

Cloud Illusions

– Aubrey Reeves, TSV Programming Director

What are the perfect conditions for cloud watching? The day has to be warm and languid. You have to be young and carefree. The sky has to be a vivid azure and the clouds a brilliant white. Most of us likely have vague memories of just such a perfect day spent staring at the sky, when time seemed to stretch on forever. Trinity Square Video's Artist-in-Residence Sara Angelucci takes inspiration for her new installation *Room to Remember* from childhood memories of such idle days and invites visitors to the gallery to also partake in that memory.

Raised on a small farm in Southern Ontario, Angelucci recalls spending many dreamy afternoons watching clouds when she was assigned the task of minding the cows as they grazed. Her duty was to ensure they did not wander into the corn patch and eat the corn, which was harmful to them. Entrusted with this sense of responsibility and accompanied by her dog, a warm summer day framed by billowing clouds has remained an ideal of childhood. However, she acknowledges that this memory might be too perfect to be really true. She says "Perhaps, this treasured afternoon is the distillation of many summer afternoons spent cow-minding; not a real memory, but the mind's distillation, the best moments—fused over time into a mythology of an idealized memory."¹

In much of her past photographic and video works, Angelucci has explored the limitations of memory, acknowledging that it can be a faulty conglomeration of many experiences. As Shirley Maddill writes of Angelucci's work, "There is always a struggle between an "ideal" past and the "real" past."² In her photographic series *The Perfect Past* (2000), Angelucci revisited childhood places, photographing them with a faulty toy camera. The cheap camera caused many light leaks and imperfections in her images, mimicking the discomfort Angelucci felt when discovering these places were not exactly as she remembered. She realized "Throughout this work, notions of dislocation, the passing of time, disruption of childhood, and the fleeting nature of memory are all intermingled. The past, it would seem, is perfect only in the mind's eye."³ This tension between the idyllic representation and reality is likewise evident in *Room to Remember*, infusing the installation with a wistfulness for the quintessential cloud-watching day that maybe never fully existed.

Before one goes inside the gallery, something shiny here and there on the exterior wall to the gallery may catch the visitor's eye. Walking back and forth in front of the wall, one might see glossy white text slowly reveal itself against the white wall. Four different quotes seem to float up along the white expanse, like the differ-

ent strata of clouds on an overcast day. "You must not blame me if I do talk to the clouds," a quote from Henry David Thoreau floats up above G.K. Chesterton's declaration that, "There are no rules of architecture for a castle in the clouds." These ruminations of famous writers puts one into the right frame of mind for cloud watching, but the white-on-white text also hones the perceptions. Through this text, Angelucci is sharpening the viewer's observational skills for the more difficult task of seeing visions in the clouds.

Inside the gallery is a 12 minute video loop of billowing clouds against an azure sky. The video has been subtly animated to have faces, animals and strange creatures sometimes appear in the clouds. There are head-phones for listening to an intimate sound design that further situates the patron inside the idealized past. Gentle breezes cause the rustling of tall grasses, there are sounds of cows in the distance and occasional birds chirping. Two lawn chairs invite the viewer to sit awhile and take some time with the seductive images and sounds.

Thus more than illustrating Angelucci's specific memory, the installation is about creating a space that prepares us for thinking and seeing in a child-like way, which is a joyful indulgence in the hectic adult world. Angelucci invites us to shed the blinders that limit our imagination and be prepared to recall cloud illusions.

Bio

Sara Angelucci is a photo and video artist living in Toronto. She completed her B.A. at the University of Guelph and her M.F.A. at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She has exhibited her photography across Canada including exhibitions at Le Mois de la Photo in Montreal, Ace Art in Winnipeg, Vu in Quebec City, the Toronto Photographer's Workshop, the MacLaren Art Centre in Barrie, the Art Gallery of Hamilton and the Richmond Art Gallery. Her videos have been screened across Canada and included in festivals in Europe, Australia and Hong Kong. Sara has participated in artist residencies at NSCAD (Halifax), the Banff Centre and at Biz-Art in Shanghai, China. Sara's work is represented by the Wynick/Tuck Gallery and VTape in Toronto. Her work can be viewed at www.sara-angelucci.ca

Credits

Animation: Sharon Switzer

Sound Design: Rick Hyslop

Installation Technician: Lawrence Molloy

The artist would like to thank Marcus Schubert and all TSV's Staff for their support during the residency.

1. Sara Angelucci, Artist Statement, *Room to Remember*, 2008.

2. Shirley Madill, "Everything in My Father's Wallet / Everything in My Wallet," *Somewhere in Between*. Exhibition Catalogue. Cambridge/Hamilton: Cambridge Galleries & Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2006.

3. Sara Angelucci, Artist Statement, *The Perfect Past*, 2000.



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Master Class

April 12, 2008, 1-4pm

\$20 for TSV members and \$25 non-members

In the Master Class, Angelucci examines how the mediums of photography and video differ when representing and analyzing memory and personal history. Angelucci will take students through an in-depth look at her own practice and compare it to other artists working with similar themes. The class size is limited to ten and is recommended for artists and students with some knowledge of video art. To enroll contact TSV at (416) 593-1332.



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Trinity Square Video and the Images Festival present

Sara Angelucci

Room to Remember



Exhibition: April 5 - May 3, 2008
 Master Class: April 12, 2008, 1-4pm