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THE GLOBE AND MAIL | ARTS

New British Drawing at the Pekao Gallery

Made Space: Contemporary British Drawing, organized by Scottish artists Fraser Staples and Gavin Morrison, is cool, smart and almost terminally elegant. Alan Johnston's vast but delicate graphite wall drawing gently but insistently reconfigures the gallery's airplane-hanger volume, while Charles Avery's persuasive crayon drawings of casually meaningful moments in the lives of a fictional family huddle over in the corner, keeping their dysfunctionality to themselves. Margarita Gluzberg's gigantic and exhaustingly labour-intensive line drawings of empty wigs are both weirdly off-putting and, at the same time, as glowingly inviting as haystacks in the moonlight. Claude Heath's map-like configurations of bright white points of light stenciled onto his deep black walls are the nebula-like results of his examining objects while blindfolded and translating his spatial memory of them into these oddly compelling clusters of ropey light – like those luminous translucent creatures that live in the dark at the high-pressure bottom of the sea. Margaret Priest, the only Toronto-based artist (while still resolutely British) of the five, has continued to extend her interests – born from her brilliant Construction Workers monument at Toronto's Bay/Adelaide park – in the lineaments of modernist construction and in the generation of graphic equivalents for raw building materials. Thus her three small pencil drawings of limestone, aluminum and steel surfaces, each framed in the appropriate substance. Priest's two wonderfully seductive and (for me) relentlessly irritating furniture-objects, *The Critic's Armchair II* and *The Critic's Armchair III*, are two of the highlights of this engaging exhibition. Here, Priest has provided excruciatingly modernist chair-like constructions in terrazzo, marble, chromed steel and porcelain, both bearing her careful drawings, inserted cunningly into the highly industrial structure the way a computer virus is loosed into a program. One final wickedness: There are shallow, buttock-shaped indentations carved into each chair's surface. For total critical comfort. \$1,080-\$9,000. Until April 29. 1610 Bloor St. W. 416-588-7952.