

## Sofia Hultén

NEUSS, GERMANY

### Langen Foundation



*Immovable Object, 2012*

Sofia Hultén finds the material for her works on the street. She alters the ordinary course of events with subtle gestures, usually documented on video. It would be tempting to call her approach 'urban intervention', were it not for the minimalism of her actions. For the early work *Getting Rid of Stuff* (2001), she took various objects from a gallery storage room and elegantly made them disappear in the city (for example, a garden hose vanished down a sewer hole). For *Auflösung* (Dissolution, 2008) – a project about vacant lots in Berlin – she took objects she found in the lots, like an old mattress, and put them through a shredder before returning them to their original location.

The anarchic impetus in Hultén's work could be felt in the exhibition *Statik Elastik* (Static Elastic) at the Langen Foundation. This private institution – which opened in 2004 on the site of a former NATO missile base – was designed by the architect Tadao Ando. The refined building in steel, glass and concrete created a rigid framework for Hultén's clearly structured presentation of six works produced between 2010 and 2012. Ando's 'Room of Silence' – originally used for the Japanese acquisitions of Viktor und Marianne Langen's collection – appears as a hermetically sealed space, to which Hultén responded in various ways. By foregoing plinths and other common display elements, she mirrored the surrounding minimal architecture; monitors and other exhibits were simply left standing or lying on the floor. In spite of the heterogeneity of her works, this presentation gave the show the coherence of an austere whole. In contrast, three pillars made of stacked car jacks – the titular *Statik Elastik* (2012) – looked like an attempt to break through this sense of closure and raise the roof a few inches.

Nevertheless, what emerged clearly was the meditative dimension of Hultén's work. In the video loop *4-D* (2012), a found piece of wood is given the same treatment over and over again: cut, sprayed, thrown into a puddle and scraped against the edge of a wall. The artist pays great attention to seemingly minor details and uses found materials frugally. The 72-minute video *Past Particles* (2010) shows items from an overflowing toolbox – a bent nail, a screw, a rusty nut or a bolt – as if they were on a miniature stage. The video projection *Immovable Object / Unstoppable Force* (2012) filled the exhibition space's end wall and provided the finale. We see the artist using telekinesis – patiently, silently – to try to move containers filled with rubble on Berlin streets. However humorous, this work addresses the mental distress caused by construction sites. Or perhaps Hultén is attempting to construct her own psycho-buildings: made with thoughts instead of bricks.

*Translated by Nicholas Grindell*

—by Kito Nedo

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