

COUTURIER

GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: GALE ANTOKAL : PAST ACCOUNTS

DATES: February 25 – April 1, 2000

OPENING: Opening Reception, Friday, February 25, 7-9pm

GALLERY HOURS: Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 5pm

Gale Antokal, who has shown at Couturier Gallery for the past 5 years, is best known for her large scale pastels on paper, depicting simple everyday objects against monochromatic backgrounds. Each piece goes beyond her superlative drawing technique, transforming daily-life elements into subjects of meditation, reflecting their own intrinsic elegance and beauty. The photo realism of her rendering has a hypnotic effect, as does the depth given to the object within the haunting atmosphere she creates.

For her second solo show at the gallery, **Past Accounts**, **Gale Antokal** introduces a new technique and reflection to her work. This new body of work has a strong link to the past, specifically, her response to history: the robbery of artifacts and valuables from million of Jews in Europe by Nazi Germany, the systematization of this procedure and the “indirect” complicity of other countries. In Antokal’s own words:

This work is about the beauty and grotesqueness of accumulations lost and found: Letters, lists, inventories, statistics and piles that represent human possession (bureaucratic or accretion). I am pulling at threads and examining the loose ends of a historical record still unfinished. It is regarding the greatest robbery in the history of the world. I have been watching a locked gate, and the secrets being revealed after sixty years. I am mourning large and small amounts. It is about both the preciousness and oppression of metal. It is about the one bowl of flour left standing that never was made into bread, the one pot of soup left boiling on a stove. Millions of recipes. A gold wedding band. 303 tons of looted gold. It is about 72 pounds of gold dental work extracted per diem (about 17,280 crowns). Three billion drops of wine that never touched a seder napkin. It is about thousands of dormant bank accounts, thousands of inventories of confiscation, a glossary, one letter.

The imagery in **Past Accounts** includes letters, lists, inventories, statistics and images of actual artifacts that represent human possession as Antokal describes above which are silk-screened on silk Japanese tissue paper to which she then applies pastel drawing (e.g., a glass, a bottle filled with wine, a wedding band) adding yet more layers of imagery. The different generations of images, referring to inventories of confiscation, frozen Swiss bank accounts, everyday objects, left in the dramatic moment of flight or arrest, tell us parts of the story of millions of Jews during the Holocaust. Layers of personal stories and intimate objects weave the map of **Past Accounts**, combining abstract motifs with figurative representations, tales with cries, lost memories with scarring truths.

For further information or photographs, please contact the gallery.