

Press Release



STERILE
Caroline Schub
June 2nd - July 1st, 2023



[Version française à la suite]

“ You can all close your eyes but I can’t ”

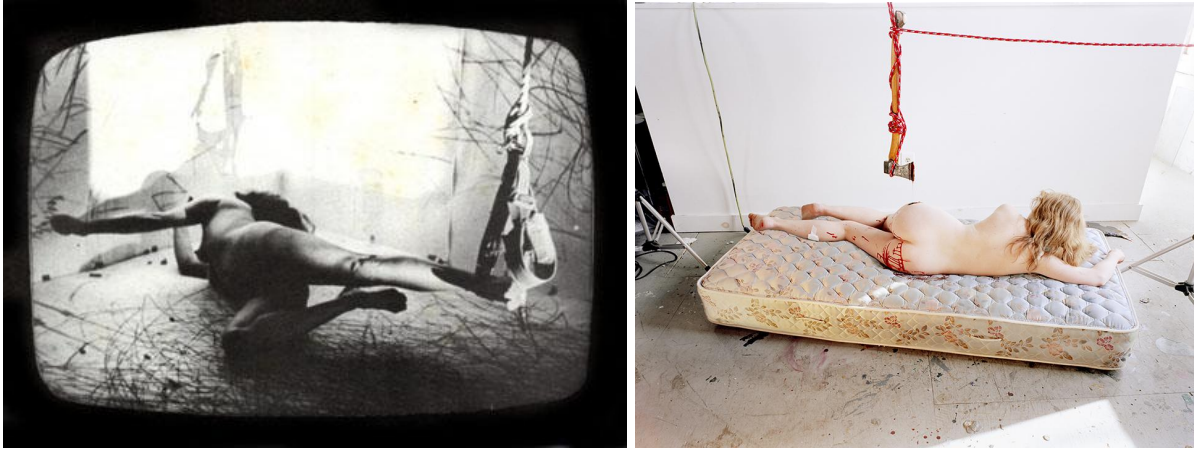
Carolee Schneeman

Dear friends,

I am so thrilled to invite you on **Friday, June 2nd, from 6 to 9 p.m.** to the opening of *Sterile*, Caroline Schub's first Canadian solo-exhibition curated by Marie Ségolène, and featuring writing by interdisciplinary artist: Alegria Gobeil.

I remember the first time I encountered Carolee Schneeman's *Up to and Including Her Limits*. A video installation of a performance by Schneeman where she is suspended by manila ropes naked, and draws with colored crayons in the corner of a room covered in paper. She performed this work nine times between 1970 and 1976. Staying in the gallery overnight, sometimes with her cat. Many stills have been pulled from this performance, *Up to and Including Her Limit* was more than a response to Jackson Pollock, it altered our understanding of the body's relationship to mark-making.

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Carolee Schneeman, *Up to and Including Her Limits*, 1971-76 (left)
Caroline Schub, *DRAG A DAGGER THAT HAS BEEN CONSUMMATED BY THE PAST*, 2015 (right)

One of the first works of Caroline Schub I encountered was a series of photographs taken on her childhood bed. We can't quite tell where the mattress is, nor how she came to be there. In one image, Schub's ankles are tangled into a rope hanging from the ceiling. She lies serene in the sunlight. In another, the rope is tied to an ax, she faces away from us, blood dripping from her leg. We are not privy to the cadence of the movements, but each image reveals a mark. Schub plays with our notion of risk, our understanding of harm, and we are left wondering how much of it is left up to chance.

If I am reminded of Schneemann's work, it is not only because the performative strategies that made up her painting practice in the 70s opened up a new language for feminist body art that we find traces of up until now. It is also because, for twenty years Schneemann made work about/in spite of/ while fighting breast cancer, which ultimately was the cause of her death. She wrote, archived and shared profound accounts of her experience with non-western treatments (see *Plague Column: Known Unknown*, 1995). She never held back in addressing the realities of her illness, and her ferocious appetite for life, for desire and pleasure.

Caroline Schub is a disability activist, a performance artist, a photographer, and a writer. Her work presents us with fragments of her experience as a person living with a chronic illness. The portraits and sculptures presented as part of *Sterile* are not documentary work, but they are raw. The language created through Schub's image-making functions much like a poem in which romance and fantasy exist simultaneously with pain and decay.

Caroline Schub's practice derives from a lineage of artists who have fiercely used their own bodies as both mediums and surfaces for their work, challenging their physical limits and in so doing, reclaiming power over lived experience of erasure, of isolation, illness, desire and pain.

If the visual landscape Schub creates confronts the viewer viscerally, it also seduces us. I promise: you will be seduced. Seduced by the impeccable response to natural light, by the plays on texture, the precision of the portraits, by a gaze that stares unabashedly back. You will want to look deeper. Further into Schub's incredible strength, grace and honesty as she selectively reveals elements of her life.

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My instinct is to tell you, you will be challenged by this work. Or is that just what we say of a visual language that offers the viewer little room for escape, what we say of work that is so honest that it frightens us?

Caroline Schub is a multi-media artist [b.1990] from the Hudson Valley, New York. After years of living with chronic illness starting from childhood, she began documenting herself as a form of self-preservation, ritual and survival. Her work is an unauthorized public record of a chronic illness. Condemned by memory, these portraits have been created using different mediums and varying artifacts while pushing through vacillating emotional filters. Caroline's understanding of her body's capacity for regeneration forms the double-edged sword that inspires her work.

She began her career by showing and performing work in DIY spaces throughout the East Coast of the United States. Caroline holds a MFA in poetry from the Warman School. Her work can be seen in her first book of self portraits CAROLINE SCHUB 2010-2016, published by Discipline Press, BILE- published by F.I.N.E Editions and DIAGNOSIS, a zine self published by the artist. She is a past performance resident of Otion Front and recipient of the NYFA Artists with Disabilities Grant.

In an effort to create a safer space for those who are immunocompromised, please consider wearing a mask for this event, while in the gallery. Masks will be available on site, thank you in advance for your cooperation!