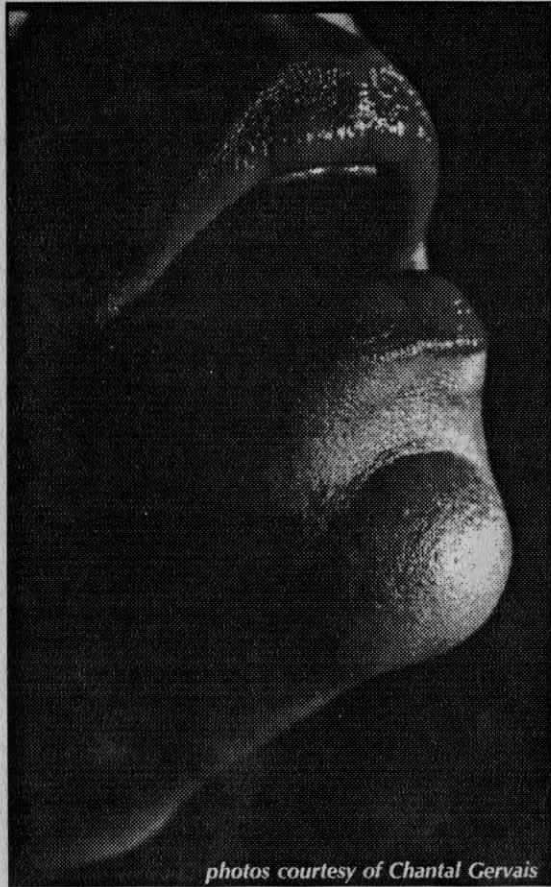


# The silence of being / Le silence de l' être



photos courtesy of Chantal Gervais

by Valerie Adam  
Arts and Culture Editor

I met Chantal Gervais last year when we used some of her photographs from her *Mannequin* series, photographs she took of mannequins fashioned in sexual poses.

At first glance it was impossible to decipher whether or not she used live models. I was struck by the intensity and authenticity displayed through her work.

When I heard she was showing her newest series "The Silence of Being" I was intrigued in seeing her newest collection.

As I ascended the stairs I could see a black curtain closing off the room where Gervais' exhibit was located. The suspense thickened.

The room is shrouded entirely in darkness except for a series of photographs of graphically displayed body parts with a single dim spotlight highlighting each piece.

Her works contain a haunting death-like quality. They are eerie and raw.

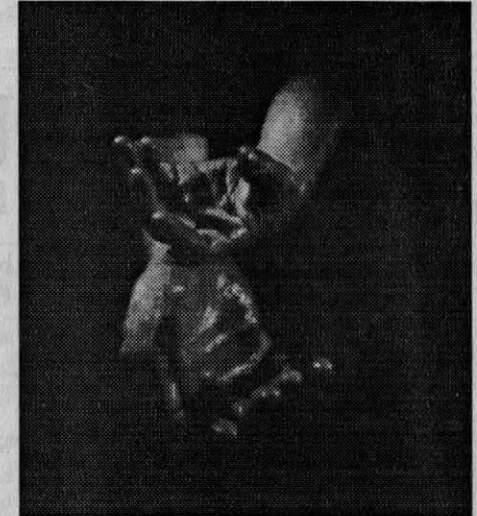
Hands, feet, arms, neck are both alive with their veins protruding, yet cut off from existence as they lay a black background frozen with life.

Her photographs seem to be negotiating somewhere between sensuality and death. It was somewhat reminiscent of the *Mannequin* series, in which she breathes life into her inanimate subjects.

In *The Silence of Being* photo installation, she does the reverse. She encapsulates the potential energy and power of the human body, dismembering it and objectifying it in a sort of a movie 'freeze frame'.

"What the installation does is propose an exploration of immateriality and the transient nature of our existence through the image of the bodies," explained Gervais.

While viewing the exhibit, I found myself unnerved at the fragility of my own body. I was both disgusted at the thought of blood coursing through my veins and invigorated at the potential energy it harnesses. Leaving the gallery I began questioning my own mortality. ✱



**The Silence of Being  
Le silence de l' être  
Photo Installation /  
installation photographique  
GALLERY 101  
236 Nepean Street  
Until October 17, 1998  
Gallery hours 10-5  
Tel. 230-2799**