

CHANTAL AKERMAN

Marcher à côté de ses lacets dans un frigidaire vide*
June 22-July 24, 2004

It all started off with the journal, my grandmother's journal. The only thing we have left, my mother always says.

Often, I mull it over in my mind and I work with the notion of lacking, of nothingness as my mother also says. Here, I worked with what we had left. Not much, yet an entire world.

For years, I was obsessed by this journal, this 'Tagebuch' which begins by "I am a woman! Therefore, I cannot...", written in Polish in 1920 by a 15 year old girl in a very Orthodox Jewish milieu, my grandmother, the mother of my mother.

This journal, one finds it in the exhibition's two parts.

It is its center.

It irrigates both the first piece and the second part.

It is essential, as well. It is projected on a tulle screen which allows one to see the background in transparency. The background, which is the only part of the installation projected on solid material, a wall. Otherwise, everything plays upon transparencies. First, the labyrinth, a space too large for us, as if haunted by the words that envelope us and take us to it, the journal. In the dark and in intimacy. Yet this time, face to face.

It barely hides the image of the mother and daughter, or if you like, of the daughter and grand-daughter...

The grand-daughter who asks her mother to translate the first page of her mother's journal for her. The mother who will discover on this day, what is projected at the center of the installation. What she herself had written, in French, when she had returned from that place and who spoke to her mother who was no longer there and who finished with "protect me" and what her two daughters, still little, added to her mother's last words.

If, when coming upstairs, one passes through the nearly transparent labyrinth, one will undoubtedly find the words exchanged between mother and daughter, the words of the journal and the secret connection, which runs from one projection to the next.

Chantal Akerman, June, 2004

**To walk next to ones shoelaces (French phrase meaning: "to be out of it") in an empty fridge*