

Pernilla Zetterman

Behave

von

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Swedish photographer Pernilla Zetterman's first monograph, *Behave*, is an intense visual study of behavioral patterns, performance, control, and discipline and how they form identity. Using two powerful battlegrounds for identity making, the home and the sports arena, Zetterman explores how a behavior or a sport acts as the grammar for a language to be studied and learned, taught and passed down to future generations--of daughters or athletes.

The opening series, *When*, is taken in the homes of three generations of women: a daughter, a mother, and a grandmother. Unlike Juergen Teller's unabashed narcissism in his family exposés, Zetterman's scenes offer nothing sensational or far-fetched but instead concentrate on the everyday and ordinary, or apparently ordinary. Neat piles of newspapers. A moldy bathroom. Starched white sheets in precise rows in a linen closet. Rotten fruit. Zetterman juxtaposes the clinically clean home with the chaotic, messy one down to the smallest detail and seems to be searching for clues into just what behavior will be learned or inherited. The still lifes are precise and perfectly lit, as if photographed under a microscope in a laboratory. Contrasting these images with two triptychs of daughter-mother-grandmother's stomachs and feet, she changes to another kind of photography; the kind that can be found in medical books. (Are we looking for a disease? Is it a hereditary one?) But the triptychs also bear qualities similar to John Coplan's nude self-portraits; they are exposed, raw, vulnerable, without any trace of self-aggrandizing.

Zetterman leaves the familiar details and smells of the home and ventures out into an expansive, man-made landscape where it is possible to rebel and victoriously defeat any fixed presets. The final series, *Ground Rules*, is comprised mostly of Tartan tracks. In the first photographs, the tracks are snow-covered and the lines that separate the lanes are barely visible. But gradually, with

each photograph, the individual lanes become more defined, until the distinct borders that separate people/competitors are finally revealed. The rules of training and competition are precise and clear. Yet the large gatefold panorama of a track expresses something more complex: on the one hand, constraint and imprisonment, and on the other, vast, borderless, utter freedom. The sporting arena is more than a site of performance and anxiety, of winners and losers; it is another location of discipline and identity making.

The journey Pernilla Zetterman takes us on in *Behave* starts with the smallest and most intimate details of the homes and bodies of three generations of women and moves to the anonymous public sports arena. She uses both locations--places that evoke a sense of rigid conditioning--to explore ways in which identity is negotiated and shaped through discipline and behavior.

