

Connect with your inner tyke

Two shows ask us to revert to childhood and see with fresh eyes

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VISUAL ARTS CRITIC

Childlike qualities of innocence and naivety are most always found in the past tense. Getting back to them – and getting them back – is very much part of two tempting exhibitions in town right now.

- "Distanz," by Grit Schwerdtfeger, at Corkin Gallery. In this suite of medium-size colour photos by the enormously talented emerging German photographer, scenes of perpetual summers are filled with listless play, days of endless leisure and benign landscapes shown at a distance.

Far-off figures stand silently in a placid body of water in *Seebad* (2004). Idle vacationers are shown seated outdoors in a modest resort area in *Promenade* (2004), with little evidence of action on anyone's part. Time stands still, as does everything else – including the artist's ego. Unlike Andreas Gursky and others among the photographer's more dramatically inclined contemporaries, Schwerdtfeger seems disinterested in artfulness itself. None of her deadpan photos might ever be described as "painterly."

Clever, this. We're being asked to look at them as if we're in the process of seeing for the very first time.

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Check out Peter Goddard's slideshow on the arts scene at thestar.com/entertainment.