

KEREN CYTTER

Based on a True Story

14 April – 10 June 2012
Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens
& at Centennial Square



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With their hand-held camerawork, abrupt edits and non-linear narratives, Keren Cytter's short films evoke an uncertain, frenzied atmosphere. Wine at a birthday party turns into blood and cake spontaneously combusts. A traumatic childhood piano lesson is re-enacted publicly in a Greek restaurant. Characters bark at one another in languages they seem not to understand, mimic each another and morph into the same person.

At once impeccably crafted and DIY in feel, Cytter's films get under our skin. Suggesting the slippery boundary between conscious and unconscious states, these films—which until recently were primarily shot in Cytter's apartment, starring her friends—confuse and frustrate as much as they seduce. Characters, scenes and images take on dreamlike qualities, with attendant loops and repetitions, uncanny echoes and perplexing misrecognitions. While subtitles often accompany the assorted languages spoken on screen, they don't always correspond to the words uttered, confounding matters further.

The doomed quest for sexual and romantic fulfillment is a recurrent theme of Cytter's, depicted with a strong dose of absurdity and lack of sentimentality. In the words of one character in *Rolex* (2009), Cytter's treatment is "blood, sex, no tears." Borrowing from sources including avant-garde film, horror flicks, reality TV, musicals and novels, Cytter's distinct approach sheds light on today's mediated culture: how our subjectivities can seem cobbled together from fictional scenes and images, as well as our own—and other people's—experiences.

Spanning both Oakville Galleries locations, this exhibition combines nine short films as well as drawings, books and other printed matter, providing Cytter's most ambitious North American survey to date. It features celebrated works that have been shown at major international events including the 2009 Venice Biennale and the New Museum's inaugural triennial "The Generational: Younger than Jesus," alongside lesser-known recent and earlier pieces. This exhibition is presented in collaboration with the 25th Images Festival, 12–25 April 2012. *I Eat Pickles At Your Funeral*, a performance by Keren Cytter, is being presented at the Images Festival on 19 and 20 April with the support of Partners in Art.

Curated by Helena Reckitt

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