

PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY

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ARTslanT

GALLERY HOP IN TOWN WITH NATALIE STANCHFIELD

Evanescence and Fragility

Nuclear Family/ No Vanishing Point

May 1 – June 14, 2008



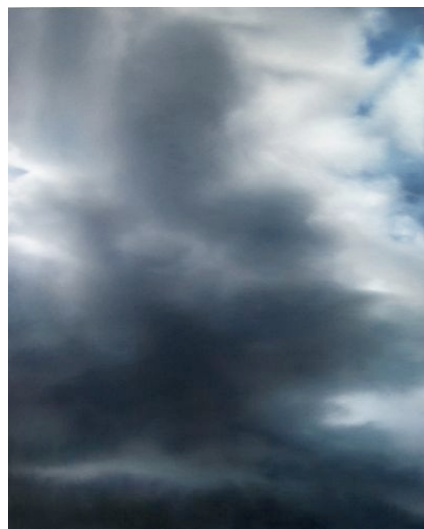
Until June 14th, as you walk in the door of Patricia Sweetow Gallery you will be greeted by a luminous, ghostly, silk deer, the head of Sarah Wagner's Nuclear Family. He is suspended from the ceiling with silk thread, his body given shape by mat board forming a minimal skeleton, but appears to stand proudly upright on his delicately crafted cloven hooves. Further in the project room is the rest of his family--the

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mother deer, and two fauns, tentatively inhabiting the project room as if it were the family's den yet still an art gallery and an alien environment. The silk's transparency coupled with its reflective qualities give the deer a ghostly presence under the gallery lights, which speaks instantly to Wagner's intent: to display "an intense fragility that mimics the tenuous balance in nature."



In the main rooms are the works of Gale Antokal, which at first glance appear to be photographs taken out of the passenger side of a speeding car, but upon closer inspection are superbly crafted chalk pastels. With a limited palette of blues, greys and greens, she paints scenes that are already passing--a group of trees in a snowy forest whizzing by, or a dark cast of thunderclouds above. These two scenes recur and are numerically grouped in series entitled Space for the clouds, and Place for the trees. The exhibition is entitled No Vanishing Point and this is true in all these paintings: no horizon, and no focal point, implying no permanence. These are investigations in space and place, but express only the vanishing, the fleetingness of such scenes.



These two shows exhibited together at Patricia Sweetow form a very cohesive and immediately understood message about the evanescence and fragility of our natural world. With that in mind, the artists statements, rather than clarifying the works' intent, serve to invest too deeply in it specific agendas. Antokal's mentions the plight of "endangered species" and Wagner's talks about how her work is an investigation of "endocrine disruption theory;" however this scientific background hardly feels integral to the work, rather weighing these delicate and subtle art works down, when their message is clear enough and already perfectly expressed.



--Natalie Stanchfield

(*Images from top to bottom: Gale Antokal, No Vanishing Point, May 1 - June 14, 2008; Patricia Sweetow Gallery, Place 24, 2008, chalk pastel on paper, 60 x 65", courtesy of the Patricia Sweetow Gallery. Sarah Wagner, Nuclear Family, May 1 - June 14, 2008; Patricia Sweetow Gallery, Nuclear Family: Father, 2008, silk organza, acid-free laminated mat board, silk thread, 80.5 x 59.5 x 12", installation photo courtesy of the Patricia Sweetow Gallery. Sarah Wagner, Nuclear Family, May 1 - June 14, 2008; Patricia Sweetow Gallery, Nuclear Family, silk organza, acid-free laminated mat board, silk thread, dimensions variable, installation photo courtesy of the Patricia Sweetow Gallery. Gale Antokal, No Vanishing Point, May 1 - June 14, 2008; Patricia Sweetow Gallery, Space 4, 2008, chalk pastel on paper, 70 x 60", courtesy of the Patricia Sweetow Gallery. Gale Antokal, No Vanishing Point, May 1 - June 14, 2008; Patricia Sweetow Gallery, Place 22, 2008, chalk pastel on paper, 40 x 38", courtesy of the Patricia Sweetow Gallery.)

Posted by Natalie Stanchfield on 5/11