

**Ola Lanko**  
1985



***Greed*** from the series ***Operation theatre of common inclinations***

2017 | Photography print, C-print on fine-art paper, mounted and framed | 120 x 90 cm | 5 + 2 AP

**Ola Lanko** (1985) studied sociology at National University in Kiev, photography at the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague and Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. In 2012 she graduated at the photography department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. For her graduation work Ola Lanko was awarded the Steenbergen Stipendium, an acknowledged annual prize for photography graduates. In 2013 she received New talent Photography award. Since 2010 she constantly participates in various exhibitions and works on her projects. Her work was shown in numerous art institutions among others FOAM, Nederlands Fotomuseum and Musée de l'Élysée. In 2015 she was an artist in residency at WILES Contemporary art center in Brussels. Besides her artistic practice Ola teaches photography in Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague and is a guest tutor at several academies in The Netherlands and Belgium.

Two things coincide in the work of Ola Lanko: fascination with the complexity of the photographic image and a passion for its poetic power. It is not for nothing that she calls herself a “rational romantic”. Lanko combines the analytic approach of photography with a constructivist process in the form of spatial installations – “constructivist”, because the photos or photo collections involved are reworked into constructions which themselves form an “image” with a cultural charge or symbolic meaning, such as a merry-go-round, cloud or mountain (thus her term “photogenic installations”). For Lanko the significance of a photograph does not lie purely within the image itself, but depends in part on the countless connections that the image has with the world around it. Moreover, images can also have symbolic meanings, and as such they must be understood as part of a culture. Lanko’s work is on the one hand an argument for embracing this complexity of the image. On the other hand she makes a strong argument for developing visual literacy – the capacity to be able to understand the daily flood of images, also within the constantly changing web of meanings within which they exist.

The 2012 project *Required Reading* is characteristic of the thoroughness with which Lanko approaches her work: a hefty book, an exhibition and a series of performance-lectures, in which she draws on linguistics to develop an instrumentalism for the analysis of images.

### **Operation Theatre of Common Inclinations**

Lanko’s most recent series *Operation Theatre of Common Inclinations* explores the seven sins, or inclinations, which have to be conquered in order to establish a well-functioning society, where one can sacrifice his own needs for the good of others. The series consists of seven pieces. Each of them explores a single deadly sin and investigates the nature of this vice through visual metaphors and personal associations. *Operation Theatre of Common Inclinations* is a quest for primal desires and motivations. By exploring the features that have to be suppressed to build a healthy society, Lanko tries to get closer to understanding the notion of being a human. While technology provides possibilities for disembodiment, humans remain animals who have managed to create a new kind of social system. This requires them to overcome some of their natural, animal habits, inclinations, and tendencies, and to follow the rules that enable the system to make life better for everyone.