

SUSAN EVE JAHODA
RECENT WORKS

February 10- March 31, 1985

Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, New Jersey

Susan Jahoda's work over the past three years has taken the form of an enquiry into Personal relationships otherwise obscured by daily life. She examines the universal struggle of the family - what it means to be connected and how imperfect those connections sometimes are. She probes the ambiguities of love and these are reflected in a series of oppositions. We find separation mingled with togetherness, love with hate, despair with longing.

Unlike her earlier works, that were both smaller and more abstract, the present photographs are blatantly figurative and on a mural scale. Members of the artist's family are juxtaposed throughout in a formal counterpoint that emphasizes their existential relationship. Jahoda describes her aim as being.

To explore the position of individuals as members of a family.

To represent them as links in a chain, each one separate and yet bound.

To express the conflicts of individuals struggling against the confines of roles.

Father, Mother, Daughter, Sisters, are each subjected to the speed of the camera and the rapidity of memory. The artist not only perceives, constructs and adjusts her vocabulary but is herself included within the scene.

None of the gestures of intimacy are complete or adequate, yet these people clearly belong with one another. They touch, they glance, they are bonded together but that bond is imperfect. In some cases one person's presence seems spectral, as if not really there, except in the thoughts of another.

The arrangements and coloring processes extend the range of this imagery beyond that of an orthodox portrait. Constructed interiors, selected landscape settings and figural groupings that depart from traditional compositional unity, intensify one's perceptions of the various mental states within the works. Perhaps these pictorial arrangements suggest that we are all ultimately isolated, innately, on a philosophical level Yet Susan Jahoda's work is also filled with hope. In the images of the garden, the place where the family began, in the aging parents resting in fetal positions, the womb-like imagery of the egg, which encircles several of the figures, she has given us her belief in rebirth. There exists the possibility of reincarnation , not into new forms, but into the people we tried to be.

With these fifteen images Susan Jahoda shows us not only what it is that connects her to them, but also what it is that connects them to her. And finally what it is that connects all of us.

Mary Morris
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