

## Canadian Art Online

November 26th to December 2nd, 2009

### David Hoffos: Night Moves

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

November 6, 2009 to February 14, 2010



David Hoffos *Scenes from the House Dream: C.P. Fail* 2008, Detail  
Courtesy the artist and Trépanier Baer Gallery / photo David Miller

No one creates dioramas with more haunting presence than Lethbridge artist David Hoffos. For more than a decade, he has been crafting light boxes and room installations that create hyperreal alternate spaces and suspend images in three-dimensional settings. For the past five years, Hoffos has been occupied with *Scenes from the House Dream*, a set of installations that, in past iterations, has functioned as a darkened funhouse excursion into memory, an imaginary voyage into mysterious personal spaces. Now, in a tour organized by Rodman Hall in St. Catharines in collaboration with the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge and Trépanier Baer Gallery in Calgary, the full suite of works has taken up residence at the National Gallery in Ottawa. (Next, the installation will move on to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art and the Illingworth Kerr Gallery.)



David Hoffos *Scenes from the House Dream: Airport Hotel* 2004 Detail Courtesy the artist and Trépanier Baer Gallery / photo David Miller

When she wrote about the Lethbridge exhibition of *Scenes from the House Dream* for *Canadian Art* last year, Calgary critic Nancy Tousley observed, “As windows onto the unconscious mind, the scenes develop as a poetics of the dream or the dreamer rather than the story of dream. They take place at night, when the normal world of the everyday is displaced by the fears, anxieties, loneliness, depression and mysteries that arise and take hold as darkness falls.” Some of the projected figures in Hoffos’ installations are spookily real, and they seem like apparitions chased by a train of thought. One of the artist’s highlights, *C.P. Fail*, indeed shows a train stopped in a forest. Time is stalled in a shadow-filled wood that is nonetheless intimate and beckoning. Some might recall the opening lines of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*: “Midway on our life’s journey, I found myself/In dark woods, the right road lost.” With Hoffos, the road has become a modern rail line and the lostness a landscape unto itself. (380 Sussex Dr, Ottawa ON)

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