

SIGNE GUTTORMSEN 8–21 NOV

NOT AFTER NOT BEFORE



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Whether responding to a specific material, site or situation, artist Signe Guttormsen (b. 1964) always takes context into account. Working within a wide range of media—from photography, painting, and print to sculpture, installation, and building-integrated art, she works from an analytical standpoint drawing on a wider scope of cultural, political, and art historic references to expose hidden narratives and interconnections between situations and things. Guttormsen is educated from The Royal Danish Art Academy, as well as Rijksakademie van beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. Her latest major work in the public space was the site-specific installation *What We Do Not Know We Do Not Know* commissioned by Kanalbyen in Fredericia in 2020. In 2022, she opened the exhibition *Step back, step back please* at Viborg Kunsthall. Signe Guttormsen lives and works in Copenhagen and has among others been the recipient of The Danish Arts Council's 3-year work grant.

Signe Guttormsen—*Not After Not Before* is the fifth publication in the ART & STRIPES series. #001; Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen, *Reenactment—Homage a Cadre* (2014). #002-3; Nanna Francisca Schottländer—*Please Be Here Now* (2015). #004; Jeanette Ehlers—*We're Magic. We're Real* (2021).

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Where does it begin, and when does it end? In her work *Not After Not Before*, artist Signe Guttormsen explores the circulation and interrelations between materials, sensitivities and knowledge production. In the facade window of iconic fashion store Nørgaard på Strøget, Guttormsen has placed a large light table with a series of photographic prints and paper sheets arranged on it. The light from the table illuminates the composition from underneath, simultaneously revealing and dissolving its material and motive—the coarse, irregular texture of the paper emerges, while the black ink of the photographs disintegrates into the background. By way of the laboratory-like display, Guttormsen challenges the formal aesthetic hierarchies between surface and object, between background and form, and draws attention to the transitional state of them both.

Typical for Signe Guttormsen's practice, nothing in *Not After Not Before* is random. Everything is considered in the smallest of detail. Guttormsen combines materials, narratives, spaces and structures in poetic collages where every component alters, nuances or intensifies the reading of the other. And this work is no exception—when taking a closer look at the photographs, contours of pieces of clothing appear: a hood, a pocket, a sleeve. This not only hints at the specific location of the work—in the window of a clothing store—but the very material of which the sheets are made. A timely, delicate and highly water consuming process, Guttormsen has handcrafted every sheet from used clothes, that she cuts up and blends, before forming and drying the pulp in special moulds. In this way, Guttormsen subtly mimics the fabrication process of clothing.

By using the age-old method of making paper out of textile fibres and afterwards penetrating them with electric light, Guttormsen calls attention to the migration and distribution of natural resources, and how they change shape and meaning according to context. Everything is in a constant state of transformation—natural, political, cultural—and what we took for granted before might be considered exceptional, odd or questionable today. The light flickers, the material dissolves, the narrative collapses. Where does it end, when does it begin? Text by Nanna Balslev Strøjer. Thanks to Danish Art Workshops.