

Sarah's world

'The ones I love are gone and hidden in a dark distance, and my way is long and wonderful.' —
Monika Fagerholm from *The American Girls*.

There would be an art-historical approach to Sarah's world, in a sense of Goya to Kubin. But that does not fit me.

What moves this woman? What's going on inside her? As if she was a survivor of the Holocaust. I know almost nothing about her. She attended the class of Elly Strik. Elly introduced us. I asked Sarah to send me some pictures and I was shocked. Because the way I remembered her did not match with what I saw.

It is as if these works tear gaps in the collective memory: The roaring restraints in the abyss of hopelessness. There is no torture, but only the tortured. A theater of cruelty in which the skull of scalped corpses is caressed and metamorphic nightmares lead to a descent into hell.

How engaging are the titles! Far away from the motives. As if the artist looks over her shoulder and sees this happen as a saga.

The violence of the phantasmagorical is like an ecstasy, the tenderness of the exposed, a twist of fate. Who fights back, will be *Shot* (2007). The grotesque resonates, rumbels, screeches in the *Funeral* (2008). The trauma of collective memory in *Where no one can find you* (2008) groans as the silent death dance in the blood wedding *Flowers in the rain* (2012). As the bloodstained pairing in *Nibble Nibble Mousekin* (2008). There are essential neither women nor men. There are just people, trapped in the plight of disappointment, of futility, and there is the affection, fragile as the branches in the series *I dreamed I was nature* (2014).

The work of Sarah Grothus has something oppressive, something atypical for her generation. In the words of Anne Michaels in her wonderful novel *Fugitive Pieces*: 'All grief, everyone's grief, you said, is the weight of a sleeping child.'

Jean-Christophe Ammann

Translation: Hedy Hempe en Sarah Grothus