

Open Letter: The Family Drama Refunctioned? (From the Point of View of Production)

Dear Model No. 1421,

If we agree that we can identify street photography as a form of opportunism, then we can begin to understand the turn to the studio. Outside, snow is falling. Inside, the warmth; outside, the cold. The studio, where it is always harvest time. Warmth, happiness, potatoes, and wheat. Wheat, wheat, bushels of wheat. Düsseldorf, Chicago, London. One sheet at a time, 8x10 inch sheets of light. Bushels of golden light. Bushels of wheat. Bushels of goodness and warmth, accumulated and distributed in an international constellation of display and consumption. To focus is to assert a preference for one surface over another. For every fragment of the world, a fragment of the camera. The exhibition as a staging of conventions? The adoption of the open letter? This letter, addressed to one but distributed to a wider audience; this letter, made up of all that exists between the ceiling and the floor, between the window and the wall.

As overheard by Model No. 1421 (The Model/The Mother):

Model No. 2401: Hey guys, they're trying to get our attention.

Model No. 92173: What is it?

Model No. 2401: Elbows, he's talking about elbows. His German is odd.

Model No. 92182: They're slow. The camera is big. They are big. They are loud. They have seven plates left.

Model No. 2401: Plates?

Model No. 92182: Film holders.

Model No. 2401: Why are you concerned with the camera?

Model No. 92182: It's the reason that we're here. It writes the checks. It's the thing that's slowing us down. It means they only have sixteen exposures left.

Model No. 2401: Fourteen.

Model No. 92173: Let's bargain. Negotiate our way out of here. Start low and play dumb. Five?

Model No. 92182: All they want is smiling, with elbows up. Always the same, smile.

Production notes for Models 1421, 2401, 92173, and 92182:

If you accept that the family is the elementary organism of society, it follows that the family is a school for ideology. Women have to do with children, producing something no factory could do. They don't produce cars, they don't produce potatoes, they produce children. In addition, they produce the non-material products which are necessary for the maintenance of the domestic industry. They are workers in the service and distribution of the smile. Their feelings acquire utility. Their feelings are products to be redistributed. She is a worker in the

emotional industry. She is the provider of the conditions of well-being. She is their manager. She is their driver. It is necessary to take these children to work. It is necessary to take these children to school.

They are workers in a network of economies beyond their comprehension. To compress is to increase density. To induce thickness. To thicken is to put the foot on the brake. The function of this activity is to reclaim duration. To reclaim duration as a function of the image. To reclaim duration as an object of study. To reclaim duration in order to redefine its function. To reclaim the time of reflection. In order to reclaim the present, in order to act. Focus. Rid yourself of distraction. In a distracted state you are vulnerable. Sustained attention is unclaimed ground. Free production from itself. Deploy the tire deflation devices, or: build a wall.¹

Cordially,

Christopher Williams

¹ Reconstructed six times: a wall designed and constructed by Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, initially used in the exhibition *Mathias Poledna/Christopher Williams*, 7 February - 26 April, 2009, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn and subsequently used as the title wall for *The Production Line of Happiness*, 29 April - 21 June, 2015, Whitechapel Gallery, London, then exhibited in *Open Letter to Model No. 1740*, 29 April - 4 June, 2016, Capitain Petzel, Berlin, reconstructed for the exhibition *Supplements, Models, Prototypes*, 3 February - 11 March, 2017, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, and exhibited in and reconstructed for the exhibition *Supplements, Models, Prototypes*, 1 March - 2 June, 2017, gta Exhibitions, ETH Zürich. Materials: plywood, metal, wood, and adhesive vinyl. Dimensions: 350 × 350 × 57 cm. Avery Dennison 500 Event Film Matt vinyl (Color code: 707EM) installed by Igma Imaging Ltd., Kent, UK. Constructed by Objekt Design Persighetti Ltd. for the exhibition *Open Letter: The Family Drama Refunctioned? (From the Point of View of Production)*, 17 March - 20 May, 2017, David Zwirner, London.

PRESS INQUIRIES

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LOCATION

24 Grafton Street
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DATES

March 17 - May 20, 2017