

## Natural Gesture: Anne-Renée Hotte Exhibition at Galerie Trois Points

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Installation view, Anne-Renée Hotte, Natural Gesture at Galerie Trois Points, Montreal Quebec, photo by Jean-Michael Seminario

ANNE-RENÉE HOTTE  
NATURAL GESTURE  
Galerie Trois Points

[Montreal](#)

March 10 – April 21, 2018

*“There is no meaning if meaning is not shared, and not because there would be an ultimate or first signification that all beings have in common, but because meaning is itself the sharing of Being.”*

-- Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* [1]

In her third exhibition at Galerie Trois Points, Anne-Renée Hotte combines video, photography and installation in *Natural Gesture*, which continues to explore her deep and abiding concern with communication and community.

This most recent work dilates on several levels of embodied interconnectivities in which speech is absent and dialogue transpires between bodies. Hotte specifies socially coded gestures in videos that shed light on human behaviour in the life-world. They dilate on embodiment and touching, intimacy and the nonverbal.

Hotte's videos are never less than startling in tenor and that is once again the case here. Whether in the postural protocols of synchronised swimming *Natural Gesture (Nageuses)*, (3 mins. 41 sec., 2018) the intertwined routines of wrestlers wrestling *Natural Gesture (Les lutteurs)* (7 min 28 sec., 2018) or the combustible passions in *Natural Gesture (Kiss)* (7 mins. 52 sec., 2018), Hotte sheds light on a phenomenon that recent developments in both developmental psychology and neurobiology increasingly highlight: the stellar significance of non-verbal, body-mediated learning processes all too often ignored or overlooked. In early childhood and later in life, experiences are codified in algorithmic patterns of bodily interaction that are then unconsciously actuated in relatable relational constructs. Hotte dilates on these interactions with characteristic flair and ardour, revealing the very fundamentals of our social existence. A visual artist whose understanding of empathy and the nonverbal is consequential, and highly refined, she works it into the very fabric of this show.



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As a counterpoint (or sounding board), Hotte intertwines her videos with large black and white photographic images of flowers and vegetation. These images are simply extraordinary. *Fleurs de dos* (2018, inkjet print on archival paper, 60.5" x 89.5") leaps out at us like the strangest and most astonishingly artefactual of floral apparitions and stakes a lasting claim upon us, as though it had just moseyed out of the British sci-fi novel by John Wyndham and subsequent film adaptation *The Day of the Triffids* (1951, 1962).

Shot with stealth at night at places around Montreal (including the *Jardin botanique*), the floral array has a consummately weird aura and is even feral in its mien. Shot as though it is nearing the end of its lifespan or imported from the dark side of the moon, these vegetation flash shots amplify the human acts documented elsewhere, and they seem to blindside the photographer, as though they have been stripped of all earthly familiarity, just as the videos highlight a consummately human dialogue but one stripped of speech.



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There are some nice modifications to the gallery layout that cement the sense of an environmental installation: a low wall one side of which ran her video of the wrestlers, while the other side was laminated with a photographic image of the dense spooky vegetation. A number of the photographs are leaning against the wall, suggesting something improvisory in

their placement. This seems fitting since Hotte seems to be in pursuit of a nonvisible and a nonverbal that escape the tidy confines of hierarchy and taxonomy but which both effortlessly evince truth in her body of work.

Hotte's is a remarkably sophisticated and well-seasoned authorial voice, and it is one that dilates as knowingly on the family as it does on the wider horizon of human community in the human lifeworld.



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A blurred photograph of an art gallery interior. In the foreground, a wooden table holds a white, fluffy object. In the background, a framed artwork is visible on the wall. The text 'ANNE-RENÉE HOTTE' and 'Natural Gesture' is overlaid in large, black, sans-serif font.

# ANNE-RENÉE HOTTE

## Natural Gesture

In her earlier work, the artist was using sounds and images in order to embellish the sense of a "global community of citizens" in a way that seemed to have much in common with the work of the philosopher Jurgen Habermas.[1] while now it seems clear that she is closer in spirit to French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy and his semiotic phenomenology of community.

The preliminary step for Nancy in laying the ground for his semiotic is a description of human community followed by conscious awareness *of awareness* and the key role of the touch in both communication and community. Touch, for Nancy, is implicit in the lived, embodied experience of being with the Other: it marks out the limits of both contact *and* separation. In this regard, Hotte's video *Natural Gesture (Kiss)* is the mainstay of her show, and it segues nicely with what Nancy said: "It is by touching the other that the body is a body, absolutely separated and shared."

Emilie Grandmont Bérubé, the Director of Trois Points, deserves real credit for her strong and continuing representation of talents that count amongst the most important in Canada -- including Hotte, Natascha Niederstrass and Natalie Reis -- and who make her gallery one of the finest and most cutting-edge spaces in Montreal. **WM**

### Endnotes

1. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 2.
2. See Jurgen Habermas "Concluding Comments on Empirical Approaches to Deliberative

Politics.” in *Acta Politica*, no. 40, 2005, pp. 384–392.

3. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Birth to Presence* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 204.

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