

Interview Choki Lindberg – *Grand Salon* and *Please wait here* by Natalia Gutman

Your photograph depicts the actual space it is displayed in, but something dramatic has happened - can you describe the scenario?

What exactly has happened is unclear, but one could imagine that a good deal of time has passed. There has been a fire. Murky water has flooded the space, plants have crept through the windows and walls have crumbled. There is no human presence to tell the story. It's all left up to our imagination.

The details in the photograph are hyper real, and at the same time it is a surreal scenario – could you explain how you create this effect?

I build everything in miniature and then I photograph it. So you look at a highly detailed photograph, which you believe in, but then there is this shift in scale and a clumsiness that the miniature gives the objects, which reveals that it's not real. I hope people can sense this disruption, while also being seduced by it. Almost everything is handmade: From the carved legs of the chairs, to the cling foil wrapped wire that appears in the form as glass ornaments in the chandelier. It's quite a labour-intensive way of producing a photograph. I use original materials wherever possible. For example, to fill a miniature sofa, I have split apart an old couch to get the filling. This in itself is something I enjoy, and I think you sense it in the work. I also hope people will take the time to engage, and immerse themselves in the image. The simple fact that time and effort have gone into making it counters the speed that images are often produced with these days – I like this slow and meticulous process.

You have burned off a painting, flooded the room and blasted a wall – the memento mori is inescapable?

The desire to preserve and immortalize things can be obsessive. It's human to want to leave a mark on this world, but it is delusional. Nothing, however solid and impressive it may appear, is permanent. High or low, we are all a part of the same cycle. We have become so used to seeing disasters hit those who have the least, but what about this kind of environment? Maybe at some point, none of us is going to be here, and a new and better species will evolve – who knows?

Your other work is a piece entitled *Please wait here*. Could you describe the character of the chair?

The embassy environment has an air of opulence and times long passed, which makes it difficult to relate to. Everything is beautiful but somehow stagnant. The chair is a kind of response to this. The chair is in a state of extreme decay. At first glance, it appears to be one of the chairs from the embassy. But on closer inspection, you will find subtle differences such as the chair's shape, which is not quite right, and the upholstery which is not woven in the same pattern as the other chairs. The details give it away as an imposter, as an outsider, leaving you to question its belonging and state of neglect.