Espace Sculpture

Presence 27: The future of women in sculpture

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Du jardin au désert
From Garden to Desert
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Citer ce compte rendu
The beginning of a new millennium of women's art is marked by an exhibition of twenty-seven female professional artists from south east New Brunswick. From the centre of contemporary Acadian culture, these artists have created new three-dimensional work on the theme of "the dress as self-portrait", a theme rich in history and significance for feminist art practice and contemporary popular culture. These sculptural works inhabit the two main exhibition spaces of the gallery like a collective of manifest and articulate characters. The collective is strong in the breadth and depth of its members' individual contributions. The installation and sculpture works-cover the two main exhibition spaces of the gallery like a collective of manifest and articulate characters. The collective is strong in the breadth and depth of its members' individual contributions. A selection of pre-1960 paintings by francophone women, from the collection of Maurice Cormier and Maurice A. Leblanc, complements the installation by painting to an established tradition of women artists in Acadia. Lise Robichaud, one of the exhibition organizers, sees these pictorial works, with their quality of beauty from nature, at the heart of Presence 27.

The installation and sculptural works are diverse in their use of materials, process, theme and treatment, and even in their fundamental approach to art. The works range from the traditional stone sculpture of Marie-Hélène Allain, expressed through Presence 2000, to the cool post-modern photo-based objects, such as Ce n’est pas une Pipe by Valerie LeBlanc and Mesure du Temps by Lise Robichaud. Across the exhibition the use of natural elements such as dirt, stone, found objects and wood stand side by side with elements of metal, photography, and plastic. These self-portraits, despite their differences in treatment and process, seem to revolve and grow out of the appropriation of found objects or the contemplation of personal photographs or objects from the past, especially childhood. In this exhibition of self-portraits, their fundamental approach to art and expression. Some dress forms are displayed on mannequins, plinths or other supports. The work of Marjolaine Bourgeois, of crocheted coloured wool, represents the dress as an outer skin, expressing the physical body as a finely tuned sensory instrument. Anne-Marie Sirois' completely original presentation (Sans titre) positions a carefully constructed bodice made of pattern paper over a lit floor lamp with a crinoline shade. It evokes the body and spirit contained with the decorative armour of the feminine, seeks to shield. Many other works in the exhibition, including Nancy Morin's Second Skin, work with this ground relationship.

Some of these works are compilations of objects invested with personal narrative, others are forged, modeled or constructed from raw material; regardless of the approach, the exhibition is remarkable in that the character of the artist is expressed in each work. These self-portraits speak with authentic voice of a facility with process and of commitment to art and expression. Presence 27: the future of women in sculpture
Galerie d'art de l'Université de Moncton
June 7-September 10, 2000.