

Annie MacDonell
The Beyond Within

May 25 – October 1, 2023

MacKenzie Art Gallery

Curated by Crystal Mowry and Leila Timmins

Organized and circulated by The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, in collaboration with the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery

As a surface with only one side, the Mobius strip resists orientation. To trace its surface is to experience left becoming right, outside flipping in, and time assuming the shape of an infinite loop. While its perimeter is defined, it is the twist in the loop that prevents predictability. Within static institutions and other familiar containers, is it possible to experience a similar twist – a radical detour – that encourages us to build our worlds anew?

Underpinned by feminist conceptions of the everyday as a basis for political engagement with the world, *The Beyond Within* proposes strategies for reorientation. In two videos made in collaboration with Paris-based artist Maïder Fortuné, pedagogical roles are underwritten by radical forms of intimacy. *OUTHERE (For Lee Lozano)* incorporates documentation from a 1971 lecture at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design alongside archives and an astrological reading to give form to an influential recluse: the late conceptual artist Lee Lozano. In *Communicating Vessels*, friendship and artmaking become productive, if precarious, portals through which to escape the isolation of the self.

Psychedelic experience as a means to dissolve the ego and yield new models of collectivity is central to the new installation, *Set and Setting*. This work is informed by historical and contemporary psychedelic trials performed within research settings. Juxtaposing animated drawings sourced from early trial documents and architectural sets that recall institutional examination rooms, *Set and Setting* suggests that the boundary between subject and viewer is not only thin, but porous and continuously shifting.

By making use of radical and lateral modes of thinking and storytelling, MacDonell affirms how art can be both a necessary clarifier and serve as an essential tool in world-building.

Annie MacDonell is a visual artist and filmmaker. Her early training was in photography, and the image continues to play a central role in her projects. Her work also includes installation, sculpture, writing, and performance. She received a BFA from Toronto Metropolitan University in 2000, followed by graduate studies at Le Fresnoy, Studio National des Arts Contemporains, in France. Her films *Book of Hours* (2019) and *Communicating Vessels* (with Maïder Fortuné, 2020) have screened extensively internationally. Recent solo shows have been held at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery; Gallery 44, Toronto; Parisian Laundry, Montreal; the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; and the Art Gallery of Mississauga. She has participated in group shows at The Art Museum of the University of Toronto; Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; and the MacKenzie Art Gallery. Recent performances have been presented at Nuit Blanche Toronto, le Centre Pompidou and the Toronto International Film Festival. In 2012 she was short-listed for the AGO AIMIA prize for photography, and she was long listed for the Sobey Art Award in 2012, 2015 and 2016. MacDonell was short-listed for the 2021 Scotiabank Photography Award. In 2020, she and Maïder Fortuné won the Tiger Award for Best Short Film at the

Rotterdam International Film Festival, for their film *Communicating Vessels*. Annie MacDonell lives in Toronto with her family and is an Assistant Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Image Arts. She is a founding member of EMILIA AMALIA, a feminist research and writing group.

PHOTO CREDIT:

Installation view of *Annie MacDonell: The Beyond Within*. Photo credit: Carey Shaw, courtesy of the MacKenzie Art Gallery