

IDEAL OR REAL DACHA

TATJANA MACIC

The untitled photograph (see: Ksenia Galiaeva: Untitled) is made by Russian artist Ksenia Galiaeva (1976, Pskov). Galiaeva is living and working in Amsterdam, after she completed her studies at Academy for Art and Design in 's-Hertogenbosch and at Post-St. Joost in Breda. This photograph is part of a body of work which shall be revealed to the general public during the art fair Art Amsterdam in May this year.

Male figure prominently present at the centre of the image is Ksenia Galiaeva's father. Does this simple fact change our perception and attitude towards the figure? After all a father is an important figure in everyone's life, in one way or the other. But is this particular representation of the man in question a *document* or a romanticised and idealised projection made by a daughter?

Does Galiaeva carefully construct a roll-play, a *mise-en-scène* of an imagined and ideal family life? Or does she show us a documentation of her family life, a raw trace of reality (if something as paradox as *trace of reality* exists)? The setting in which this and other works from this series is situated, is family dacha in rural Russian countryside (dacha is Russian for summer house). That only enhances the idealistic tone of the photographs. Constructed and real family relationships, yearning for family intimacy - are some of the issues that Galiaeva has put forward in this work.

The photographic technique used by Galiaeva is fashionably placed on the edge between amateurism and professionalism, she is playing with photographic development process, contrasting colours and blurred planes - all of which could raise several eyebrows amongst photo-purists or put an ironic smile on a faces of others.

Works by Ksenia Galiaeva under working title *Dacha* can be seen during the art fair Art Amsterdam, May 13-17 2009, represented by Ellen de Bruijne Projects. www.edbproject.nl