

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

May 30, 2009

GWEN MACGREGOR AT JESSICA BRADLEY ART + PROJECTS

\$2,500-\$4,000. Until June 20, 1450 Dundas St. W., Toronto; 416-537-3125

Gwen MacGregor has a certain fineness of vision - and a sheer, transforming sensibility honed to give that vision a habitation and a name. A great deal of her exquisitely lyrical art is made from what is most often simply overlooked by the rest of us.

Her *Snowblob* series of photoworks, for example - as ungainly as their overall title may be - are, well, blobs of snow, caught and held in the crotches of tree branches. Isolated in what are now greening, otherwise spring-bound landscapes, these isolated suspensions of snow - which can sometimes look like albino porcupines or aerial jackrabbits - are apparently the result of certain conditions of extreme, cyclical temperature change. Everything melts except for these curious, creature-like nodes of snow that remain - snowball punctuation marks - as the last sigh of a retreating winter.

Equally remarkable, as the trophies of an enhanced, visionary sense of observation, are her video works - especially *Going*, made during a recent residency in France. By reversing her daily photographing of a copse of trees coming gradually into bud and leafing out - so that the trees begin in full verdure and retreat back into bareness - MacGregor is able to generate a chilling little sermonette about environmental threat and ecological destabilization. How? By allowing us to see that as the leaves of the trees clear themselves away (running backward in time), there is now revealed what was before concealed: two nuclear cooling towers standing stolidly just beyond the glade.