

COUTURIER

GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: **GALE ANTOKAL**
We Are So Lightly Here

DATES: February 25 - April 2, 2005

OPENING: Artist's Reception, Friday, Feb 25, 7-9pm

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

Couturier Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition of **Gale Antokal**, *We are so Lightly Here*, drawings in pastel, flour and ash. This will be Antokal's fourth solo exhibition at Couturier Gallery. Reception for the artist is Friday, February 25, 2005 from 7-9 p.m. *A fully illustrated 36-page catalogue accompanies this exhibition.*

Bay Area artist Gale Antokal took a 3½ year hiatus to develop a body of work vastly different from her formal, still-life compositions that were the subject of her drawings for 2 decades. The new body of work differs in palette, monochrome v. color; in subject, human v. object; and detail, soft-focus v. hard-focus. Prior to beginning the current body of drawings, Antokal synthesized an approach to her subject that obviates identification of person, time and place, yet delivers a haunting vision of displacement, and loss. Her queries are eloquently posed through the drawings, "What do we leave behind to prove we have ever existed? What is left after all is taken away?"

The pastels for this show derive from a series shown here in 2000, *Past Accounts*, which examined those items lost or left behind at moments of sudden departure. These new works take the concept a step further to show trace elements we leave behind when displaced as well as illustrating that initial moment when things begin to move or take flight: the beginning of a march; milk spilling down a flight of steps; that initial moment when a gust of wind blows the fresh snow off a mountain top; the light trace of footsteps one leaves behind in snow.

"Unorthodox and meaningful materials allow Antokal to give the work a considered gravity without resorting to heavy-handed imagery. They allow each drawing to remain historically nonspecific, and to invoke responses from within each viewer's personal experience. While

some works reveal clues—the boxy suitcase, the dated hemline—to place and location, the physical fragility of the work, (one brush against the paper and the image vanishes) reminds how quickly the lessons of history can be forgotten".¹ Antokal's choice of images is extensive, milk pouring down a flight of stairs, groups of people walking with baggage in hand, monumental mountains shrouded in snow, sledders disappearing down a hill, billowing smoke, footprints in snow, a lone skater gliding across a field of ice, birds in chaotic flight, all the drawings reverberate with ghostly evanescence and collective foreboding. The fugitive nature of the media gives poignancy and immediacy to images that intentionally dissolve into oblique memories.¹“

Gale Antokal was born in New York, New York, and received her MFA from the California College of the Arts in 1984. She is an Assistant Professor in the School of Art & Design at San Jose State University, California. Antokal held several visiting artist positions and teaching positions including the San Francisco Art Institute, Instructor of Art History at the Lehrhaus Institute, and the American College in Jerusalem. In 1992 she received a Visual Arts Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is included in both private and public collections including the Crocker Museum, Sacramento, CA; The Franklin Company, Los Angeles, CA; The David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Los Altos, CA; MacDonaldis Corporation, San Jose, CA.

Exhibition Catalog:

A fully illustrated 36-page catalogue accompanies this exhibition. Included are essays written by Laura Richard Janku, Editor of Artweek, *We are so Lightly Here: The Fate of People and Places*, and Craig Buckwald, PhD, Principal Editor at the University of California, Berkeley, *Approaching Life: Vision and Technique in Gale Antokal's We are so Lightly Here*.

For further information and/or press photos, please contact the gallery.

¹Laura Richard Janku, *We are so Lightly Here*, catalogue essay