

## THE BIG PICTURE

*Inside the city art scene*

RM VAUGHAN

AT HOME IN THE  
PRISON-HOUSE  
OF LANGUAGE

## AN INTRICATE MIRROR GAME

Czech-Canadian photographer Jakub Dolejs, famed for creating a series of large, carefully staged photos that looked like a cross between historical images and film stills, has decided to turn his lens on himself.

Coming of age in several cultures, Dolejs has, to say the least, an ambivalent relationship with language and the way words shape entire cultures and individual personalities. If the late Derrida is to be believed (and I'm a believer), all experience is rooted in language — even the very intimate experience of looking in a mirror.

For his second solo exhibition, *AutumnFall*, at Angell Gallery, Dolejs takes this unspoken (pun intended) self/words relationship and makes some big noise, offering the viewer a collection of large photographs depicting himself and his partner literally cornered by language.

Reminiscent of *The Lady from Shanghai's* hall of mirrors ending, minus the gunplay, Dolejs's new photographs employ mirror games and the austere body language of fashion photography to show us people who are living in multiple worlds: an act that requires a level of self-consciousness, and continuous alertness, that those of us raised in one familiar culture cannot image.

Loaded with tension and a curious kind of anxious glamour, Dolejs's photographs are deceptively simple acts of self-examination (and no small amount of playful self-deprecation — cute as they are, Dolejs and his partner are too apple-cheeked wholesome to be dour fashion models) that resonate with the outsider's naturalized paranoia.

! Jakub Dolejs's *AutumnFall* runs from Oct. 14 to Nov. 20 at Angell Gallery, 890 Queen St. W.

