

The commuters are lost out the window, lost in the time of any day. They ride until, like a social punctum, their eyes take in a hooded figure emerging out of the dullness, frenetic, moving in isolation, yet disturbing everything. Making it awkward and felt, bringing the onlookers into their bodies again. The figure spins around a pole, *Singin' in the Rain*,<sup>1</sup> without the singing, or the rain, but still recorded. The camera's presence another reason for the riders to be cautious. Perhaps able to ignore this blip in their day, not noticeably reacting is reacting nonetheless. Removing hood, jacket, then after a somersault, trousers, the now athletically attired figure glides through the empty spaces on the train. Finding other uses for seats, floors, and luggage racks. With their potential for discomfort in those recorded moments, the commuters' accidental participation becomes a form of release for the viewer of Klara Lidén's work *Paralyzed*.<sup>2</sup> Given the distance pixels and a screen provide, the viewer can chuckle through the awkwardness instigated by Lidén's movements without feeling it per se. They can be in on the joke, laugh or smile more than being in situ would necessarily allow. There's a testing of the tautness of otherwise blended time and experience going on here.

With a slow determined moonwalk, Lidén glides backwards across the frame, on the street, feet barely leaving pavement. The plodding score conjures Philip Glass' soundtrack for *Koyaanisqatsi*,<sup>3</sup> and the work's title *Der Mythos des Fortschritts (The Myth of Progress)*<sup>4</sup> feels an appropriate poke at the former film's premise. Ever facing forward, but moving back, Lidén is passed by cars, trucks, and bicycles going both directions. On a section of road, kept in line by concrete meridian, Lidén passes by a sign with diagonal arrow reading: exit. A momentary Sisyphian punchline.

In an austere studio/gallery/office Lidén sits at a desk facing the blankness of a white wall. Speakers belt out 'helpless' three times, a tiny refrain in a sad song. The trashcan in *Untitled (Trashcan)*<sup>5</sup> flanks the desk. Unceremoniously, Lidén stands and approaches the bin, plunging head first, legs up in the air, before they fold in after, almost there. Not quite gone from view though, Lidén emerges to try again. This time feet first, this time disappearing. The quip: 'If at first you don't succeed, failure may be your style' from Quentin Crisp comes to mind, thanks to J. Halberstam.<sup>6</sup>

The joke here is time. As Simon Critchley states, 'in being told a joke, we undergo a particular experience of duration through repetition and digression, of time literally being stretched out like an elastic band. We know that the elastic will snap, we just don't know when, and we find that anticipation rather pleasurable. It snaps with the punchline, which is a sudden acceleration of time, where the digressive stretching of the joke suddenly contracts into a heightened experience of the instant.'<sup>7</sup> Laugh often: each of these works by Lidén repeat, stretching out their instants into moments folded back on themselves. With each loop, it keeps going, elastic snapping like the string of an instrument.

<sup>1</sup> Kelly, Gene, and Stanley Donen, directors. *Singin' in the Rain*, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> Lidén, Klara. *Paralyzed*, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Reggio, Godfrey, director. Music composed by Philip Glass. *Koyaanisqatsi*, Institute for Regional Education/American Zoetrope, 1982.

<sup>4</sup> Lidén, Klara. *Der Mythos des Fortschritts (The Myth of Progress)*, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Lidén, Klara. *Untitled (Trashcan)*, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Crisp, Quentin. 'The Naked Civil Servant.' Quoted in: J. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011, pp. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Critchley, Simon. *On Humour*, London and New York, Routledge, 2002, pp. 7.