

It's only been a couple of months since the young Dutch artist Gwenneth Boelens was last seen at Klemm's, but on the evidence of this show, familiarity need not breed contempt. Back in the spring, Boelens contributed to the equally impressive *Endless Lowlands Breaking Up*, alongside Peggy Franck, Alon Levin and Marijn van Kreijl. Now, as then, much of the focus of the show is the dialectic relationship between nature and culture, the logical and the illogical, the human and the architectural.

Boelens's approach is almost rigorously multimedia, incorporating photography, installation, collage and video. She demonstrates an ability to produce simultaneously critical and evocative texts with a degree of confidence that thrusts any suspicion of mystification to the margins; no mean feat when so much of contemporary art seems to want to perceive cuteness and vagary with every roll of the optical dice. *Ramble* (2008) at first appears a chaotic jungle reproduced in inkjet on all four interior walls of an open-topped, boxlike structure. Soon, however, one becomes aware that this quasi-edenic scene is in fact anything but random. Instead it is revealed as a meticulously planned and monitored fabrication of wildness, every inch of its territory conceived as a delicately balanced microcosmic reenactment of the idea of habitat. Is this, Boelens asks, the result of an architectural failure of imagination, or is it simply that 'to minimise the parameters is to maximise control'? The discrete artificiality of this environment is breached through its situational recreation; it becomes impossible to think of the garden itself or its evocation as any more or less natural.

Boelens's work is infused with a sense of failure: not as commonplace rehashing of complacent looking and thinking, but as an indication of memory's imperfection, opening into the mechanisms by which art functions, environments are apprehended and society is experienced. The possibility of failure becomes the territory in which aesthetics can reassert itself. This is an idea pursued further in *A Whole Fragment* (2007), a work in two parts, one installational, the other photographic. The latter is a loosely gridded archival inkjet print, on the surface of which appears a tangle of blank abstract shapes and fragments of images, this tangle echoed in the deceptively loose arrangement of ceramic-board cutouts and inkjet prints organised around a fine thread grid and in turn partially reflected in a tiny mirror attached to the nearby wall. Both show a kind of mechanical continuity with her diptych of black-and-white collages *Apollo Bay* (2007). They also bear a passing resemblance to Gordon Matta-Clark's anarchitectural photographic work, such as *Splitting* (1974) and *Office Baroque* (1977). The relationship between individual works is more explicit in *Choreography* (2006) and *Hand Wall* (2007), the tightly defined, multiply demarcated room in the photograph not quite giving way to the insubordinate limitlessness of the hand in the video, as it feels its way along the aforementioned wall, indifferent to interruptions.

Sidestepping ostentation, Boelens nevertheless manages to illuminate something about the topology and archaeology of everyday experience which would otherwise be subordinate to the unflinching glare of narrative: the illogical logicity of precise imprecision. *Luke Heighton*

GWENNETH BOELENS: THE ENTIRE BUSINESS OF COMING CLOSER

KLEMM'S, BERLIN
28 JUNE - 2 AUGUST



The Entire Business of Coming Closer, 2008 (installation view). Courtesy the artist and Klemm's, Berlin