

Myne Søe-Pedersen: Untitled Covers (2001-ongoing)
by Stine Hebert, curator and art historian

The photographs in Untitled Covers (2001-ongoing) show a number of old books. Nevertheless the subject of the series is not the books as such. Søe-Pedersen has photographed them with an analog technique where the books have been lit from below, which means that shadows only fall on the top surface and around the folds on the cover. The book, a three-dimensional object, thus appears two-dimensional, and the subject of the representation becomes the actual surface of the dust cover. The result is abstract and invites the viewer to look at the subject in another way than if the titles of the books had been featured and linked associatively with the content of the books.

The choice of shooting technique involves a wish to create a situation of exclusive concentration on the surface. Moreover, the enlarged format means that the reproduction is displaced from a 1:1 coding. Instead a number of details appear: scratches, folds, faded corners and worn edges – all bearers of knowledge about the use and life of the objects.

A majority of the front covers in the series present a variety of depictions of landscape, but their geographical origin or real locality is difficult to place. At the concrete end of the spectrum an idyllic country road appears with a blue sky and summery clouds. Among the more abstract is an urbanized landscape shown in a bird's-eye view, looking most of all like an artificial town created as an architectural model. Søe-Pedersen's conceptual approach emancipates the subject, and in a kind of double image two landscapes appear across each surface – the traces of the ravages of time and the motif specifically depicted on the cover.

Through Søe-Pedersen's lens the consequences of the books' lives in the schoolbag, on the living-room table, in the summer cottage etc., are elevated so that they bear up a narrative as significant as the stories written inside the books. The presence to be found in the details is exposed to the viewer, and this is a general interest in Søe-Pedersen's photographic works, which are often concerned with the exploration of the photographic medium in itself and its relation to time and presence.