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Milena Dopitová
At Ronald Feldman

In her New York solo debut, Milena Dopitová, a 40-year old Czech artist from Prague who has shown extensively in her homeland, audaciously presented for youth-obsessed America a show about growing old. Titled "Sixtysomething," the exhibition featured large photos, two video projections and a group of sculptures in the shape of oversize butterfly wings, all related to the theme of aging. In the first gallery a DVD projection and a group of photos showed the artist and her identical twin sister made up to look like elderly women. Known for combining two and three-dimensional elements in elaborate installations that touch on issues of gender and identity, she also included here a video monitor showing a continuously running documentary about the duo's transformation from youthful blondes to gray-haired matrons in dowdy, Soviet-era costumes. The DVD projection and the sepia-toned photos, which resemble blowups of antique stills, highlight the pair sipping tea and taking slow walks in a park, arm in arm, helping each other navigate some large puddles. In the video, the frumpy seniors perform a piano duet rendition of an old American ballad, "Green Fields," providing a rather melancholy soundtrack to the entire video. The lyrics to this well-known tune are all about lost love and nostalgia, which neatly complement the theme of the exhibition.

The works in the rear gallery set a livelier mood. A video projection on the back wall featured footage that Dopitová shot while residing one summer in a home for the aged. Most of the film shows elderly couples dancing to disco music in an outdoor dance hall. Hardly a dance of death, the action in the video comes across as a celebration of life. Similarly, a group of eight pairs of butterfly wings, some placed on the floor and others wall-mounted, refers to the beauty of life processes. Made of colorful, iridescent fabrics, some trimmed in silver or gold, these sculptures served as a glittering punctuation point for this thoughtful and affecting show.

DAVID EBONY