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Famille, Photos de Gabor Szilasi, Visual Arts Centre, 2008

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Better known for working in video and film in the 1990s, Gisèle Poupart has also published her comics in fanzines, and exhibited her paintings and drawings. An early interactive video collaboration with Claude Pare at Galerie Skol involved storytelling sequences mixed with texts by Claude Pare, the first interactive video ever produced in Quebec where viewers played a situationist role. The viewer could modify the video sequencing and the text likewise changed. Each potential narrative, originating from one “story”, altered by the audience, was then printed into a “book” at Skol. Other early 1990s videos by Gisèle Poupart with their minimalist performative aesthetic included one with a door that opened, with an adoring cat sitting beside her, or framed between two graffito figures, as a mirror image from the “Inside” where a family was posed for the camera seated in front of Doreen and Andrea who are standing behind him in a doorway, a sombre portrait reminiscent of the photographs of Great Depression; Gabor the patriarch watching over his sibling and leaning her elbow on the table, a sombre portrait reminiscent of the images of the Great Depression; Gabor the patriarch watching over his own son, his daughter Andrea, also an accomplished artist-photographer, is a natural star, posing with the same nonchalant abandon during childhood antics as in later, sombre teenage years. In a tub with her and her baby boy. Andrea and Andrea's partner, painter Michael Merrill's baby boy. Andrea is the central character in most of the images.

Le Contrat, Gisèle Poupart's debut comic book is very unusual, and closer to art than the art of the comic book. If you were to remove the pretense here. Poupart leaves the image open, at a point of tension, of a story unfolding in time, with a string sense of the social, and it is the faces and expressions of the characters that have that ring of truth, found in the contexts and atmospheres Gisèle Poupart creates.

John Grande