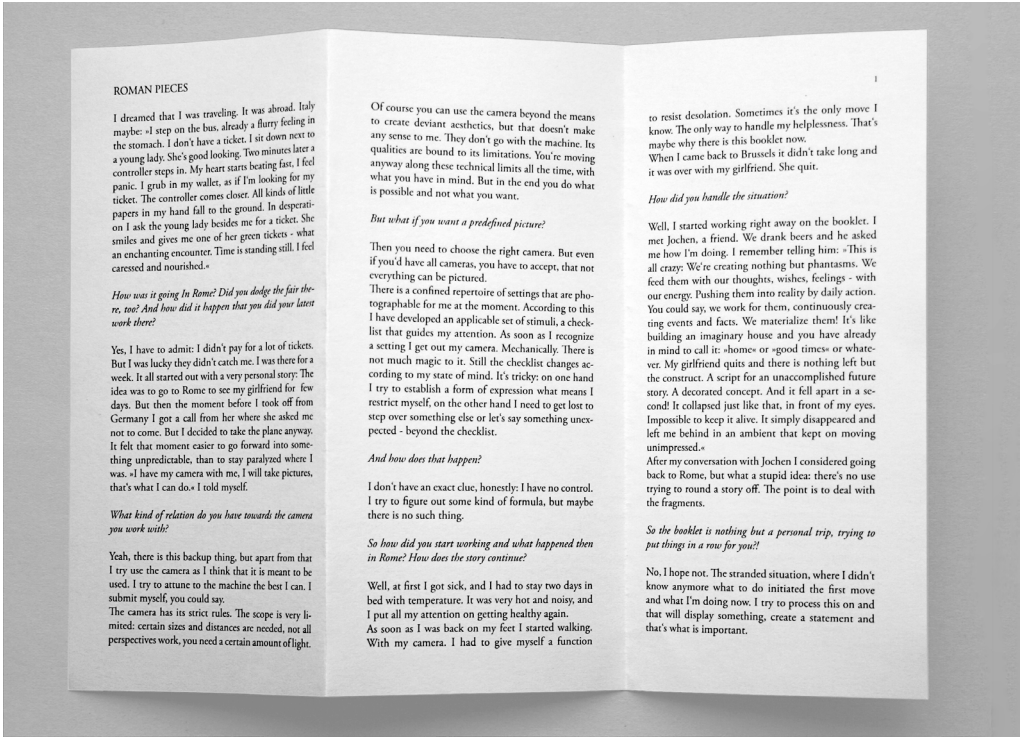
Bernd Kleinheisterkamp

„Roman Pieces“

24. April 2010, 18 Uhr



ROMAN PIECES

I dreamed that I was traveling. It was abroad. Italy maybe: »I step on the bus, already a flurry feeling in the stomach. I don't have a ticket. I sit down next to a young lady. She's good looking. Two minutes later a controller steps in. My heart starts beating fast, I feel panic. I grub in my wallet, as if I'm looking for my ticket. The controller comes closer. All kinds of little papers in my hand fall to the ground. In desperation I ask the young lady besides me for a ticket. She smiles and gives me one of her green tickets - what an enchanting encounter. Time is standing still. I feel caressed and nourished.«

How was it going In Rome? Did you dodge the fair there, too? And how did it happen that you did your latest work there?

Yes, I have to admit: I didn't pay for a lot of tickets. But I was lucky they didn't catch me. I was there for a week. It all started out with a very personal story: The idea was to go to Rome to see my girlfriend for few days. But then the moment before I took off from Germany I got a call from her where she asked me not to come. But I decided to take the plane anyway. It felt that moment easier to go forward into something unpredictable, than to stay paralyzed where I was. »I have my camera with me, I will take pictures, that's what I can do.« I told myself.

What kind of relation do you have towards the camera you work with?

Yeah, there is this backup thing, but apart from that I try use the camera as I think that it is meant to be used. I try to attune to the machine the best I can. I submit myself, you could say.
The camera has its strict rules. The scope is very limited: certain sizes and distances are needed, not all perspectives work, you need a certain amount of light. Of course you can use the camera beyond the means to create deviant aesthetics, but that doesn't make any sense to me. They don't go with the machine. Its qualities are bound to its limitations. You're moving anyway along these technical limits all the time, with what you have in mind. But in the end you do what is possible and not what you want.

But what if you want a predefined picture?

Then you need to choose the right camera. But even if you'd have all cameras, you have to accept, that not everything can be pictured.
There is a confined repertoire of settings that are photographable for me at the moment. According to this I have developed an applicable set of stimuli, a checklist that guides my attention. As soon as I recognize a setting I get out my camera. Mechanically. There is not much magic to it. Still the checklist changes according to my state of mind. It's tricky: on one hand I try to establish a form of expression what means I restrict myself, on the other hand I need to get lost to step over something else or let's say something unexpected - beyond the checklist.

And how does that happen?

I don't have an exact clue, honestly: I have no control. I try to figure out some kind of formula, but maybe there is no such thing.

So how did you start working and what happened then in Rome? How does the story continue?

Well, at first I got sick, and I had to stay two days in bed with temperature. It was very hot and noisy, and I put all my attention on getting healthy again.
As soon as I was back on my feet I started walking. With my camera. I had to give myself a function

to resist desolation. Sometimes it's the only move I know. The only way to handle my helplessness. That's maybe why there is this booklet now.
When I came back to Brussels it didn't take long and it was over with my girlfriend. She quit.

How did you handle the situation?

Well, I started working right away on the booklet. I met Jochen, a friend. We drank beers and he asked me how I'm doing. I remember telling him: »This is all crazy: We're creating nothing but phantasms. We feed them with our thoughts, wishes, feelings - with our energy. Pushing them into reality by daily action. You could say, we work for them, continuously creating events and facts. We materialize them! It's like building an imaginary house and you have already in mind to call it: »home« or »good times« or whatever. My girlfriend quits and there is nothing left but the construct. A script for an unaccomplished future story. A decorated concept. And it fell apart in a second! It collapsed just like that, in front of my eyes. Impossible to keep it alive. It simply disappeared and left me behind in an ambient that kept on moving unimpressed.«
After my conversation with Jochen I considered going back to Rome, but what a stupid idea: there's no use trying to round a story off. The point is to deal with the fragments.

So the booklet is nothing but a personal trip, trying to put things in a row for you?!

No, I hope not. The stranded situation, where I didn't know anymore what to do initiated the first move and what I'm doing now. I try to process this on and that will display something, create a statement and that's what is important.

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umseitig: Abbildung aus dem Künstlerbuch „Roma“ von Bernd Kleinheisterkamp, 2009.

Bernd Kleinheisterkamp - „Roman Pieces“
24. April 2010

Zur Präsentation von Bernd Kleinheisterkamp möchten wir Sie am
Samstag, den 24. April 2010, um 18 Uhr herzlich einladen.

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