

# ARTSWEEK

MONTREAL MIRROR MAY 6 - MAY 12 2010

## Illustrious illusions illustrated

Since appearing as one of the *Mirror's* Noisemakers in 2008, **Elena Willis** has certainly lived up to this illustrious title. This month alone, her photography is being celebrated at home and abroad, with a solo exhibition at Galerie d'Este (1329 Greene) til May 23, and as one of 15 Canadian artists chosen to showcase their work as part of the Montreal Day festivities at the World Fair in Shanghai.

Culled from images produced over the last couple of years, the show here illustrates Willis' move away from the subconscious investigations of earlier projects, with their elaborately constructed dreamscapes, and into something more outward reaching and metaphorical.

A pair of photographs entitled "Ensuring Uniformity" and "A Long Chain of Tangential Thoughts" (2010) illustrate this new direction, both thematically and stylistically. Captured in deep chiaroscuro, meaning that the figures emerge, barely lit, from an otherwise black background, the images speak to the human need for community and companionship, but question whether this longing is actually a positive feature. For in the darkness that surrounds these figures—in the first, a row of cars, and in the second, a crowd of people—the idea of a collective character seems merely an illusion.

—**STACEY DEWOLFE**



**OUT OF THE DARK:**  
Willis's "Malleable"