

For immediate release

MICAH LEXIER, 37
AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

Montréal, June 3, 1998. The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents *Micah Lexier, 37*, from June 17 to this coming September 20. The exhibition by this Canadian artist contains pieces — objects, photographs, photographic installations — produced over the last 10 years. In his work, the artist explores the notions of identity and belonging. Micah Lexier was born on November 13, 1960; he is therefore now 37 years old. This information, generally considered of secondary importance in the appreciation of a work, explains the title of this exhibition.

A tradition of the portrait and self-portrait

The notions of identity and belonging (to a family, a sex, a social group, etc.) play a dominant role in Lexier's art. According to curator Pierre Landry, Lexier's work focuses on our relations with others, the connections on which a group is based, the criteria used to characterize an individual and the frequent arbitrariness of those same criteria — in short, the knowledge of oneself and of others, which can only be partial.

At first glance, Lexier's works are distinguished by their meticulous technique, which seems deliberately devoid of any form of expressivity. A certain detachment, as well as an obvious restraint, seem to mark this work. But Lexier's art is also enlivened by a strong emotional component based mainly on borrowings from the tradition of the portrait and self-portrait. Doubtless its chief quality is that it delivers, through an arguably "cold" aesthetic, an extremely powerful emotional charge.

Measurement of time, quantification

In developing his pieces, Lexier thus makes frequent use of measurement and quantification, an effort that has the effect of constraining and exacerbating our attempts to delimit a phenomenon or define an individual. The notion of measurement, and the comparative relations that emerge from it, thus constitute both the organizing principle of these works and the basis of their strength.

Scientific knowledge invariably entails observation, measurement and systematization. This is an essential condition for the mind to have a certain grasp of the environment and get beyond a merely qualitative perception of things. But a phenomenon never comes down to just the sum of its parts, and our relation to the world inevitably stems from a complex blend of affect and reason. This simple observation seems to underlie the labour of measurement and quantification which, for Lexier, is at the origin of many of his works, presented here for the first time at the Musée.