

WENDY SHALEN

by Sigmund Abeles, N.A.

Oh my goodness, does Family matter to this empathic draughts-person, life artist, Wendy Shalen. Working from deep within the heart, her heart, with her sensitive antenna on alert, she skirts sentiment for genuine connected depth. By life-artist I refer to her chosen subject matter ranging from birth to aging/death and those chosen juicy moments in between; just exactly what it means to experience the scope of life via the brain, eyes and hands of an attuned, passionate artist.

Shalen has created little miracles by preserving very special images and moments within this particular exhibition, Family Matters, which encompasses her finely drawn visual record of five generations of her own family. Life stories, memories depicting her ninety year old grandmother, and hanging on, her now speechless mother, a beguiling grandchild in her daughter's arms, even the family, loyal to your side, canines. I truly feel I can get to know each and everyone of these people, through Shalen's sharp incisive lines, delicately smudged tones, sure but tender yet nailed mark-making drawing that is indeed touching at a distance. I sense her holding her breath sensing this is her one chance, possible last chance to capture a fleeting moment, forever.

This is hardly easy work; however, considering the degree of compulsion Shalen operates within, we leave experiencing these honest images, and they remain truly memorable.