

Stoic *flair*

I first encountered Anna-Sophie through fashion, since this is my world. She likes to record snapshots of materials with a paradoxically flowery and stoic breeze. Her writing also reflects a gloriously stoic attitude towards these materials.

...This is *soft* this is *hard*.

On her pea earring she writes:

This piece satisfies me because it is so hideously small, as if it needed protection.

And on the subject of mud:

Mud puddles appear because rain makes the lawns weak and we always walk the same paths. It becomes symbolic for groups of people, masses of bodies treading the ground at festivals and temporary refugee camps alike, bodies drenched in mud, splashes all over clothes. As usual there is also a bright side. The mud pit for pigs. Watch a rhino or elephant bathe in mud! Nothing is more satisfying to witness...

She sifts the societal condition of materials, what I want to call their *flair*. Diana Vreeland was often criticized for her ahistorical 'curatorial' approach at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Before this, her column at Harpers Bazaar, *Why Don't You?*, indulged in capricious instructions for sartorial flair:

Rinse your blonde child's hair in dead champagne to keep its gold, as they do in France?

I feel there is a strange conceptual parallel in Anna-Sophie's language. She does not like to give too much away outside of her material processes and etymological ponderings.

I have been wondering about this German word *Zartgefühl* for a few weeks. I like it, since there is no direct translation to English (or so I think)... Among other words when searching are: sensitive / tenderness / delicacy / empathy (also discretion sometimes). All of which is not what it is.

These diaristic editorials replace the need for a 'proper' thesis and accentuates Anna-Sophie's lyrical disposition towards communicative processes. She enjoys ambiguity. Vreeland in my eyes was an innovative figure as an exhibition maker, reconfiguring the flair of history into new stylized iterations. She betrayed the factual pretense of The MET. Curator Judith Clark reflects upon Vreeland:

Her references are specific and vague. We all know what she means but we are not always sure exactly what she is referring to.

Anna-Sophie works with *impressions*...often of social materiality (food, fashion, games etc.). An impression of a garment on wet paper.

These billboard images are somewhat maddening. Their lack of logic annoys me because of their vague aesthetic. A video game screenshot, a drawn mandala, an artist's selfie, a baby in crisis being rescued? Anna-Sophie's editorial eye is at work gathering records of disparate human communication. How to make sense of this image clusterfuck? I only feel the malaise of proliferation. The modern mass of imagery, particularly online, mediates our disorienting relations. One billboard's image depicts moist traces on a cement path. This is redolent of a work by Berger where a wet light coat has been thrown against a floor or wall. Sometimes these textile pieces are also anchored by mud. And now we come back to the flair of materiality! A damp coat strewn across a public path radiates loss, perhaps violence.

Much is written about the emptied *decapitated* garment. I won't contribute to that thesis now but let's just appreciate its **flair**.

Fashion, as Benjamin understood as the dialectical image, combines projections of the past into the present to create new inquiry. The impossibility of history is our absurd reality. Was Diana Vreeland just a fabulous Samuel Becket? Communication is theatre and we need our props. I often use them inappropriately because I drink and become unmanageable. Sobriety must feel like unthinkable clarity, where all messages are indexed. But there is so much talking, exchanging and appearing at play in any one moment, that to manage them all is hopeless. The allegory of communication as a drunken habit could be relevant here.