

Together turning in time: family, nature and the ties that bind at Galerie Trois Points | The Belgo Report

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Anne-Renée Hotte at Galerie Trois Points

After the relative tranquility of the summer months at the Belgo building, September has ushered in a tide of new exhibitions on its (unusually crisp) breeze. Saturday's veritable festival of vernissages heralded this shift, and the energy and quality of the offerings was like a tonic.

Galerie Trois Points presented **Anne-Renee Hotte's** newest work, *Toutes les familles heureuses se ressemblent*. The main space of the gallery had been cut on a diagonal by the middle wall, an unusual architectural decision that heightened my awareness and attention to perception. Embedded in this wall were eleven screens of varying sizes in a non-linear arrangement. Each video

depicted a pair of people in a family—a father and son, elderly sisters, or young lovers, for example—in a natural landscape. Some sat with their arms around each other, one held a boy in his raised arms, some faced each other, hands on shoulders, forming a bridge. They made only the most subtle movements—a child swung her legs slowly, as if she was a mechanical doll come alive; a thumb moved back and forth across a fur coat. Each of these couples turned, slowly, as if standing on a rotating disc below the frame.

Hotte continues her meditation on family relations, generations and the cycles of time in these simple and quiet, but rich, images. Her work evokes for me a sense of ritual and archetypes but is not obvious or dogmatic. The sense of alive stillness emanating from these people somehow makes their human-ness easier to see: in their relation to and care of the other, and in the ties of love and belonging.

The adjoining gallery was darkened, and it was as though a different time had been summoned. In a large black-and-white photograph on the far wall the family appeared again, dressed in white and assembled in a group, very much like pictures of family picnics from the earliest days of outdoor photography. The children's faces were blurred, their constant movement at odds with the demands of the long exposure time. There was something haunting about it, as there often is when we look at very old photographs. Sometimes it's hard to believe that these ossified scenes were once animated by the sounds, smells and movements of a real day, now far in the past.

There was a further oddness to these figures that I couldn't quite place, though, a kind of ghostly distortion in their faces. They seemed out of place, actually, and consequently seemed out of time, but only just. It made me wonder whether they are an eternal family that travels together through time, never quite settling in one before moving on. I also thought about what a strange thing family is—who are these people that we are born into knowing, how random are these assemblages of people with whom we are, nonetheless, inescapably connected?

Behind that wall was mounted a small, white tree of sorts illuminated by a spotlight, casting a filamentous

shadow. It suggested death, but also a release from the cycles of growth and decay. It wasn't perfectly shaped, it was singular. It is much like how I feel about Hotte's work in general: elegant and full of suggestion, but retaining that important core of mystery that compels us to keep looking.

This beautifully presented exhibition runs from September 7 until October 5, 2013.

Galerie Trois Points, space 520 Anne-Renée Hotte *Toutes les familles heureuses se ressemblent*
September 7 – October 5, 2013 www.galerietroispoints.com

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