

NATASHA SHULTE



*Letter*, from the series *Line*, Dyptich, 2011

All characters from Natasha's shots are abandoned children from two Ukrainian orphanages. These staged portraits refer to early 19th-century documentary photography. At that time, children were photographed upon admission to orphanages. It was part of social relations. However, Shulte's visual stories, even masked as reportage, elude social interpretation. For an instant, the portraits of orphans flash as a traumatic lure of critical art and then melt into an impenetrable monolith of existential totality. In all the photographs of *Line* a strict, one-plane composition is united with the geometric decor that is just the background wall. It is impossible to catch the gaze of children, even when directed straight. They do not represent themselves but do not play either. This series of photographs received accusations of exploitation of orphans. However, it is worth noting that the characters in *Line* are not devastated models, but rather nymphs with something growing within.

The mystery is thrown to the audience: what does the dim light in the eyes of the children mean; the light which is the same for the protagonist in the adjacent field, that is (so strangely) emotionally different? What is the reality for these children?

Arseniy Steiner

BIO

**Natasha Shulte** (b. 1975, Odesa) graduated from the National University of Odessa and from the Speos School of Photography in Paris. PX3 2011 Priix de la Photographie Paris winner. She has been selected by International Photography Awards as the Editorial Photographer of the year 2011. Shulte explores voltage lines between state control and personal identities. The artist also reveals the mechanisms of biopower, making these instruments visible through her projects, often placed into specially sterilised settings. The artist combines and works on the intersection of video, photography and painting. In her practice Shulte is interested in issues of social organisation, psychology and human interaction with the environment.