



Draw: 2006
 Pen, oil, paper
 on file, 40 cm x 70 cm
 51 x 25 cm
 Photo: Nathalie Kozinska



Dorothy Grostern
A Time of Innocence

heart, at once homage to her ailing elderly mother and a meditation on passing.

Some of the images are taken from old photographs, but since few survived, Grostern relied on her memory to build the series, thus transforming it from the documentary into the painterly.

In several works, the composition is divided into two images, with a garment on one side and a human figure on the other, or, in one case, focusing only on her parents' wedding clothes, forsaking the human models.

The symbolism is deeply personal—the artist's mother sewed most of these garments herself—but also universal. From Jim Dyne to Jacques Payette and Betty Goodwin, artists have incorporated clothing into their works, seeing in it endless plastic and narrative possibilities.

Like shed skin, clothes carry the scent and the shape of the person who wore them, and into their threads are woven endless human tales.

It is these memories that are at the heart of Grostern's latest works, as she struggles with a difficult personal chapter in her life, seeking in her art both a release of her own pain, and a way of communicating a higher truth about the fragility of our human existence.

Somewhat naïve and tender, these pastel and oil-paint stick on paper drawings offer a peak into an intimate journal that lures us with

its colourful pages only to tug at the heart with its story.

Little girls giggle while posing for an invisible camera, a serious young bride and her dashing groom resemble a cut-out from an antique postcard, an empty red chair sits against a row of trees... the pages turn imperceptibly.

Perhaps the most accomplished of the works is the eponymous *A Time of Innocence*, encompassing the essence of what's at the core of Grostern's latest production. Two young girls, clasping hands, walk quietly past a sleeping woman reclining in a chair, half hidden in the shadow.

It is the passing. The never-ending cycle of life, where for each hand we grasp there is one we have to let go of.

Dorota Kozinska

NATHALIE GRIMARD

VERTIGES

17 February–17 March, 2007

Galene Trois Points

www.galerietroispoints.qc.ca

In this exhibition the artist to all intents and purposes sets out the first principles of minimalism. The casual observer will see little more than predominantly blank sheets of paper, some coloured string, several needles, and especially, numerous pinholes. Indeed the hurried gallery-goer may quickly conclude that this exhibit represents a pre-computer screen version of pixel!

Moreover, the sheer starkness of this show could easily repel facile art lovers. When entering the gallery, the visitor gets the sense of an empty, scrubbed up, hospital operating room, with its inimitably cold, aseptic, sterile environment. Here the artist's works lie flat against bleached walls, like surgical instruments neatly arrayed in a steel tray before an operation. The glint of a few sharp needles that dangle from threads heightens the impression of a surgeon's scalpels and sutures on display. An incisive, if not severe aesthetic, thus pervades *Vertiges*.

The Spartan ethos of this exhibition to no small degree results

from the pristine, almost virginal tenor of Grimard's art. In this vein the leitmotif of whiteness runs throughout her works so that they constitute variations on this colour in one shade or another, white permeates these pieces to such an extent that it often comes perilously close to blanching the pinpoint figures on these paperworks.

Therein resides the significance of vertigo, from which this exhibition takes its name. Grimard's tableaux create virtual whiteouts that mock the points of the compass, blur boundaries, and undermine dimensionality. Even time appears erased, so that the perforated animal and human forms in these set pieces seem to exist in a state of suspended animation.

Furthermore, the vertigo of these characters derives from an existential malaise. Their presence on paper ironically occurs through the absence of paper, namely pinholes. In effect, they owe their being to non-being. This parallels Grimard's frequent recourse to blankness as both the negation of colour and negative space. She thereby situates her characters at the interstice of vacuity and substance, so wonder these pinprick creatures assume the guise of wraiths, aptly accentuated by their hollowness. They, animal and human, represent transitional entities that move inexorably, like all created beings, between existence and oblivion. The vertigo they experience, and the viewer vicariously through them, arise, not from heights, but from the dizzying realization that by virtue of our creaturehood we constantly teeter on the brink of non-existence—and will inevitably fall into that abyss.

In essence then, Grimard employs the semblance of nothingness as a foil to articulate an existentialist aesthetic. The diptych *Attente I, Attente II*, epitomizes this. Each frame features a lone, pinpoint, human profile, barely perceptible amidst a colourless, denuded sheetscape. In fact, both silhouettes readily fade in and out of sight so as to emphasize the liminality of these characters. Meanwhile, the bleakness of their setting bespeaks a no-man's-land that underscores their isolation; a sentiment compounded by the solitary confinement

to which Grimard condemns the two since she relegates them to separate quadrangles. The gravitas of these twin scenes prove the touchstone of *Vertiges*.

Norman F. Cornett, Ph.D.

SUTTON

DETOURS

ARTS SUTTON GALLERY

7 rue Academy

Sutton

Tel: 450 538-2563

info@artssutton.com

This is a terrific spot to visit on a summer's day. This contemporary art gallery has a welcoming, small town ambience, and is dedicated to the presentation and development of local talent as much as to international artists. Its programming is vibrant, with more than 200 exhibitions organized since the gallery opened its doors in 1980.

In addition to art exhibits, the gallery also offers workshops and lecture series.

Because of its location and activities, Arts Sutton Gallery attracts an equally diverse public, from art student and local citizens to tourists.

The gallery is located in the village of Sutton, 105 kilometers from Montréal and is open Thursday to Sunday from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Dorota Kozinska

HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS FROM MONTREAL:

Take AUTOROUTE 10 E. to exit- EXIT 68- toward COWANSVILLE

Follow PROVINCIAL SECONDARY ROUTE 139 and 104 that leads you to Sutton

The Gallery is located in the village at 7 Academy Road behind the Esso Station.