

Atlanta

Nancy Floyd

Atlanta Contemporary
Art Center

"Can you imagine the time it must've taken to make *that*?" is an admiring comment I overhear about certain artworks or handcrafts. One could not help but marvel at the intricacy and meticulous craftsmanship of Nancy Floyd's mixed-media installation, its elegance and attention to detail. Structure, process, and image were combined into evocative cross-references of time, loss, and memory.

A plywood ramp-way led visitors toward a backlit color transparency of a small, child-like house built

Nancy Floyd, *Weathering Time*, 2002. Mixed media, installation view.

of Popsicle sticks. On the left of the landing was a small inset video monitor screening a sequence of still images of a modest, clapboard house. The first image, a black and white snapshot, included a snowman outside. The others, in color, showed the same house, its yard at first decorated with lawn chairs, then abandoned—tell-tale orange construction fencing signaling an impending demolition.

Visitors were requested to remove their shoes before entering the first of the two rooms. The flooring was covered with an elaborate parquet of Popsicle sticks. These craft sticks (reportedly totaling 50,000 altogether) were also used to create small house structures, of different heights, installed around the room. The walls held a series of large, backlit transparencies of the same house seen in the landing video. In one, "for sale" and "no trespassing" signs were posted. Another image showed a derelict kitchen, with freon canisters stored on the floor. Three identically framed images followed an abandoned interior in stages of decay: first, a boarded-up window with faded yellow-flowered curtains; then, those curtains shredded and the wooden flooring torn up, a hole now in the ceiling. In the third image, plywood and curtains have been ripped out to reveal the world outside. Each photograph could have stood alone as documentation, abstraction, and/or postmodern study in texture, but side by side, cinematically, mnemonically, they informed one another. One last image framed an empty lot, house gone, the ground tilled.

The smaller, inner room contained the most compelling part of the installation—a 55-minute projected loop of 1,500 photographic self-portraits taken by the artist over the last 20 years. (A small video monitor showed the same



sequence in reverse on a side wall.) In this video, the image sequence again was prefaced by a snapshot of the artist's family on the front porch of the same house. These self-portraits were shot primarily in interiors, her bedroom at nine a.m. every morning. At first only the artist appeared, but then glimpses of her family, her husband, friends, dogs, cats, co-workers, exhibitions, and workplaces began to emerge. One setting, over and over, then a U-Haul, a vacation, or a summer job brought about a change of backdrop. Floyd was the constant, facing the camera, posed but unposed. One was struck by how different a single person can look day to day—at times coquettish, at others haggard. A fresh-faced girl became a mature woman, alternating, like the length of her hair, her clothing, the clutter next to the bed, in a kind of tidal rhythm. The tools of the photographer's trade occasionally appeared—a view camera, a video camera, and the cable release. We, as viewers, were left to make the most of

these visual clues, like a photo album found without its owner, un-narrated—image *as* text, as narrative.

Weathering Time foregrounded the drip-drip-drip erosion (accumulation? mark-making?) of everyday living and contextualized an artistic process. Floyd shows us how the cumulative effects of a small artistic exercise done daily, piece by piece, can become a life project. In her work, seemingly straightforward documentation can point back to a profound mystery.

—Lisa Tuttle