system, the moments of appearance and disappearance of a cloud, as in the installation *Waiting for the Clouds to Vanish* (since 2014). Comprising individually framed newspaper pages which have been almost completely covered by black-pigment paint, while the written information on the newspaper pages becomes obscured and devoid of function, singular rectangles are left uncovered, revealing glimpses of what we recognize as clouds, or fragments thereof; slowly to fade away over time, just like the written words.

If *Waiting for the Clouds to Vanish* possesses a gestural quality in Koljonen's deliberately, highly accurately executed covering-up of text, then *Filmstrips of Mountains* (2015–16), made during the artist's residency in China in 2015, presents a complementary juxtaposition, inasmuch as the gestural here fulfills opposite functions of creating, shaping, thus exposing form. For this work, Koljonen applied black paint to paper with a paint roller in singular gestural movements. The immediacy and accidentality of the spontaneous, one-time "brushstroke" gesture not only evokes visual form, style, and aesthetics of traditional Chinese ink landscape paintings, therein wittily countering the theme of monumental, all-enduring, eternal mountains. Further, suggested by way of visual reference to medium-format film negatives, the images' truth claim as to the depiction of real, natural mountains is subverted.

In this exhibition, Koljonen essentially deals with the impossibility of complete thoughts. For the artist, the inexhaustibility of words and meanings translates as an "obsessive, repetitive search for a certain stillness in the chaotic flood of information" of today's world, as she puts it; the re-interpretation of found materials through the photographic medium moreover aiming "to stretch the limits of a conventional image." Habits and boundaries of seeing and reading are challenged and refigured, namely, through that what emerges and is constituted in the interstitial: an open space oscillating between different, often antagonistic poles "between two dots."

Shao-lan Hertel.