

TWO PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKS BY MYRIAM BOURGEOIS

Julian Peters



Myriam Bourgeois

BoyGirl 2



Myriam Bourgeois

Page 2 from *Brûle encore, bien qu'ayant tout brûlé. Brûle encore, même trop, même mal... pour atteindre l'inaccessible étoile* (photographic comic)

Myriam Bourgeois comes to photography from a background in film studies at the CÉGEP level, and her works reflect an ongoing interest in narrative and theatricality. Her photographs are generally highly staged, and often carry the suggestion of an underlying storyline, of which they seem to constitute an extract or a condensation. During the past year, Myriam has begun experimenting with the graphic tablet, using it to insert drawn elements into her photographic compositions. The result is a striking and oftentimes poetic transformation of what would otherwise appear to be quite visually straightforward and emotionally disengaged photographs into images redolent with symbolism and allegorical allusions.

In her *BoyGirl* series, Myriam explores the idea of social masks -the various assumed identities that mediate our day-to-day personal interactions. The drawn elements help to orient a reading of these images in terms of this metaphor, which is explored from a variety of angles: In this case, we are presented with a moment of sexual intimacy in which the masks can be seen to have been let drop, the protective affectations shaken off like dead leaves in a salutary wind.

Myriam's experimentations with combinations of drawing and photography has led her to begin creating photography comics, in which the images are paired with words and arranged in sequential panels, much like in a traditional comic book. Rather than presenting the reader with a linear storyline, however, these works are made up of a sequence of thoughts and mental images that come together to convey a particular emotional state. Comics have always derived a great deal of their expressive power from their ability to create new meanings out of the interaction between drawn and written elements; in these works, Myriam adds a third mode of communication, photography, into the mix, thus exponentially increasing the opportunities for new expressive juxtapositions. Here we see a page from one of Myriam's photography comics, in which she explores the emotional aftermath of her abandonment of synchronized ice skating, a sport which had been a lifelong passion of hers, and in which she once competed at an international level.