

000 | KRISTLEIFUR BJÖRNSSON

000 | 2011

001 | SELECTED WORKS

028 | CV



# This Would Suit Her

2007 | « THE ROOF - DAY »  
ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
LIGHT-JET PRINTS  
150 X 115 CM

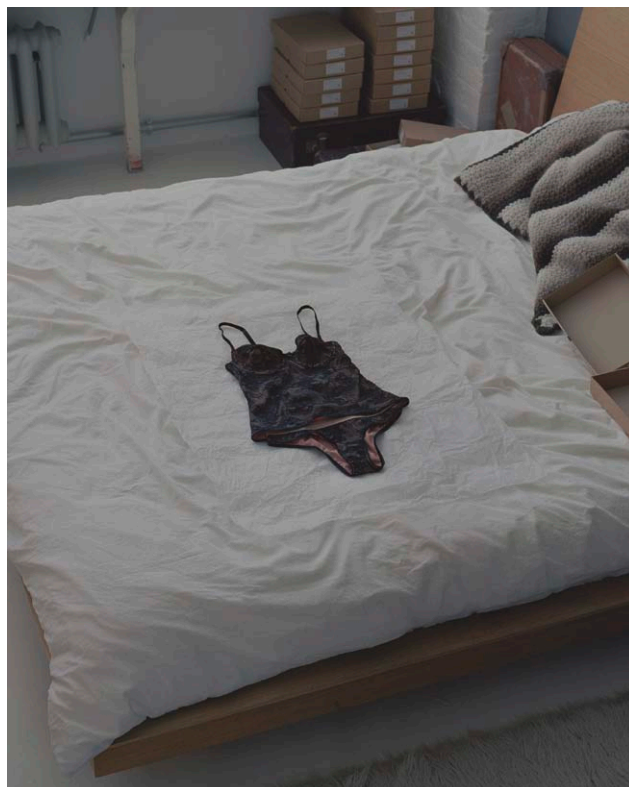
2008 | « THE ROOF - NIGHT »  
ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
LIGHT-JET PRINTS  
150 X 115 CM

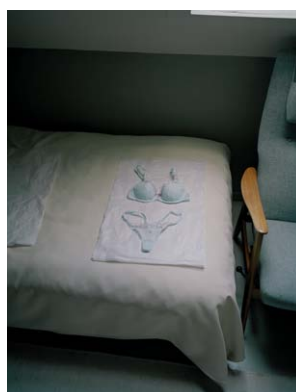
2010 | « THE NEST »  
ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
LIGHT-JET PRINTS  
150 X 115 CM

On a tidy single bed in a sparsely furnished bedroom Björnsson spreads out different sets of lingerie. One at a time they are meticulously displayed on wrapping paper, fresh out of the box that can sometimes be seen close by. In his photographic demonstration, the artist plays with the conflicting notions of absence and intimacy, setting the stage for a drama. The images and the title of this series of photographs are bound to trigger some kind of a narrative in the mind of the viewer. The striking atmosphere of melancholia extends back-

wards in time with impressions of nostalgia, even regret. Longing and suspense possibly linger in the air as well, but will lead nowhere in all probability: it seems unlikely that anyone will ever be wearing these garments. A recurring element in Björnsson's work that renders it so uncanny is the perplexing line between infatuation and obsession. These images are an obvious case in point. With the artist recently undertaking the task of designing and sewing women's underwear by hand, yet another layer is added to this series of work.







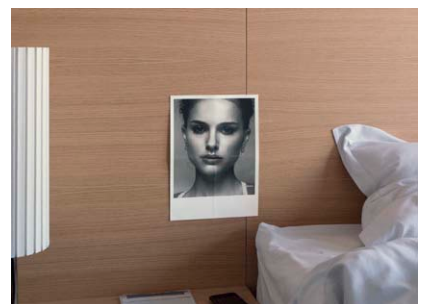
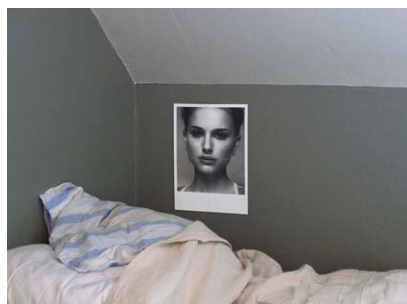
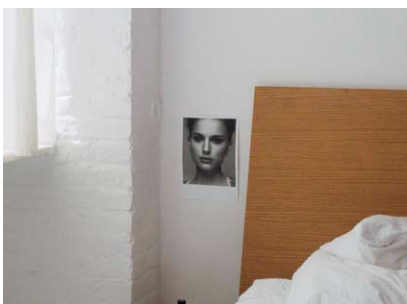
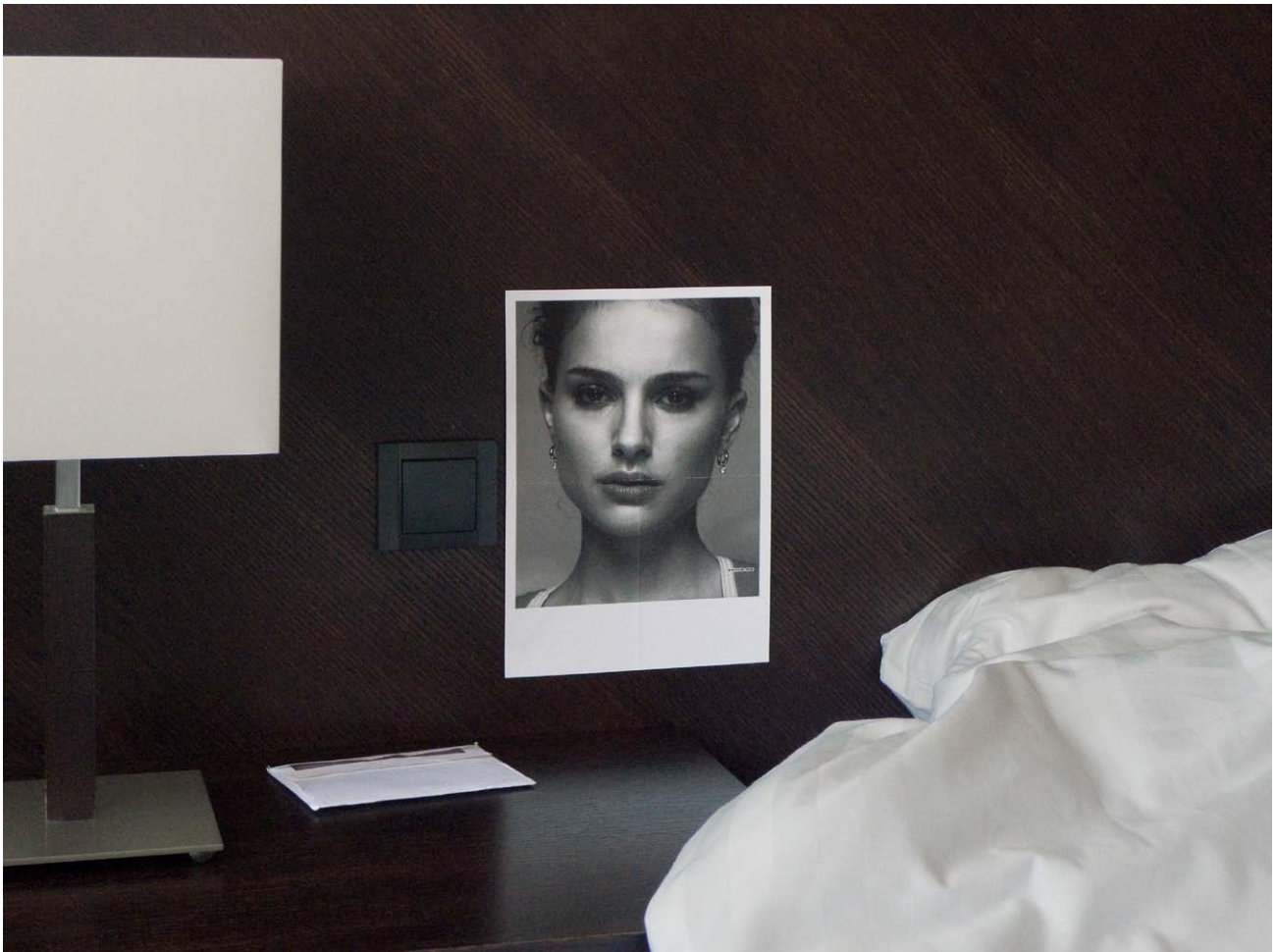


# The Trial

2009 & 2010 | DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
INK-JET PRINTS  
38 X 50 CM

A portrait photograph of the actress Natalie Portman looking somewhat melancholically into the camera, printed on standard DIN A4 paper. Folded and put into an envelope together with a small strip of adhesive tape, it fits into a shirt breast pocket, making it possible for the owner to keep it close to his heart during the day. At night, he unfolds it and sticks it to the wall next to his pillow. In the morning – after a night with Natalie by his side – he takes a picture of the scene.

The photo series documents over a year the different locations where this private ritual takes place. It will continue to grow over the years. Björnsson's use of the celebrity's web photo makes it part of real life, treating it almost as you might treat the picture of a loved one. Responding to the staged intimacy of Natalie's picture he sets up another private universe and allows the dialogue between the performative and the narrative nature of photography to continue.



# Beside Picasso

2009 & 2010 | ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
LIGHT-JET PRINTS  
143 X 182 CM

This photographic series of portraits of museum guards testifies to an interest not so much in "Picasso" as in what else is on view in a gallery beside the great works of art. In this case Björns son's focus is on the women guarding them. Apparently unaware of the camera, the guards are at the centre in each picture, relegating the old masters to the background. One shot is taken in the Reykjavik Art Museum, where paintings by Kjarval, Iceland's most renowned twentieth-century artist, are on display.

The photographs are part of the tradition of institutional critique and comment on the relationship between people and art. They are also a somewhat self-conscious contribution to the discourse on the role of women in art history as subjects/objects and on the notion of the male gaze. Björnsson follows up his investigation of what it is that images really mediate and what they want from the viewer. On which side of the camera is the subject?



# I Don't Want To Know Your Name

2007 | « BERLIN 2007 »  
 ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
 20 INK-JET PRINTS  
 EACH 38 X 56 CM

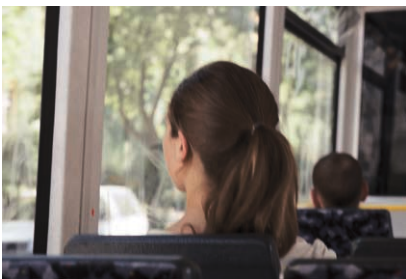
2009 | « BERLIN 2009 »  
 DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
 9 DIN A4 INK-JET PRINTS  
 108 X 82 CM

2009 | « BERLIN 2009 »  
 ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
 20 INK-JET PRINTS  
 EACH 38 X 56 CM

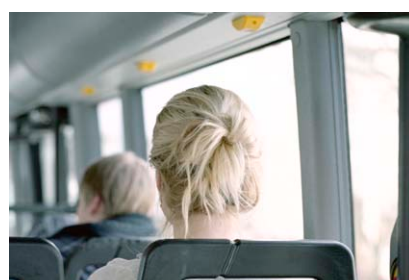
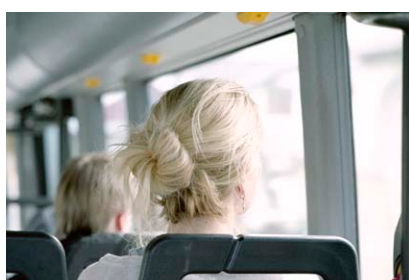
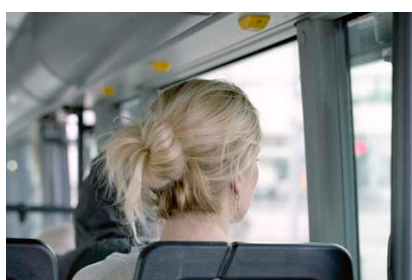
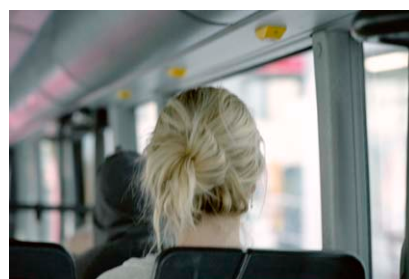
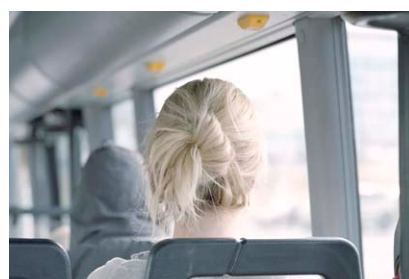
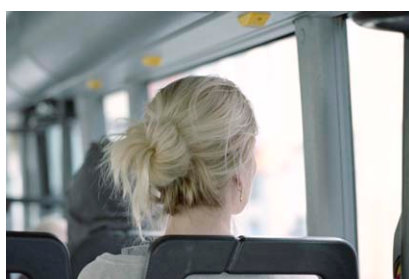
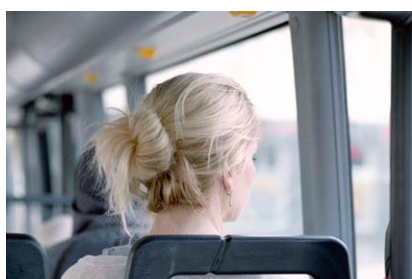
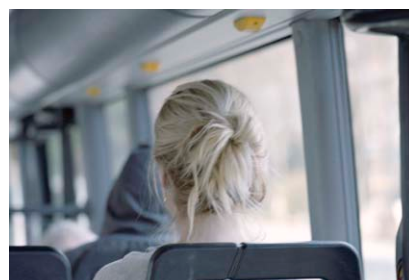
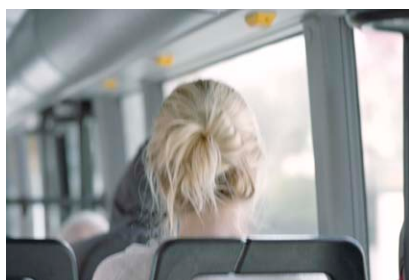
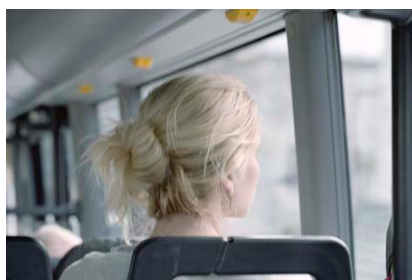
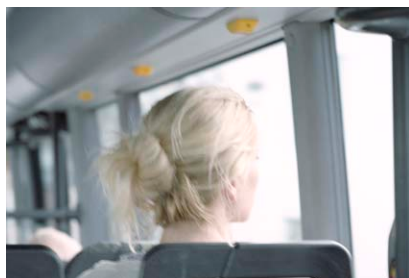
2010 | « REYKJAVÍK 2010 »  
 ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
 20 INK-JET PRINTS  
 EACH 38 X 56 CM

Arranged in a grid, these twenty photographs shot on board a bus depict a young woman seated in the row of seats in front of the photographer. With her hair in a ponytail and wearing a sleeveless white blouse she looks out through the window at the sunlit streets of Berlin. Summer is in the air. Björnsson's title sets the stage for a romantic, urban moment even more than the loca-

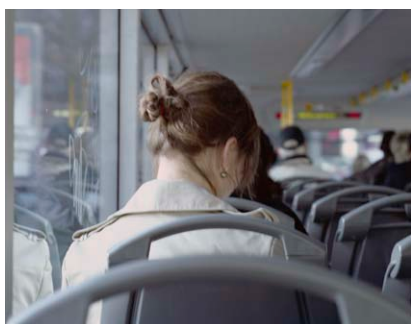
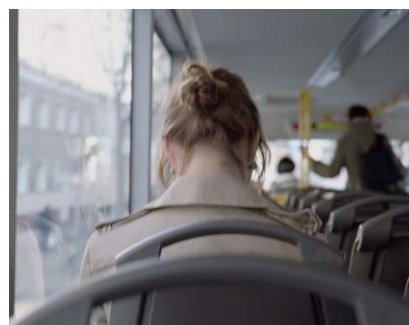
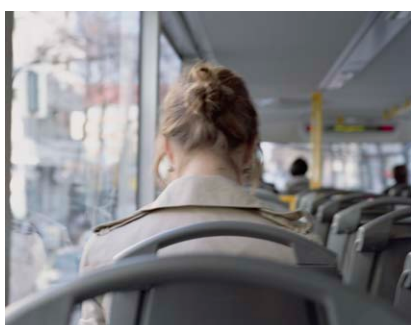
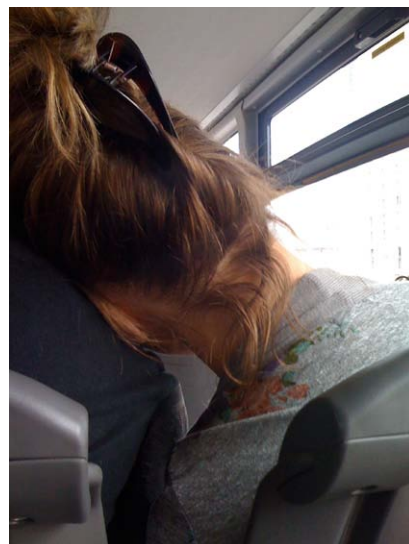
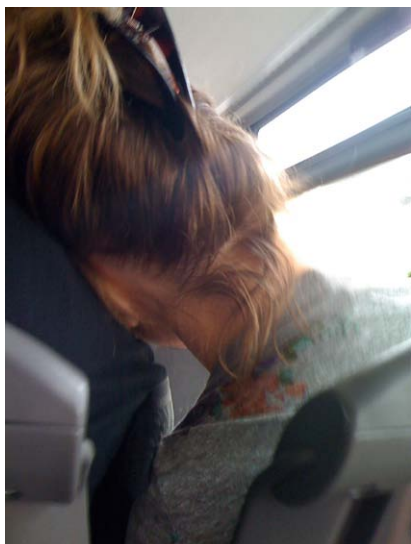
tion where this series was made. Someone is smitten with the beauty of a girl on the bus and allows himself to watch her from behind without her noticing. The systematic capture and display of these images make you wonder about the authenticity of the moment in the bus.













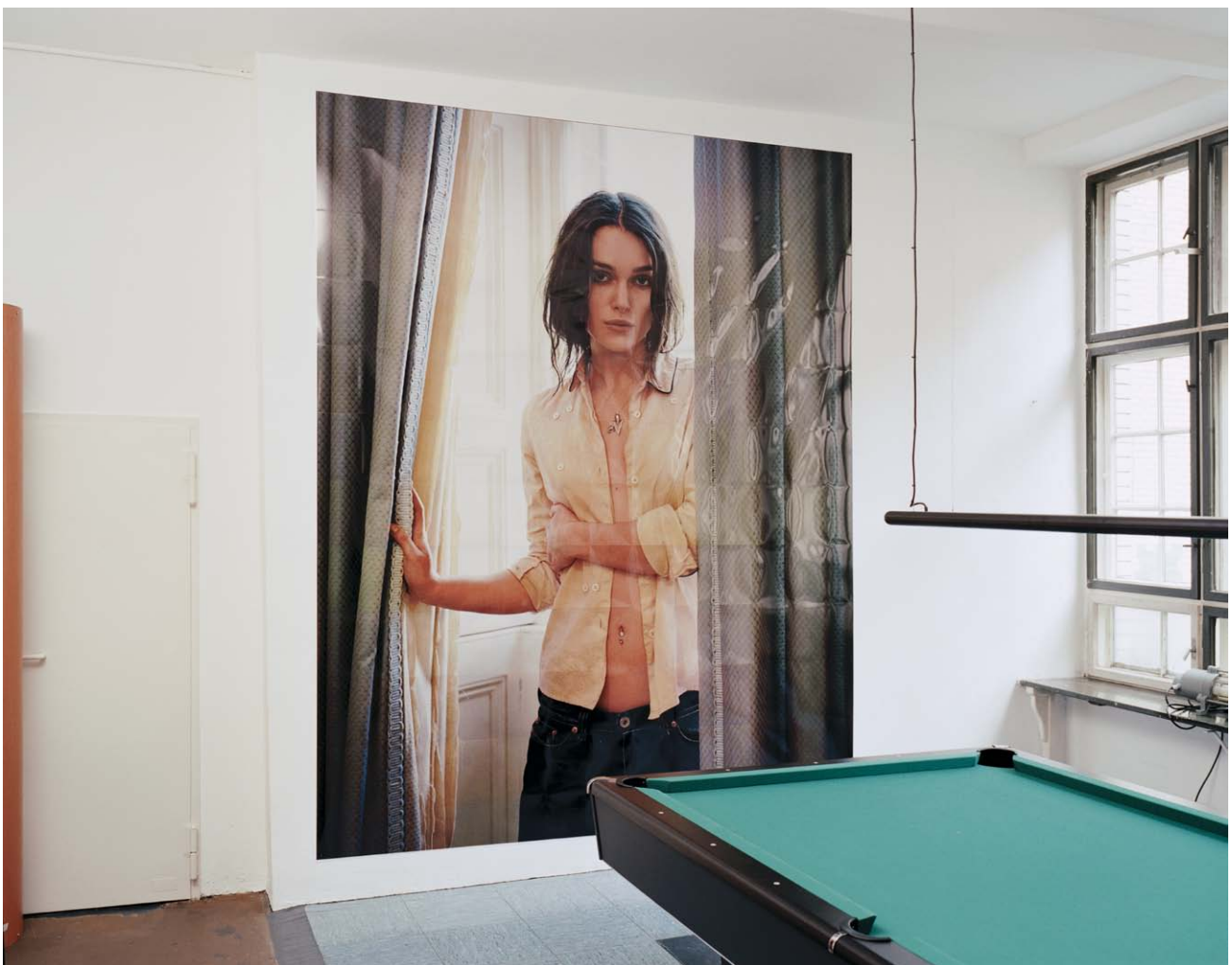
# My Most Beautiful Keira

2009 | COLLAGE OF DIN A4 INK-JET PRINTS  
320 X 240 CM

*image used is of Keira Knightley  
and found on the internet  
Photographer unnamed*

This photograph of the actress Keira Knightley is perfect in terms of the criteria that Björnsson is looking for in pictures as he trawls the Internet: a beautiful starlet poses in a thoroughly stylized framework aimed at creating a kind of pseudo privacy. Wearing low-rise jeans and an unbuttoned blouse that she holds together with one hand, Knightley appears to be in a sensual mood. She is about to come into a room, stands in the doorway holding the curtains to one side and looks into the camera.

Any man would be proud to have captured his girlfriend in such an intimate mood. This picture however is part of an archive of public portraits of the actress, which is dispersed among magazines and Web sites to sustain her career and celebrity status. Björnsson downloads this single image from the Internet and manipulates it, so as to be able to print it out in a wall-size format on a stack of DIN A4 sheets without leaving his studio.





# I Would Love to Make Her Radiate

2009 | « FOR THE GIRL IN QUIBERON »

2010 | « FOR THE GIRL IN VENICE »  
 « FOR ... ON THE TURKISH MARKET »  
 « FOR THE GIRL IN WAINUIOMATA »  
 « FOR THE GIRL IN CAFÉ ADVENA »

*Lingerie designed & sewn by the artist*

In what appears like a quirky sideline at first sight, Björnsson has perfected his skills as a lingerie maker for this series of works. While seeking out the fabrics, the lace and the ribbons and designing the shape of two-piece underwear, he has a particular woman in mind he met at some stage in the past. A process of perfectionist craftsmanship is distilled from what may have been no more than a moment of infatuation. The result is displayed on white

fur in an oak vitrine and dedicated to the distant beloved. As with Björnsson's compulsive approach to images found on the Web, he highlights fleeting moments in his past, holding on to them and working with them to create his own reality. Together with the distinct title the result suggests a narrative of nostalgia and affection and quite possibly also of melancholia and obsession, a conflict constellation not uncommon in Björnsson's work.









# Every Second Day

2009 & 2010 | ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
LIGHT-JET PRINTS  
120 X 140 CM

There are not many situations in everyday life where it is not considered impolite for anyone to fix their gaze on anyone else. A man caught staring at a woman has little excuse. Is he just being rude or is he an incorrigible rubberneck? Going about his business in town, Björnsson has charted the circumstances where he can look his fill at beautiful girls. For example, when shopping for groceries it is perfectly acceptable to observe the cashier working at

the checkout counter while you wait your turn. Björnsson uses this mundane supermarket routine as the basis for this series, displaying young women carrying out their work, apparently unaware of their onlooker. Captured with a camera and blown up to a life size photograph, what might be an inoffensive moment of mere admiration is taken to another dimension, where questions regarding the politics of the gaze are inevitably set in motion.







# Café Maybach

2008 | « WOULD BE LILIES »  
ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY  
6 INK-JET PRINTS  
EACH 38 X 45 CM

Björnsson introduces a delicate sequence in a set of six almost identical photographs depicting a young woman reading in a café. Immersed in the book that she holds in her hands she briefly glances up to see what is going on around her before returning to the book again. The parallel worlds of art and reality are reflected in Björnsson's work, as he makes the viewer wonder about the intentions of the person sitting at the next table with a camera, documenting this moment. The unexpected

perfection of the images seems too good to be true, the angle, the photogenic protagonist and her haircut that all but frames the young woman's face.

The result of careful staging or an impromptu reaction, the photos document a time span that probably lasted no more than a couple of seconds. Nevertheless, they provide a storyboard for a narrative that may range from infatuation and poesy to the obsessions of a stalker.



# My Girlfriend Natalie

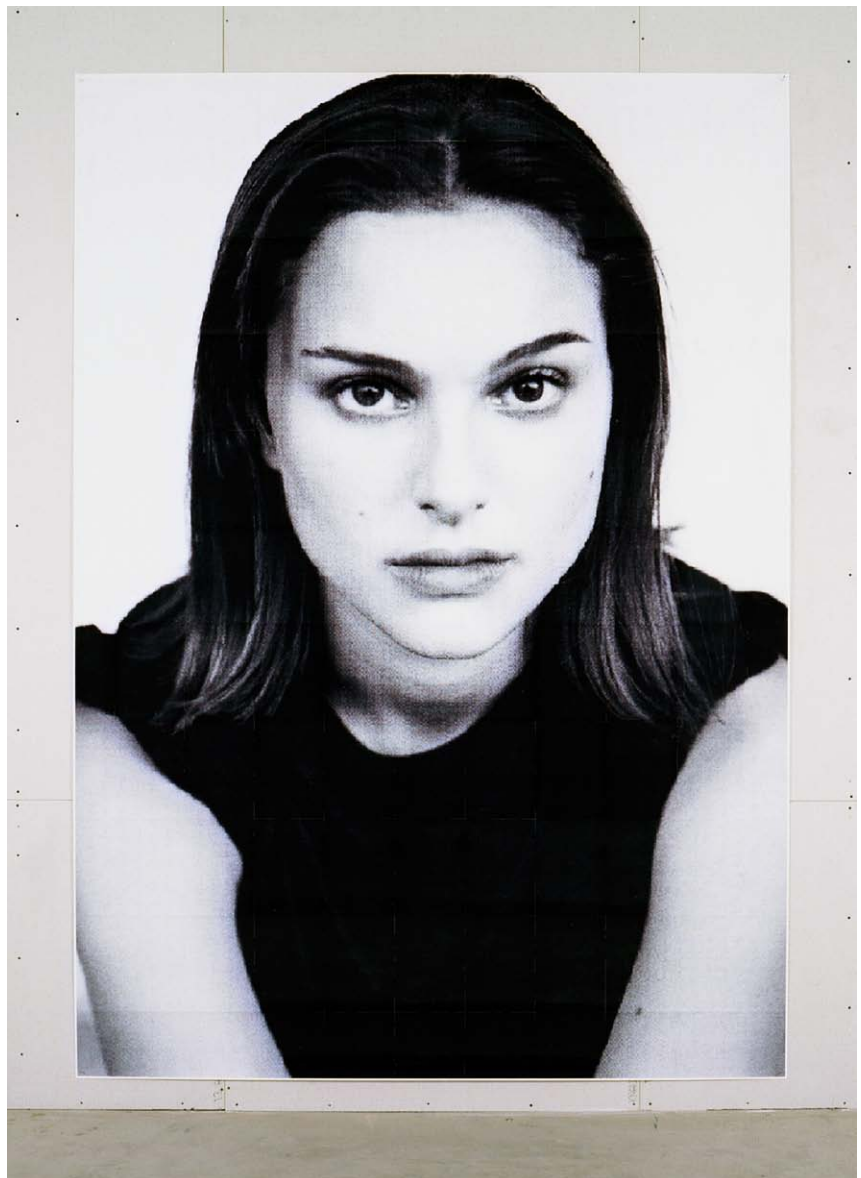
2002 | COLLAGES OF DIN A4 INK-JET PRINTS  
292 X 170 - 255 CM

2003 | COLLAGES OF DIN A4 INK-JET PRINTS  
292 X 180 - 235 CM

2009 | PENCIL TRACING  
DIN A4+

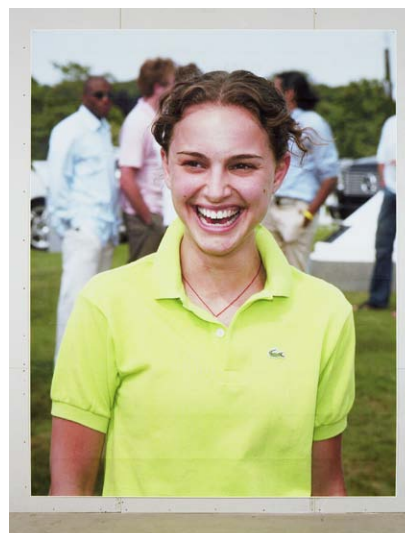
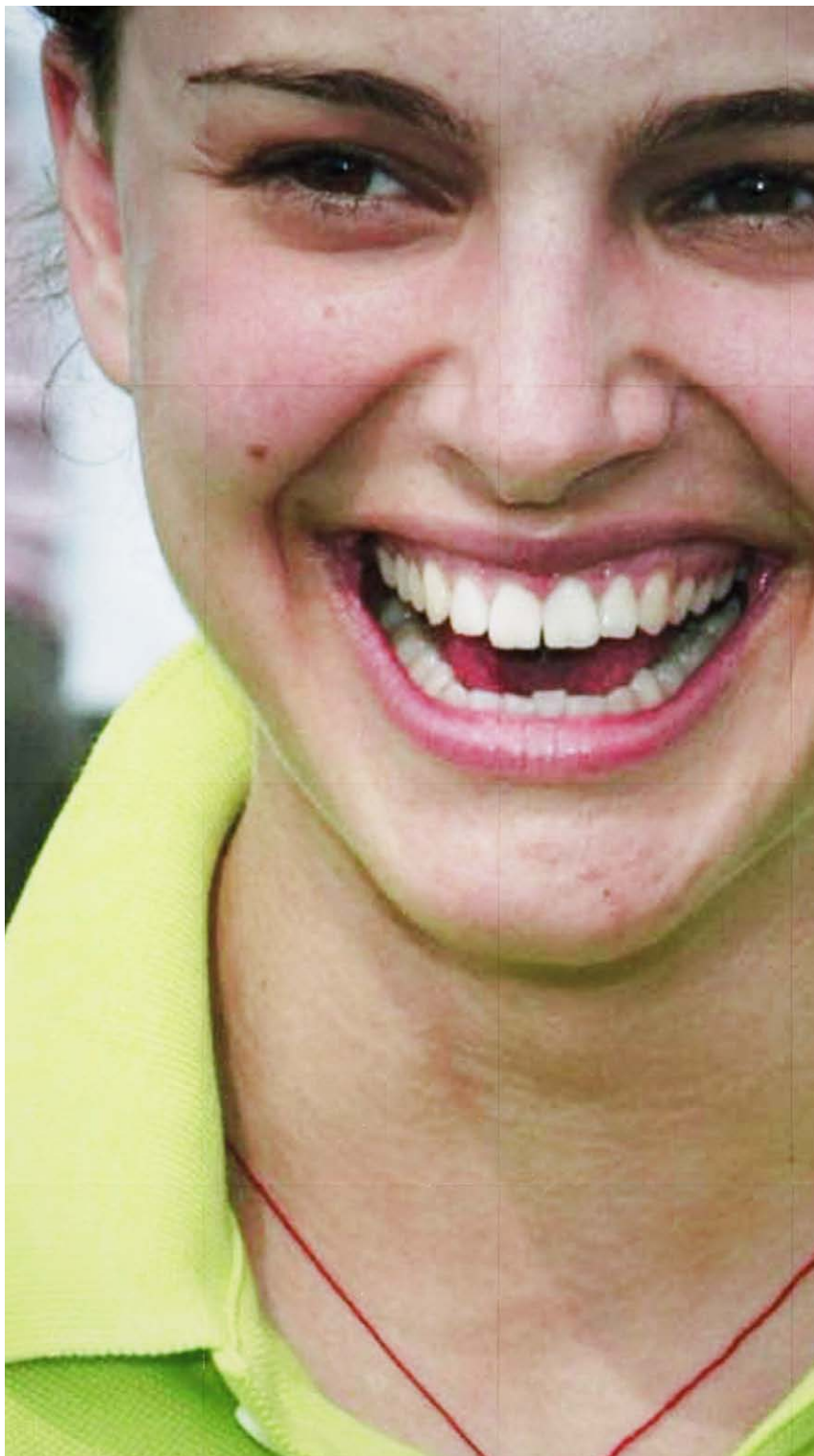
In the age of the Internet the mass media have a powerful impact on show business. The pictures of actress Natalie Portman that Björnsson selects from what is available online differ from his series of other actresses in that they are not all from professional sittings. Some seem to have been taken outdoors by paparazzi when Portman was out on an errand or attending a social event. Their snapshot quality conveys an illusion of proximity that the staged photographs circulating on the

Web lack. Björnsson still includes a few clichéd pictures of the young star posing for the camera. Having blown up the digital images in the "privacy" of his studio, he prints them on his A4 home printer and assembles them to floor-to-ceiling size portraits. Björnsson here plays off the elements of the public and the private against each other, presenting a one-way intimacy with a celebrity, while at the same time highlighting the power of images and the absurdity of the celebrity culture.



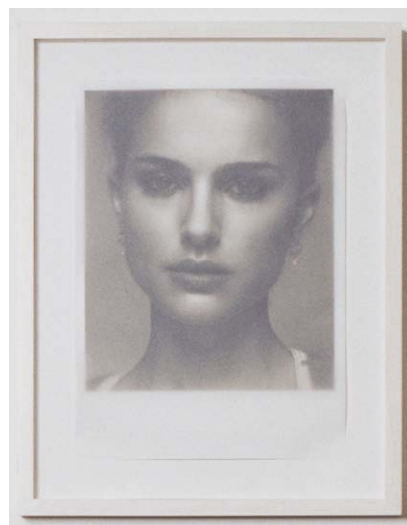
*All images used are of Natalie  
Portman and found on the internet  
Photographers unnamed*











# Olivia

2010 | PENCIL TRACING  
ED. 100  
DIN A4

The portrait of a young actress retrieved by Björnsson from the Internet is remarkable for its perfect symmetry. It meets all the criteria of the standard ideal of beauty and succeeds through its careful stylization in creating the familiar illusion of bedroom intimacy, complete with sidelight, loungewear and alluring gaze.

The artist puts a sheet of transparent paper on top of the image and lightly traces the face of the actress with a pencil. It is important to him not to draw or to imitate, but to trace

the image in a non-expressive manner. This he does not only once, but a hundred times, bringing into play the contradictory qualities of repetition. The work is then displayed as a group arrangement of different sizes where the tracings reveal subtle similarities and differences. The straightforward appeal of the photograph is substantiated and blurred at the same time, as the artist's intimate and time-consuming treatment alternately highlights it on the one hand and conceals it on the other.



*The image used is of Olivia  
Wilde and found on the internet  
Photographer unnamed*



# My Shannyn

2005 | COLLAGES OF DIN A4 INK-JET PRINTS  
245 X 200 CM

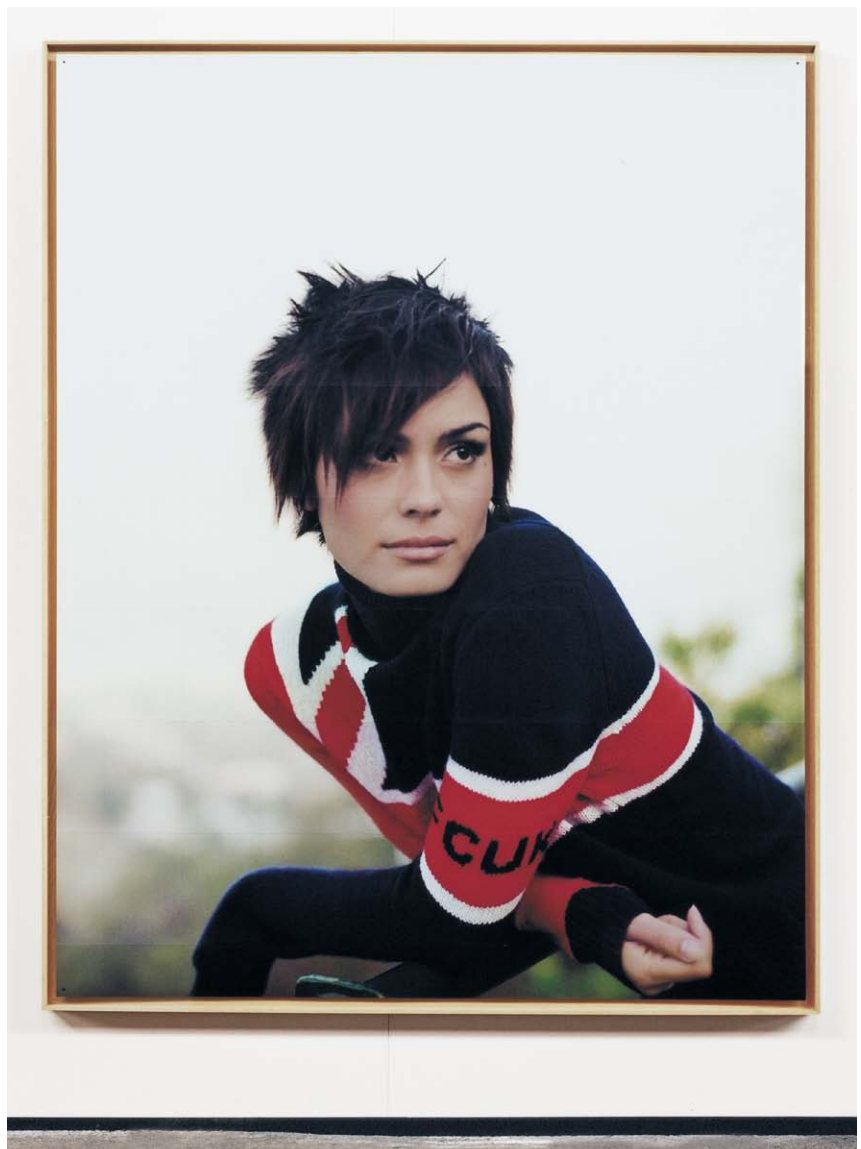
2009 | COLLAGES OF DIN A4 INK-JET PRINTS  
120 X 87 CM

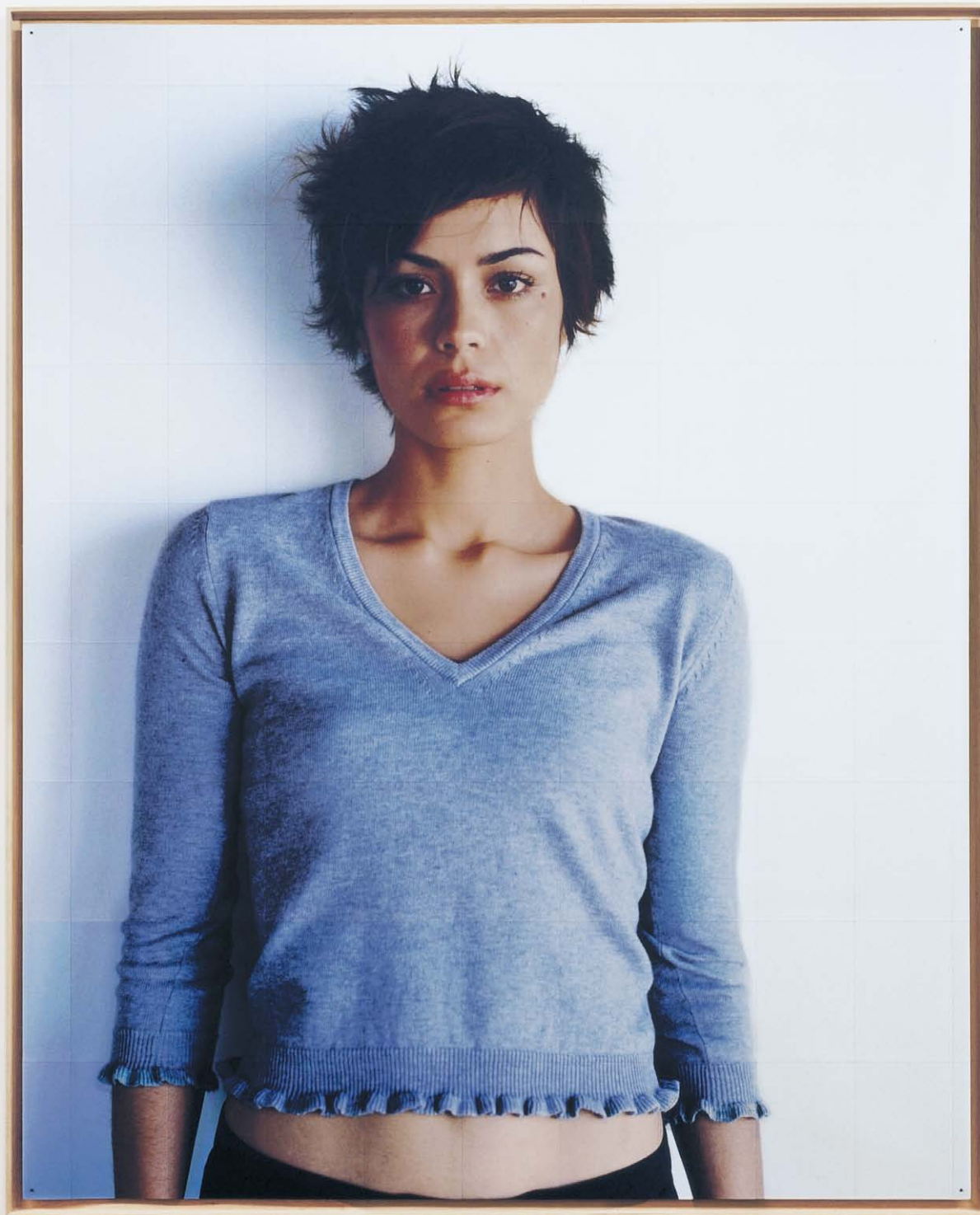
2009 | PENCIL TRACING  
DIN A4+

From the wide range of pictures available on the Internet of the actress Shannyn Sossamon Björnsson focuses on a few that exist as sets from the same sittings. More than one image taken on the same occasion provides the notion of a sequence or a miniature narrative and undermines the autonomy of the single image. The multiple pictures are consolidated into one idea in the mind of the viewer, perhaps making it possible for a more genuine, a more personal portrayal of that person to

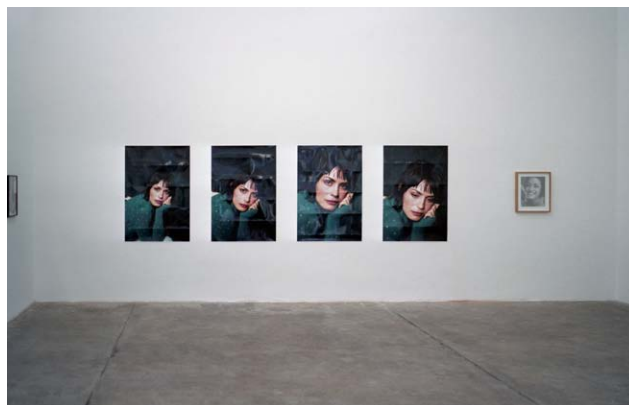
emerge. Björnsson's shift from a brief session in front of the computer to a longlasting relationship with the images suggests a story of love, worship or even obsession. Within the solitude of his studio, he meticulously enhances the quality of the source material, prints each image out as numerous small fragments to be reassembled on the wall. Similarly, he works extensively on some images with a pencil, tracing them through a transparent sheet of paper.

*All images used are of Shannyn Sossamon and found on the internet Photographers unnamed*









# Mindi; My Indian Flower

2005 | COLLAGES OF DIN A4 INK-JET PRINTS  
245 X 170 / 225 CM

2009 | PENCIL TRACINGS  
DIN A4

The title of Björnsson's work on the actress Parminder Nagra contains a twofold uncertainty of meaning. Mindi, as he calls her, is not an Indian; she's a British citizen of Indian descent and it is unclear – to say the least – to what extent he can call her "his". Ambiguities such as these form a central part of Björnsson's work. Like any other fan, Björnsson trawls the net for pictures of her but rather than skip from one picture to the next, as most people would do, he decides to pore over only a handful and to trace them on tracing

paper and/or blow them up to gigantic size. Equally mannered in style and conveying an air of artificial "spontaneity", these images are supposed to depict the actress as a real person, as opposed to one of the characters she plays in her films.

This play with the real and the performed is an underlying theme in Björnsson's works. He takes an active part as a recipient or user, claiming ownership not of the photograph but of the icon.



*All images used are of Parminder Nagra and found on the internet  
Photographers unnamed*





# Succeeding Desire

2009 | « CHANGE »  
PENCIL TRACINGS  
DIN A4+

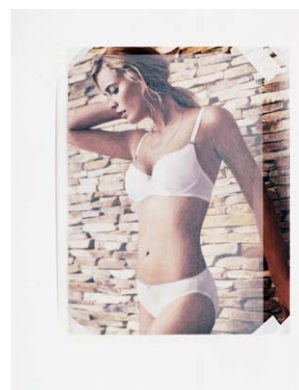
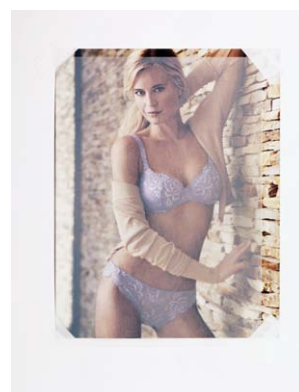
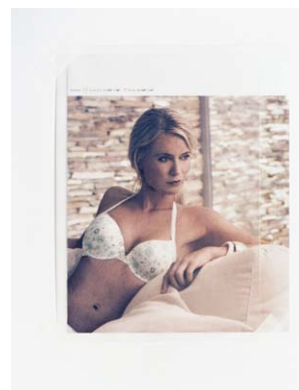
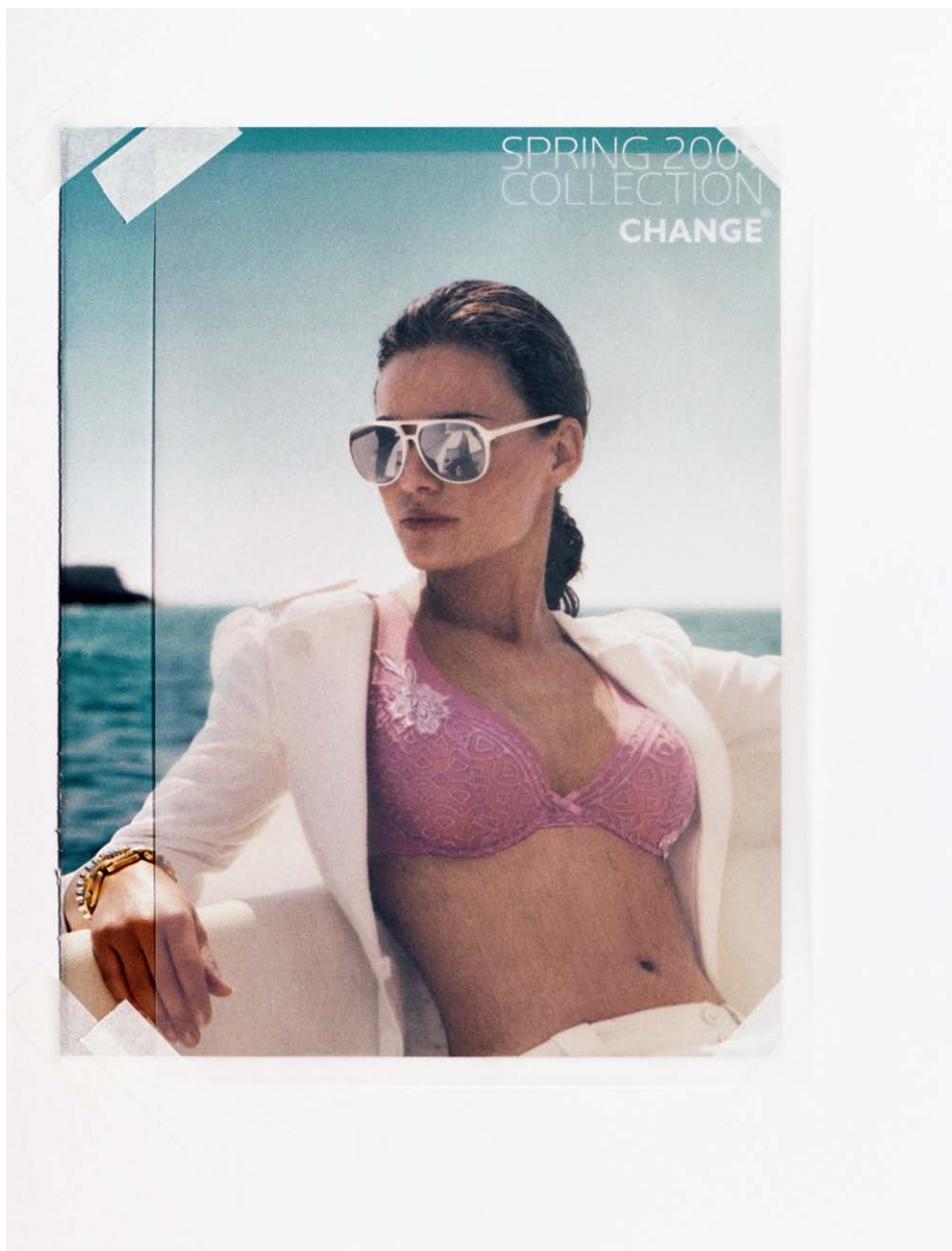
2009 | « SIMONE »  
PENCIL TRACINGS  
DIN A4+

The source of inspiration for the two series entitled “Succeeding Desire” are mail-order catalogues for bathing suits and lingerie. Having cut out individual pictures from the catalogue and mounted them on a sheet of white DIN A4 paper, Björnsson puts a sheet of transparent paper on top of the collage and traces the images with a pencil. In tracing the images the artist seems to be much more concerned with the contradiction of bringing something

forward and concealing it at the same time than with concentrating on the image underneath. Björnsson only traces the outlines of the body of the swimsuit models, leaving out the textile products and the background. He highlights the obvious aim of these images to enhance desire in an attempt to subdue it at the same time. Each image is displayed with all its different layers – background, mounted photograph and tracing – in a single frame.



*The underlying images are  
cut out of lingerie brochures  
Photographers unnamed*







# Ris Kaktusanna

1996 | COLLAGE OF B/W DIN A4  
LASER-JET PRINTS  
180 X 480 CM

*The images used are of Winona  
Ryder and found on the internet  
Photographers unnamed*

Björnsson's title for his collage of images found on the Internet of the actress Winona Ryder is remarkable for its overtones of domestic privacy. In the dawn of public Internet access the Web was already swamped with pop culture trivia. This foreshadowed the potential inherent in this particular side of the Web as an extension of the yellow press of reaching beyond the living- and bedrooms of the masses and into the minds of the users. Björnsson acted on this idea already in 1996,

collecting all the images that appealed to him of the beautiful actress, printing them and assembling them into a personal archive of infatuation. While he went on to develop this process ever further both in terms of technology and of highlighting the notion of privacy through the personal tone in his work titles, the basic interest underpinning his Internet based work has stayed the same: it is not the person that Björnsson is concerned with but their fleeting image.





# Kristleifur Björnsson



PHOTO | BERNHARD FUCHS

Kristleifur Björnsson studied at HGB – Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig, Germany, under the guidance of professor Timm Rautert and graduated in 2003. He was born in Reykjavík in 1973 and currently lives in Berlin.

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS | SELECTED

- 2011 « the nest », Gallery Poulsen, Copenhagen / Denmark.
- 2009 « my shannyn », Gallerí Gangur, Reykjavík / Iceland.
- 2008 « Hlíðar / Slopes », Skaftfell, Seyðisfjörður / Iceland.
- 2005 « Mindi ; my indian flower », Asmundarsalur / Iceland.
- 2003 « My Girlfriend Natalie », HGB, Leipzig / Germany.
- 2001 « Hlíðar / Berghaenge », HGB, Leipzig / Germany.

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS | SELECTED

- 2011 « Leipzig Fotografie, seit 1839 », Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig / Germany.
- 2010 « Ruanveruleikatékk / Reality Check », Reykjavík Artfair, Reykjavík City Center, Reykjavík / Iceland.
- 2010 « Berlin Transfer », Berlinische Galerie, Landesmuseum fuer moderne kunst, Berlin / Germany.
- 2009 « Zeigen », Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin, Berlin / Germany.
- 2009 « Master Class of Prof. Timm Rautert », Galerie Kleindienst, Leipzig / Germany.
- 2008 « Street & Studio », Fotomuseum Volkwang Essen, Essen / Germany.
- 2008 « Mindi ; My Indian Flower », Steirischer Herbst, Art Festival, Graz / Austria.
- 2008 « Street & Studio », Tate Modern, London / England.
- 2007 « Forschen und Erfinden », Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur / Switzerland.
- 2007 « Update », Stalke Galleri, Kirke Sonnerup / Denmark.
- 2007 « Ohne Schatten », Galerie Eigen + Art, Leipzig / Germany.
- 2006 « Vor aller Augen », Festival, Bâtiment d'art, Genf / Schweiz.
- 2005 « My Shannyn », Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Arles / France.
- 2004 « Synd & Hljod », Klink og Bank, Reykjavík / Iceland.
- 2003 « Silver & Gold », Essen - Dresden - Glückstadt - Wolfsburg / Germany.
- 2002 « Artists of the Gallery », Gallery 20.21, Essen / Germany.
- 2001 « United Cantonas Fan Club », HGB Leipzig / Germany.
- 1998 « Accumulator #1 », Leipzig / Germany.
- 1996 « Back Flash », Leipzig / Germany.

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