

# Czech artist makes solo debut with Trianon exhibition

PETRA MALÁ MILLER  
SHOWCASING HER  
PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK

LETHBRIDGE HERALD

The Trianon Gallery along with Savill Group Architecture is running the exhibition, Petra Malá Miller: The Voice Reached Us Through the Floor, but the Words Themselves Were Lost & other photographs today through May 15. This is Miller's

first solo exhibition in Canada.

Born in former Czechoslovakia, Miller grew up in Blatnice, a village in southern Moravia.

Her photographic work explores the poetics of childhood, of innocence, aging, memory and loss and raises questions surrounding cultural identity, the individual, the family and the community.

By reconstructing incidents from her past and placing them within the present, Miller filters experiences, memories and reveries through an emotional process of recollection and translation.

Her work takes place at the

intersection between the real and the imaginary, between truth and fiction, memory and forgetting.

The Voice Reached Us through the Floor, but the Words Themselves Were Lost from 2009-2010 is presented in its entirety. Two augmented portraits represent the artist's current work: Portrait of My Father After His Diagnosis is from a larger cycle of works exploring the artist's patriline.

Portrait with Protective Facemask, juxtaposed with a photograph depicting the Dukovany nuclear power station, is part of the artist's ongoing work called, Living in the Zone.

Miller's work is primarily autobiographical but the photographs defy precise definition.

Several are staged tableaux. In others, the artist adopts the

point-of-fact style of lyrical documentary photography. Fact and fiction jostle one another.

In The Voice Reached Us Through the Floor, but the Words Themselves Were Lost the portraits of a preadolescent boy and girl live double lives.

Like a mirror image reflecting one's left side as one's right, the children, cast in porcelain light, play themselves but are also modelled on the artist's former self, as a child.

The artist's childhood memory interlaces with the identities of the children, whose chaste features and genders blur.

The two portraits locate the project in narrative time, the artist's past, a prepubescent flowering, and an age of innocence.

Looking back, drawing the outlines of the past across the

present, Miller negotiates spans of time and dislocations in space through recollection and projection; recollections stranded in time and place, projections of things to come.

For Miller, the camera as an aide-mémoire is a key to self-knowledge and self-construction.

Miller earned her MFA from the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design, Prague in 2008.

In 2009, she received the ESSL Museum Award for Contemporary Art, Klosterneuburg, Vienna.

Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in Europe, the United States and in Canada.

Miller lives and works between Blatnice and Prague, Czech Republic and Lethbridge. She is represented by the Jiri Svestka Gallery, Prague.

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