

**Carolina Raquel Antich:
Beginnings of stories**

by Hiromi Kurosawa, curator

We all grew up listening to "stories" that accompanied the events of our childhood. Some of those stories were factual, while others were fiction, and they took many different forms and had a wide variety of content. However, rather than being objective descriptions of something the storyteller actually saw, many of those stories were assembled from recalled memories or subjective views of things and events in the past. The characters that appear in the stories are often narrating experiences from their own perspectives. Going beyond simply explaining what the character saw; their narratives describe the full gamut of physical experiences, such as the smells in the air or the pain of a fall. As far as the listener is concerned, a story that fits a standard pattern and has a predictable outcome is surely not as good as one that depicts such physical experiences in a way that the listener can understand and appreciate, sharing the feelings portrayed.

Carolina Raquel Antich's paintings are stories. They tell tales of everyday events and moving emotions that she has personally experienced or felt. These stories are conveyed to us through the gazes of the characters that appear. Most concern the fear, pain, relief, or sense of release that children actually encounter. Through fragments of everyday life, they suggest behavior and codes that differ from those of the society that adults attempt to justify. As adults, these paintings seem to encourage us to re-visit the times we knew as children, helping us to recall imprinted memories of the past. The characters depicted create a unique impression. As a consequence of the condensation of time and experiences in other dimensions, their facial expressions, particularly their eyes and lips, are ambiguous, seemingly devoid of emotion. The characters' bodies are depicted with lines that show little movement, and some are no more than fragments—just a head or just an upper body. They are a striking metaphor for the precarious, danger-fraught existence of childhood. For example, each figure here seems alone, even when depicted in a group. This brings to mind the unique universe experienced by children, in which each child's world seems to be composed of a collection of small fragments. The backgrounds to the paintings have little depth, and there is no distinct horizon, leading viewers to imagine connections to other dimensions and other places. An interesting feature of these works is the way that rather than predominantly capturing particularly symbolic events, they conjure up a variety of images one after the other, creating spaces that have their own distinctive meaning. Examining the series of stories told by these paintings, it eventually becomes clear that Antich can produce an unlimited number of combinations. Consequently, you realize that each individual work may well be no more than a foretaste—a story that is about to begin.