



Cate Giordano, *The Final Wife*

Performances, December 12, 13, 14, 2025

Friday, December 12, doors at 7.30, performance at 8pm

Saturday, December 13, doors at 8.30, performance at 9pm

Sunday, December 14, doors at 7.30, performance at 8pm

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Cate Giordano, *The Final Wife*

Exhibition on view December 17, 2025 – January 11, 2026

Cate Giordano, *early movies*

online at participantafterdark.art

December 7 – January 30, 2026

Cate Giordano, *The Final Wife* is a play and film loosely based on the 1993 Waco Siege of a compound belonging to the Branch Davidians, a religious sect in Waco, Texas. The work presents fictionalized representations of Branch Davidians leader David Koresh that include negotiations with the FBI, passages from the *Book of Revelation* and the *Old Testament*, and fantasies between Koresh and then U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno.

In *The Final Wife*, Koresh believes he is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. After his behavior catches the attention of federal law enforcement, he finds himself, his followers, and his numerous wives and children embattled in an armed stand-off with the FBI. Koresh engages in cat-and-mouse negotiations with an FBI agent named Steve, prolonging the stand-off for weeks. Convinced that his final wife must be Attorney General Janet Reno, Koresh begins to meet with her in dreams and the two develop a dialogue about the overlapping nature of government and faith. In accordance with Koresh's plan, they fall in love, which sets off the apocalypse.

Giordano plays the parts of David Koresh, the FBI agent, and a newscaster. **Julianna Schley** performs as Janet Reno and a news correspondent.

PARTICIPANT INC

116 Elizabeth Street, Floor One, NY, NY 10013

The Final Wife uses a fictionalized version of a tragic event to explore ideas of control, coercion, and fanaticism. While Koresh finds Biblical justification for his delusions, Reno fervently believes in the righteousness of government in any situation. *The Final Wife* is an investigation of two hierarchical structures of power and what happens when ideologies collide.

From December 17, 2025 – January 11, 2026, the movie version of *The Final Wife*, 2025, will show continuously, along with fifty oil paintings based on stills from the movie.

The play and the film are an expansion on a multimedia installation shown in October 2021 at Galerie Christophe Gaillard in Paris, France.

Performance credits:

Made by Cate Giordano

Produced by Lia Gangitano and Participant Inc.

Live performers: Julianna Schley, Cate Giordano, Eddie Grocerie

Soundtrack: Jordi Wheeler

Technical Director: Harry Kleeman

Production Team: John Brattin, Ryan Harman, Baseera Khan, Fred Maass, Eve Sussman

Documentation: Itziar Barrio, Isaiah Davis, Bryce Hackford

Camera: Chris Wawrinofsky, Eve Sussman, Jesse Karch, Simone Siegel, Clayton Skidmore, Diana Ayala

Fire: Ed Giordano

Mold making: Blake Hiltunen

Video Featuring:

Asia Meade Smith, Rachel Leal, J. Starr, B. Lane, A. McNaughton, Oliver Jones, A. Jones, I. Jones, Jane Cramer, Amy Ruhl, Leah Retherford, Neil Meredith, Roger Gaitan, Fred Maass, Clayton Skidmore, Eddie Grocerie

Concurrently, from December 7, 2025 – January 30, 2026, **Participant After Dark** presents **Cate Giordano, *early movies*:**

Hunter in the Woods, 2007, 7:56, hi-8 video

Hunter Dodge escapes his unhappy relationship with Joy by retreating to the forest and building himself a wife out of scrap wood. In his constructed paradise, Hunter is content with his silent, self-made partner, Susannah. However, Joy finds him and drags him kicking and screaming back into reality. *Hunter in the Woods* was the first film featuring Julianna Schley, who has acted in most of Giordano's projects.

Species, 2008, 14:04, miniDV and 16mm film

Trapped in the belly of a Trojan Lion, Jonah and Dot are falling out of love. Jonah, a writer, fights to remain true to his artistic vision, despite mounting pressure from Dot to earn money. Dot runs off with a shape-shifting insurance salesman named Hugh, played by seven actors, leaving Jonah to incubate inside his creation. Jonah and Dot are both played by Giordano.

Site design by After Dark Director, **Itziar Barrio**.

Image: **Cate Giordano, *The Final Wife*, 2025**, video still. [A color video still of the artist Cate Giordano playing David Koresh from the 2025 video *The Final Wife*. Koresh stands with Janet Reno, played by Julianna Schley, in the Garden of Eden. Koresh and Reno face each other with their hands raised to chest height and press their palms together. Koresh has dark hair, painted-on stubble beard, and wears wire frame double-ridged glasses, a white ribbed tank top, and jeans. Reno has dark hair, glasses, and wears a dark suit. The Garden of Eden is depicted as a landscape with a blue sky, trees, and yellow-green vegetation.]

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 116 Elizabeth Street, floor one, between Broome and Grand Streets. The closest trains are the J/Z (Bowery) and the B/D (Grand); the closest wheelchair accessible stop is the 6 (Canal). Entry is on grade and the gallery is barrier free throughout with an all gender, wheelchair accessible bathroom. Service animals are welcome.

PARTICIPANT INC's exhibitions and public programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

Our programs are supported by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Archiving and documentation projects are supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Online projects are made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature through the Media Arts Assistance Fund, a regrant partnership of NYSCA and Wave Farm.

PARTICIPANT INC's exhibitions and online programs are made possible by Teiger Foundation.

PARTICIPANT INC has received support from the Ruth Foundation for the Arts.

PARTICIPANT INC is supported by an Artists Council Grant of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

PARTICIPANT INC receives generous support from the Harriett Ames Charitable Trust; Ames Family Foundation; Jerome Foundation; Lambent Foundation Fund, a fund of Tides Foundation; Mellon Foundation; VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant Fund; Jacques Louis Vidal Charitable Fund; Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; FRIENDS of PARTICIPANT INC; numerous individuals; and Materials for the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs/NYC Department of Sanitation/NYC Dept. of Education.



PARTICIPANT INC has received support from The Willem de Kooning Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, Mellon Foundation, and Teiger Foundation through Coalition of Small Arts New York City (CoSA NYC).

