

Kirsten Borchert

People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day.

– A.A. Milne
Winnie the Pooh

In the *Board Games* (2012) series, Kirsten Borchert has taken the playing fields of traditional Middle European parlor games, altered them slightly, created silkscreen prints mounted on cardboard and hung them on the wall. Looking at them, one is reminded of the fun one could have playing those games. However, this pleasurable memory is interrupted by the fact that the playing fields have been disfigured and then placed at a 90° angle, making it impossible to play. By taking these games apart and reassembling them in another context, Borchert invites us to challenge our notions of what is meaningful and prudent – and what is a waste of time.

The paradoxes that *Board Games* reveal have several levels. In games, one lets emotions free: wants to win, prevent another player from winning, experiences highs and lows, anxiety, fear and triumph. During the game, the players feel free. Society's rules are suspended, and the players let themselves go in ways that would not be acceptable in another societal context. However, to enjoy that freedom, they must subordinate themselves completely to the rules of the game. Changing or breaking the rules destroys the gaming experience. The need to seek relief from society's dictates meets at the intersection of obedience to the dictator Game.

Borchert's primary medium is silkscreen printing, which she from time to time combines with other media to make objects such as *La familia conservada* (2011), a silkscreen of a table setting in a wooden and glass case containing preserved but inedible food. She also uses photography and performance to give form to her themes, as well as doing installations (*Patchwork*, 2009; *Territorium*, 2010) and curating exhibitions. In 2010, Borchert began to look into how houses reflect the tension between private and public life: the single family house as the ideal wish, the expression of self-realization or perhaps ultimately just a tremendous burden. *House Nr. 12 (Folio 1-5)* from 2010 is a series of silkscreened photographs (out of the windows of an empty house that Borchert used as a temporary studio space) that focuses attention on the public-private dialectic.

The house is also a sign for Borchert that evokes memories. Like a memory, a picture of a house is not "real", but only transmits an idea of what is being depicted. For the 2012 untitled C-print photograph of her father's house in Germany, Kirsten Borchert first built a scale model the year before, in meticulous detail. She then took the complex model apart, laid out the pieces in a way suggestive of childhood paper doll cut-out clothes and photographed them. This process was incredibly time-consuming, and referred back to one of Borchert's main areas of inquiry, one she shares with Samuel Beckett: what is a worthwhile use of time, what is senseless and what do we do to either accommodate or eliminate boredom.

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