



Øyvind Hjelmen



Marie Docher



Shelley Calton



Catherine Cameron

REFLECTING HABITUS

Guest curated by Tracy Xavia Karner

BERING & JAMES

Saturday, September 27, 2008 6-8pm Exhibition dates: 9/27/08 – 10/9/08

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Bering & James' first photography exhibition brings together an international group of contemporary lens-based artists whose work coalesces as perspective, place, and time intersect. *Reflecting Habitus* is a celebration of images that illuminate the artist's vision as it echos a shared external world. The notion of habitus comes from french sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's work about the influences of the social spaces within which we live our lives. For Bourdieu, habitus is a system of dispositions—ways of seeing and understanding the world. *Reflecting Habitus* features the work of Shelley Calton, Catherine Cameron, Marie Docher, and Øyvind Hjelmen as they share visual narratives of desire, memory, dreams and fears—inviting viewers to experience four distinctive and intriguing habitus.

Well known Houston photographer, Shelley Calton, isolates physical and symbolic space of women's lives in her series *Invisible Thread*. Elegant and tasteful whispers of lingerie from days past drape against the white backdrops of memory. Remnants of personal moments, nightgowns and slips reflect the private truths of individual women's experience. Sensual and tactile, the images bring to mind the women who might have lived within these bits of silk and lace. *Invisible thread* evokes the common thread that connects all women and the ways that feminine bodies have been covered, contained and desired. Calton's soft focus and diffused light leaves to wonder how the satin felt as it slid against warm skin.

In *Ego and Persona*, Catherine Cameron creates a visual journey into the deeper recesses of her world. Working with themes of longing and memory, Cameron explores the blurred boundaries between a rich inner life and its external manifestations. Teacups and rumpled beds are interwoven with snowy moonlight nights and lakes shrouded in fog. Within the scarce Norwegian light, Cameron creates images that balance the ambiguity of endless twilight with times of personal warmth and intimacy. Steadfast in her investigations, Cameron faces moments of emotional dark and light with the same clarity of vision. The whole of a life with all its contours, complications, and comforts can be found in *Ego and Persona*. Cameron's stunningly poignant and deeply evocative silver gelatin prints suggest a well seasoned, deeply passionate life that resonates strongly and widely.

What if the sky were to fall on our heads, Marie Docher asks in her series, *Toutatis*. In her photographic work, Docher often addresses broader aspects of the human condition through her own experience. Reflections of her habitus, her connection to the woods of Auvergne where she grew up and traces of travel, transformation and loss are recurrent themes in her work. In *Toutatis*, Docher uses the environmentally threatened yet stunningly sensuous landscape of the Camargue in southern France as a metaphor for our own vulnerable existence—as individual bodies and a global community. *Toutatis* refers to both an ancient Celtic god as well as an asteroid with an erratic orbit that brings it frightfully close to the earth. After unexplainably losing her hearing in one ear which resulted in a loss of equilibrium, Docher was reminded of the ancient Celts who were believed to fear only one thing—that the sky might fall. Her resulting skyless landscapes have a lunar quality with solid black expanses instead of skies. Strikingly beautiful, the deep, limitless expanse of space disorients the viewer, perhaps just enough to feel *Toutatis*' divine intervention.

With transcendent vision, Øyvind Hjelmen has created a seductively beautiful world in *Elsenhere*. An ongoing, life long project *Elsenhere* is Hjelmen's soothing response to the anxieties and distress of modern life. An exacting craftsman with a poet's soul, Hjelmen's silver gelatin prints call to mind the pictorialist tradition yet with contemporary sensibilities. Whether in individual prints or nestled in fine, handcrafted leather folios, moments of wonder and delight beckon. Sometimes crystal clear and other times obscured, but always deeply expressive. The intimacy of the small format is to be savored like a fine wine and explored with a full sensory palette—come close and breathe deeply—Hjelmen's images unfold and expand. Each glimpse reveals another layer of charm and grace. *Elsenhere* is a magical space that enriches all who visit and stay awhile. –Tracy Xavia Karner, Guest Curator

Reflecting Habitus is on display at Bering & James through the 9th of October.