

LINDA KIRKLAND GALLERY

REVIEW

Reviews & previews of current exhibitions in New York
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Nancy Davenport

LINDA KIRKLAND

THROUGH NOVEMBER 30

Not at all nostalgic are Nancy Davenport's deliciously satirical photos and texts. *Accident Prone* (1996) is a series that demands up-close and personal attention, and actually delivers the goods.

The ten black and white photographs depict various landscapes, over each of which hovers an imminent sense of danger. Mountainous areas, forests, oceans, and lakes are inhabited with small characters whose rugs are literally about to be pulled out from under them – one figure walks a tightrope between two mountains, another takes a fall from a rocky terrain, yet another bobs helplessly in the ocean.

The accompanying texts are quite wry. Written in a journalistic or psychological case-study form, they tell tales of events leading up to these tragic demises. Davenport has created these biographies to be dry yet funny, and while the accidents they speak of may seem unlikely, the photographs serve as a reminder that they have “actually” happened. Implausible and sometimes over-the-top, these stories are unsettling in their black humor, and cavalier attitude toward (untimely) death.

While Davenport is purportedly making some serious statements about our contemplation of our own deaths, I think the series works better when viewed as sardonic commentaries on our lack of control in this world and the idea of fate.

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