

Filip Haag: Intimations

A picture offers itself to us, and evades us. We take note of it, arrange what we have perceived in our own minds. We try to close in on it.

Judith Ammann does not ask questions, nor does she offer answers. Her images arise from the coincidental and yet seem constructed. They resemble compositions without being such. They are close-ups and long shots at once. The photographer finds them on the road, and yet they appear invented.

What is represented exists and yet seems unreal. Intangible, difficult to grasp. The closer it comes to abstraction, the more real it seems. And the more precisely it is composed, the more tranquil its appearance. In this regard, the picture is the exact opposite of something composed, something constrained: Uninvolved, tranquil. Universal. Anyone who projects him- or herself so clearly is evidently at peace.

Art obeys the will to attain the ideal. The impossible. Processing turns a re-presentation into an image in its own right. By processing, Judith Ammann excludes: everything unessential, and herself. She has not lost herself in the image, has not found herself in it, she has simply left. She creates the image and then moves on. She no longer has a position within the image, but stands outside it. In front of it. And behind it.

Even Judith Ammann's films are almost entirely without movement. Here, movement is a matter of gliding. An intimation. A whisper. Yet where motion almost ceases, there is reverence. Intimacy. Here, intimacy is not some wildly agitated abandonment, but more a soft touch. At the most, heat causes asphalt to shimmer—and that is where movement becomes visible.

Judith Ammann's photographs are visions that contain no act or action. They invite the viewers into settings not empty, but open, unfulfilled and undramatic. What happens, happens. No stories are required.

The pictures observe without defining. They show the pointlessness of any desire for momentous meaning. They call for the endurance of the moment.

Viewers immerse themselves in the picture for a moment and absorb that intimation.

(Berne 2007)

