

# TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

18 September – 30 December 2021

Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens & at Centennial Square

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## TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

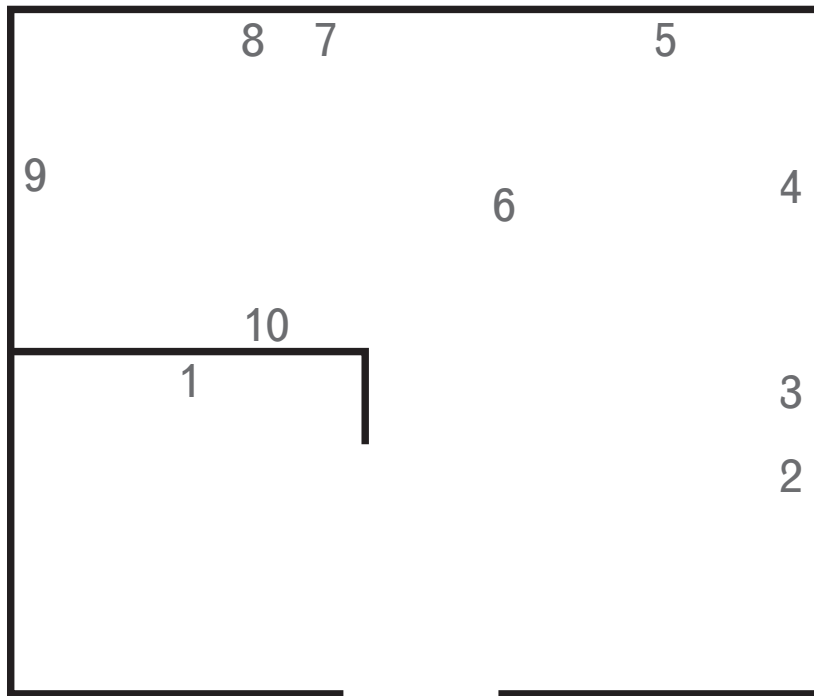
The tradition of landscape in art history is composed of mythologies, histories, and identities. To read a landscape is to understand it as a moving, dynamic subject that entwines the sublimity of nature with a sense of place. The selected works on view in Centennial Square examine the notion of finding a place for oneself by privileging the authenticity and importance of personal narratives as well as considering alternative visions of nature.

Whereas the works at Gairloch Gardens are more concerned with the mutability of identity and information, the works in this gallery prize open spaces for vulnerability, authenticity, and revelation. For *The treaty is in the body*, Tanya Lukin Linklater hosted and documented two days of gatherings with her daughters, friends and women from the Treaty 9 community to which her family belongs. These women gathered to discuss the transmission of Indigenous knowledge through oral traditions and to reflect on their understandings of “treaty” and the ways in which it is enacted in lived, embodied ways. As with much of Lukin Linklater’s work, this piece makes obliquely visible the processes of Indigenous knowledge production, particularly the transmission of knowledge through embodied acts, such as oral transmission and dance. Yet as viewers of this work, we are permitted to only bear witness to these acts and not to apprehend them—the work is a silent one, thwarting the desire of many audiences to see Indigenous bodies performing or sharing knowledge. What Lukin Linklater instead provides is a glimpse of a process, one that foregrounds the presence of Indigenous peoples and practices that center knowledge away from institutions and toward the body.

*Maigre Dog* by Donna James is paired with *A Very Personal Story* by Lisa Steele. As oral stories, the two video works reveal interior reflections about one's identity. James' tape reveals layers of thought and circles of knowing by exploring Jamaican proverbs shared by her mother and aunt, coming to an understanding of how personal identity is inherited and recognized by the people around us. More than a singular voice, James' evokes a communal voice full of resonance. Steele's work is a vulnerable soliloquy where a young Steele recounts the death of her mother for the first time. Her monologue is unscripted and honest, coming across as a confession to herself. With a desire to "let memory become the present tense," Steele instrumentalizes memory to express the complexity and endurance of personal experience.

In Micah Lexier's *My Father and Myself (10)*, he explores autobiography and how the self can be measured through systems such as time, family, identity, and language. The title of the sculptural installation is borrowed from a memoir by British writer J. R. Acklerly which measures the distance between father and son through words: "he was the same age as I am as I write this." Each word in the phrase has been laser cut in steel ten times, a repetitive cycle that alludes to a metaphorical generational cycle in which youth and maturity are equally balanced. In her *Souvenirs of the Self* series, Jin-me Yoon positions herself in scenes of Canadiana tourism. The work on view depicts Yoon standing in a Cabinet of Curiosities in the Banff Park Museum. Yoon's face is inscrutable yet an air of discomfort is palpable: the work examines the notions of belonging within Canadian national identity. By featuring herself squarely in these sites, Yoon considers the role of physical and cultural landscapes within the formation and perpetuation of national identities.

Interspersed within these personal narratives are works that combine individual or collective experience with motifs of nature. Stephen Andrews' two wax works on paper mark the passage of time and self-reflection. The titles *A Change of Heart* and *Wrong Move* each delineate an action enacted by the individuals portrayed within the works, suggesting a scene from a larger, unknown story and asking the viewer to place the events therein. Spring Hurlbut, whose work is also exhibited in the gallery at Gairloch Gardens, presents here a series of Doric columns made of tree trunks. The work conveys the stability and historicity of classical Greek architecture and strengthens the markers of its cultural legacy by integrating the endurance and longevity of trees. Olya Mischenko's meticulous drawing is a cultivated architectural landscape representing a microcosm of a post-industrial world and the tensions that hold it together. Like a fusion of Brutalism with the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, her vignettes demonstrate that our environments are not inert, but rather linked to networks of historical, social and political relations. Valérie Blass' *Presque plus* observes this all from the centre. A sculptural assemblage composed of a yarn ghillie suit and found metal armature, the work camouflages two enclaved forms, figure-like yet bodiless. Blass creates a strange interaction between the "bodies" and nature where the desire to be hidden becomes subsumed by nature. Yet rather than a definitive absence, there is the provocation of an in-between space, a private and guarded space where we can only imagine what might be hidden from view.



- 1 Tanya Lukin Linklater  
*The treaty is in the body*, 2017  
video
- 2 Stephen Andrews  
*A Change of Heart*, 1990  
bleached beeswax, oil stick and pigment on rag paper
- 3 Stephen Andrews  
*Wrong Move*, 1990  
bleached beeswax, oil stick and pigment on rag paper
- 4 Spring Hurlbut  
*Tree Columns*, 1988  
wood, steel and architectural elements (Doric capitals)
- 5 Olia Mischenko  
*Untitled*, 2014  
ink on paper
- 6 Valérie Blass  
*Presque plus*, 2008  
found objects, paint and composite fibre
- 7 Donna James  
*Maigre Dog*, 1990  
video
- 8 Lisa Steele  
*A Very Personal Story*, 1974  
Video
- 9 Micah Lexier  
*My Father and Myself (10)*, 1991  
stainless steel, fluorescent fixtures and bulbs
- 10 Jin-me Yoon  
*Souvenirs of the Self (Banff Park Museum)*, 1991-2000  
cibachrome print on plexiglas

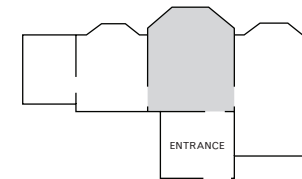
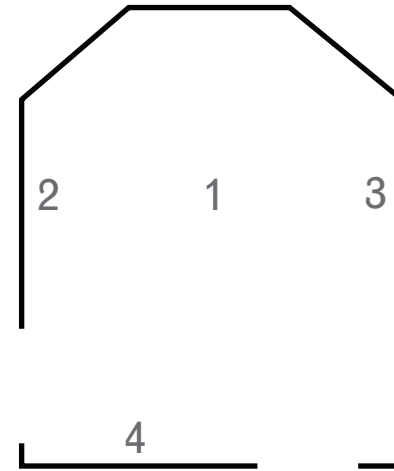
# TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

## Central Gallery

Image-based media, including photography and film, have the ability to challenge or reinforce the authenticity of who or what they represent. At once guided by the desire to visualize as well as to mediate their subject, still and moving images can elide objective truth, engaging in rituals of performance and fiction that defy pure credibility. Entering the Central Gallery, we hear in *True/False* the echoes of a man pronouncing statements about himself after which he assigns them “true” and “false” one by one. Colin Campbell creates through this video work a knotty web of truth and falsity, calling into question how fictions and artifice can create a mythologized version of the authentic self. The result is an endless multitude of possible “Colin Campbells” called into being.

Framing this piece are a pair of works by Louise Noguchi from her *Compilation Portraits* series in which Noguchi cuts up two portraits and weaves them together in an interlacing pattern resulting in a third ambiguous figure. These images combine images of herself with those of murderers and their victims culled from news media. Through the merging of these two subjects, Noguchi comments on the inability to truly understand a person, as our perception and fixation can be obscured by our own perspectives.

Stan Denniston's work with Andrew Lee from his *Fictions* series offers a third level of portraiture that invites the portrayed person to invent their personal history. The staged snapshot is framed against a text written in collaboration with the subject that augments the imagined narrative. Through these reconstructions, the viewer is asked to negotiate photography's privileged status as a record of memory.



- 1 Colin Campbell  
*True/False*, 1972  
video
- 2 Louise Noguchi  
*Compilation Portrait #25*, 1996  
woven photographs on museum board
- 3 Louise Noguchi  
*Compilation Portrait #27*, 1997  
woven photographs on museum board
- 4 Stan Denniston / Andrew Lee  
*Andrew Lee*, 1994  
laminated Cibachrome, silkscreened text and lightbulbs

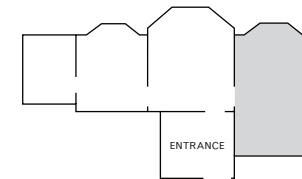
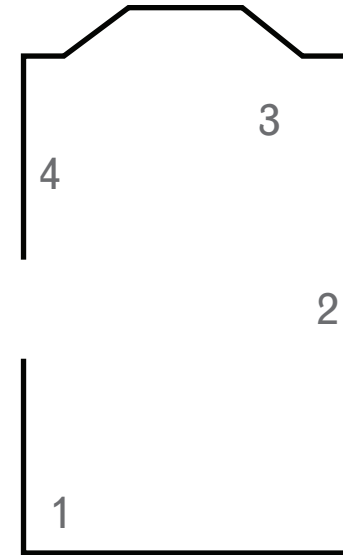
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## North Gallery

The telling of memory is shaped by the world around us. In *Kent State U | Pilgrimage and Mneumonic*, Denniston expresses through an accumulation of images an experience of memory that continues to dilates associatively into the present. In order to create this scaffolding of personal and collective memory, Denniston visited Kent State University and gathered a series of images of places upon his return to Canada that triggered for him the same language of civil unrest and tragedy. Revisiting the piece over time to create its diptych response, Denniston builds further associative cues to events like the Toronto Bathhouse Raids in 1981, demonstrating that the structure of memory continuously shifts based on the conditions of the present.

Spring Hurlbut's early series *Sacrificial Ornament* is concerned with the relationship between classical architecture and the notion of sacrifice. This work on view from the series emphasizes the interior ornamentation and mouldings within the Gairloch gallery while also experimenting with the Mannerist style replacing design elements like dentils with horse teeth. Situated between classicism and iconoclasm, Hurlbut's work reforms her references to architectural motifs and suggests new ways of constructing agency from the ruins of the past. Liz Magor's uncannily realistic sculptural work similarly invokes cultural and individual memories. Her still lifes are humble, everyday objects—a pile of clothes or a pair of gloves—hardened in artifice with their gypsum-cast shells. For Magor, the process of casting is similar to photography in that there is a real, the negative, and a copy of the real. In these copies, her sculptures conjure a banal nostalgia for the intimate relationships that we have for objects easily missed and taken for granted.

In *General Idea* (A. A. Bronson, Jorge Zontal, and Felix Partz)'s video work, they combine found film and television footage with biting commentary to critique how the media represents artists and the contemporary art world. Part satirization, part exposé, the work turns the camera onto the myth of artist, attacking the hype created by the media's sensationalization of art stars and spectactulization of artists' lives.



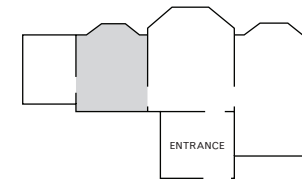
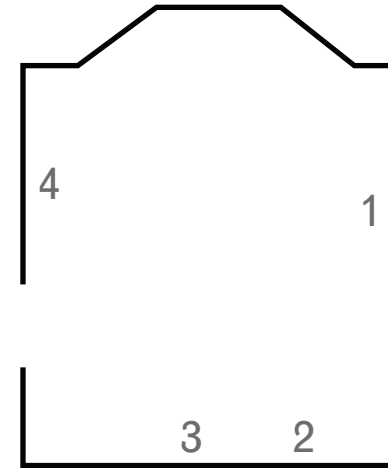
- 1 Stan Denniston  
*Kent State U | Pilgrimage and Mneumonic*, 1982-1990  
silkscreened text on acrylic, colour Cibachrome and black-and-white prints
- 2 Spring Hurlbut  
*Dentil Entablature*, 1989  
horse teeth and plaster
- 3 Liz Magor  
*Carton II*, 2006  
polymerized gypsum, tobacco products, matches, gum, lighter
- 4 General Idea  
*Shut the Fuck Up*, 1985  
video

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## South Gallery

In this black-on-black portrait of a dog, the kitschy is disoriented with a noir surface that hints at a certain melancholy. Made soon after artist Sojourner Truth Parsons' move to Los Angeles, this painting is characteristic of Parson's ability to use texture and colour to imagine personal yet fictional narratives hinged on the atmospheric energies of feelings, memories, and fantasies of the spaces that she moves through. Similar to Colin Campbell and General Idea, Parsons understands gossip as a form of makeshift knowledge and a survival strategy for social ascension, the darker underpinning of the psychic energies in Los Angeles.

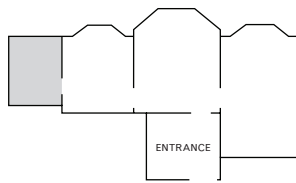
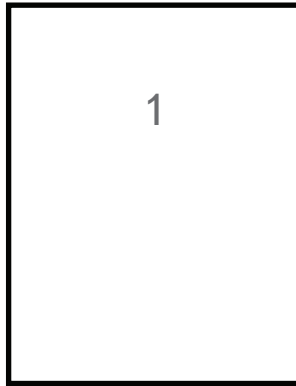
In these drawings from his *Poster Drawing* series, Derek Sullivan builds on a curious array of citations ranging from pop culture, art history, and artist books. The visual language of the motifs often stay in the realm of the familiar rather than instantly legible; clues emerge in the titles of the works which constantly grow, reflecting various moments of the drawings' presentation with new elements added and older ones crossed out. For Sullivan, books and their textual relatives are framing devices that ask viewers to engage in a slow reading and interpretative process. Through the format of the poster, the drawings examine the poetics of artworks in circulation and the messages and forms that they accumulate along the way.



- 1 Sojourner Truth Parsons  
*Crying in California*, 2016  
acrylic, glitter, glue, flashe, raw pigment, lavender essence on canvas
- 2 Derek Sullivan  
*#52, myers briggs, between you and me and it*, Carmen Lamanna, 2009  
coloured pencil and collage on paper
- 3 Derek Sullivan  
*#13, Standing on the Shoulder of Giants, an errant ess, county rock, Jenifer Papararo*, 2006  
coloured pencil and gouache on paper
- 4 Liz Magor  
*Humidor (Brown)*, 2007  
polymerized gypsum, tobacco products, matches, gum

# TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Salah Bachir Gallery



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David Rokeby  
*In The Offing*, 2011-2013  
computer, stored digital images, custom software

To read a landscape in artwork is to understand it as a moving, dynamic subject that entwines the sublimity of nature with a sense of place. Drawing from a database of around 1,000,000 images, *In the Offing* presents a gliding, endless voyage of the view of Lake Ontario seen from Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens. Between 2010 to 2013, David Rokeby captured footage with a video camera and computer system and compiled the resulting image archive into a shimmering and pulsating moving image. Unlike a timelapse, the piece pans throughout the lake view, wandering closer in, out, and along the offing. A variable space continuously unwinding, Rokeby's landscape is a perceptual space that endeavors to make coherence within the limits of the imminent and impending.



Oakville Galleries is located on Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee. The treaty lands are covered by the Upper Canada Treaties, namely the Head of the Lake, Treaty No. 14 (1806) and Treaty No. 22. At the same time, Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens and at Centennial Square is uniquely situated along the shoreline of Lake Ontario and Sixteen Mile Creek. These waterways are unceded territory and the Mississaugas have unextinguished aboriginal title to all water, beds of water, and floodplains contained therein. As an institution, Oakville Galleries recognizes the importance of establishing and maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships with the original inhabitants and keepers of the land, and we are grateful for the opportunity to operate on this territory.

Oakville Galleries would like to thank the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for the open conversation around truth and reconciliation.