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**VIDYA GASTALDON**  
**'STOP BELIEVING, START KNOWING'**

on view through March 10, 2007

The Geneva-based, French artist Vidya Gastaldon works with visionary and revelatory symbolism, creating worlds into which her viewers can enter and potentially be transformed. Entering the SI gallery, visitors stand face-to-face with the shamanistic entity, *Godmother*, draped in hand-woven yarns and fabrics, wearing her own internal organs as decorative ornament. Offerings of woolly flowers sit at her feet. The hand-made quality of the knotted layers and rays emanating from this work pay testament to the care and attention the artist gives her subjects. Similarly, the drawings filling the gallery walls and surrounding the suite of sculptures are like small reveries, each one meticulously designed and illustrated by the artist. Landscapes are populated with creatures that morph into geological masses; biology and geometry interchange and are punctuated by smiling symbols and dancing forms.

The working methods of repetitious hand labor evident in Gastaldon's work suggest a conscientiousness and methodical attention that might bring about a meditative state. Likewise, experiencing into the works, most obviously as in the three grand mountains, viewers may enter their own contemplative state, as overpowering forms made up of delicately knotted strings, modulate light and color, like 3-dimensional scenic dream-machines. The color modulation and rhythms that oscillate in the set of twelve pyramids, *Radiance Teleport*, also suggest a transcendental quality of geometric forms. The absence of patterning and multitude of colors in *365 Devotions* is an over-sized decorative offering, with one unique hand-crocheted flower dedicated for each day of the year.

The soft-sculpture heart *Coeur de Guru* is an amalgam of felt vessels and organs. The Guru's anatomy is re-ordered into a new, complete system where the heart defines the global structure of the body.

Transcendental symbols intermix with digital music and pop culture in Gastaldon's videos, which are on view through a portal at the back of the gallery. Light emanating from beside the Guru's heart invites viewers in to watch the play of light, sound and form in the three animation works. Her most recent piece, *Nucléarama*, engages with the possibility of the transformative power of nuclear energy or the positive potential force that drastic change and even destruction can bring to the earth.

The SI becomes a site of elation and mystery with Gastaldon's work as a vehicle for radical transformation through art.

-Gabrielle Giattino