

Sanna Helena Berger  
A Stock-take

15.05

Chair facing wall /  
Is there an alternative to the opening?

The opening acts as an erasure of work. I become acutely aware of my ineptitude to enact a certain role in this environment. Any engagement feels instead as a re-enactment of behaviour I have witnessed, at times envied and at times disdained, but never naturally inhabited. The imitation of the ideal self or the awareness of the unavailability of the actual self makes me feel in an absolute loss of place. These are my personal circumstances and conflict with the generous conditions I aim to show this work in, the same generous conditions that they came to become in. A kindness turned into care through the luxury of loosening the restraints of the application of a finish.

2 years ago, in Oslo, I walked past a window with a view into a basement flat. Peeking in, and down, I found a primitive domestic setting. 3 white plastic chairs around a white plastic table of the standard variety. The only other furnishings; a basic IKEA staple kitchenette, a filter coffee machine on the counter, two heaters, one of which a fan and the other, I presume, oil, a set of industrial lighting, one lamp on a stand and another just beneath it, lying on the floor. The kind that painters use when they paint in a dark area, the kind that lights up the room renovated with a blinding brightness. The scene in itself would not have been wildly unfamiliar as a sparse environment, albeit off-centre, what made it seem so abruptly desolate was a 4th chair, separated and detached from the setting of the other 3.

On the far end of the room, this other, garden-variety plastic chair, stood pushed up against the wall in reverse, as if reversed, with not its back but its seating area facing the wall, rendering it, as a chair, useless. As if in a state of protest, objecting the standard hierarchy of an open space. Although all unoccupied, there was a human quality to the retraction. People try and find a spot where their backs are protected, looking out toward the view or that which comes nearest to a view. It is a primitive instinct at work. This recess offered no great vistas. And the contrary position seemed to warrant a prefix to narrate the scene, if forced to narrow down, or add it up to a total as a form. The arrangement felt as a removal, not the showing of a specific object as a singular, but as a whole, a negation, a contradiction.

At the table you could place cakes and coffees as lunchtime came around, there 3 people could sit, the site was set. But this 4th chair, divorced not only as a commodity but as a non-entity, de-funct, ex-cluded and set a-side, prefixed in place as a proof that this void of purpose is awkward. Such a simple but effective gesture of altering the value of a thing itself, the minimum effort on display. As a functional object; a standard, but when rendered useless; a subject in an A-typical condition. Not really a chair.

**Visit: May 15th - June 1st**

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