

Karin Iturralde Nurnberg's 'Architectural Fingers'

Tangents x SYB: Artists & Writers in Dialogue

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I always kept my passports after expiration. They attached themselves to me like the diaries I imagined I would be keeping in a childhood fantasy of the young girl journaling. At the end of each passport's lifetime, nearly all of its pages would remain empty. But it was never the blank pages I was interested in preserving. Rather, it was the two stamps and the one sticker that appeared yearly: one sticker from the visa office, and two stamps as an accounting for my time in the country—one at arrival, one at departure—together ensuring that I did not overrule the duration of my granted stay when visiting family.

There is something equally intimate and sterile about airport immigration, where a sticker as visa dictates the conditions of your return, and when the immigration officer decides which forms of attachment can be recognized at the border. It is with those stamps on a napkin in Karin Iturralde Nurnberg's work that I am reminded of these relations—how bureaucracy can be intimate, and how sterility is perhaps only a temporary surface.

With her installation *Architectural Fingers*, Karin plays with the formalities and expectations of both the places we move through and the relations we encounter in those spaces. She recounts landing at Schiphol Airport and noticing an immigration officer carrying stamped napkins: white, folded squares marked with seals from different countries. She asks him if she can have them. He disappears for a moment and returns without reasoning as to why not. This is how the napkin ends up in Beetsterzwaag.

But the napkin is not the only object in Karin's work that carries a story. Airplane trips function as their own medium, toilet paper sculptures become a form of public art, and handwritten notes and collages appear as witnesses to the moments where the playful brushes against the restrictive.