

astonishingly enchanting, teasing puzzle for his audience, with its own equivalents of hidden drawers and secret entrances; he made subtle use of the mathematical proportions crucial to Linde's interpretation of Duchamp, which meant your experience of the exhibition derived from *Moulin à café* too. Linde has never laid claim to being an artist, but after "*De ou par Marcel Duchamp par Ulf Linde,*" there is ample reason for Åman to consider the claim for himself.

—Ronald Jones

Ulla von Brandenburg/ Malin Pettersson Öberg

BONNIERS KONSTHALL

In 2010, Ulla von Brandenburg made *Chorspiel*, a video in the form of a "choral play." In this Ibsenesque family drama, a grandfather, grandmother, mother, and daughter move like pieces on a chessboard in front of a drawn backdrop that shows an open field near a forest, reminiscent of the settings of Lars von Trier's films *Dogville* (2003) and *Manderlay* (2005). The interactions among these figures are characterized by ritualized gestures, such as the loosening of a tangle of yarn they pass between them. Rather than speaking, they lip-synch to the singing of an offstage choir, which gives them an irritatingly alienated presence, or, considered psychoanalytically, allows them to speak their many selves. The choir also sings at times when the family does not speak, presenting a recapitulation of what has been said, or a summary of the action. In this way, the choir acts as a kind of authority, similar to a Greek chorus, while lending a sense of ambiguity to the constructed



Ulla von Brandenburg,
Chorspiel (Choral
Play), 2010, still from
a black-and-white
video, 10 minutes
35 seconds.

rhetoric and the symbolic language of the action onstage. This language merely hints at its meaning, but it essentially consists of the protagonists' efforts to negotiate their fraught relationships along with philosophical considerations on life and transience.

Eventually, a Wanderer appears, bearing a box: He is a fascinating interloper whose role is unclear. The young man causes a stir in the life of the family: "The ribbon is hot, the breath is cold, we need you," the choir chants (in German, with English subtitles) as the Wanderer and the young woman approach each other. The daughter, like Ibsen's Nora, wants to escape the rigid, numbing life of the family, to leave with the Wanderer, but at the end, all remain: "We did not choose, it has made us," the singers intone, and life runs its course. The mysterious box is never opened.

The video, which is based on a performance at the Lilith Performance Studio in Malmö, Sweden, in 2010, was shot in one uncut take,

and therefore retains the character of a filmed live performance. As often with von Brandenburg's works, the black-and-white work is suggestive of a certain nostalgia in its mode of production, underlined by the anachronistic diction of the songs and the ritualistic actions of the characters. The refrain of the chorus, "We did not choose, it has made us. Now we are here, but for how long?" reflects a fatalistic view of life but at the same time alludes to a kind of social imprisonment whose outcome is uncertain. (The somewhat threatening mood of the work is also reminiscent of Michael Haneke's portrayal of the subliminal power of strictly regimented communal life in a patriarchal society in *Das weiße Band* [The White Ribbon, 2009].)

Von Brandenburg presented her film here within an installation made for the occasion by the young Swedish artist Malin Pettersson Öberg, *Stereoscopic Scenography*, 2011—a room within a room made of heavy black cotton with white designs printed on it, presenting the scientific history of optics, but also echoing the film's historical view of (in)visibility. The heaviness of the fabric and the alluring power of the choral music as it emanated from behind it lent the installation a haunting and enigmatic atmosphere.

—Nina Möntmann

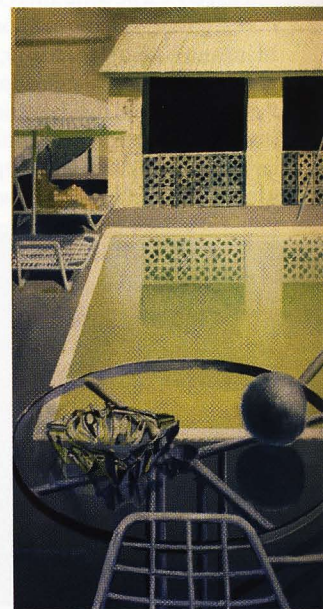
Translated from German by Anne Posten.

MADRID

Angus Collis

GALERÍA ESTAMPA

It is becoming less and less common for galleries to show the work of younger artists who entirely and unapologetically focus on painting. Perhaps it's that fewer and fewer young artists paint without pursuing some other rhetorical agenda; instead, they attempt to endow the act of painting with metalinguistic meaning or, though engaged in painting, simultaneously deny it as a medium. And, of course, there is an abundance of young artists with an indirect relationship to painting—for instance, artists who draw, sometimes in color. An artist from New Zealand who now lives in Spain, Angus Collis is thus atypical in a context in which the relationship to painting tends to be so hedged. Indeed, his connection to the pictorial tradition is underscored by his references to the history of painting. Some of his earlier works were suggestive of Edward Hopper, and in his most recent exhibition, that influence was even more evident, especially in the canvases depicting industrial buildings in vast landscapes with low horizons that contrast with the vertical and visually invasive structures. The iconography of such paintings as *Railway House*, *Fire Tree*, and *Dalmainy Corner* (all works 2011) is strikingly similar to Hopper's. But that's not to say Collis is merely an imitator; his works have a special atmosphere of their own, thanks in part to the use of abstraction as a means of muting their representational quality. Such deployment of abstraction is a constant in Collis's production. It gives his work a strange ambiguity because it reminds us that his paintings are not only straightforward representations but are also keenly aware of being *paintings*.



Angus
Collis
(detail)
oil on
86"