



Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, *La leçon de catéchisme, Soeur Élisabeth et Sylvain, Prieuré Saint-Pie-X, Shawinigan, Québec (projet Prieuré Saint-Pie-X), série « Petits projets »*, 1988, print 2012, gelatin silver print, 27.7 x 35.2 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Born in Laval, in 1948, Claire Beaugrand-Champagne is a French-Canadian photographer who is known for her explorations of the human experience in her journalistic and documentary photography. In her photographic practice, Beaugrand-Champagne builds relationships with her subjects rather than photographing them spontaneously. Her photographs communicate this relationship between sitter and photographer. In the case of *La leçon de catéchisme, Soeur Élisabeth et Sylvain, Prieuré Saint-Pie-X, Shawinigan, Québec (projet Prieuré Saint-Pie-X), série « Petits projets »* (1988), both subjects are aware of the photographer's presence in the room, but they are comfortable with her and in no way appear ill at ease. The scene is not staged; instead Beaugrand-Champagne captures the interaction between Sister Elisabeth and Sylvain,

emphasized by the intent eye contact and the movement of the nun's hand. The composition in this photograph is rather simple, featuring white walls, a statue of the Virgin Mary, a crucifix, a desk, a window, half figures and the corner of a blackboard. The focus of the photograph remains on the two people and their interaction, thus capturing the humanness of the situation. By establishing relationships with her subjects and keeping the composition simple, the photographer imbues her work with a sense of honesty. As such, we have a pointed and honest portrayal of this catechism lesson and, more broadly, a peek into late twentieth-century Quebec Catholicism.

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