



Clara Gutsche, *Janet Symmers*, from the Series "Milton Park," 1972, gelatin silver bromide print, selenium toned, 35.5 x 30 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Clara Gutsche (b. 1949) is an American Canadian photographer and teacher of photography at Concordia University and Champlain College Saint Lambert. She examines the individuality and identity of her subjects in her socially engaged documentary photography. In this black and white photograph from her *Milton Park* series (1970–73), a young Janet Symmers is standing on

her bed with a puppy in her arms. Her innocence and femininity are emphasized not only through the presence of her cuddly pet, but also through her outfit—which resembles a girl’s school uniform—and floral-patterned bedspread. These elements contrast with the masculine adult world of rock music depicted in the multitude of posters on the wall behind her. Janet is wearing a tousled blonde wig, which suggests that she, like her music idols, delights in performance. The shot is taken from a slight upper angle, giving Janet an empowered position. This complex portrait employs the conventional formal language of portraiture and documentary style, yet transcends typical representations of young girls.

Twyla Hatt