

# Bradley Ertaskiran

*À distance appropriée*

Sandra Brewster, Suzy Lake, Joyce Wieland

March 21 to May 4, 2024

Bradley Ertaskiran is thrilled to present *À distance appropriée*, a group exhibition featuring the work of important Canadian artists Sandra Brewster, Suzy Lake, and Joyce Wieland. Working across photography, performance, and image-making, these artists alternately reveal and obscure views of the female body, creating works that are both self-conscious and provocative.

Over her fifty-five-plus-year career, American-Canadian artist Suzy Lake has combined performance, video, and photography to investigate aging, beauty, and gender through her own body. The triptych *Beauty at a Proper Distance/In Song #4* (2002) showcases the artist's magnified face, tightly cropped to accentuate thick red painted lips—puckered into a wide "O", frozen in song—unplucked chin and lip hairs, springy curls, and enlarged pores. A dramatic close-up of an unruly aging body, the work subverts seductive, airbrushed commercial photography conventions, yet tantalizes in offering only a peek; we cannot consume the images in their entirety, and yet we cannot look away. *Suzy as Jay Lee Jaroslav* (1973-1974/1975) further exemplifies Lake's interest in playful mimicry and staged, repetitive performance, in which the faces on two sets of black-and-white portraits are slightly altered and coloured with thick black lines across the mouth and eyes, like costume make-up. Lake's work elicits a bold sense of self-awareness, unaccountable to the viewer's pleasure or discomfort.

Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist Sandra Brewster navigates portraiture through dynamic material experimentation. Brewster's series *Take a Little Trip* (2022) includes black-and-white portraits of iconic figures in Black thought and culture—Claudia Jones, Josephine Baker, Salome Bey, Minnie Riperton—made of frames pulled from videos of each subject being interviewed, then layered on top of one another by way of photo-based gel transfer. The result is a blurring effect that uniquely retains each subject's likeness and sense of movement, as if they are still moving on the paper, refusing to sit still for the viewer. The works also accentuate the imperfections necessary to their creation; creases, marks, and scars are visible, like old archival photographs, leaving some information intact and others lost to the transfer process.

Throughout her prolific career, the late Canadian artist Joyce Wieland radically explored the female body across film and mixed-media artworks, among these a series of erotic drawings created at the height of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. In *Erotic Drawing 2* (c. 1962), quick, sparse lines reveal hints of twisted, naked bodies, suggestive of Wieland's own moving body, drawing one sweeping mark after the other. The watercolour painting *Stage* (n.d.) similarly illustrates the artist's gestural and obscure style. Draped curtains frame a stage comprised of abstract forms in washed pastel hues, almost hallucinatory in their unrecognizable but whimsical content. Here and in her drawings, Wieland intentionally limits our full viewing of the scene; the spectacle (and its bodies) are told through fragments and hazy brushstrokes rather than a titillating, public reveal. The artist kept some secrets for herself.

In a cultural moment in which images (and bodies) are regularly shared, sensationalized, and rabidly consumed, here, passive consumption is restricted and left in the hands of the artists alone.

Artwork by Sandra Brewster courtesy of Olga Korper Gallery; artwork by Suzy Lake courtesy of Georgia Scherman Projects; artwork by Joyce Wieland courtesy of Caviar20, Art45, and the collection of Munro Ferguson.

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**Sandra Brewster** (b. 1973; Toronto) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Toronto. Her work employs a range of media to engage concepts of movement that express an internal relationship with identity. Notable solo exhibitions include the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (Toronto), Kenderdine Art Galleries (Saskatoon), Leonard & Bina Art Gallery (Montreal), Hartnett Gallery (Rochester), Or Gallery (Vancouver) and Lagos Photo Festival, and an upcoming solo show at Olga Korper Gallery (Toronto). Brewster's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Ontario), Art Gallery of Guelph (Guelph), Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (California), among others. Her public sculpture *A Place to Put Your Things* is currently on view at the Harbourfront Centre, Toronto.

**Suzy Lake** (b. 1947; Detroit) is an American-Canadian artist based in Toronto, Canada. Lake's work explores the politics of body and identity through performance, video and photography. Her later work addresses the ageing body, questioning structures of power politically and poetically. Lake's work has been presented extensively across Canada and internationally at the Centre Pompidou-Metz (Metz), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Brandhorst Museum (Munich), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Vancouver Art Gallery, Hayward Gallery (London), Santa Monica Museum of Art, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, and the Art Gallery of Windsor. In 2014, the Art Gallery of Ontario presented a retrospective spanning Lake's career. Her works have also been featured in several historic feminist exhibitions including *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (curated by Connie Butler, touring 2007–2008) and *WOMAN: The Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s, Works from the Sammlung Verbund, Vienna* (touring 2013–18) and are part of major private and public collections worldwide. A member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, Lake received the 2016 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, and 2016 Scotiabank Photography Award. In 2024, she was presented with the Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement by the College Arts Association in Chicago, Illinois.

**Joyce Wieland** (1930–1998; Toronto) was a multidisciplinary artist renowned for her contribution to the development of contemporary art in Canada. In her works, she engaged with national identity and feminist issues, challenging the predominantly male art culture of her time. She explored political themes like nationalism, feminism, and ecology using diverse media, from painting and filmmaking to textiles. Wieland's work has been exhibited internationally at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Museum of Modern Art (New York), National Museum of Modern Art (Tokyo), Musée national d'art moderne (Paris), Isaacs Gallery (Toronto), Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, among others. Wieland's works are part of numerous public collections, including the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Vancouver Art Gallery, MacKenzie Art Gallery (Regina), Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. In 1983, Wieland was appointed the title of Officer of the Order of Canada, in recognition of her outstanding level of talent and service to Canadians. A major retrospective of her work is being organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for 2025.