



Lina Selander, born in 1973, living in Stockholm

It is difficult to label Lina Selander's work as an artist. She uses a number of different techniques, drawing and painting, photography and video, sound and text.

At the same time, there is consequence, both as far as the method and the expression are concerned, so her works are reminiscent of monochrome painting, e.g. of Agnes Martin's kind, or of the strictest minimalism by composers like La Monte Young or Eliane Radigue.

At the end of the 1990s she started working with family photographs. She sewed on the back of the pictures so that the stitches connected certain details; then she let the stitches become the starting point for the new pieces.

They exist as a sound/image-work (Reconstruction) where the abstract patterns form a score which, in its turn, is transformed into electronic sounds via a computer programme.

They have become a book (117 of 146 Instamatic Pictures), with short texts that describe the details in the pictures that are enhanced through the stitches. The same texts have also been recorded and are played as part of a performance.

The glade that suddenly is enlightened. The dark corner of a room. It is about showing things that are invisible, the backs of the pictures, the other reality in the usual reality.

Repetitiveness and slowness is an important aspect of her expression, the act of returning to the same place. The details come back again and again in different works, in new formations and new layers of light. At the same time – eradication and memory. One of Lina Selander's works is actually called Repetition and is a video of different sepulchres in Portbou on the border between Spain and France, where the philosopher and writer Walter Benjamin committed suicide in 1940 while fleeing the Nazis. Sepulchre after sepulchre with different details spread out are captured by the camera – aluminium foil, yoghurt pots, cobwebs, plastic flowers – without much going on; in the background, the noise from a motorway.

The transformation happens mentally, in silence, in the absence of metaphoric super-titles or sub-titles. This is true also for the video 27 Kilometre Drawing which consists of electricity and power lines filmed from a train window: the lines seem to vibrate in the air and gradually creates a feeling of giddiness through standing still and moving at the same time. The speed is high, and at the same time one hasn't moved an inch. It is extremely repetitive, with a strange feeling of emptiness and non-communication, and at the same time strikingly beautiful.

Lina Selander tells of the crucial experience of seeing Walter De Maria's minimalist earth room at DIA Art Center in New York at the end of the 1990s: the way the piece so absolutely and self-evidently communicated its own reality and its own pre-requisites. Lina Selander describes her earlier artistry as personal, expressive and revelatory.

Now, after the physical contact with Walter De Maria's work, she has found the necessary distance. A distance that has entailed: being concrete and close to the material.

In the video/installation piece *Inner Pond* from 2003, the sound track from a fragment of a renaissance motet by Thomas Tallis, *If ye love me*, combined with the crackling of an old vinyl record. But the phrase is reversed and the psychedelic sounds that are created by the reverse effect instead say: "Save me".

The contemplative and staggeringly beautiful colour layers, vibrating like the pattern in a mandala, start from a rectangle which has been compressed into a circle. It is precisely an inner room, a pond to sink into, perhaps also to drown in, like Shakespeare's *Ophelia*. Like many of Lina Selander's works, *Inner Pond* gains through its reduction, the minimal changes. The expression is harsh, but at the same time strangely romantic.

In *Reconstruction*, the little red dot reads the patterns in the sewn pictures from left to right. For those who haven't seen the photographs and know nothing of their private meaning, this material can be nothing other than abstract. Like a series of punch cards, decrypted one after the other.

Nevertheless there is something melancholy about the piece, a dark feeling of human touch which seems related to loss and distance. Perhaps you could make a comparison to Arnold Schoenberg's music that Lina Selander has used in another piece, *Exercise in front of an Alder*, where fragments of Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony* accompanies the movements following a series of powerful throws of a javelin; a male figure is seen repeatedly moving in the sand, almost losing his balance after the powerful throws. The pictures and the music work strangely well together. There is a surprising emotional tension, a sort of inner turmoil, which also tells us of an artistic dilemma. Even during his most consistent and pure time as a dodecaphonist Schoenberg kept his romantic sense of sound and it was thus he wanted his music to be performed – a balance between the strict and the emotional. There is a similar complexity and ambiguity also in Lina Selander's works. It is basically about classicism.

