CAAC Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

- **Exhibition: "**Songs by Annika Ström"
- **Artist:** Annika Ström.
- **Inauguration:** 26 May, 20:00 h.
- **Date: 26 May – 11 September 2011.**
- **Exhibition Session**: Song as a Force of Social Transformation

Ström's art (Helsingborg, Sweden, 1964) is about sincerity. Her videos, songs and textworks are structured around the poetic transfiguration of the ordinary.

In her bittersweet video-diaries she draws upon details of everyday life and seemingly insignificant experiences usually accompanied by her own low-fi synth-pop soundtracks. She often works with members of her family to create emotive and intimate situations.

Her songs are not dissimilar to many pop songs, in that they are mostly delivered in the first person and are addressed to an unspecified "you." Generally, the songs that start with "I' and end in "you", are about relationships. But in other ways they are nothing like pop songs, because Ström does not perform these songs with a band, but accompanies her own voice with the preset chords and rhythms of a small electronic keyboard. These songs are delivered in a minimalist way, shaped by the formal conventions of Conceptual art, in part, due to the fact that Ström does not consider herself a musician, but an amateur.

Her textworks fit even more squarely into the aesthetic category of Conceptual art. They consist of phrases, normally no more than a few words, transcribed onto sheets of paper or, occasionally, onto a wall. She rarely uses punctuation or capital letters except for the word "I". Although their words are different to Ström's songs, they often have the feeling of song titles or lyrics (I don´t know what to sing, I do sing anything… Sentimental; or Please help me).

These phrases, as pop songs, have a combination of emotional directness and impersonal ambiguity. For instance, when the text says "I" does that mean Annika? If so, when she sings "you", does she mean us? The possibility for such intimate personal address is troubling and elevates the work beyond the cerebral chilliness of the art that it formally resembles.

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