

Significant Details/Détails pertinents
Glendon Gallery Toronto May 14 - June 24, 1992

autoportrait à Toronto

autoportrait à Toronto, an installation created around an opening panel in the gallery wall, recalls that memory is in the body and that the body is invested with social relations. This investment makes dualistic oppositions redundant. Addressing this redundancy opens a dialogue with the self and with the Other.

The panel of the wall left slightly ajar reveals the existence of a window. The daylight filters onto the gallery wall and lights the piece. This opening of just several inches allows the gallery visitor to see through the window beyond the building entrance to the summer-green of the trees, or to see a blueprint reflected onto the window glass from the back side of the panel. Adjusting the eye's focus, one catches the fleeting image of the blueprint 'tattooed' onto the bodies of those passing quickly between the inside and the outside of the building.

This blueprint, facing the window and clearly visible from the outside, provides a reading of the work's disparate elements. Images of my french-speaking immigrant grandparents from Québec to New England, and fragments of newspaper clippings about them, take the form of puzzle pieces. Text fills the bottom left corner:

AS WITH A PICTURE PUZZLE ONE STARTS BY CONSTRUCTING THE BORDER.
ONE NEEDS A FRAME TO CIRCUMSCRIBE THE ABSENCES.
SUCH CONTAINMENT IS A COMFORT.

Inside the gallery, painted vertical bands of deep blood red delineate separate yet continuous spaces between two modified commercial picture puzzles propped on narrow mirror shelves. Missing pieces from the puzzles reveal images of my father in one case and of my mother in the other.

Three small oval portraits represent the body as it is invested with social relations. Placed on a field the same colour as the gallery floor, one portrait images people dancing on the Berlin wall at the moment of the wall's dissolution, another images a studio portrait of my grandmother and of my father as a young boy. Just outside the colour field, the third portrait reproduces a recent lettre to the editor calling for a Berlin-type wall to be constructed dividing east and west Montreal. Words placed directly on the gallery wall, between the lettre and a vertical band of blood red read:

IN THE TURBULENT SEA
IN THE OSCILLATIONS OF THE HEART AND THE BRAIN
THE IRREGULAR SIDE