



# SUZY LAKE

## Life & Work

By Erin Silver





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**Decades before the “selfie” sparked a cultural paradigm shift, Suzy Lake (b.1947) changed the course of art history, taking up her camera and using it as a tool to investigate how we manufacture the self, often using her own body as a model to investigate issues of identity, gender, beauty, and aging. Incorporating elements of theatre, performance, and role-playing, Lake blended technology and art to create works so ahead of their time it took the art world nearly two decades to catch up. As an activist, Lake has demonstrated a profound commitment to feminism and civil rights. Her artistic output spans more than forty years, and today she is recognized as one of the world’s most important image-makers.**

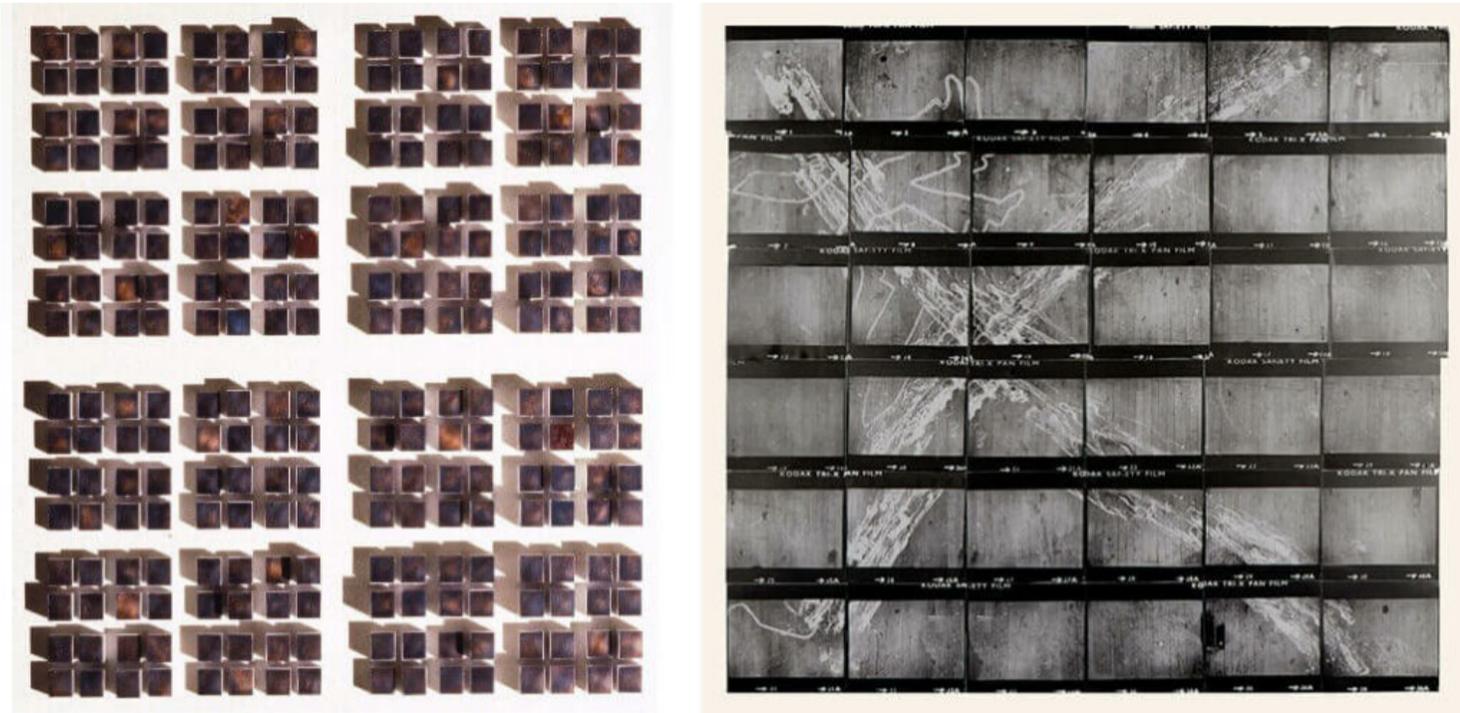
### EARLY YEARS IN DETROIT

Suzy Marx (later Lake) was born into a German-American working-class family on June 14, 1947, in Detroit, Michigan. Her father, Robert Marx, a Second World War veteran, was a roofer, and her mother, Helen Marx, a housewife. Robert's ancestors had lived in the city since 1883. Lake grew up in a hard-working, conservative household on Washtenaw Avenue, in a predominantly white neighbourhood on the east side. Amid Detroit's racial divisions and political upheaval during that decade, she was struck by the disparity of the poor working and living conditions for African-American families looking to settle in the area. She recalls, "My father had a roofing and sheet metal shop in the city ... It was in a segregated neighborhood ... I was aware of inequality and racism as a child, so when I was old enough to act, I joined solidarity groups."<sup>1</sup> She later became involved in the anti-war and civil rights movements of the 1960s.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *6 Over 28*, 1975, gelatin silver fibre-based print and graphite drawing, 96.5 x 71 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. RIGHT: Wedding photo of Helen and Robert Marx, Suzy Lake's parents, 1944, photographer unknown.

Lake's grandfather Arthur Marx was a hobby painter, and he encouraged the young Suzy's artistic development by drawing with her and taking her to the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). Despite Lake's traditional upbringing, in particular around gender roles, where women were discouraged from pursuing higher education in order to tend to domestic responsibilities, her family urged her to attend university. Having developed an interest in the visual arts as a child, one that continued through high school, she enrolled first at Western Michigan University in the College of Fine Arts in 1965 and the following year at Wayne State University, majoring in studio arts with a focus on painting and printmaking.



LEFT: David Barr, *Relief Construction No. 20*, c.1964, mahogany, copper, paint, 82.9 x 82.6 x 6.4 cm, Detroit Institute of Arts. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Contact X*, 1973, 36 gelatin silver fibre-based prints, 18 x 25.4 cm each, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

As a student, Lake was especially captivated by Abstract Expressionism and German Expressionism (a fascination instilled by her grandfather), absorbing whatever influences she could. At Wayne State she was inspired by instructors David Barr (1939–2015), a sculptor, and Robert Wilbert (1929–2016), a figurative painter whose design class became a foundation for Lake’s interest in formalist techniques. Her focus became the purely visual qualities of line, space, texture, shape, and presentation rather than representation or narrative content. In *Contact X*, 1973, for example, she arranged a configuration of thirty-six contact sheets in a grid pattern to form the photographic image of a hardwood floor with a large white X painted over it, and traced the outline of two legs with dangling feet in the top left corner. Lake’s early interest in working through questions of how we perceive an object in space is clear in this image with its focus on composition. By photographing the X she had painted and fracturing the image into parts, Lake tacitly asks the viewer to mentally assemble the image and reflect on the relationship between painting and photography and the act of seeing.

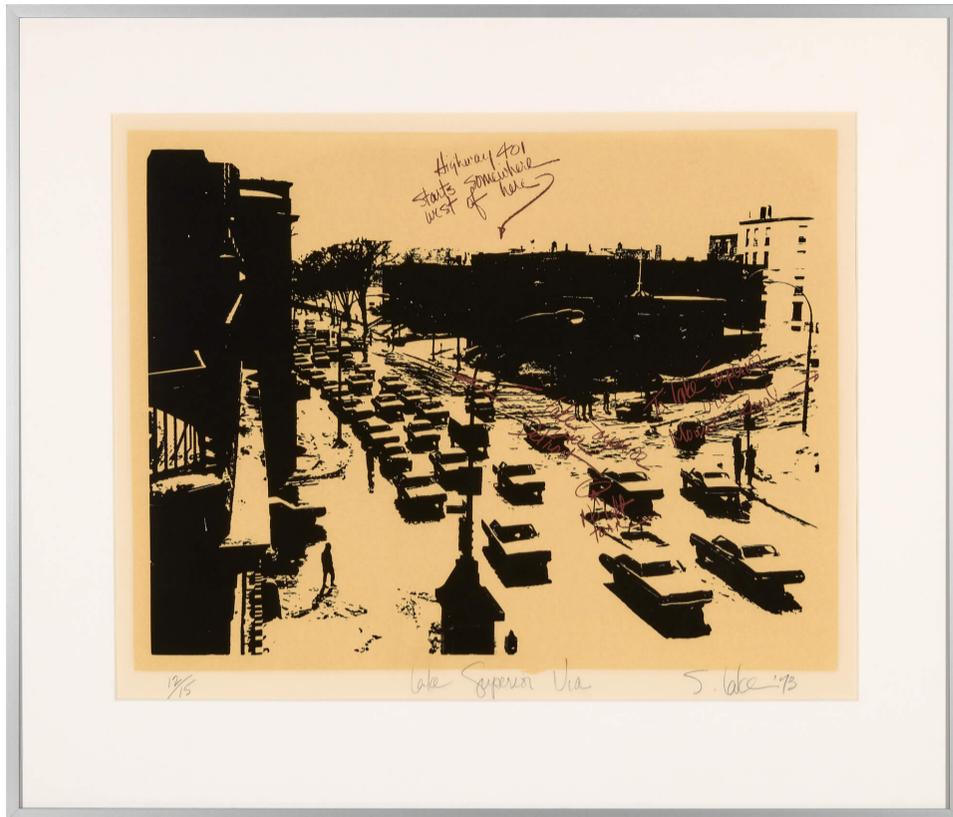
During her university studies, Lake moved to live in downtown Detroit, where the racially charged atmosphere of the city core led her to become involved with the burgeoning civil rights movement. While she was always “curious about the world,” the political struggles of the 1960s, such as the civil rights movement and its intersections with the early women’s liberation movement, inspired her, and she found she



LEFT: Amedeo Leone (architect), Architectural drawing of Jeffries housing project, Smith Hinchman & Grylls, Inc., C. Howard Crane Associates, n.d., 1 slide in cardboard mount, 15.2 x 16.5 cm, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library. RIGHT: Looting on 12th Street, Detroit Riots, July 24, 1967, photographer unknown.

could “no longer... keep questions to [her]self.”<sup>2</sup> She volunteered with the Detroit Mothers, an organization that assisted single African-American women in the Jeffries Project. She helped care for their children and taught skills such as resumé writing, so they could enter the workforce.

In July 1967 the Detroit Riot, a series of confrontations that began as a response to police brutality toward African-Americans and extended to anger over unemployment and segregated housing and schools, lasted for five days in the sweltering heat. These riots, among 159 race riots that occurred in the United States throughout that year, resulted in forty-three deaths, over a thousand injuries, multiple burned properties, and extensive looting. Canadian curator Michelle Jacques has noted that Lake’s upbringing, during which her parents instilled a strong sense of individual and community responsibility, and these summer riots were instrumental in developing Lake’s political consciousness and helped her devise strategies for working in solidarity with oppressed populations.<sup>3</sup>

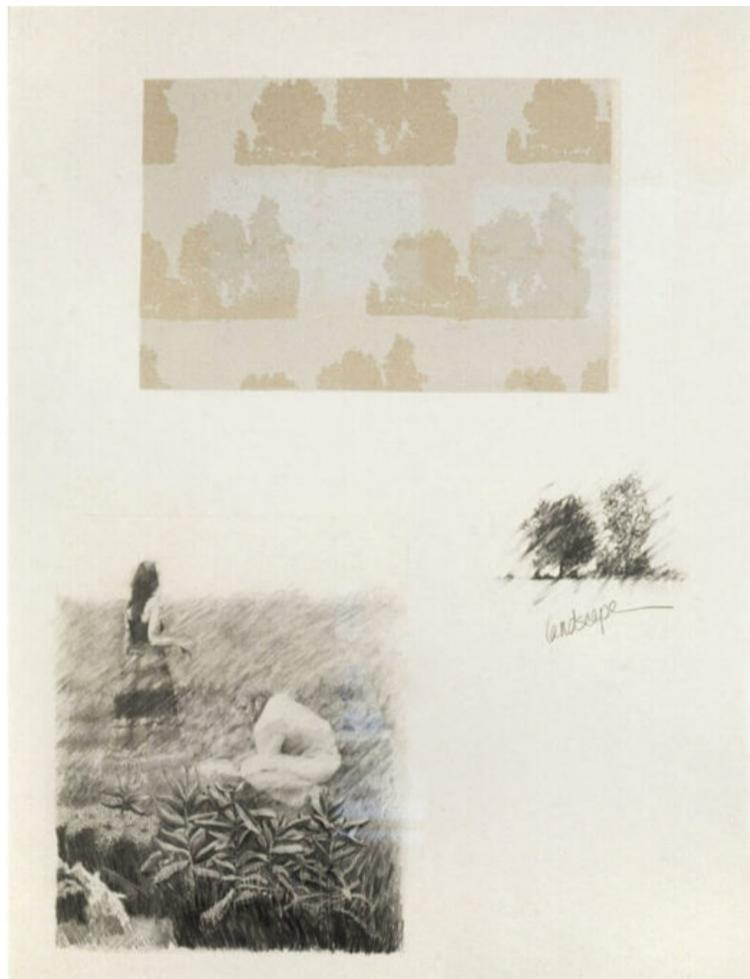
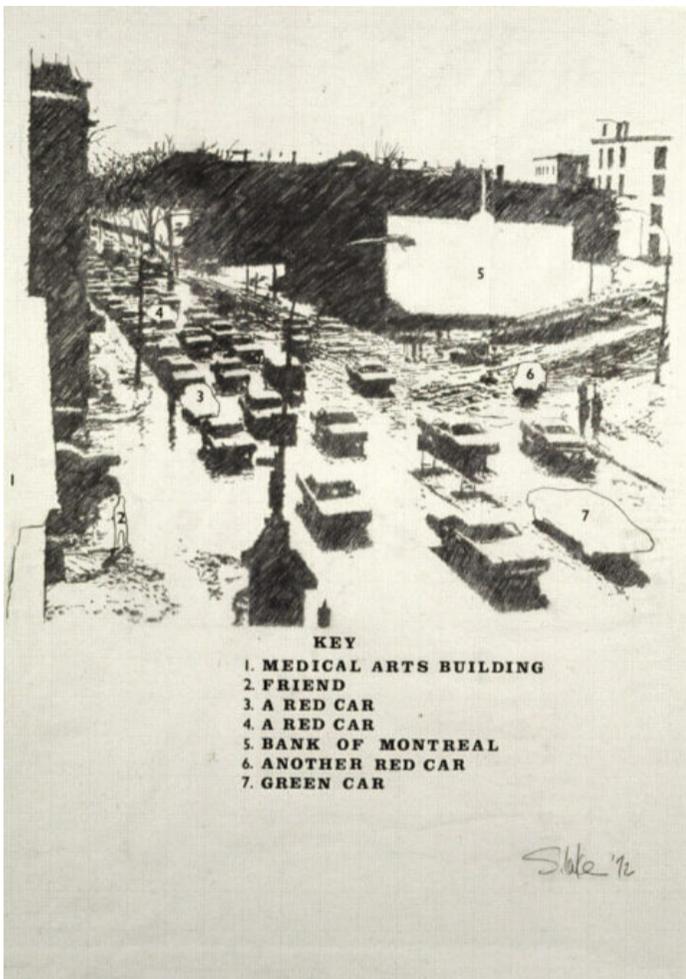


Suzy Lake, *Lake Superior Via*, 1973, silkscreen print, 55.8 x 66 cm, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa.

By this time, she was in a relationship with Roger Lake, a painter. Disillusioned with the violence in Detroit and wanting to avoid the Vietnam draft, they married in 1968 and immigrated to Canada, even though Lake had not finished her studio arts degree. She soon fell “in love” with her new city, Montreal,<sup>4</sup> though, as she described, it was a shock to learn that, under Quebec’s civil code, derived from the Napoleonic Code, she was “technically [Roger’s] property!”<sup>5</sup>

### MONTREAL: A PIVOTAL DECADE

When Lake entered the Montreal art scene in 1968, it was at a pivotal moment. Quebec was experiencing the emancipatory effects of the Quiet Revolution and, by chance, she once again found herself in the midst of political crisis and revolution. Although Lake was not pursuing a feminist activist agenda, women’s social, legal, and financial inequalities both within and outside the civil rights and anti-war movements inspired her interest in women’s liberation.<sup>6</sup> At this time, before a feminist consciousness began to emerge in her work, Lake was still primarily working in painting, drawing, and printmaking –for example, *Car Key Drawing*, 1972; *Re-Placed Landscape*, 1972; and *Lake Superior Via*, 1973.



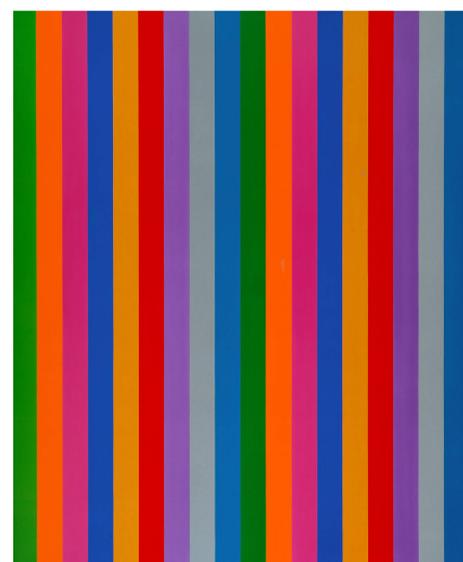
LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Car Key Drawing*, 1972, graphite drawing on graph paper, 61 x 45.7 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Re-Placed Landscape*, 1972, graphite, colour pencil, and silkscreen on paper, 66 x 55.9 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

The early 1970s were heady times to begin exhibiting in Montreal. Expo 67 had focused international attention on the city, the Quiet Revolution was well under way, the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) and the October Crisis of 1970 exposed the separatist threat, and ideological struggles between anglophone and francophone feminist groups concerned with class, race, and global solidarity aligned with anti-colonial movements. Having moved from one hotbed of political activity into another, Lake absorbed elements from all these causes and incorporated them into her art.

Soon after Lake arrived in Montreal, she worked as a life model at several institutions, including the school at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA).<sup>7</sup> Through this connection, she met the sculptor Hugh LeRoy (b.1939), who in turn introduced her to Guido Molinari (1933-2004). She became Molinari's assistant, and he had a profound impact on her. Molinari was famous for paintings of hard-edged sections of colour in which the forms of the colours became his subject—the content of his art; *Green-blue Bi-serial*, 1967, is a typical example. Lake's recollection is that the elastic-like quality of Molinari's paintings, the way each colour appears to stretch into the next, suggested a shift to her—from thinking about the "action" of paint on canvas to considering the act of seeing the painting as a process that involved the viewer. As Lake recounted:

I met Guido quite soon after my undergraduate training in painting and printmaking (probably '69 or '70). I had strong technical and formal skills in those media. Although I knew I wanted to reflect



Guido Molinari, *Green-blue Bi-serial*, 1967, acrylic on canvas, 254 x 205.7 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

more of what was happening in the streets, I began with reduced figurative work ... I admired both [Molinari's and LeRoy's] work, but it took time for me to realise how they maximised their formal aspects to be perceptually performative. Molinari got very excited about juxtaposing specific colour[s] to activate the edges of his stripes[...] It was discussions with Guido about his work and the relationship of my own elements that made me gradually understand [these elements] were more active to the view than merely placement.<sup>8</sup>



Suzy Lake, *A Genuine Simulation Of... No. 2*, 1974, 6 gelatin silver prints and commercial makeup mounted on fibre-based print, 70 x 82.5 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Lake began to translate Molinari's exploration of the way paint is visually perceived in abstract works—a process emphasizing contrasting colours, shapes, and lines—into her own practice. She experimented with multiple techniques to achieve the results she wanted. She describes this process as “the plurality of language to orchestrate the image,” or the way language, the way we talk about an image, can change our perception of that image. Over the following years she used her education in painting and printmaking while focusing on her own body as a site of artistic expression and creating works of photographic manipulation—for example, by placing materials on the surfaces of photographs, as in *A Genuine Simulation of... No. 2*, 1974, in which Lake

applied cosmetics directly onto the portraits. Whereas Molinari experimented with different shades and tones of paint to challenge viewers to see colours in new ways, Lake's experiments with photographs challenged viewers by refusing any straightforward experience of seeing the subject of the image (often Lake herself).

During this period, Lake studied dance and mime at Théâtre de Quat'Sous in Montreal, where she learned the meaning of whiteface makeup—a thick white paint that she called the “zero state” that erased the performer's personal characteristics and provided a “*tabula rasa* following the political and social changes of the 1960s.”<sup>9</sup> Whiteface makeup had tremendous potential for turning one's own body into a canvas for experimental art. Before long, Lake linked up with Allan Bealy (b.1951), a student at the School of Art & Design at the MMFA, as well as Tom Dean (b.1947) and other young iconoclasts who were exploring new forms and strategies of art-making different from the Minimalism and geometric abstraction that dominated the contemporary art scene in the city.<sup>10</sup>



Suzy Lake in her studio on Craig Street in Montreal, c.1970s, photographer unknown, Collection of the artist.

Lake began experimenting with play and performance. When she and Dean went on a picnic together, for example, they dressed as nineteenth-century painters, she as Impressionist Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) and he as Post-Impressionist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901). Lake photographed

such performance events so she would later be able to go back to them in documentation form, experience them from a different perspective (as observer rather than participant), and study the shifts in information conveyed as a result of the change of medium and viewpoint; however, she did not consider these photographs to be finished works.<sup>11</sup> Eventually Lake turned to performance, photography, and video as a set of tools for creating, buoyed by the freedom that artists enjoyed in Quebec as agents for change in the new emerging society.<sup>12</sup> As she put it, she set out to balance “the relationship between my classical training and my work as an activist on the street.”<sup>13</sup>

### FORGING COMMUNITIES

In the late 1960s, several artists across the country, with Montreal as an important centre, were occupied with Conceptual art—artwork in which the idea was more important than the technique with which it was created. Lake began conceptual experiments in her Montreal studio with performance, drawing on the local art community to be both participants and audience. There, through this participatory studio space, she also began to use her art practice to bridge the political currents she witnessed in Quebec: “I was trying all kinds of different things to figure out how to bring content into my works, so that what was happening on the street made sense with what was happening in the studio. I was trying to figure out who I was as a result of a lot of radical social change.”<sup>14</sup>

A global counterculture had been coalescing in response to the Vietnam War, civil rights struggles, women’s liberation, and various decolonization movements around the world. In North America, burgeoning hippie and protest cultures promoted an anti-conformity stance, and numerous communities experimented with alternative forms of relationships, communion, and mobilization that extended into the art world, notably through Happenings. In 1969, in the midst of this social revolution, Lake hosted her initial *Annual Feast*, where she silkscreened place settings directly onto the studio floor. She considered this event, a performance that was also a work of art and a social gathering, as a way to explore the relationship between her work and its effect on her viewers—her dinner guests.



Suzy Lake, *Behavioural Prints*, 1972, archival pigment print, documentation of studio performance/event, Montreal, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

A year later Lake purchased her first single-lens reflex camera and began to combine performance with photography: her initial effort was the 16mm film *Bisecting Space*, 1970, in which she silkscreened a dotted line on a two-hundred-foot sheet of muslin and placed it along the floor and ceiling of an empty gallery space in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), dividing the



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space in two. "I used the fabric to bisect the space to feel the perceptual impact on the body's awareness of space/area," she explains. "I first did this in 16mm film in a gallery at the MMFA; but the cumbersomeness of the equipment was distracting to the experience, and the 2-d projection reduced the activity to documentation of process. I re-did the activity ... as a private performance in my studio [in order] to focus on the experience, with a minimum of stills to document it for my own record."<sup>15</sup> As with her performance picnic with Tom Dean, this work is an early instance of how performance and its documentation were becoming increasingly entwined in Lake's practice.



Suzy Lake, *Bisecting Space*, 1970, 16mm film, documentation of event, Montreal, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Although greatly influenced by the dominant artistic styles of hard-edged abstraction used by Guido Molinari, Serge Tousseignant (b.1942), Yves Gaucher (1934-2000), Hugh LeRoy, and others, Lake gradually transitioned to using camera-based forms of media; as she said, "I had to step away ... to not fall back on the old tropes of painting. So I chose to work in photography and video, and a lot of the early performance and video that I did do were issues that I was learning from the senior artists. I wanted to try to understand them, to perform them with my body."<sup>16</sup> At the time, camera-based art was still a relatively new medium compared with the long-established practice of painting. It offered innumerable avenues for exploring representation.

Lake's interest in self-portraiture increased in the early 1970s and she produced several series of photographs of herself in different outfits and makeup, in some works speaking to someone off camera and in some even

transforming feature by feature into another person who was important to her. Her goal in all these photographs was to explore an aspect of a constructed and composed identity—often in a playful manner bordering on slapstick.



Suzy Lake, *A One Hour (Zero) Conversation with Allan B.*, 1973, gelatin silver fibre-based print, felt pen on paper, 63.5 x 105.8 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.

*On Stage*, 1972–74, Lake's first photographic performance series, reacted against the way women were represented in the mass media. By photographing herself as she played different roles and in various costumes and cosmetic applications (including whiteface), she used her own body to explore issues of beauty, identity, perception, and advertising. Lake went on to further investigate the concepts of identity and appearance in multiple portraits arranged in a grid pattern in *A One Hour (Zero) Conversation with Allan B.* and *Miss Chatelaine*, both from 1973. In the former, Lake once again appears in whiteface, the title alluding to a conversation Lake is having, presumably with Allan Bealy, outside the photographic frame. In the thirty images, presented in grid formation, that constitute the work, Lake smokes a cigarette, grimaces, and appears to pause to listen to her interlocutor. With a black marker, Lake has circled her head on seven of the images, mimicking a photo editor's markup on contact sheets, and suggesting a self-consciousness with regard to the dissemination of her image in the media.



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LEFT: (From top left, clockwise) Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being, Cycle I: 11/63* (detail), 1973, advertisement in *Village Voice* of November 29, 1973, #3 of 17; Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being, Cycle I: End of Cycle* (detail), 1974, advertisement in *Village Voice* of September 26, 1974, #13 of 17; Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being, Cycle II: 12/63* (detail), 1974, advertisement in *Village Voice* of December 30, 1974, #16 of 17; Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being, Cycle II: 10/13/61* (detail), 1974, advertisement in *Village Voice* of October 31, 1974, #14 of 17, newspaper in plastic sleeves, 43.2 x 35.6 cm each, Museum of Modern Art, New York. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Suzy Lake as Gilles Gheerbrant, 1973-75*, 4 gelatin silver fiber-based prints, 91.4 x 76.2 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

A few months later, Lake started her *Transformations* series, 1973-75. She opened the body of work with a self-portrait and gradually, by replacing one facial feature after another, morphed her image into that of another person, such as Wayne State University colleague Gary William Smith or the Quebec dancer and artist Françoise Sullivan (b.1923). Lake identified Adrian Piper (b.1948) as a pivotal inspiration at this time: "She was a strong influence beginning with her *Mythic Being* performance series. She was addressing identity ramifications of social change in the late sixties. About that time, I was questioning the representation of women resulting from that social change."<sup>17</sup> In *The Mythic Being, 1973-75*, Piper performs for the camera as a somewhat androgynous, racially ambiguous man. Piper's alter ego first appeared as advertisements in the *Village Voice*, and over time she began to manipulate the surface of the photographs with word balloons containing text from her journals between 1961 and 1972. Certain textual information and juxtapositions included in works in the series open up the possibility of reading the series as a commentary on racialization and identity construction; *I/You (Her)*, 1974, for instance, juxtaposes Piper's face alongside the face of a white woman, while the accompanying speech bubble offers the text, "You punish me for how I look, when that is irrelevant and out of my control." *The Mythic Being Cruising White Women*, 1975, though not describing the racial identity of *The Mythic Being*, nevertheless enters concerns over race and racialization into a reading of the work via its titling.

Although Lake's art from these years can easily be interpreted as feminist, she did not conceive of it that way: "My politics originated in human rights issues, civil rights, the FLQ in Quebec, and race issues in the States."<sup>18</sup> This description is important: although the feminist movement was emerging in the early 1970s as a distinct rights movement with its own specific political and visual strategies, Lake was more invested in the local struggles that surrounded her and their links to global liberation movements. In particular, she was influenced by the dominant

political struggle for sovereignty and the alignment of various political groups—most notoriously the militant Front de Libération du Québec, which, despite its violent strategies, was supported both by left-leaning students, academics, and artists in the years leading up to the October Crisis in 1970 in Montreal and, more broadly, by many others throughout Quebec.

In 1976, Lake appeared in a photographic series by fellow artist Bill Jones (b.1946) titled *If You Knew Suzy*, in which she dressed as heiress-turned-militant Patty Hearst. Following her alleged kidnapping by the Symbionese Liberation Army, Hearst became a member of the group (she later claimed to be suffering from Stockholm Syndrome) and participated in a bank robbery that was captured on security-camera footage. According to Jones, when he asked Lake if she would appear in the work as Hearst, she "showed up the next day wearing a red beret and raincoat and carrying a realistic-looking gun right out of the news photos."<sup>19</sup>

### VÉHICULE ART

Lake has reflected that by the early 1970s, "the remarkable thing about Montreal at that time is that the generations intermingled, so it felt like a transition. I was fortunate that I had a dialogue with artists in a range of aesthetics and generations."<sup>20</sup> With a group of fellow artists, Lake co-founded Véhicule Art Inc. in Montreal in early 1972.<sup>21</sup> The establishment of Véhicule responded to contemporary artistic interests and contributed to a new and pivotal network of artist-run centres that provided much-needed exhibition venues for artists working in new media and burgeoning means of expression. According to its early mandate, Véhicule would "provide a non-profit, non-political centre directed by and for artists, that [through] its very operating structure will remain open and unbiased to changing forms and expressions in all the arts ... and that will remain a vital place for both artist and public."<sup>22</sup> As one of Canada's first artist-run centres, the gallery provided an exhibition space for artists and became an important site for experimental art and



LEFT: Bill Jones, *If You Knew Suzy #1*, 1976/2008, colour and black and white photographs, edition of 10, 67.3 x 57.2 cm, Paul Petro Contemporary Art, Toronto.  
RIGHT: Bill Jones, *If You Knew Suzy #2*, 1976/2008, colour and black and white photographs, edition of 10, 67.3 x 57.2 cm, Paul Petro Contemporary Art, Toronto.

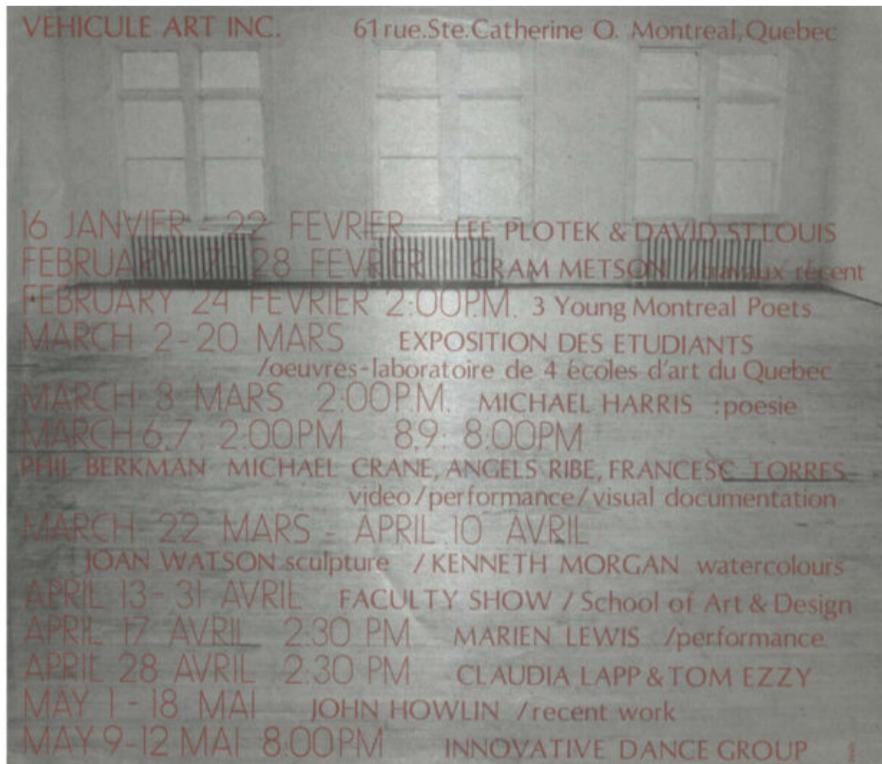
independent art publishing. Soon after the gallery opened, Lake exhibited her first iteration of *On Stage*, followed by a two-person exhibition, *Allan Bealy and Suzy Lake*, in December 1973.



Véhicule Art Inc. meeting, Montreal, c.1972-73, photographer unknown, Collection of the artist.

In 1976 Lake began her Master of Fine Arts studies at Concordia University, graduating two years later. While there she produced her breakthrough series *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976-77, in which she was suspended in a harness from a scaffold and manipulated by two puppeteers above, with a third person photographing the performance at regular intervals. Lake explored themes of dominance and resistance and, in addition, because the image of her body became blurred in the still images as she moved, the loss of identity. For Lake, the possibility of distorting a photographic image through a long exposure time meant that the technique was invaluable: it offered a critical site through which to investigate time, duration, movement, and perception.

Although *Choreographed Puppets* attracted modest attention at its first showing at the Optica art gallery in 1977, it has since been recognized as a challenging and forward-thinking work of art and it was included in the retrospective *Introducing Suzy Lake* at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2014. William A. Ewing, the founding director of Optica who invited Lake to exhibit *Choreographed Puppets*, described the dual focus in this work: to use performance to blur the boundaries of art, and to use photography in a new and expressive way that offered her new personal insight. "The uncertainty built into the production of the piece," he said, "had given her a new awareness of something fundamental in human nature."<sup>23</sup>



LEFT: Artist-poet-activist Roy Kiyooka performing *Poetry/Slides/Video* at Véhicule Art Inc., Montreal, 1973, photographer unknown, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Allan Bealy, *Véhicule Art Inc.*, Montreal, Quebec, 1974, paper, 34 x 39.4 cm, Concordia University Library, Special Collection, Montreal.

### TORONTO: BRANCHING OUT, LOOKING IN

After a productive decade in Montreal, Lake had attracted the notice of influential figures in the commercial and public gallery scene in Toronto, and she decided to move to the city where the Sable-Castelli Gallery, her commercial dealer, was located.<sup>24</sup> She arrived in 1978 accompanied by her second husband, Alex Neumann. Soon after the move, Lake became a member of a community of photographers who helped to found the Toronto Photographers' Co-operative (now Gallery TPW); it included Jim Chambers (b.1945), Keith Bassam, Shin Sugino (b.1946), David R. Harris, Jim Adams, and Michael Mitchell (1943-2020). This community had come together in late 1977 to discuss the possibility of forming a photographers' co-operative gallery in response to concern expressed by many artists over the lack of support in Canada for photography as an art form.



LEFT: Documentation of the early meetings of the Toronto Photographers' Co-operative, 1978, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Michael Mitchell, *Self-portrait*, c.1983, colour instant print (Polaroid), 25.4 x 20.3 cm.

In 1978 Lake had a solo exhibition, *imPOSITIONS*, curated by Roald Nasgaard, at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and she was included in a group exhibition (titled *For Suzy Lake, Chris Knudsen, and Robert Walker*) at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The VAG show included three of her photographic series from the time: *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976-77, and *Vertical Pull #1*, 1977, as well as *imPositions #1*, 1977. In the latter two, Lake appears bound with rope so as to investigate issues of confinement, control, struggle, and perhaps empowerment—qualities that she believed could be amplified by heating the photographic film and stretching it to exaggerate the actions documented in *imPositions #1*.

During this time Lake began work on her series *Are You Talking to Me?*, 1978-79, which was exhibited at the Sable-Castelli Gallery in 1979, followed by a trans-Canada tour. It marked the culmination of her explorations in identity and gender by documenting one of her own “performances” in black and white photography; she painted some of the images with traditional oil paints and re-photographed them in colour film. Her intention was to manipulate the photograph, with particular emphasis placed around the mouths in the images in an attempt to draw the viewer into the conversation.

In 1980, while still married to Neumann, Lake gave birth to their daughter, Danika. As she recalls, “When I had my daughter it was like an isolated incident in the community, and you know, I had male artists saying, ‘Don’t you believe in your career? What are you doing that for?’”<sup>25</sup> Throughout the 1980s Lake juggled parenting and working, producing photographic works focusing on the relationship between the figure and space. In the sculptural photo and wood installation *Passageways*, 1982, different photographs of Lake’s body are assembled in a collage-like formation contained by a wooden structure that resembles two parallel walls. In *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, 1983-85, which was photographed in Lake’s new home in Toronto’s Christie Pits neighbourhood, Lake is seen taking a sledgehammer to a bright red wall behind her, revealing the wooden slats behind the drywall. In these images she engages in destruction in order to achieve greater freedom by breaking out of the confined space, but is nevertheless contained by the frame of the photograph—this tension is an example of how Lake’s practice of photographing her performance can introduce an altered perception. This series, in which she stands with her back to the viewer, was the last in which she performed for the camera until 1994 (she did a live performance, *Missed Liberty*, in 1985-86).



Suzy Lake, *Are You Talking to Me?* (detail), 1978-79, 76 gelatin silver and chromogenic prints, total size 94 x 649 cm, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Passageways*, 1982, lumber, black and white gelatin silver fibre-based prints, hand coloured gelatin silver fibre-prints, photo emulsion on lumber, drawing on lumber and mirrors. Installation photograph of *Passageways* installed at the Art Gallery of Hamilton as part of the exhibition *Sites and Locations*, 1982, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #8*, 1983/1984, chromogenic print, oil paint, lumber, 162.6 x 109.2 x 10.2 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Lake ceased appearing as a subject in her work in the mid-to-late 1980s as she became invested in more direct forms of camera activism: for a decade she put her camera and skills to use in more specific political struggles. She began to teach photography as an activist strategy even as she used her camera to document and advocate on behalf of the groups she assisted. On the global front, she focused on power dynamics and grassroots activism, working with ArtNica, a solidarity group that supported the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) (the Sandinista National Liberation Front) in Nicaragua. While there, she taught the Sandinistas how to take nighttime surveillance photographs of the Contras.

In Ontario, Lake joined with the Teme-Augama Anishnabai Band of Bear Island in Temagami and, at the invitation of the Band Council, produced a series of photographs designed to be an installation in solidarity with their land claim. She had been involved in anti-clear-cutting protests in the province, and the Band hoped she could convey the issues to a majority-white city audience through this collaborative work. Lake decided to work collaboratively on this project and lend her aesthetic skills to draw attention to the issue: "I could talk about issues of authority and power relations through my own work," she wrote, "but the land claim and the attempts since 1870 to arrive at a treaty were not my stories to tell."<sup>26</sup>



Suzy Lake, *Cautioned Homes and Gardens: Barb and Janie*, 1991, triptych; chromogenic print, photo montage, 151.8 x 58.4 cm; 151.8 x 103.5 cm; 151.8 x 58.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

These experiences, combined with new developments in the theory of photography that advocated a politically conscientious engagement with photographic subjects (in writings by Martha Rosler [b.1943], Allan Sekula [1951–2013], and others), contributed to the development of her installation *Authority Is an Attribute ... part 2*, 1991. In this work she created a photomontage of pictures of some of the Band members before photographs of their special places in the disputed territory, juxtaposed with photographs of two businessmen—called the Game Players—staring through binoculars to scrutinize the location. In 1991 the Band named Lake an “Honorary Friend of the Teme Augama Anishnabai” for her advocacy of their land claim.

Since 1968 Lake had taught in various institutions, first in Montreal and later in Toronto. In the 1980s she became a sessional instructor at the University of Guelph, where she was hired as an associate professor in 1988 and granted tenure in 1990. For the first time, she had a secure income for herself—and she enjoyed her role as an educator:

I loved being in the classroom and inventing pedagogical strategies ... As a 22-year sessional veteran, I taught everything from watercolour to performance. Once full time, I was able to focus on media more aligned to my practice, then eventually I was able to focus on photography. In a smaller art program, photo students needed to learn technical, aesthetic/conceptual and historical material. It was a lot to blend each semester, yet it provided the student with means for creative independence.<sup>27</sup>

Lake became famous among her students for her many catchphrases, such as “aesthetic bracketing,” which translates as encouraging students “not to lock in one vision of what the finished work should look like.” Her former student and later studio mate Sara Angelucci (b.1962) says that the phrase “everything is information” became a “mantra” in Lake’s classes.<sup>28</sup>



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *A Genuine Simulation Of...* (detail), 1973/1974, 90 chromogenic prints, total size 152 x 142 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Sara Angelucci, *Al Rivero (cousin)*, 2004, chromogenic print, 101.6 x 76.2 cm, Collection of the artist.

In 1987 Lake separated from Neumann, and they divorced in 1994. She has been with her partner, Robert Yoshioka, since 1989, and she works from her home studio in Toronto’s Annex neighbourhood. Lake continues to maintain multiple identities—among them, artist, grandmother, and citizen.

#### MATURITY AND RECOGNITION

After a quarter century in Canada, Lake’s broad recognition as an artist was firmly established. In 1993 the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (founded in 1985 and closed in 2006, its collection absorbed into the National Gallery of Canada) organized *Point of Reference*, a twenty-year retrospective of her work, which toured until 1997.



Suzy Lake, *Rhythm of a True Space #1*, 2008, archival pigment print, glossy laminate, 61 x 11.8 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. Maquette for the Art Gallery of Ontario's McCaul Street installation in Toronto.

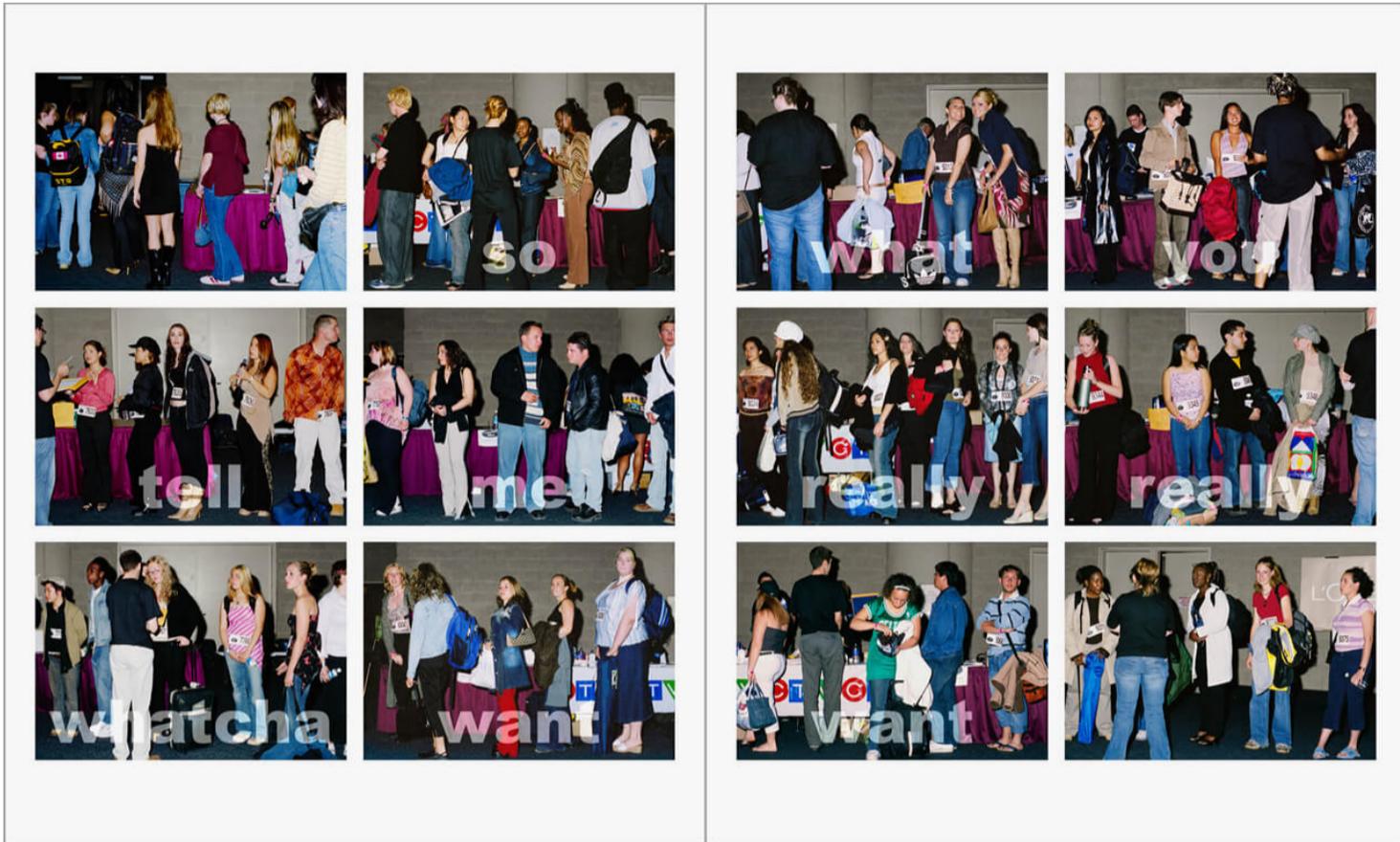
Around the same time, after a decade-long absence, in 1994 Lake began to appear as the subject in her work again, though, in her words, this return marked “the beginning of depicting an older body.”<sup>29</sup> The cotton slip, a metaphor for both vulnerability and armour, became the costume she donned in *Re-Reading Recovery*, 1994–99—and again in the commission *Rhythm of a True Space*, 2008, at the Art Gallery of Ontario, when the work appeared on a human scale yet elevated by the temporary wooden scaffold that surrounded the building during its renovation. A version of the cotton slip, made of hand-quilted photographic emulsion, was also displayed as part of the 1998 series *Fascia*, in which Lake created a tactile link between the delicate wrinkled photography film and the texture of her aging skin.

The art Lake made over the next ten years included performance for the camera, as she explored the female body and its relationship to mainstream celebrity and youth culture, notably as Suzy Spice in *You Really Like Me #1*, 1998, the photo performances series *Beauty at a Proper Distance*, 2000–2008, and works produced from photo-documentation she took of the *Canadian Idol* reality TV auditions in Toronto in 2003. These photographs were exhibited by her art dealer Paul Petro Contemporary Art in her 2004 show *Whatcha Really, Really Want*. Lake's *Peonies and the Lido*, 2000–2006, captures a different side of aging—one of contemplation as well as agitation. It depicts Lake as the Dirk Bogarde character Gustav von Aschenbach, an aging composer who travels to Venice and becomes obsessed with the youth and beauty of the adolescent boy Tadzio, in Luchino Visconti's 1971 film adaptation of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*.



# SUZY LAKE

Life & Work by Erin Silver



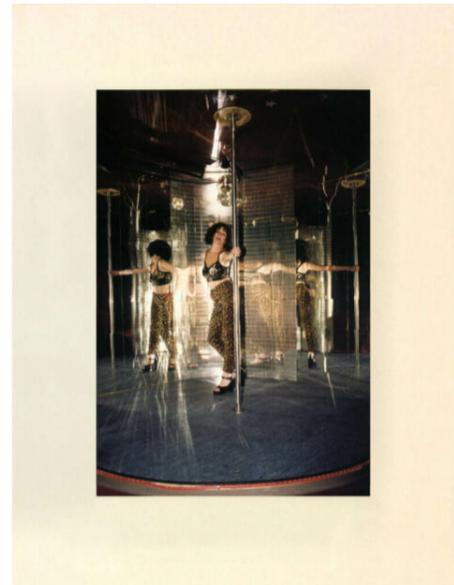
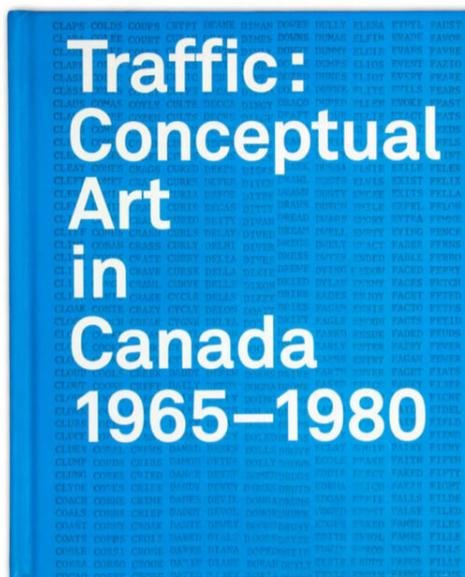
Suzy Lake, *Whatcha Really, Really Want*, 2003, 2 chromogenic prints, laminated, 111.8 x 101.6 cm each, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

In 2008 Lake retired from teaching at the University of Guelph and was given the title Professor Emerita. The approaching freedom launched yet another busy period of artistic production and recognition: she was included in pivotal group exhibitions such as *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution, 2007*, curated by Connie Butler, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles—a show that travelled to New York, Washington, DC, and Vancouver. That same year, Lake was exhibited alongside two notable American contemporaries in *Identity Theft: Eleanor Antin, Lynn Hershman, Suzy Lake, 1972-1978*, at the Santa Monica Museum of Art (now the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles). Lake has acknowledged the influence that Antin's work with the body had on her own practice.

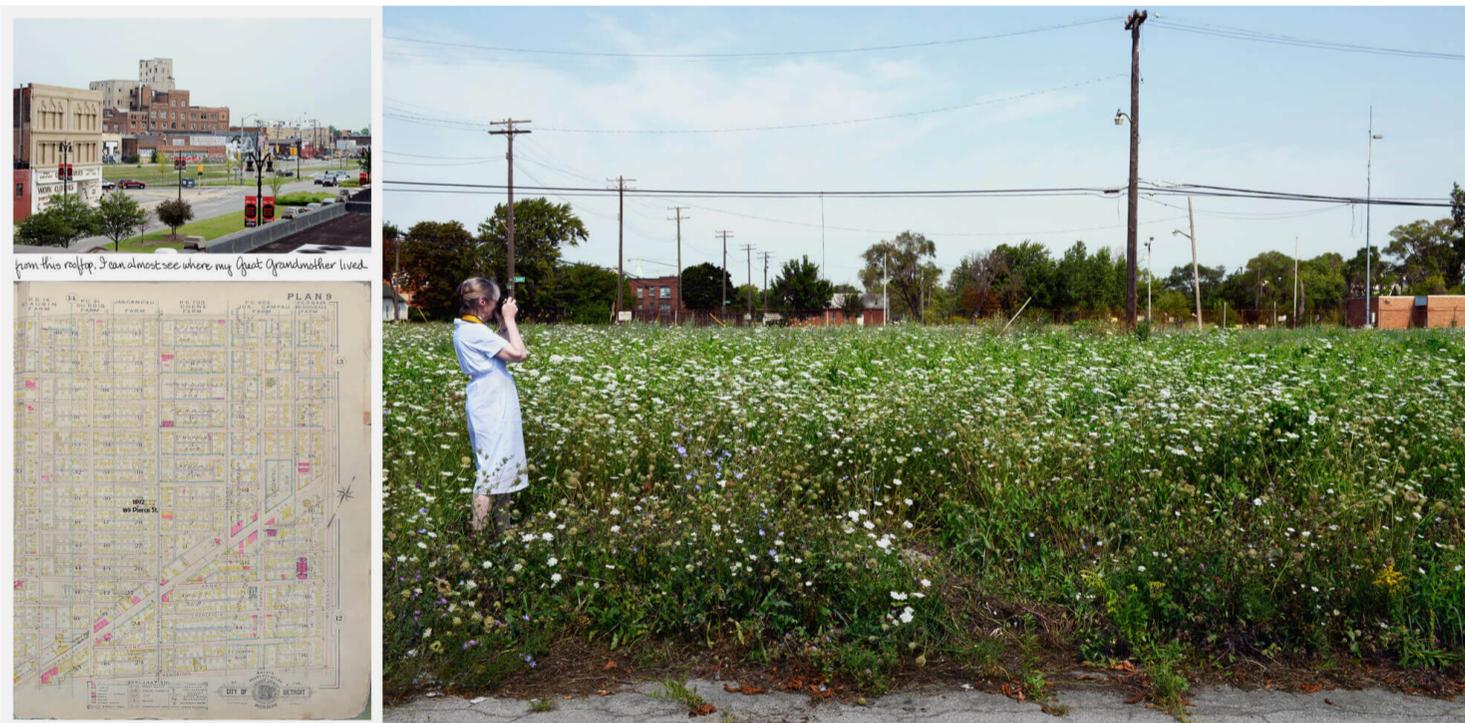
The 2010 touring exhibition *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada, 1965-1980*, featured Lake in its Montreal section, alongside former Véhicule artists Tom Dean, Serge Tousignant, and Bill Vazan (b.1933). In 2012 Georgia Scherman became her dealer, in Toronto, because, in Lake's words: "I was very fortunate to have a gallery on Queen Street [Paul Petro Contemporary Art] that kept my work visible to a younger community, and he did a very good job of that. But I think in terms of a different perspective, I changed galleries because I really did feel that I needed a woman to represent me."<sup>30</sup>

In 2014–15 the Art Gallery of Ontario presented the retrospective *Introducing Suzy Lake*. The title was tongue-in-cheek, “introducing” Lake to new generations and audiences when, in fact, she had been working in plain sight all along. Some performance works were resurrected for the AGO’s First Thursday event: while Lake resumed her Suzy Spice persona, *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976–77, was re-enacted by Toronto dancer and choreographer Amelia Ehrhardt, rigged into a facsimile of Lake’s original scaffolding and animated by puppeteers overhead. Among the new works, *Performing Haute Couture*, 2014,

commissioned especially for the retrospective, extended Lake’s career-long interest in self-fashioning, depicting the artist in a luxury Comme des Garçons two-piece suit before a dark grey backdrop. These photographs evoke a high-fashion photo shoot where Lake exerts a different type of command: while most of her figure is in sharp focus, her right arm is blurred by movement.



LEFT: Cover of *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965–1980* (2012), edited by Grant Arnold and Karen Henry. The show was organized and circulated by the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, and the Vancouver Art Gallery, in partnership with the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery at Concordia University and Halifax, INK in 2010. It was the first major exhibition mapping the development of Conceptual art in Canada. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Ciccolina Bar #2*, 1999/2000, chromogenic print, laminated on canvas, 77.5 x 66.4 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.



Suzy Lake, *189 Pierce Street, 1892*, 2014/2016, archival pigment print, 50.8 x 101.6 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

The AGO retrospective also featured two new photographs for the series *Extended Breathing*, 2008-14, where Lake tests the durational capacity of her aging body as she stands perfectly still in various sites, both private and public, for an hour-long photographic exposure. While the background remains crisp in the photographs, her body is blurred by the gentle movement as she breathes, save for her feet and lower legs, which remain in sharp focus. *Extended Breathing* also marked a notable return to Lake's hometown of Detroit, where, in *Extended Breathing on the DIA Steps*, 2012/2014, she stands in front of the Detroit Institute of Art and, in *Extended Breathing in the Rivera Frescoes*, 2013/2014, before *Detroit Industry, South Wall, 1932-33*, by Mexican artist Diego M. Rivera (1886-1957), one of the two largest murals Rivera painted for the institute. Lake further explores her own roots in Detroit in the series *Performing an Archive*, 2014-16. Through a combination of family documents, genealogical charts, census records, and personal recollection, she created a visual map of her Detroit ancestral homes, juxtaposing neighbourhood maps with photographs in which she also appears.



Suzy Lake, *Performing Haute Couture #1*, 2014, chromogenic print, black frame with museum glass, 167.7 x 127 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Following on the heels of her groundbreaking AGO retrospective (Lake became one of only a handful of women artists in the gallery's history to receive a solo show with an accompanying publication), in March 2016 Lake was honoured with a Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and, in May 2016, she won the Scotiabank Photography Award, leading to a solo exhibition at the Ryerson Image Centre in 2017. Today Lake's work is held in several national and international collections, including at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo), the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Musée d'art contemporain (Montreal), the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York).



# KEY WORKS

Suzy Lake's artworks reflect her lifelong interest in challenging the limitations of representation and questioning what is possible when an artist creates an image. Using cameras and, most often, her own body as the subject, Lake pushes the photographic medium to explore the relationship between art and its viewers and, through performance and the manipulation of physical photographs, issues of identity and gender, control, and resistance. She has tried to reveal how lenses shape the world and how the particular characteristics of the camera alter our understanding of the images they produce.

## ANNUAL FEAST 1969–72



Suzy Lake, *Annual Feast*, 1969-72  
 Studio performance/event, Montreal  
 Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto

*Annual Feast* captures several themes that had come to light in Lake's early work soon after the young artist moved to Montreal. In 1969 she invited her colleagues to a feast that was part performance and part meal. In order to explore the relationship between art and its viewers, she silkscreened circled numbers and place settings on the floor of her studio and provided a legend in stencilled letters on the wall indicating what each of the numbers referred to: 1. dinner plate; 2. cup & saucer; 3. wine glass; 4. salad bowl; 5. vegetables; 6. salads; 7. soups; 8. turkey; 9. ham; 10. candelabra; 11. butter dish; 12. salt; 13. pepper; 35. hostess (skipping numbers 14 to 34, suggesting a symbolic accounting for her guests). Although her guests could have eaten around her work table, without any instruction from her they opted instead to sit down before the place settings, depositing their plates and glasses in the designated circles. Lake saw the potential for her work to direct an audience—much like the power of signage on the streets. She continued to host the feast every year until 1972.

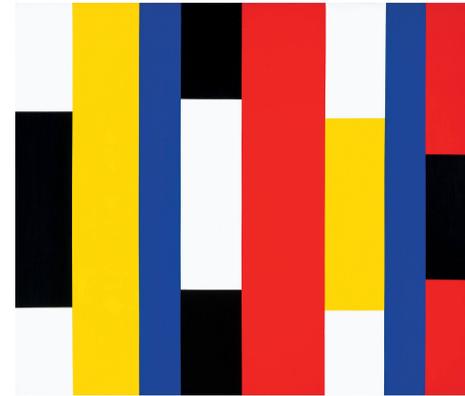


# SUZY LAKE

Life & Work by Erin Silver

At this time, Lake was working as an assistant for Guido Molinari (1933-2004), and she had joined a vibrant community of artists. Her work was experimental, conceptual, and rooted in performance. Her studio functioned as a site of significance both for her solo experiments with large-scale installations and as a location through which to mobilize her community. The studio Lake rented on Montreal's Craig Street (now rue Saint-Antoine) functioned not as a backdrop but as a key component in her early experiments with space and the experience of it. In 1970 she bought her first camera, enabling her to photograph events and performances and to judge their effect on participants and viewers alike.

In *Behavioural Prints*, 1972, a work related to *Annual Feast*, Lake rolled out a long sheet of paper and asked a friend to step in paint and walk down the sheet with her. They allowed the paint to dry before they switched positions and followed along the previously laid-down prints. The participants soon found that their bodies were "out of sync" with each other and this made them attempt to compensate with their steps, making their gait awkward. The photographs of this event are the first record of a Lake performance.



Guido Molinari, *White Rectangle*, 1959, acrylic on canvas, 83.7 x 95.6 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

## ON STAGE 1972–74



Suzy Lake, *On Stage*, 1972 (reprinted 1996)  
Gelatin silver print, selenium toned, 40.1 x 91.3 cm  
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

During the early 1970s, Lake created her breakthrough work, *On Stage*. Using herself as the model for a series of photographs, she explores how our identity is shaped by both ourselves and society. The work would have a far-reaching impact on the international art world. The American artist Cindy Sherman (b.1954) has credited it as a major inspiration for the conceptual portraits for which she became famous.<sup>1</sup> For *On Stage*, Lake produced three iterations of still photographs: first, in 1972, a slide projection of eighty-four photographic images in which she posed as a fashion model in different scenes and costumes; then, in 1973, a new iteration of these images with the addition of bilingual captions to explain her intentions; and finally, in 1974, a new group of close-up photographs of her upper body, in whiteface makeup, arranged in a grid.

Over the years, *On Stage* became iconic as the forerunner of many recurring features in her oeuvre: the use of her own body as a constant reference point; the arrangement of the images in a grid sequence, much like the contact sheets common in advertising photography; the use of whiteface to erase her own individuality and provide a “zero” slate for the work; and her interest in the themes of feminism, identity, and protest. As Lake expressed it: “Art became a mode through which to explore the social, political, and philosophical concerns of the time.”<sup>2</sup>

An occasional fashion model and life model for artists, Lake appears in this work in a variety of interior and exterior settings. She mimics the fashion photography that appeared in contemporary women's magazines through exaggerated poses and gestures, such as being photographed mid-stride or staring away from the camera. Lake calls this work a "provocation" of self-fashioning and role-playing, an exploration of identity at a moment of social and political upheaval.<sup>3</sup> Through the use of imitation, the fashion model, a ubiquitous signifier of ideal femininity at this time, became a sign that could be explored and critiqued from a feminist perspective. *On Stage* marks the beginning of Lake's preoccupation with questions of perception and formation of the self—by the self, by others, and within broader society.

The photographs range from close-up headshots of Lake as a child and young woman to portraits of the artist in a variety of costumes, hairstyles, and makeup. Lake writes in a text accompanying one of the images: "Role playing is a daily occurrence; it can be as subtle as dressing for a special occasion, diplomacy, or inadvertently picking up someone's mannerisms." In another of the captions, with text alternating between English and French, she juxtaposes three family snapshots of herself as a toddler at Halloween, a child playing the accordion, and a teenager at a prom, asking, "Where do we begin to define our true selves?" Lake did not intend to produce an autobiographical portrait but rather to examine what she refers to as "portraits as an issue of identity."<sup>4</sup>

In its original iteration, the series included only the fashion photographs. However, amid the seriousness that marked the women's liberation movement and other political movements of the day, including civil rights and various decolonization movements around the globe, the subtlety of the work was not immediately appreciated. It was even mocked for being "narcissistic."<sup>5</sup> This charge led Lake to alter the work by adding subversive images and texts in order to emphasize that this self-conscious performance was both for the self and for others.

The *On Stage* series proved to be influential in Lake's development as an artist in the early 1970s. She went on to use whiteface in several other works from these years, including *Miss Chatelaine*, *A One Hour (Zero) Conversation with Allan B.*, and *Imitations of Myself*, all from 1973. The overall effect of altering her appearance within the photograph eventually became, for Lake, a more overt strategy of manipulation and distortion of the surface of the photograph itself, techniques that can be seen in *Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith*, 1973-74, a work from her *Transformations* series.



Suzy Lake, *On Stage*, 1972-74, 84 gelatin silver fibre-based prints, selenium toned, 35.6 x 27.9 cm each, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. Installation photograph of *On Stage* at the University of Toronto Art Centre as part of the exhibition *Suzy Lake: Political Poetics*, 2011.

## MISS CHATELAINE 1973



Suzy Lake, *Miss Chatelaine*, 1973

Gelatin silver fibre-based print (printed 1996), 22.3 × 22.4 cm

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

*Miss Chatelaine* presents a grid of twelve portraits in which Lake is photographed in whiteface, with different hairstyles cropped from women's magazines collaged onto her head. Her facial expressions are natural—laughing, reflecting, lighting a cigarette, all while seeming to talk with someone off-camera—but the elegantly arranged hair around her anonymous face provides a satirical commentary on the depiction of women in the media. Step by step, it attacks the stereotype of femininity. Created during the same period as *On Stage*, 1972–74, it too presents a behind-the-scenes view of the formation of a

public self. As such, it parodies the social pressures on women and becomes an important piece of feminist art.

The title *Miss Chatelaine* refers to the popular Canadian women's magazine *Chatelaine*. Under the direction of the legendary editor Doris Anderson, the magazine courageously published articles on equal pay for women, abortion, and divorce while, at the same time, it balanced its appeal with the customary attention to impossible standards of fashion, beauty, and housekeeping. In this work, Lake simultaneously identifies with, and disavows, the standards of beauty urged on women; as she said, "I knew what I should look like ... I was told that all my life."<sup>1</sup> However, she resisted identifying her work with overt contemporary feminist issues. *Miss Chatelaine* can be seen as an early intervention into assumptions about gender and the societal standards of womanhood that are acted out on women's bodies. The images have the effect of concealing the very facial features that the makeup is intended to define.

In Lake's artwork, the grid, with its ties to Conceptual art as a rational visual strategy of organization, often carries with it an expressive weight that is focused on the self. American artists including Eleanor Antin (b.1935) (a mentor for Lake) and Hannah Wilke (1940-1993) likewise explored this fusion of reason and emotion. In turn, Lake's use of the grid as a narrative device, as performance documentation, and as a container for role-playing later influenced the American artist Cindy Sherman (b.1954).<sup>2</sup>

*Imitations of Myself #1*, 1973, continues Lake's use of whiteface to explore the formation and concealment of identity. In this sequenced grid of forty-eight pictures, Lake sits at a kitchen table laden with beauty products, applying both whiteface and cosmetic makeup, including eye shadow, eyeliner, and lipstick. In the first frame, her face is obscured by a sheet of white paper on which is scrawled "Genuine Simulation of ..." This image is followed by four photographs of Lake, without makeup, wearing a beige cardigan and a pink shirt, and tucking her hair behind her ears as she smokes a cigarette. As in *A One Hour (Zero) Conversation with Allan B.*, 1973, she again appears to be in good-humoured conversation with someone off-camera.

Lake's focus on the space beyond the frame presents several possibilities: she could be looking at the camera, at a viewer, or at her own reflection. This ambiguity becomes a crucial element of her performance and her notion of constructing a self. As Lake applies the white makeup, which she then amplifies with cosmetic makeup, she alternates her focus between an off-camera mirror and the camera itself. The camera operator takes pictures at regular intervals, providing a visual record of Lake's performance.



Suzy Lake, *Imitations of Myself #2*, 1973/2013, 24 chromogenic prints, total size 79 x 84.8 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

## SUZY LAKE AS GARY WILLIAM SMITH 1973–74



Suzy Lake, *Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith, 1973-74*  
10 gelatin silver fibre-based prints, total size 94 x 67.3 cm  
Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto

In all nine works that make up the *Transformations* series, 1973-75, Lake begins with a set of self-portraits presented in a grid. With the progression from one image to the next, she uses montage to introduce a facial feature from another face onto her own, and gradually morphs into another person entirely. *Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith* shows Lake's portrait frame by frame transformed into a portrait of Smith—a colleague from Wayne State University who was visiting Montreal at the time. Further graphic interventions—such as shading added with a marker—highlight individual features from Smith's portrait that have replaced Lake's in the images. In contrast to previous photographic series in which Lake played with variations on herself to make her point, here she gradually and playfully transforms her portrait into that of another person.

At the midpoint of the transition, Lake appears still recognizably herself, but the lower half of her face is replaced with Smith's beard. Although the performance of gender was not at the forefront of Lake's thinking at the time, the Smith piece in particular might nevertheless be regarded as an important feminist work in the history of art. In relation to the traditional photographic portrait, it raises issues that explore the nuanced elements of gender, transformation, performance, the scrutinizing view of the self, and flexible markers in the formation of identity. Lake's morphing into Smith is exemplary of the power of Lake's visual transformations—here, from woman to man, unrecognizable as herself by the last frame, despite her own photographic portrait as the point of departure.



Suzy Lake, *Suzy Lake as Françoise Sullivan*, 1973–74 (printed 2012), 6 archival pigment prints, total size 182.8 x 208.9 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

In making the *Transformations* series, Lake chose partners (men, women, and one child) from whom she had “learned something”—individuals from her life who had influenced her—and the images are a visual record of sorts of their effect on her, in the same way that we absorb the mannerisms of people we admire.<sup>1</sup> The portraits are all very large, a scale that was exceptional at the time. Using analog photography, she stencilled out features from two different negatives, and then exposed them in a darkroom. Each photograph is at once its own portrait, but all together the images document the accumulation of new facial features that Lake has layered on the original photograph of herself.

In another work in the series, *Suzy Lake as Françoise Sullivan*, 1973–74 (printed 2012), Lake first shaded out the eyes and then the mouth of Françoise Sullivan (b.1923), an important Quebec artist and choreographer.<sup>2</sup> The work draws attention to the photographic surface, to the process of creating the photographs, and to the photo-editing process—what must be discarded and what remains.

## THE NATURAL WAY TO DRAW 1975



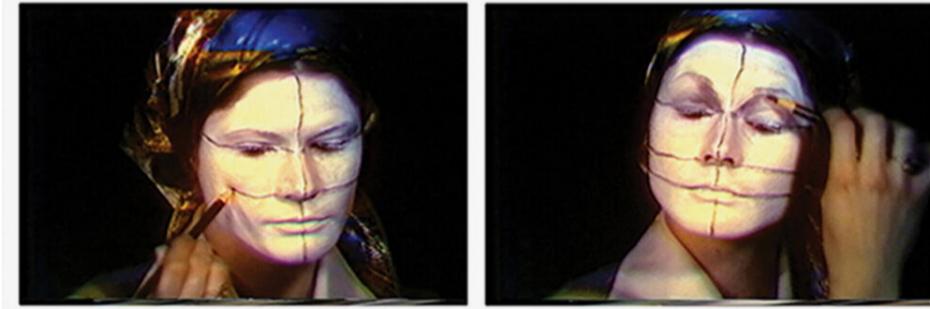
Suzy Lake, *The Natural Way to Draw* (detail), 1975  
 Colour emulsion transfer on uncoated canvas, 102.5 x 134 cm  
 Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

*The Natural Way to Draw* borrows its name from a 1941 drawing manual by Kimon Nicolaïdes. For Lake, the manual brought back fond memories of her grandfather, who owned the book and fostered her interest in art as a child, drawing with her and taking her to visit the Detroit Institute of Art. It is both a performance captured on video and a storyboard for the actions captured within.

The video depicts Lake as she receives and follows the instructions being read from the manual by an off-camera voice. Appearing in whiteface makeup for the last time after having experimented with it for three years, Lake lets her own visage become the surface on which she performs the directives. The effect appears to flatten her face as she applies lines and shading directly onto her skin. Elizabeth A.T. Smith observes that this work is similar to that of other artists at the time—notably, Bruce Nauman (b.1941) and John Baldessari (1931–2020)—who similarly examined and critiqued notions of artistic process and

artistic genius by performing repetitive gestures in response to instructional cues.<sup>1</sup>

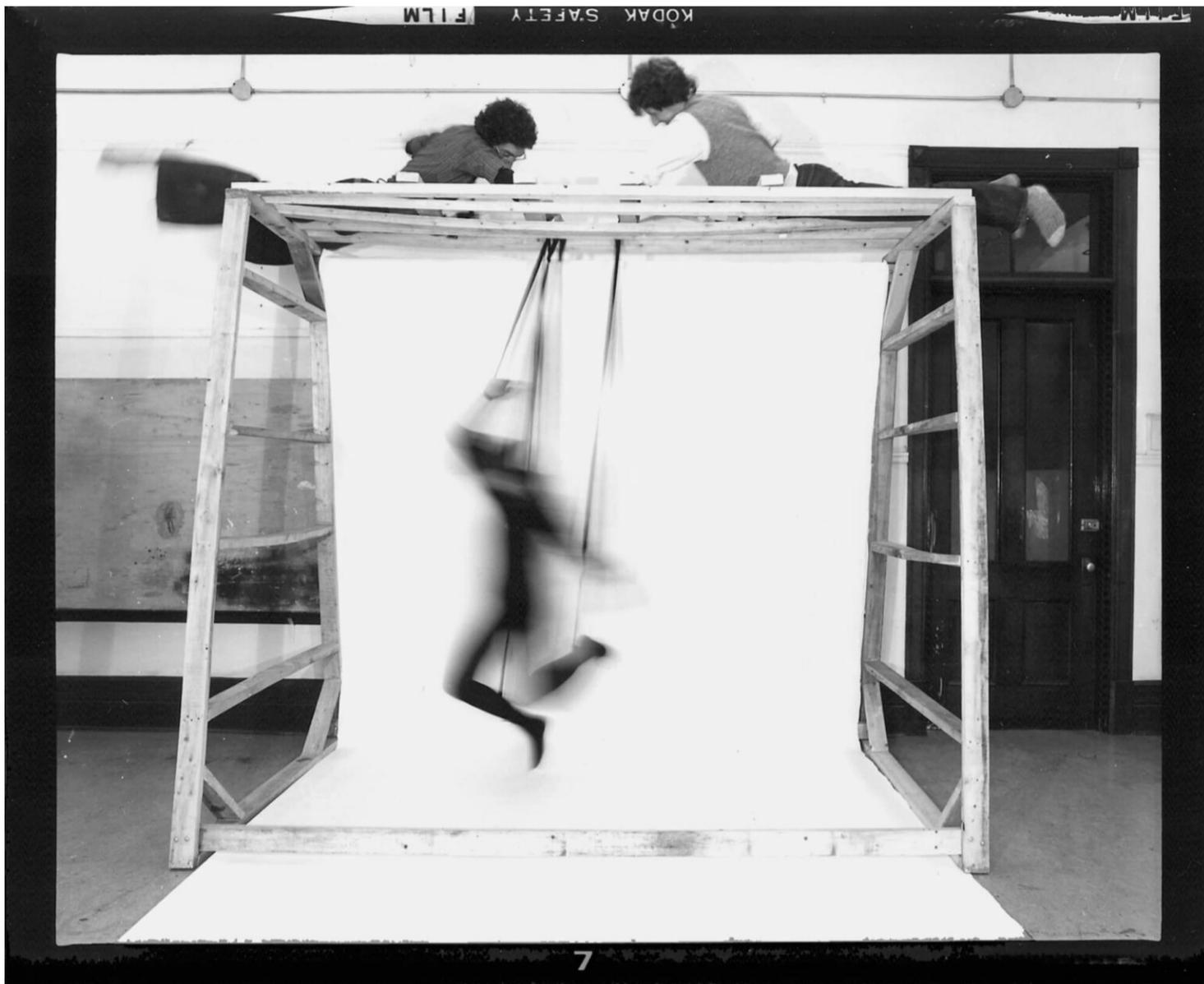
Lake had already combined the medium of photography with drawing by hand in such works as *A One Hour (Zero) Conversation with Allan B.*, 1973, in which she brought the behind-the-scenes process of image selection to the fore by making marks on the photographs with grease pencil, as if editing the image in the manner of a professional photographer or photo editor. In *The Natural Way to Draw* she returns to drawing and painting—processes she had temporarily put aside in order to focus on other media.



Suzy Lake, *The Natural Way to Draw* (film stills), 1975, colour video, sound, 15 minutes, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

In the storyboard component of the work, Lake combines drawing and photography by assembling a grid of sixty-six images—sixty photographs and six drawings. The first column documents the process of drawing a face, from basic geometric shapes to the addition of shading and detailed contour lines, to finally arrive at the appearance of a dimensional portrait in the final frame. The photographs in each row correspond to the steps represented in each of the drawings, depicting Lake, in whiteface and dressed in a yellow sweater and matching yellow kerchief, applying face makeup not to accentuate beauty, but to mimic the techniques of the drawing manual, using her own face as the canvas. The drawing instructions, which make sense on the flat surface, appear exaggerated when applied to Lake's face; the drawn portraits in the first column represent a standard drawing and, when applied to Lake herself, a deviation or manipulation of the norm.

## CHOREOGRAPHED PUPPETS 1976–77



Suzy Lake, *Choreographed Puppets Mural, Negative #7, 1976 (negative)*, printed 2011  
 Archival pigment print; six laminated black and white chromogenic print panels, print wrapped around Dibond substrate with Velcro for attaching to exhibition wall, 274 x 341 cm  
 Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto

*Choreographed Puppets* is a breakthrough piece in Lake's development as an artist. Her previous series from the early 1970s, such as *Miss Chatelaine*, 1973, had explored issues of identity and appearance using a variation of a grid pattern. In *Choreographed Puppets*, Lake turns to themes of dominance and resistance, presented in a series of individual photographs organized in a linear pattern. Lake describes the work as "control in the hands of another" that results in the loss of the performer's identity.<sup>1</sup> She further explores similar themes in related works like *Against the Wall*, 1977, *imPOSITIONS*, 1977, and *Vertical Pull*, 1977. The images in *Choreographed Puppets* appear fuzzy, which was unusual in photography at the time; they are painterly, not precise, and in character.<sup>2</sup>

The work is presented as a series of large-scale photographs that depict a scaffold, 10 feet by 12 feet by 8 feet, that Lake built in her studio at Concordia University in Montreal while she was studying for her Master of Fine Arts. Wearing a tunic with a strap, Lake is suspended from the scaffold, feet not touching the ground. Also included in the photographs are two “puppeteers,” positioned on top of the structure and holding straps that control her arms and legs in order to manipulate her movement. Throughout this theatrical performance, an assistant took photographs at regular intervals, with the shutter speed set at a thirtieth and a fiftieth of a second. After Lake selected the images to include in *Choreographed Puppets*, she presented them as silver gelatin black and white fibre-based analog prints. They give the impression of a behind-the-scenes view of the performance, without suggesting any particular beginning or conclusion. The scaffold and the process create a frame for the manipulation of Lake’s blurred body where the artist is unrecognizable. In its original showing and again in the retrospective *Introducing Suzy Lake* at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2014, Lake installed the scaffold as part of the exhibition.

The work is often understood as a feminist piece but also holds a larger meaning—the manipulation any individual might feel at times as part of humanity as a whole. However, it can also have an alternative interpretation: despite her lack of physical control, Lake remains the director of the scene, establishing the structure and the script for the unpredictable performance that occurs. Understood in this way, *Choreographed Puppets* reflects the influence of experimental dancers such as Simone Forti (b.1935) and Yvonne Rainer (b.1934), who rejected a predetermined outcome in favour of improvisation, responding to a loose set of fixed rules. (The word “choreographed” in the title is surely significant.) Forti’s *Hangers*, 1961, from her performance series *Five Dance Constructions and Some Other Things*, is an important precursor: three looped ropes hang from the ceiling and three performers stand on the loops while four other performers mingle between them, leading to unpredictable motion and an inability among the performers to control the ropes’ sway. In Lake’s investigation, however, she performs for the camera and is able to capture this element of uncontrollability through the depiction of frenetic motion as her legs dangle above the floor.

As William A. Ewing writes, “The blur was obviously the key. At the time, blur was much frowned upon in photography, considered a betrayal of the almost puritanical documentary ethos. Here it evoked a feeling of drawing, or a quick sketch. More importantly, it held back information, adding an element of mystery.”<sup>3</sup>



Simone Forti, *Photograph of “Slant Board” Performance at the Stedelijk Museum, 1982*, documentation photograph, 20.3 × 25.4 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

## IMPOSITIONS #1 1977



Suzy Lake, *ImPositions #1*, 1977

4 gelatin silver fibre-based prints, approximate size 140 x 300 cm installed  
Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa

*ImPositions #1*, a set of images, is one work from the larger *imPOSITIONS* series of photographs that feature Lake, her arms and legs bound with rope, struggling to free herself—this time as she stands in a narrow space between two rows of storage lockers in the basement of her apartment building. Lake's body, wedged in between two claustrophobic rows of wooden storage lockers, bridges containment and confinement; in their static grounding in space, Lake is forced to meld her body within the narrow space between the two rows, an exercise further complicated by her being bound.

What is particularly interesting about *ImPositions #1* is that Lake heated the film with a candle and stretched it to create a distorted effect that amplifies her movement and exertion in the photographs—a process that, as was the case with the notable blur in *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976–77, would have been frowned upon for its betrayal of the concerns for formal purity in photography at the time. As with *Choreographed Puppets*, she moved away from the grid formation, presenting the works in a rhythmic sequence in order to heighten the emotional impact of her struggle to escape.

A related work from 1977, *Vertical Pull #1*, includes photographs of Lake, who is tied to a strap and in the process of being pulled down a set of stairs by someone outside the frame—by fellow artist Angela Grauerholz (b.1952), with whom Lake shared a studio. The verticality of the images causes



Suzy Lake, *Boundaries #2*, 1985, colour pencil and oil pastel, 231.1 x 128.3 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.



# SUZY LAKE

Life & Work by Erin Silver

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a perceptual blur that obscures what is happening as Lake descends the steps with each successive photograph.

These works focus on the power and authority one person can exert over another—what Lake describes as “that restrictive situation of being suspended between actions or decisions that are under someone else’s control.”<sup>1</sup> The works were shown together in her exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1978, where Lake wrote for the accompanying brochure: “We have all (in some form or other) gone through the ominous feeling of not knowing where, when, or how the rug was pulled out from under. The edges aren’t defined.

*ImPositions #1*, by means of manipulating the photographic medium, addresses the political dimensions of control and confinement.”<sup>2</sup>

Another way to understand this work is that Lake is not presented as a victim in *ImPositions #1* or in *Vertical Pull #1*, just as she had not been in *Choreographed Puppets*. Although she is exploring issues of manipulation and control, perhaps drawing on her experience of the civil rights movement in Detroit and her reflections on women’s liberation, she is both the actor in and the producer of these photographic series. Seen in this way, the pieces are about strength. As she told Robert Enright in an interview: “The idea of victim was something I wanted to work past. I was more interested in the idea of empowerment.”<sup>3</sup>

## ARE YOU TALKING TO ME? 1978–79



Suzy Lake, *Are You Talking to Me? #3*, 1979

5 gelatin silver fibre-based prints with applied colour and 2 chromogenic prints,  
installed dimensions variable

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Self-portraits have strategic importance for Lake, unifying self-representation, performance, and dialogue with viewers—and in all these respects, *Are You Talking to Me?* is a major work. In this series of images Lake photographs herself as she repeats the iconic question from Robert De Niro’s famous scene in the film *Taxi Driver* (1976), where he talks to his reflection in the bathroom mirror while pulling a gun from his sleeve. The photographs are, simultaneously, depictions of Lake herself, De Niro, and De Niro’s character Travis Bickle, though they are more than mere documents. By referring to De Niro’s character, the images address the viewer directly, leading to a relationship between who they are and what they see.

Unlike her previous series, where other people were present on- or off-camera, Lake chose to be alone in her studio as she photographed this work, so she could get into the needed state of anxiety as she repeatedly asked herself this question. She selected the final images from a mass of possibilities, grouping them in a linear order that would recount a narrative. Though the sizes of the images vary a little, they are all larger than life size, and she manipulated the negatives by heating some and stretching them vertically, exaggerating her angst. With others, she tinted or painted on



Installation view of *Are You Talking to Me?* at Oakville Galleries as part of the exhibition *UN-home-Ly*, 2010.



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top of black and white images with traditional oil paint, to accentuate the colour, and then re-photographed them using colour film. Even on the black and white prints, she hand-tinted the mouths. For the installation, she hung the framed images close together in a horizontal sequence, with all the mouths at the same level. Arranged in this way, the photographs provoke a conceptual conversation between themselves and with the viewer, enlivened by their rhythmic groupings within the gallery. "The whole room was a conversation," Lake said, "and each wall would be like a sentence in that conversation."<sup>1</sup>

The monologue is inherently related to the original performance of masculinity by both De Niro and his character Travis Bickle. Because Lake is a woman, her "speech act"<sup>2</sup> becomes a form of reclamation and re-gendering of the original performance. In repeating De Niro's iconic lines, Lake not only quotes the scene but embodies it, raises questions of gender roles, and secures the pop cultural reference in art history.

*Are You Talking to Me?* continues the research and experimentation around performing, documenting, and representing the self that Lake began while living in Montreal with works such as *Miss Chatelaine*, 1973, and *A One Hour (Zero) Conversation with Allan B.*, 1973. *Are You Talking to Me?* is perhaps the culmination of these experiments and marks Lake's relocation to Toronto. It was originally exhibited at the Sable-Castelli Gallery in 1979, then travelled across Canada for nearly three years with favourable reviews. It was also included in the exhibition *Introducing Suzy Lake* at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2014-15.



SUZY LAKE

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PRE-RESOLUTION: USING THE ORDINANCES AT HAND 1983–85



Suzy Lake, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #6*, 1983-84  
Chromogenic print, oil paint and lumber, 162.6 x 109.2 x 10.2 cm  
Art Gallery of Hamilton

Composed of twelve large-scale colour photographs presented in sequence, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand* depicts Lake, dressed in a casual yellow sweater, blue jeans, and Nike running shoes, wielding a sledgehammer, with her back to the viewer and a slight smile on her averted face. Working with saturated primary colours—red, yellow, and blue—the photographs document Lake as she breaks through a red-painted wall in her home to reveal its wood-slat structure. As the title indicates, the series speaks to a larger global meaning than the scene portrays. Moreover, at the same time that Lake produced these brilliantly coloured photographs, she worked on a set of seven-foot drawings depicting the same subject—*Boundaries I*, 1984, is an example—continuing her practice of either painting or drawing along with her photography.

Although the photographs capture a dynamic staged performance of destruction, presumably to find greater freedom, Lake is confined. The frames have been painted to extend the reach of the photographs into the viewer's space, but they also reinforce the boundary between the territory occupied by Lake and by the viewer: it seems that Lake is truly breaking through the wall before her—the wall that is *behind* the image. A master of the interplay between form and perception, she engages with an illusion. Despite her demolition act, she remains confined to the photograph. Although she appears to step on the frame in some instances, she never breaks outside it. As Lake writes, "The frame provides a context of confinement, which confirms a function beyond mere 'picture frame.'"<sup>1</sup>

As part of a series of works exploring the idea of "the bound figure" that "becomes a metaphor to question notions of control,"<sup>2</sup> *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, made in the early 1980s, might be viewed as a response to earlier works, such as *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976-77, and *ImPositions #1*, 1977, in which Lake's body is depicted as restrained and/or manipulated by the hand of the other. Here Lake has broken free of such constraints and wields her body against the structural elements of the world—she has freedom of movement but is still spatially confined. Georgiana Uhlyarik notes that the title "appropriates legislative vocabulary and anticipates the period of political activism that followed."<sup>3</sup> However, to use the ordinances at hand, Lake here demonstrates that the artist in society is uniquely positioned to transform various materials into an exploration or critique of world conditions.

After creating *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, Lake disappeared as a subject in her work for nearly a decade, compelled, as during her formative years in Detroit, to engage more directly with political struggle and activism. She became an observer and an organizer, using her talent and her skill for political activism both in Central America and in Northern Ontario.



Suzy Lake, *Boundaries I*, 1984, 2 panels, colour pencil and oil pastel, 213.4 x 106.7 cm each, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

## AUTHORITY IS AN ATTRIBUTE ... PART 2 1991



Suzy Lake, *Authority Is an Attribute ... part 2*, 1991

Gelatin prints; triptych photomontages and photo sequences; cut-outs on foam core, with newspaper collaged onto canvas, glue, acrylic paint, white grease pencil, and gel medium

Installation at Gallery TPW, Toronto, 1992

In *Authority Is an Attribute ... part 2*, Lake created an installation with three components representing the stakeholders in a land-claim dispute between the Teme-Augama Anishnabai of Bear Island and the Ontario government. The first component consists of life-sized mounted photographs of seven men and women holding binoculars—the authority figures who represent the title *Authority Is an Attribute of Power Relations*. For this section, Lake also produced fifteen-foot silhouette cut-outs on the floor that extended the cut-out figures into the gallery, giving viewers a sense of the relationships among the people and, because of the binoculars, the uncomfortable feeling of being scrutinized and constantly surveyed. The other two sections consisted of *The Game Players*, which depicted two men in suits playing chess on the edge of a forested area; and *Cautioned Homes and Gardens*, portraits of Teme-Augama Anishnabai Band members, with the individuals photomontaged in front of locations within the contested land that held personal significance.

This work, the second part of a two-part project entitled *Authority Is an Attribute*, marks Lake's abandonment of her exploration of identity and the self and the beginning of her decade-long focus on combining art and social activism in Canada and abroad. In the first part of the project, Lake had intended to explore power dynamics and authority relationships, but she felt that it "failed ... to scrutinize the complexities and complicities of this theme beyond the expressive, 'knee-jerk' polarities of victim and exploiter." For the second iteration, she collaborated with the Teme-Augama Anishnabai of Bear Island in Temagami, located in the Nipissing District of Northeastern Ontario. They asked her to create a visual element for their struggle over their land claim.<sup>1</sup>



Suzy Lake, *Cautioned Homes and Gardens: Three Sisters*, 1991; triptych, gelatin silver fibre-based prints, photo montage; 151.8 x 58.4 cm, 151.8 x 103.5 cm, 151.8 x 58.4 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

The Temagami land caution, which had been in place since 1973 and permitted the Indigenous Band to protect 10,000 square kilometres of land, was threatened by the approval for an expansion of Red Squirrel Road into their territory. In response, the Teme-Augama Anishnabai erected a series of roadblocks. This particular event was just part of a larger conflict between the Band and the Ontario government after the Ontario Court of Appeal refused to consider their land claim, finding that the Teme-Augama Anishnabai had been signatories on earlier treaties. Lake, who had camped near Lake Temagami and met members of the Band, agreed to use her artistic strategies to draw attention to the dispute and to provide a visual forum in which the Teme-Augama Anishnabai could be represented and have a voice.

Lake notes that at the time the installation was first exhibited, in the early 1990s, this type of collaboration, which provided a visual forum for political struggle, was uncommon. Throughout the 1970s she had explored elements of power and power dynamics abstractly by using her own body in her photographic series—as in *ImPositions #1*, 1977. Here she used similar techniques to inquire into the real-life conditions of the Teme-Augama Anishnabai and the political urgency of their land claim. Reflecting on the project and its intentions later, in 1998, Lake wrote, "As the artist, I was to provide a context for the audience to recognize the impact of the dynamic, to remind them what that dynamic 'feels' like."<sup>2</sup> In this way she extended her conceptual preoccupations around power and authority into a more didactic call to attention around land, place, and Indigenous resistance.



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RE-READING RECOVERY 1994–99



Suzy Lake, *Re-Reading Recovery #1*, 1997  
Chromogenic print mounted on aluminum, 243.84 x 152.4 cm  
Collection of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP, Toronto

After a decade of social activism in which Lake ceased to appear as a subject in her work, she returned before the camera in two works depicting themes of rebuilding—a visual follow-up chapter to the demolition enacted in *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, 1983–85. *Re-Reading Recovery* features Lake dressed in a thin cotton slip (a symbol of both vulnerability and protection), standing barefoot in front of a peeling green wall and amid a pile of debris. As she sweeps the broken drywall, she looks down at her broom, which appears blurred, as though in motion. She never makes eye contact with the camera. Focusing on the task at hand, Lake evokes the suggestion of repetitive rhythmic gestures.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones #2*, 1994, chromogenic photographic construction, 53 x 43 cm, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Chrysalis #2*, 1996, chromogenic print construction, 61 x 59.7 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

*Re-Reading Recovery* followed its closely related work, *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones*, 1994–95, another colour series in which Lake explored ideas about perception and concept. Again, Lake appears to be in the same thin cotton slip and in front of a similar green crumbling wall, though in this first work returning to the familiar subject and medium of the body after her decade of activism, her back is turned to the camera. Her profile is visible and her shoulder bare, except for the strap of her slip as she scratches at the crumbling wall. Her figure is cropped by what appears simultaneously to be a mat and a frame as well as a photograph in close-up of the same crumbling wall.

The effect suggests that Lake is embedded inside a strange mirror—the looking-glass kind devised by Lewis Carroll: she is inextricable from her surroundings but also burrowing into a recessed photographic plane. Two perceptually contradictory actions are at play: peeling away and layering, at once offering an increasingly recessed space and the hard reality of the photographic surface. Realizing that her body had changed and aged over the course of the decade since she last appeared in her work, she opted for a more



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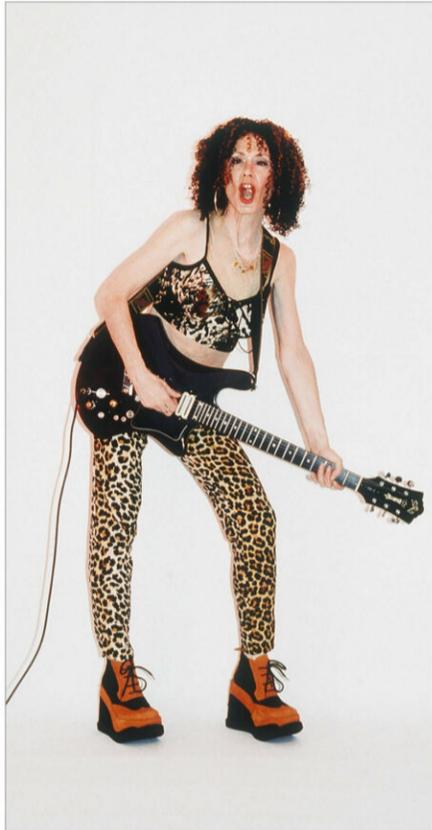
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introspective approach to depicting herself, one that could also represent the positive attributes of aging and maturity. For Lake, clearing the rubble symbolized a figure emerging from struggle and preparing the way for a new phase.

In 2008, the Art Gallery of Ontario asked Lake if she would adapt *Re-Reading Recovery* and *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones* to be a large-scale outdoor installation during the gallery's renovation. Titled *Rhythm of a True Space*, the various iterations of Lake in her sweeping action were depicted in a fifty-six-foot-long seamless vinyl wrap on the hoarding around the building—the necessary step of clearing away the rubble in the process of rebuilding. Although in *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones*, Lake seemed confined, by the time her larger-than-life image appeared on the exterior of the gallery hoarding, in *Rhythm of a True Space*, she seemed to have broken away from her confines as she tended to the aftermath of her escape.

## FOREVER YOUNG 2000



Suzy Lake, *Forever Young*, 2000  
 3 chromogenic prints, laminated, 210 x 107 cm each  
 Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto

In *Forever Young*, a series of three chromogenic prints of Lake playing guitar, dancing, and singing as she holds a microphone, the artist poses a question to the aging female body: "What can I do that Brittany Spears cannot do?"<sup>1</sup>

Recognizing that she was often regarded as "passing" for younger than her age, Lake points to the troubling ideal of beauty that privileges youth. In response, she invents as her alter ego Suzy Spice, a girl band member who appears in both live performance and photographs probing this mainstream obsession with youth and celebrity culture.

In the early 2000s Lake became interested in the public response to reality TV—specifically, *American Idol* and the Canadian version, *Canadian Idol*. She documented the audition process in *Whatcha Really, Really Want*, 2003, presenting her photographs in two grids accompanied by the lyrics from the Spice Girls' 1996 breakout hit, "Wannabe." In *Your Field of Contestants*, 2004, she arranged individual photographic portraits of contestants performing for the imagined audition camera. The cult of celebrity has a direct impact on the visibility of certain bodies at the cost of others, and Suzy Spice, mimicking the grotesque ideals to which the reality television contestants must aspire, ironically becomes one of the rare older women who is permitted a "pass."

*Forever Young* is the photographic performance of Lake's glam persona, "Suzy Spice." Dressed in leopard-print pants and a crop top, wearing thick-heeled sneakers, Spice both looks defiantly into the camera and appears lost in the performance of singing and dancing. As in many earlier photographs, Lake interrupts the veneer of the photograph with a hand-drawn mark. The photograph of Spice with her arm raised above her head, her fingers making the peace sign, is autographed "Forever Young–Suzy." Against the white backdrop, the photographs appear as promotional images for a fabricated rock star. A series of gelatin prints, including *Ciccolina Bar #2*, 1999/2000, and *The Kindness of Gentlemen*, 1999–2001, work to authenticate the existence of Spice as a prolific social figure and important member of a group. They are juxtaposed with photographs of prescription medication for menopause—the "secret" behind her youthful veneer. In these works, she pole dances, performs among other Spice Girl clones, and is "felt up" by her male companions.

Lake's larger project also included "readymades"—various items of "merch," such as throw pillows, which bear Suzy Spice's image. They recall Dada gestures of performance and the construction of alter egos, confirmed by photographic documentation, such as the "autoportraits" undertaken by Claude Cahun (1894–1954). The commodity object, in turn, offers the public an up-close brush with celebrity.



Suzy Lake, *Your Field of Contestants, This Week's Top Ten and Voting Material*, 2004, 96 chromogenic prints, bowl, dais, and ballots, installation at Paul Petro Contemporary Art, Toronto.

## BEAUTY AT A PROPER DISTANCE / IN SONG 2001-2



Suzy Lake, *Beauty at a Proper Distance / In Song*, 2001-2

3 colour transparencies and lightboxes, 134 x 99.4 cm; 134 x 115.2 cm; 134 x 99.4 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

*Beauty at a Proper Distance / In Song* is a set of three images that are part of the large series *Beauty at a Proper Distance*, 2000-2008, in which Lake, who can no longer ignore her own aging body, mimics the visual codes and media of youth culture. In three colour transparencies each displayed in a large lightbox, her face is cropped to include only her nostrils, mouth, and chin. The images are enhanced by the use of advertising effects such as glamour lighting, gels, and scale. The photographs depict Lake singing in a glam rock style while highlighting her wrinkles, stained teeth, and facial hair that betray conventional standards of beauty, youth, and femininity.

In conventional glamour photographs, such features would be seen as blemishes and removed in post-production; here, they are presented larger than life and magnified, making it impossible for the viewer to ignore the physical transgressions of gender and youth. In contrast to *Miss Chatelaine*, 1973, which Lake undertook while still in her twenties, as well as *Forever Young*, 2000, where she portrays herself as passing for younger than her age, *In Song* presents a cruel reminder of the passing years. In another interpretation, however, it can be seen as a feminist embrace of the expanded views of beauty and womanhood in its realistic manifestations. As Lake expressed it: "Experience is positive; maturity is positive; but our culture doesn't celebrate these attributes when associated with aging."<sup>1</sup>



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Pluck #2*, 2001, light-jet chromogenic print, 82.6 x 101.6 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Thin Green Line*, 2001, light-jet chromogenic print, 82.6 x 101.6 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Lake extends this project with a series of works, including *Pluck #2*, 2001, in which she manipulates and stretches her skin as she plucks at her facial hair with tweezers. Again, most of her face is cropped out of the photograph, so that only her nostrils, mouth, and chin can be seen. The black and white photographs are shown with black panels between them: as such, they suggest narrative, sequencing, and a connection with the cinema.

## EXTENDED BREATHING IN THE GARDEN 2008–10



Suzy Lake, *Extended Breathing in the Garden*, 2008-10  
Fujitrans light-jet transparency, 76.2 x 101.6 cm; lightbox, 88.3 x 113.7 x 3.8 cm  
Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto

In *Extended Breathing in the Garden*, Lake stands erect in her own backyard after sunset. She photographed the scene with a one-hour exposure time, and, while the background remains crisp, her own figure is blurred, save for her lower legs and feet, which remain in sharp focus. The result resembles photographs from the latter part of the nineteenth century, when camera technology was unable to easily record movement. Lake presented the work in a colour transparency fixed into a lightbox. This photo-performance is part of Lake's *Extended Breathing* series, 2008-14, eleven images in which she challenged herself to stand still in one place for an hour, her only movement the essential act of breathing.

In other images in the *Extended Breathing* series, Lake took photographs outside her home at various times of day or night. Both the title and the concept suggest a meditative state, one that in reality was not always achieved; as Lake has said, "While I'm standing there for one hour, I'm making the image in my mind's eye, but what I'm thinking about is not predictable. Sometimes

I'm in a meditative state, sometimes I'm responding to my body, sometimes to a memory."<sup>1</sup>

The *Extended Breathing* series also explores elements of duration, movement, and perception at many different locations. Lake broadened the project to public sites of personal and historical interest—such as London's Trafalgar Square, New York's World Trade Center, and the Detroit Institute of Arts. In her photograph of Trafalgar Square, the traces of pedestrians and sitters have become spectral or have disappeared while Lake's relative stillness gives her appearance a monumental quality that likens her to the background elements in the photograph.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Extended Breathing on the DIA Steps*, 2012/2014, light-jet chromogenic print, 152.4 x 113 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Extended Breathing at the World Trade Center*, 2012/2014, light-jet chromogenic print, 152.4 x 113 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Two *Extended Breathing* photographs taken at the Detroit Institute of Arts bring together the personal and the political. One was taken on the steps of the museum in 2012, when the museum was undergoing an existential crisis: with the city declaring bankruptcy, creditors attempted to claim the art in the collection. The other was taken in a grand hall in the museum in 2013 in front of a large-scale fresco from the early 1930s that depicts people at work in one of the city's factories, by Diego Rivera (1886–1957). The photograph therefore points not only to Lake's childhood in mid-century Detroit but also to the balance achieved at that earlier time by labour unions, business owners, and governmental regulators—an order that, once upset during the 1970s, would lead to the city's economic failure. These works, seemingly simple, weave together multiple histories.

As in works such as *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976–77, the blur is a notable feature in the *Extended Breathing* series. It appeared again in the series *Performing Haute Couture*, 2014, produced for Lake's retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario, *Introducing Suzy Lake*, in which Lake stands still in her elegant Comme des Garçons pearl-grey suit, but raises her arm slowly, causing the image to blur markedly on the sleeve on that side. As the work of a female artist in her sixties, these images explore endurance and the stoic presence of women in the wider social and political space. She is no longer transforming, as she was in *Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith*, 1973–74, or struggling against control, as in *Choreographed Puppets* or in *ImPositions #1*, 1977.

*Extended Breathing in the Garden* represents a quiet moment at day's end at a private residence. Although it situates Lake at a specific time and place in her life, she is still very much a part of the world around her.



**SUZY LAKE**

Life & Work by Erin Silver

**REDUCED PERFORMING: BREATHING #5 2009–11**



*Suzy Lake, Reduced Performing: Breathing #5, 2009-11*  
Light-jet chromogenic print, 204 x 82.6 cm  
Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto

*Reduced Performing: Breathing #5* is part of a series called *Reduced Performing* which Lake created between 2008 and 2011. In it, she set out to explore time, duration, movement, and perception by lying down on an eight-foot-long flatbed scanner in her printer's studio during a 12-minute scan. In this series—her first experiment with digital photography—she harnessed sophisticated technology to investigate the limits of image-based reproductive machinery in making art.

In all Lake's work in photography, as in her parallel series *Extended Breathing*, 2008-14, she is a three-dimensional character in a two-dimensional world. Her hyper-awareness of what happens during her own performance, along with the performance of the camera, allows her to engage in a conceptual kind of trickery that questions both the self and the medium. In the *Reduced Performing* series, Lake takes this investigation one step further by "flattening" herself into the scanner so that the process itself becomes acutely implicated in the outcome. As in early photography, the limitations of the medium have the effect of erasing the subtle actions that were the subject of study. Although Lake lies on the scanner for a 12-minute exposure, the machine cannot document her breathing. The resulting image seemingly causes her subtle action of inhalation and exhalation to disappear. In other variations in the series, Lake blinked or cried as she lay on the flatbed, with the same result.

In their place, something resembling hyperrealism and digital painting emerges: Lake's entire body is represented as though it is a direct facsimile, but with the rainbow hues and hints of saturation from the RGB breakdown of the scanner. The flatbed scanner is overly sophisticated in its visual sculpting of her body, yet, despite (or perhaps because of) this robot-like efficiency, it cannot register the subtleties of emotion that play out on Lake's face. Lake visualizes the technology's cold and calculated reality, one that is incapable of understanding the nuance of the human condition.



Installation photograph of *Reduced Performing Series* at Fonderie Darling for Le Mois de la Photo, Montreal, 2013.



**SUZY LAKE**

Life & Work by Erin Silver

**PERFORMING HAUTE COUTURE #1 2014**



Suzy Lake, *Performing Haute Couture #1*, 2014  
Chromogenic print, black frame with museum glass, 167.6 x 127 cm  
Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto

Produced on the occasion of Lake's 2014 retrospective exhibition *Introducing Suzy Lake* at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the images in *Performing Haute Couture* depict Lake staring boldly into the camera, dressed in a grey Rei Kawakubo suit from Comme des Garçons's Fall 2013 show, standing on a similar grey floor in front of a black background. Lake appears upright, her body, legs, head, and left arm appearing still and crisp, while blur and multiplication of her right arm suggest an arm in motion. Continuing her play with the photographic representation of movement creating a perceptual blur, Lake appears to be raising and lowering her right arm, the edges of her hand and fingers appearing most clearly at the hand's most upraised point and in its resting along her side. Choosing an outfit with an architectural element, Lake has described the coat's knot, where her elbow bends in one of the photographs, as suggesting a "cantilever movement."<sup>1</sup> In order to achieve the commercial style she desired for the images, Lake collaborated with fashion photographer Miguel Jacob; however, the aesthetic and movement decisions remained Lake's.

The prints offer something of a bookend to her breakthrough work, *On Stage*, 1972-74; however, the two, when taken together, chart the trajectory of Lake's maturing over the course of four decades, showing Lake in many ways more strong, poised, and confident in the more recent series, evidenced by her direct confrontation with the camera, a notable aspect of many of her self-portraits in recent years, including other works experimenting with minimal performance and duration, such as *Reduced Performing*, 2008-11, and *Extended Breathing*, 2008-14. The scale and sparseness of the photographs, coupled with the blur, also evoke Lake's earlier series *Choreographed Portraits*, 1976, where a young Lake, dressed in a white body suit, or else a body suit paired with a loose-fitting short pant, stands in front of a black background, her movement again spectrally documented by the blur introduced by the camera, a combination of photography and screen printing collapsing Lake's depiction onto the surface of the image and offering a sense of placelessness that is echoed in the *Performing Haute Couture* photographs.

The works might be read as a riff on the inside joke of the title of the exhibition in which they first appeared, simultaneously "introducing" Lake, who, active since the late 1960s, was receiving her due forty years later, and signalling that Lake had, in fact, finally arrived.



Suzy Lake, *Choreographed Portrait #2*, 1976, gelatin silver fibre-based print with silkscreen, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.



# SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Lake's oeuvre suggests a lifelong preoccupation with a number of key themes—society, gender, and universal experiences of power and authority—which she explores through a blend of performance, photography, and photographic manipulation. Her art-based activism began during the civil rights movement in Detroit and continued after she moved to Montreal and then to Toronto. Starting in 1970, Lake began putting herself into her art, embracing her body as a site for her art, influencing other artists—her contemporaries, as well as younger generations, through innovations in her approach and in her teaching—to do the same.

### IDENTITY AND THE SELF

Through her own experience with the civil rights and anti-war movements in Detroit, Lake became interested in exploring the identity of her generation. In the early 1970s she was exposed to feminist artists including Adrian Piper (b.1948), Nancy Spero (1926–2009), and Martha Wilson (b.1947), who were also studying subjectivity and identity formation and the possibilities afforded by the photographic medium for these investigations. In Piper's *Catalysis*, 1970–73, for instance, the artist photo-documented herself performing a series of attention-grabbing gestures in public spaces. While in some of the images, the individuals with whom she is sharing public space seem oblivious to her actions and presence, in others, they appear to have their heads turned to look at her, suggesting that in these scenarios, Piper's presence was heightened by her actions, catalyzing a consideration of her difference as someone standing out from the crowd. An early activist and feminist, Spero focused many of her painted and collaged works through the 1970s on representations of women amid the backdrop of global political struggles. The series *Torture of Women*, 1976, for example, included accounts of women's experience of torture with paintings of female figures. Wilson, with whom Lake would eventually be exhibited, is also known for photographic work exploring identity and female subjectivity via role-playing—for instance, in the series *A Portfolio of Models—The Working Girl*, 1974.

Through photographic portraiture, Lake examined issues of identity in works such as *On Stage*, 1972–74, that, paired with an interest in role-playing, formed the basis for an early relationship between performance and photography. In this series, Lake performed for the camera, and the resulting photographs served a double function as artwork in themselves and as a documentation of the performance. In 1973 she took up the camera to produce *Imitations of the Self*, one of the first of her works to consider how identity is formed within the self and in relation to society, reflecting her lifelong preoccupation with forms of civic awareness and engagement.



LEFT: Adrian Piper, *Catalysis III*, 1970, documentation of the performance, three silver gelatin prints (reprinted circa 1998), photograph #3 of 3, each photograph 41 cm x 41 cm, the Generali Foundation Collection, Austria—Permanent Loan to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria. RIGHT: Adrian Piper, *Catalysis III*, 1970, documentation of the performance, three silver gelatin prints (reprinted circa 1998), photograph #2 of 3, each photograph 41 cm x 41 cm, the Generali Foundation Collection, Austria—Permanent Loan to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria.



Suzy Lake, *A Genuine Simulation Of...*, 1973/1974, 90 chromogenic prints, total size 152 x 142 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Identity is a constant source of interrogation for Lake: in the “masking” in her whiteface photo-performances from the early 1970s (*Miss Chatelaine*, 1973; *Imitations of Myself #1*, 1973/2012; *A Genuine Simulation Of...*, 1973/1974); in the transformation of the self in *Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith*, 1973–74; or in the submission of the self to others in *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976–77. From the 1970s to the early 1980s Lake figured centrally in her own work, not to

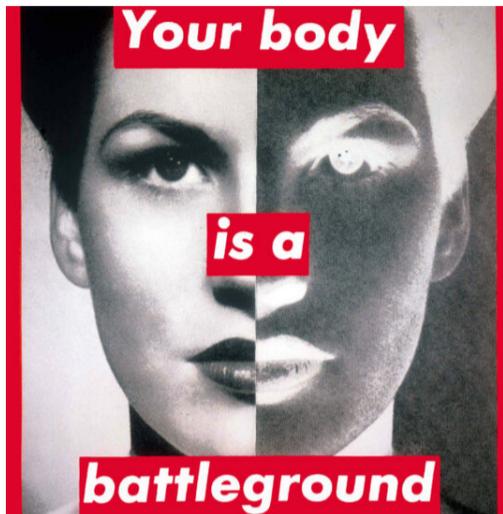
convey a biographical sketch but to excavate a more general “self” in relation to society as well as “the self” as a construct. As she said, “I don’t try to say what my identity is. I’m not some heroine recounting my life. I needed a constant, a vulnerable subject for a reference point. The reason I use myself as a model is because I’m always on hand, always around.”<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Lake’s broader concern was for the self in relation to society. Mass media had made images and products associated with self-fashioning ubiquitous, often directing advertising at women consumers through beauty magazines, and these provided fertile terrain for Lake. Her work from the 1970s—notably, her fascination with media, framing, and perception—anticipates the movement that, late in the decade, came to be known as the “Pictures” generation. This group of artists was interested in representational

imagery and mass media. Curator and art historian Douglas Crimp was the first to attempt to identify their new technique and style in his 1977 exhibition *Pictures*, where, he noted, they created works by exploring “processes of quotation, excerptation, framing, and staging.”<sup>2</sup> For example, the genre-defining work of American artist Barbara Kruger (b.1945) produced biting commentary on the objectification and subjugation of women, and the role of images in these processes, through her use of bold typeface and appropriation of photographic images borrowed from mass media and art historical plates.

It is notable that during the 1980s Lake ceased to appear as a subject in her work in order to focus her lens on specific political struggles. The absence of explicit representation of “her” self as a stand-in for “the” self reaffirms the centrality of Lake’s enduring preoccupation and engagement with the world around her, as well as her desire to innovate appropriate representational strategies toward the concerns in question at any given time. This absence is significant in particular with regard to the political issues of pressing concern to Lake through the 1980s: the struggles of the Teme-Augama Anishnabai of Bear Island and the Sandinista National Liberation Front, among them. Moving outside the broader social struggles she directly encountered and participated in as a white North American woman required her to move away from attempting to represent struggles beyond her experience through using herself as model.

In 1994, after a decade spent in political activism, Lake returned to depicting herself with the series *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones*, 1994–95, and *Re-Reading Recovery*, 1994–99, at this time also recognizing the experience of the aging body and the older woman as a site to explore. “Experience is positive; maturity is positive,” she said, “but our culture doesn’t celebrate these attributes when associated with aging.”<sup>3</sup> In remarkable series



LEFT: Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Body Is a Battleground)*, 1989, photographic silkscreen on vinyl, 284.5 x 284.5 cm, Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *On Stage/Bank Pose*, 1972/2013, archival pigment print, 61 x 50.8 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.



'ROLE-PLAYING' IS A DAILY OCCURRENCE; IT CAN BE AS SUBTLE AS DRESSING FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION, DIPLOMACY, OR INADVERTANTLY PICKING-UP SOMEONE'S MANNERISMS.

from these years, Lake exaggerates the stereotypes of aging (*Peonies and the Lido*, 2000–2006), playing off the melodramatic depictions of death and aging by Dirk Bogarde in the 1971 film adaptation of Thomas Mann’s 1912 novella *Death in Venice*; magnifies the nuance and nuisance of continuing to role-play femininity in mainstream society (*Beauty at a Proper Distance*, 2000–2008); and defies the societal expectations placed on older women in society (*Forever Young*, 2000).



Suzy Lake, *Peonies and the Lido #9*, 2000–2002/2010, 3 light-jet chromogenic prints; 101.6 x 137.2 cm, 101.6 x 141 cm; 101.6 x 137.2 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

The photographic self-portraiture of Lake and her contemporaries has been viewed by many commentators as anticipating the advent, in the 2010s, of “selfie culture,” the vernacular practice of taking photographs of oneself using smartphone cameras, often resulting in the circulation of these images on social media platforms such as Instagram. However, the selfie is usually intended to suggest a spontaneous approach to self-portraiture, which differs from Lake’s practice in that her images and process are slow, representing her preoccupation with time and process. Although Lake is invested in media and social perception, she engages with popular media as a critique rather than an exaltation. The selfie is vernacular, unskilled; Lake’s work is technically masterful. The selfie is about “my” self; Lake’s work is about “the” self.

## ACTIVISM

The activist seeds underlying Lake’s practice were planted at a young age as she witnessed and participated in the social upheavals in Detroit in the 1960s, particularly the civil rights movement. This early political consciousness would follow Lake through her career as she discovered and innovated visual strategies for translating “what was happening in the streets” into art.<sup>4</sup> One of her earliest events, *Annual Feast*, 1969–72, in which she invited other artists and cultural workers into her studio, mirrored the gatherings known as “Happenings” that were bringing groups together.



LEFT: Hans Haacke, *MoMA Poll*, 1970, 2 transparent, acrylic ballot boxes with automatic counters, colour-coded ballots, transparent boxes, each: 101.6 x 50.8 x 25.4 cm; paper ballots, each: 7.6 x 6.4 cm. Visitors using the poll during the exhibition *Information* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 2–September 20, 1970. RIGHT: Martha Rosler, *Cleaning the Drapes*, from the series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, c.1967–72, photomontage, printed, Collection of the artist.

The role of art in political activism hit a fever pitch in the 1960s and early 1970s, when art became political for many artists, especially in the way they responded to the ongoing Vietnam War. They were enraged by America's role in the war and by American art institutions, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, that received major funding and support from benefactors who supported President Richard Nixon's policy on the Vietnam War. The German-born artist Hans Haacke (b.1936) became an early proponent of Institutional Critique and, with his artwork *MoMA Poll*, 1970, waged a direct confrontation with Nelson Rockefeller, the chair of the MoMA board.



Suzy Lake, *Choreographed Puppet #3*, 1976/1977, Cibachrome print, 40.6 x 50.8 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

In 1969-71, Lake shared the same goals as the New York-based Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), an open coalition of artists and cultural workers who employed artistic means to advocate for museum reform (particularly the fair representation of women artists and artists of colour) and for museums to take a moral stance against the war.

Around the same time, feminist artist Martha Rosler (b.1943) created her series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, c.1967-72—photocollage works juxtaposing the domestic imagery found in home and lifestyle magazines with brutal journalistic imagery from Vietnam combat. These works continued in the tradition of photomontage artists such as Hannah Höch (1889-1978) and John Heartfield (1891-1968), who used similar agitprop strategies in contesting the Second World War. The advent of mass media technologies and their incorporation into artworks in the early twentieth century extended the political allegorical work of eighteenth-century painters such as Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), as well as the anti-war

Cubist paintings by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who incorporated mass media forms into his canvases.

In contrast to more strident artists, Lake's strategy was subtle rather than instructive; she resisted and challenged authority through metaphors in her art. Some of the major themes Lake explored include control and resistance, endurance, and the formation of identity. Though rooted in her personal culture and gender, they extend to broader social meanings. For *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976–77, Lake engaged her entire body, yet she ceded control of her movement to two "puppeteers" overhead who, while standing on the scaffold she had built, manipulated her arms, legs, and torso with straps tied to her body. The photographs of this performance, which another assistant took at regular intervals, depict the blur of her movement and her consequent loss of identity. In staging, performing, and recording this contradictory relationship between control and submission, Lake produced a visual accompaniment to a universal experience. As William Ewing observes, "Viewing the piece through the long lens, it becomes clear that the work addresses the manipulation and powerlessness every human being must feel, at least sometimes, as a member of the collaborative collectivity."<sup>5</sup>

Lake has also used concepts and ideas to allegorically stand in for broader issues of power in other works. In *imPOSITIONS*, 1977, the images of her struggling against coercion ask the viewer to reflect on the power and authority one person can exert over another. Late in life she continues to employ allegory to provide commentary on political struggle. In her series *Game Theory: Global Gamesmanship*, 2019, for instance, she appears on a broken marble chessboard, mimicking the poses of the queen and the pawns in an exploration of the collateral damage of politics and war.

In the 1980s Lake turned away from the subtler political gestures of earlier work that focused on her own body and entered a more overt activist phase. It was around the same time that fellow Torontonians Carole Condé (b.1940) and Karl Beveridge (b.1945) returned to Toronto from New York, abandoning an apolitical form of Conceptual art and establishing practices as political artists engaged in processes of consultation and collaboration with labour and community movements. Their series *Oshawa, A History of CAW Local 222*, 1982–83, combined staged photographic images and personal testimony of working conditions and unionization attempts at the General Motors plant in Oshawa, Ontario, in the period



We had to collect dues right there in the plant. You'd try and get them before they went home on Friday night or it'd be gone. A lot of them were scared the Union might fall through again.

Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge, *Oshawa, A History of Local 222*, 1938–45 (Part 2, #3 of 6), 1982–83, azo dye print (Cibachrome), 40 x 50.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

following the Second World War, when married women were permitted to enter into factory work—one part in a series of works devoted to the history of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 222.

Lake's work from this time might be thought of similarly: through her friendship with the Teme-Augama Anishnabai of Bear Island, she agreed to produce the series *Authority Is an Attribute ... part 2*, 1991, as a form of visual advocacy for their land claim. In this collaborative installation she juxtaposed life-sized photographs of Band members standing before locations of special meaning to them with cut-outs of authority figures holding binoculars and businessmen "game players" playing chess. By emphasizing the importance of specific places for Indigenous peoples, Lake drew attention to historical colonial injustices toward Indigenous peoples as well as the urgent need to rectify them today. A trip to Nicaragua in 1985 to support the Sandinista National Liberation Front further emphasizes her political commitments of the period, both instances demonstrating Lake's constant adaptation of her approach to image-making alongside political engagement to respond to the specific conditions, preoccupations, and urgencies of her subject matter.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Standing Binocular Figure #3 (Sid)*, 1992, cut-out gelatin silver fibre-based print mounted on foam core, wooden stand, newspaper collaged onto canvas, glue, acrylic paint, white grease pencil and gel medium, 172.7 x 73.7 x 457.2 cm. Installed at Gallery TPW, Toronto, 1992. RIGHT: Teme-Augama Anishnabai road blockade, June 1, 1988, Collection of Brian Back. On June 1, 1988, the Teme-Augama Anishnabai blockaded the Red Squirrel Road where it intersected with Sharp Rock Portage in Northeastern Ontario. The blockade shown in this photo took place prior to construction of the extension of the Red Squirrel logging road and lasted for the duration of the summer. This was the first of two blockades organized by the Teme-Augama Anishnabai over the course of 1988 and 1989.

## THE BODY AND PLACE

Along with Carolee Schneemann (1939–2019) and Yoko Ono (b.1933),<sup>6</sup> Lake was considered an early practitioner of body art. This art form became associated, in the early 1970s, with feminist art by Ana Mendieta (1948–1985), Hannah Wilke (1940–1993), Adrian Piper (b.1948), and others. For Lake, the body—her own body—became a medium in itself, open to the same types of manipulations and distortions that she experimented with in her photographs. In her work, the separation between the body and the photograph is intended to narrow to the point where one cannot exist without the other.

While living in Montreal, Lake met several avant-garde artists, many of whom were known for Minimalist artworks. In contrast to the stark objectivity they followed, she adapted their adherence to mastering a medium's qualities into her own style—one that allowed for the expression of human emotion. On this issue, she was also influenced by postmodern dance—an emerging style of dance whose development she was aware of and following.

In the early 1960s, artists and dancers associated with the Judson Dance Theater in New York, including Robert Morris (1931–2018), Simone Forti (b.1935), and Yvonne Rainer (b.1934), enacted a series of encounters between human bodies and a variety of inanimate objects in loosely scripted yet unpredictable ways.<sup>7</sup> As Lake explains, “I clearly appreciated the Judson Dance Theatre because of their progressive form and content; but I was mostly excited by them because they included duration and the body.”<sup>8</sup> Dancers associated with Judson emphasized non-classical, everyday movement—a major departure from classical and modern dance tenets—often using duration and repetition as a mode through which to closely examine the concept of movement itself. Although these experiments influenced Lake, the camera became her invisible yet ever-present companion—a recorder through which she permitted her own concept of art to emerge.

*Vertical Pull #1*, 1977, explores and documents how the body responds to and resists authority and control. Rather than think about her body as flattened into the two-dimensional plane of the photograph, Lake saw the image as a space to occupy and break out of, as in *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, 1983–85, where she demolishes the drywall in her house with a sledgehammer. Made up of twelve images arranged in a grid of three columns of four, *Vertical Pull #1* appears to reconstitute a set of stairs, broken up by the edges of the photograph and repeating three times in three columns. Lake, who is bound, kneeling, or lying on the steps at a lower register with each successive row, appears to descend the stairs, her body blurred by her movement. The photographic depiction of movement evokes the earlier experimentations of postmodern dancers and the documentation of their performances, as well as their encounters and negotiations with the constraints and possibilities of the built environment. In Lake's series, the steps become a support for Lake's body—a type of stage or plinth that performatively complicates her liberation and visually restrains her body within the spaces between the steps. In the image, the steps appear as flattened horizontal lines into which Lake's body fits snugly.



LEFT: Ana Mendieta, *Blood and Feathers (2)*, 1974, colour photograph, Estate of Ana Mendieta. RIGHT: Suzy Lake in Montreal, c.1973, photograph by Tom Dean, Collection of the artist.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Vertical Pull #1*, 1977, 12 gelatin silver fibre-based prints, 34 x 50.5 cm each, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.  
 RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *imPositions (storyboard)*, 1977, 21 gelatin silver fibre-based prints mounted on foam core, total size 76 x 91 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

In the early 2000s Lake returned to her body to explore issues related to beauty, aging, and the place of the older woman in a society obsessed with youth. Her photographic work magnifies the signs of aging, with a clinical view of wrinkles, facial hair, and skin blemishes (*Beauty at a Proper Distance / In Song*, 2001-2), as well as in more theatrical tableaux, such as *Peonies and the Lido*, 2000-2006. In contrast to early explorations where she applied whiteface and cosmetic makeup directly to her face or her photographs (*Miss Chatelaine*, 1973), these later works magnify the made-up face in an almost clinical manner. More recently, Lake has performed fashion again, but here as an older woman using fashion-show conventions. In *Performing Haute Couture*, 2014, the geometries and architecture of the garments themselves are manipulated and amplified by Lake's poses. The "constant" is Lake's own body, and through this consistency viewers are permitted a long view of the kinetic, biological, and social shifts that the body endures over time.

Change is critical to Lake's *Transformations* series. For this work, Lake has stated that she chose the subjects because she had "learned something" from them—so she found it appropriate to morph into them. In the case of Françoise Sullivan (b.1923), this Montreal-based Automatiste artist and dancer had already created a kind of conceptual template to Lake's own interest in relating the body to its location and documenting the body in motion. In 1947—the year of Lake's birth—Sullivan embarked on her cycle of dance solos dedicated to the seasons. Completing only the summer (*L'été*, 1947) and winter (*Danse dans la neige*, 1948) cycles, she intended the performances to be presented as a complete work, and had individuals, including artists Françoise Riopelle (b.1927), Jean Paul Riopelle (1923-2002), and Maurice Perron (1924-1999), as well as her mother, film and photograph her dancing. Sullivan's performance was groundbreaking both in her move outside the dance studio into the natural environment and in her desire that the performance be viewed not in real time, but as documentation.<sup>9</sup> This desire is reflected in Lake's own practice as well.



LEFT: Françoise Sullivan, *Dance in the Snow (Danse dans la neige)*, 1948, image from the album *Danse dans la neige*, published by Françoise Sullivan in fifty copies, S.I. Images Ouareau (1977). RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *As Dirk Bogarde #2*, 2002, light-jet chromogenic print, 152.4 x 116.8 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

In many of her works, Lake considers the importance of in-between spaces to her exploration of the self, as in *Passageways*, 1982, and *Bridge*, 1982-83. These two constructions combine wooden structures with photography in such a way that the images of the body are fragmented by the grids. *Passageways* appears as two wooden structures suggestive of the scaffolding behind a finished wall but positioned parallel to each another so they create a corridor. The scaffolding doubles as a hallway and a gallery, with a series of squares and rectangles of empty and filled space producing the feeling of a salon-style gallery hang. Lake's body is perceptually reconstituted through the inclusion of life-sized cut-up images of herself, depicting a foot, a leg, a torso, and a head, spread out across columns. In these works, Lake is reliant on the confining structure in order to come into view as a subject. In contrast, in *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, 1983-85, the space becomes a place to break out from.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Bridge*, 1982-83, lumber, hand coloured gelatin silver fibre-based prints, and mirrors, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Passageways* (detail), 1982, lumber, hand coloured gelatin silver fibre-based prints, photo emulsion on lumber, drawing on lumber, and mirrors, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

*Extended Breathing in Public Places*, 2011–14, an extension of the original *Extended Breathing* series, 2008–14, might be seen as exemplary of Lake’s concern with place because the series began in her own backyard (*Extended Breathing in the Garden*, 2008–10), suggesting a personal relationship to her domestic surroundings. However, a second iteration includes photographs of Lake in public places such as the Detroit Institute of Art<sup>10</sup> and the post-September 11 World Trade Center in New York City, images that carry their own political significance in terms of endurance. As such, they become a mirror of the artist’s fortitude. Lake’s presence in front of these sites associates her with a living social history.



Suzy Lake, *Extended Breathing in the Rivera Frescoes*, 2013/2014, Inkjet print, 152.4 x 200.7 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

*Performing an Archive*, 2014–16, a series that depicts Lake in the process of photographing the various houses in Detroit that belonged to her ancestors, also provides a longer view in which to document urban and suburban histories. Many works in the series have a left-hand column with a small photograph at the top and, below, a Detroit 1896 historical real estate plan of the neighbourhood, along with a larger image on the right of Lake photographing the site. Just below the top left of each photograph, she provides photo-album-like information about the significance of the place to her family. Her presence lends a biographical reading to the series, while her body—always a standard of measurement—provides an entry point, a specific vantage point, and a broader concept of place.

In her preoccupation with place, Lake shares interests with other photographers, including the Chicana-American artist Laura Aguilar (1959–2018) and the Ottawa-based artist of Plains Cree / European descent Meryl McMaster (b.1988), both of whom situate their own bodies in relation to natural landscapes of personal significance and social identity. Aguilar sought to locate the lives of LGBTQ+ people of colour in the natural and built landscape and, therefore, as part of the cultural imaginary community around notions of “place.” Her *Nature Self-Portrait #2*, 1996, shows the artist, curled up nude and facing away from the camera, appearing to be in the desert. The sense of her body as



LEFT: Laura Aguilar, *Nature Self-Portrait #2*, 1996, gelatin silver print, image: 35.6 x 48.4 cm, sheet: 40.7 x 50.5 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. RIGHT: Laura Aguilar, *Nature Self-Portrait #1*, 1996, gelatin silver print, image: 35.2 x 48.3 cm, sheet: 40.7 x 50.5 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

object is accentuated by its position among four boulders. This juxtaposition in turn leads to a sense of life within the static objects, rendering both the animate and the inanimate as part of the natural environment.

## GENDER/FEMINISM

Lake is considered a pioneering feminist artist, one of a handful of women artists such as Carolee Schneemann (1939–2019), Lisa Steele (b.1947), Hannah Wilke (1940–1993), Joan Jonas (b.1936), Adrian Piper (b.1948), and Eleanor Antin (b.1935) who used their own bodies in their work to explore issues related not only to power but to power as inevitably gendered. She did not, however, consider her work to be feminist until later in her career:

In terms of talking about identity, except at the very beginning, I always felt I was addressing an audience that was not female only ... Because I am female, gender was inclusive. On specific points, I realized that people were hearing something different than what the work was saying because of the body ... I began to understand why it was so necessary for women to talk to women ... so you could actually hear what their reception was of the work, rather than just the reception ... of a male audience. So that was a big thing that really allowed me to say, "Yes, I am a feminist artist." I hope my audience is broader than that, but I'm not backing off that.<sup>11</sup>



LEFT: Carolee Schneemann, *Eye Body #21* from *Eye Body: 36 Transformative Actions for Camera*, 1963, gelatin silver print (printed 2005), 61 × 50.8 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Right: Hannah Wilke, *S.O.S. Starification Object Series (Back)*, 1974, gelatin silver print, 101.6 × 68.6 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

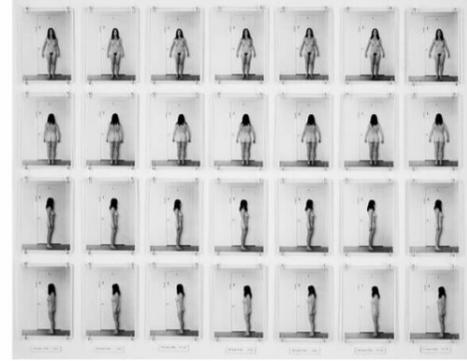
Before the convergence of rights movements in the late 1960s, proto-feminist artists had begun to employ their own bodies within their work, with many of the prominent works to emerge from Fluxus and in underground cinema being reclaimed as feminist work in later decades. American artist Carolee Schneemann is considered one of the most notable examples of the belated recognition of the significance of the body as medium to the development of feminist art. However, at the time in which she was producing her early works, such as the photo-performance *Eye Body: 36 Transformative Actions for Camera*, 1963, in which the artist produced thirty-six photographs in an environment she created that included broken mirrors, mannequins, and tarps, her own body unclothed and covered in grease, chalk, and plastic, she was regularly accused of creating pornographic work and, on many occasions, censored for dealing with taboo subjects such as women's sexuality and eroticism.

Lake did not explicitly identify with the feminist cause in her early work. But by virtue of her choice to figure consistently as the subject of study,<sup>12</sup> her work has been regarded as contributing to an emerging feminist art aesthetic.<sup>13</sup> However, Lake's art is different from the explicitly feminist works of her time, such as the "central core" imagery, which concentrated on the vagina as a site of power.

*Through the Flower*, 1973, by Judy Chicago (b.1939), is, perhaps, the best-known example of this art. Lake's performances, examinations of the gendered body, and embodied experience of the world have, nevertheless, lent her work a feminist reading.

Given the political undercurrents of the early 1970s, the mere presence of a woman's body meant it was read as implicitly "female" and, therefore, as feminist. The adoption of specific formal and conceptual strategies—such as performance, the body, staging, and the use of photography and video—by significant women artists including Antin and Piper also led people to consider Lake as a feminist conceptual photographer. Both Antin and Piper engaged with the body in their works. Antin's iconic *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*, 1972, in which the artist documented herself between July 15 and August 21, 1972, as she reduced her food intake, producing four images every day (front, back, and both profiles), explores the conventions of traditional sculpture and attempts to conform to its classical ideals. Lake has identified Piper's *The Mythic Being*, 1973–75, as a strong influence: in this photo series, Piper performed as a racially and gender ambiguous character and collaged these images with excerpts from her diary, exploring racial dynamics and notions of the self in relation to society.

Within the context of women's liberation, anti-war protests, and civil rights in both the United States and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s, Lake's exploration of identity and authority encouraged critics to read her work as feminist, even if only metaphorically so. As Martha Hanna writes, "Although she has not overtly addressed feminist issues, the politics of feminism is an undercurrent in all her major photographic works to date [2008]. The attention to power relations that feminism implies may be seen in Lake's work as symbolic of a personal struggle, and her artwork is evident of her progress."<sup>14</sup>



LEFT: Judy Chicago, *Emily Dickinson Plate* from *The Dinner Party*, 1979, china paint on porcelain, 35.6 cm diameter, Brooklyn Museum, New York. RIGHT: Eleanor Antin, *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (detail), 1972, 148 silver gelatin prints and text, 17.8 x 12.7 cm each, Art Institute of Chicago.



Suzy Lake, *The Extended Good-bye #2*, 2008-9, light-jet chromogenic print, 83.2 x 101.6 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

In her later work on beauty and aging, Lake has explored the gendered elements of embodiment, experience, and perception more closely. In particular, she examined the social conventions of femininity. *The Extended Good-bye #2*, 2008-9, from the series *Extended Breathing*, 2008-14, asks the viewer to reflect on questions of when the aging body becomes invisible in society. Similarly, *Thin Green Line*, 2001, from the series *Beauty at a Proper Distance*, 2000-2008, interrogates what the appropriate grooming conventions for older women should be.

Through her blending of performance and photography in her art, enhanced by her early won skills in painting, drawing, and printmaking, Lake has, over fifty years, made a provocative contribution to many of the significant issues for her generation—issues of identity in relation to society, gender, and the universal experiences of power and authority.

## AHEAD OF HER TIME

The title of Lake's retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario, *Introducing Suzy Lake*, offered a playful commentary on the fact that Lake, although she had been working as an artist since the 1960s and had long been considered influential to artists familiar with her work, was becoming known to new audiences only in the 2010s. As curator Georgiana Uhlyarik has explained about the exhibition's title: "It works on the level that a lot of people don't

know her work and this is going to be their first introduction—she never really had a show at this scale, or her full career—but for us, the core of her work has to do with performance and in particular the performance of the self and the way in which the self keeps navigating and introducing and reintroducing itself as it navigates societal forces ... And this ongoing act of introducing herself, introducing this idea of Suzy Lake again and again over her career.”<sup>15</sup>

Her approach to photo-performance, as distinct from photographing a performance, would go on to influence Cindy Sherman (b.1954), who has regularly cited her as an influence. Lake has often been exhibited with contemporaries, including Eleanor Antin, Lynn Hershman Leeson (b.1941), and Martha Wilson (b.1947), artists viewed as complementary in their approaches or themes. She has also been included in pivotal survey exhibitions devoted to feminist art, 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).



Installation view of *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, March 4 - July 16, 2007 at the Geffen Contemporary at Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, photograph by Brian Forrest. Lake's *A Genuine Simulation Of...* (1973/1974) can be seen to the right of the exhibition space.

The 2010 touring exhibition *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada, 1965–1980* (curated by Grant Arnold, Catherine Crowston, Barbara Fischer, and Michèle Thériault, with Vincent Bonin and Jayne Wark) attempted to organize the flurry of Conceptual art activity happening across the country in the wake of Canadians' embrace of contemporary art, the advent of new communications technologies, and the influence of American social and cultural trends. Photography and video art figured prominently, with Lake's participation in the Montreal exhibition featuring *Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith, 1973–74*, a large-format sequence of photographs from her *Transformations* series, 1973–75, in which she gradually replaces her own features with those of other people, resulting in a final photograph in which she is entirely transformed.

A younger generation of artists may be viewed as evoking many of Lake's concerns and strategies—notably, Meryl McMaster, whose photographic work often explores issues of identity and the identity of others, and the ways by which identities are constructed through social masks. In her series *Second-Self*, 2010, McMaster invited individuals to draw blind-contour portraits of themselves, which she then transformed into wire sculptures that hung in front of their faces in her photographic portraits. Like Lake, she also painted her subjects' faces white “to represent this protective social mask or persona we wear, either real or metaphorical.”<sup>16</sup> The Vancouver-based artist and vocalist Carol Sawyer (b.1961) has built a three-decades-long practice of posing and



# SUZY LAKE

Life & Work by Erin Silver

performing for the camera, albeit presenting herself as her alter ego, the modernist artist Natalie Brett Schneider. For Lake, self-portraits are not created to position the artist but rather as an evaluation of the human condition. Both the body and the photographic apparatus function in tandem as modes through which to enact, endure, and document these explorations.



LEFT: Meryl McMaster, *Meryl I*, 2010, digital C-Print, 91.4 x 91.4 cm, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Imitations of the Self (study #3)*, 1973/2012, archival pigment print, 20 x 18.6 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

A photograph of a woman from the back, peeling off floral wallpaper from a wall. The wall is a dull, greyish-green color, and the wallpaper is yellowed and peeling in several places. The woman has dark hair and is wearing a white tank top. The text 'STYLE & TECHNIQUE' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

# STYLE & TECHNIQUE

While she was a student and an apprentice, Lake's experience in art was in drawing, printmaking, and abstract painting. Once she purchased a camera, she became interested in the interplay between a performance (usually by herself) and the viewer's perception of it, and in the way photographic devices could make this connection visible. Her physical manipulations of film through stretching and lighting reveal hidden aspects of the subject's inner self, even as her constant use of her own body provides a visual marker through which to consider the mechanical techniques of photography.

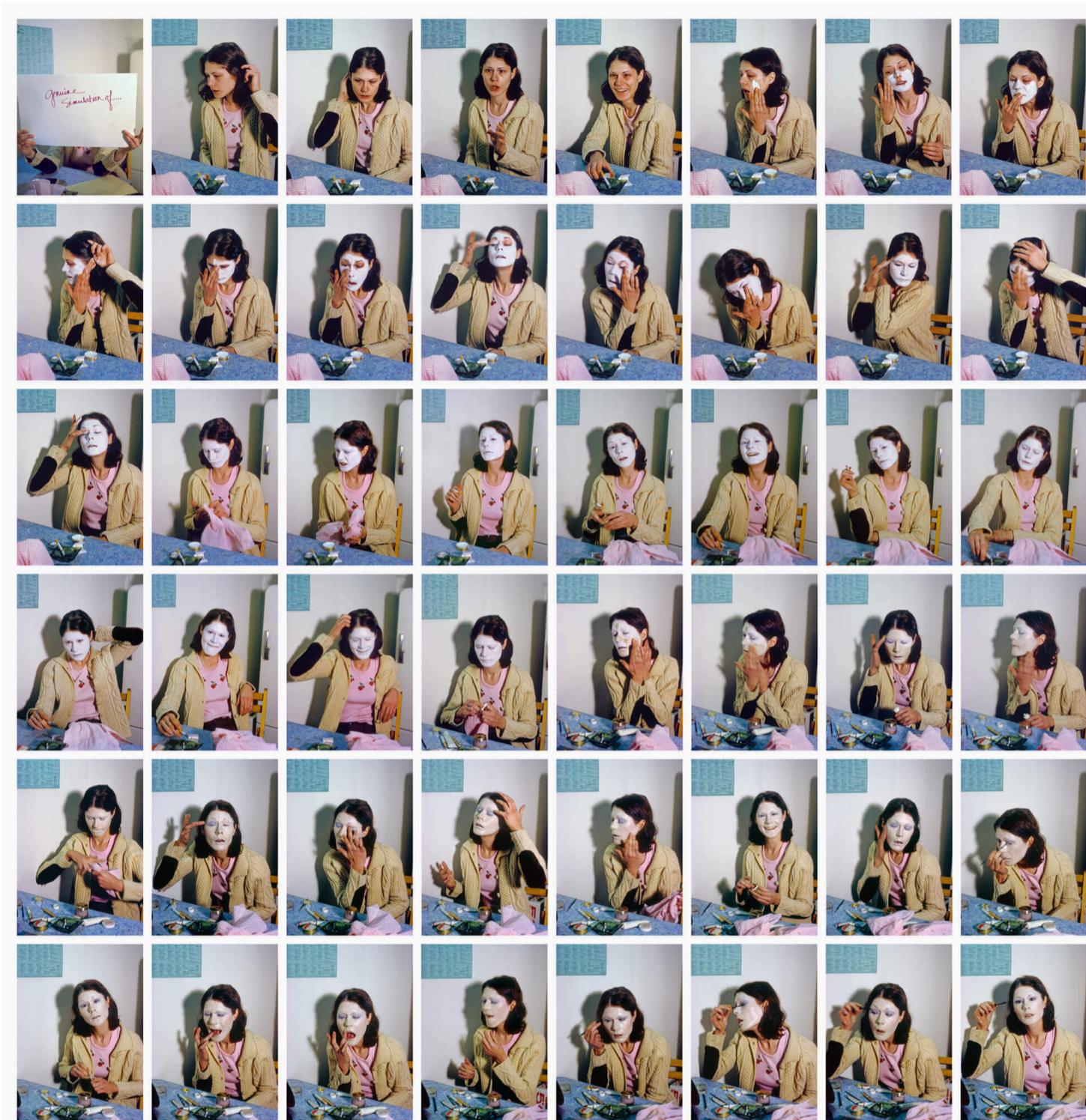
**CAMERA ART**

Lake took up photography in 1970 to “see what [she] looked like” as she engaged in various performances and to convey her experience in a manner the audience could trust.<sup>1</sup> She called the results “camera art,” a term coined by video artist Les Levine (b.1935), who described it as “devoid of logic,” requiring viewers to apply their own reasoning to it. Beyond an emphasis on narrative content, Lake’s photographs hinge on aesthetic and compositional concerns and on attention to the process of creating the works themselves. For this reason, Lake’s oeuvre has often been considered part of the Conceptual art movement: her photography explores not only social and perceptual processes but also the medium itself. Lake’s own body became—and has remained—the primary site of exploration.

Photography as employed within Conceptualism offered the means through which to document conceptual experiments, at once acting as a document and as a work itself. Process, duration, and action were crystallized into an image, or images, whereby artists employed organizational structures, such as the grid, to communicate the different stages of their experiments as they unfold through time. A notable example is *Nine Polaroid Photographs of a Mirror*, 1967, by American artist William Anastasi (b.1933)—a grid-within-a-grid work composed of nine larger photographic images of the artist taking his own picture in front of a mirror. The camera is also reflected in the mirror, seemingly pointed directly at the viewer. Anastasi takes his portrait, and the immediacy offered by the Polaroid format allows him to affix the fresh image to the mirror, creating a grid on the mirror until almost its entire surface is covered, save for the bottom-right corner, where his forearm remains visible. Within the new grid, an even smaller grid begins to appear—the document of Anastasi’s placement of each new photograph onto the mirror. Two years later, Canadian artist Michael Snow (b.1928) would engage a similar experiment with *Authorization*, 1969, covering only part of the mirror’s surface to produce a grid of four images and one stray photograph in the top-left corner. Photography, here, is at once the end product and a record of the product’s making. Lake frequently used a grid format for displaying her photographs and constructing a narrative. This arrangement further emphasizes notions of duration and process—the ability to document a performance or event over time as well as the steps taken in making the works themselves.



Michael Snow, *Authorization*, 1969, instant silver prints (Polaroid) and adhesive tape on mirror in metal frame, 54.6 x 44.4 x 1.4 cm with integral frame, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Suzy Lake, *Imitations of Myself #1*, 1973/2012, 48 light-jet chromogenic prints, total size 111.1 x 107.9 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Works like *On Stage*, 1972–74, show Lake merging photography (as documenting a process) and the body (as a site through which to enact the process). In this series she initially posed for photographs in a manner that mimicked fashion photography; twice, later, she returned to the photographs—in 1973 adding new text and in 1974 adding an entirely new set of self-portraits. These photographic additions feature Lake in whiteface makeup—signifying a “zero” state, without individual character—effectively fusing painting, performance, and photography, a central strategy to which she returned throughout the early 1970s, as in *Imitations of Myself #1*, 1973/2012, and *A Genuine Simulation Of ...*, 1973/1974. *Imitations of Myself #1*, composed of forty-eight chromogenic prints arranged in a grid of eight by six, documents an entire cycle of transformation, showing Lake seated at a table, initially without makeup, and gradually going on to cover her entire face with the white

makeup. In most of the images, Lake appears dabbing the makeup onto her face with her fingers; in a few, she appears to pause and engage in conversation with someone out of the frame. By the final row, with her face entirely covered, she continues her transformation by applying lipstick and mascara to her visage—by now, transformed into a zero-state palette.

Lake's series reveal the method she uses to select works to exhibit, pulling from a vast photographic repertoire in which the documented performances themselves were often unpredictable. In this way she ultimately exerts control. She often returns to previous works to explore new issues related to the original concept, imbuing the work with different formal or political concerns and/or considering the concept from a new vantage point. In *Rhythm of a True Space #1*, 2008, for instance, during a major renovation of the Art Gallery of Ontario, she revisits *Re-Reading Recovery*, 1994–99, with the images transferred to a vinyl wrap on the construction scaffolds that surround the building. For this project Lake took the photographs from her 1994 performance and enlarged them to a massive scale, and then, through their presentation as one consecutive image, introduced an element of rhythm previously latent in the original work.



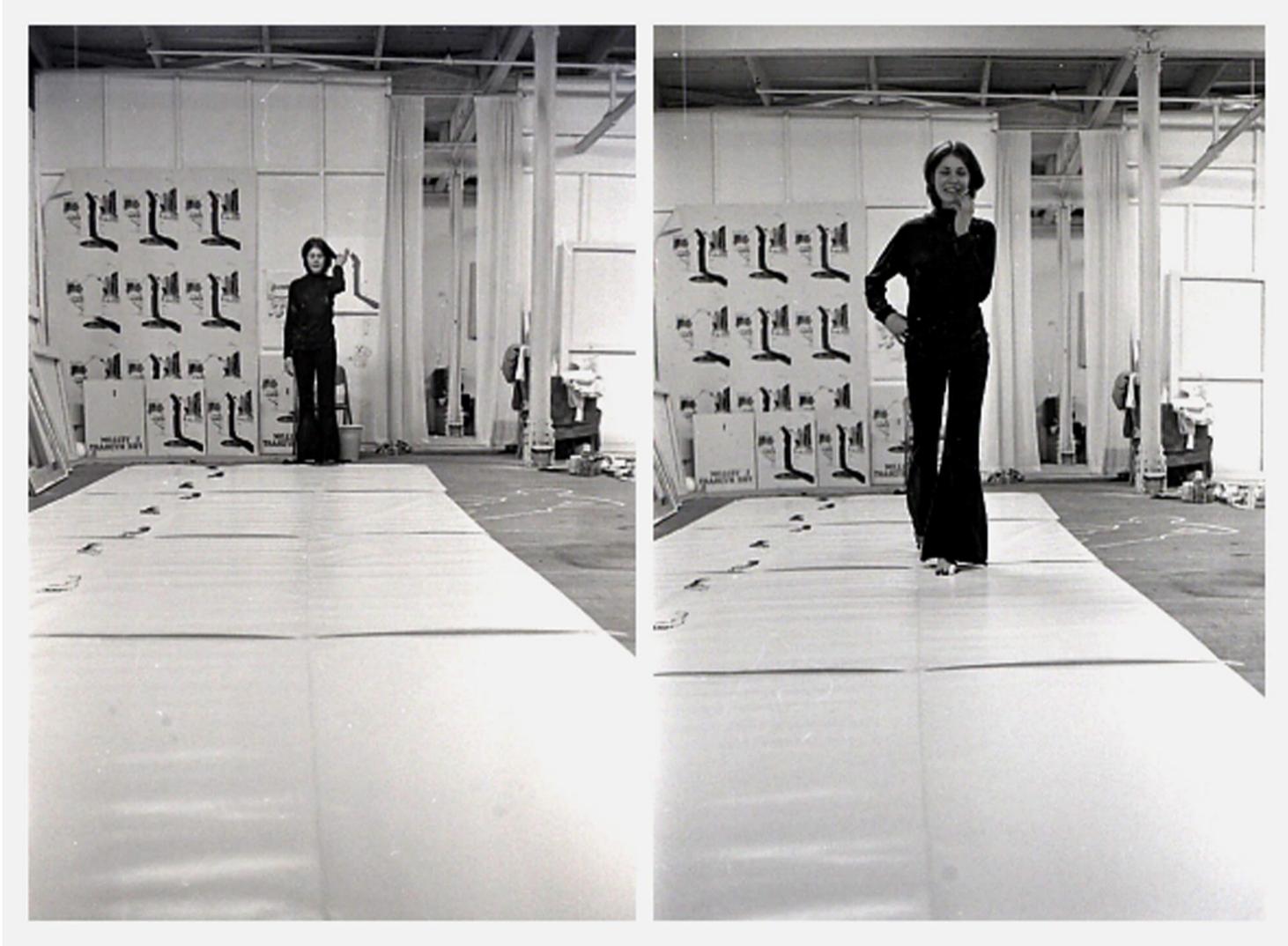
Suzy Lake, *Rhythm of a True Space #1*, 2008, 2 archival pigment prints on vinyl, 243.8 x 1706.9 cm each. Installation at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

In all her camera art, as the process develops, Lake is open to new ideas—even years later. “My favourite works are those from which I learn more than I could have ever expected,” she writes. “Regardless of Maquette or sketches, I do not follow plans as if to fill a prescription ... The production process is invaluable in orchestrating a more complex narrative.”<sup>2</sup>

## PERFORMANCE

Lake's work in the early 1970s also echoed the “Happenings” from that time—pop culture and political events where people gathered to experience a performance together or make their protest. During Lake's studio performance/event *Behavioural Prints*, 1972, friends dipped their feet in paint and walked across a long sheet of paper, then allowed the paint to dry, switched positions, and followed the line again. This work perhaps recalled *Automobile Tire Print*, 1953, by Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008)—a collaborative effort with composer John Cage during which Cage drove his Model A Ford in a straight line over sheets of paper he had glued together. *Behavioural Prints* also echoed *Anthropometries*, 1960, by Yves Klein (1928–1962), for which the artist used models—“living brushes”—covered in blue paint to produce his canvases. In these events that transpired in Lake's studio, the invisible participant is Lake's studio, which, over the course of her career, has

functioned as more than a place to make work behind the scenes; it is an active space whereby social and political events occurring outside can be explored through artistic means. As Lake has reflected, "I do believe that a lot of the elements that influence or provoke my work happen in the world. I'm able to bring all those influences, the raw materials, into the studio and put them on the walls, have them on the floor, test them off among other things and form the work."<sup>3</sup>



Suzy Lake, *Behavioural Prints*, 1972, black and white RC prints, documentation of studio performance/event, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Lake's photographs capture carefully constructed performances staged for the camera and for audiences—as in *Forever Young*, 2000, her series of three chromogenic prints showing her playing guitar, dancing, and singing as she holds a microphone. Through her photographs, Lake records her exploration of conceptual questions that she acts out using her body—in *Forever Young*, her probings about the aging female body. Photography is "evidence" or "a record," as she described her performance for the camera in *A Genuine Simulation Of ...*, 1973/1974, in which Lake, dressed in a plaid shirt and seated at a table with a matching tablecloth, her face bare, proceeds to apply layers of whiteface, blush, and mascara, pausing to light a cigarette or examine her work in the mirror. In the last frame of the ninety photographs she selected is Lake's reflection in the mirror. All through the series, which is presented in a grid arrangement, she interrogated how identity is formed and perceived—by herself, by others, and by society in general.<sup>4</sup>

For Lake, photography creates images of performance and of movement, and it can capture something the eye does not see. In *Choreographed Puppets*, 1976-77, for example, she, as the performer controlled by the puppeteers, became unrecognizable because of the blurring caused by her manipulated movements—as had happened during experiments with chronophotography in the 1800s, in which early photo practitioners attempted to capture figures in motion. *On Stage*, 1972-74, in contrast, appears to stop motion.

Lake's photographs are documents of various performances, all of which have been orchestrated in such a way that the camera is not merely a recording device but an active player in the staging, performance, and outcome of the work. In *Are You Talking to Me?*, 1978-79, Lake repeats the famous question Robert De Niro asked in the film *Taxi Driver*, only this time directing the question to herself, and using the camera to capture the subtle shifts in facial expression and the position of her lips and head. Presented in a sequence that appears to be rhythmically installed, the mouth aligns in all the pieces as though mimicking a film strip or an animation reel. This work is a re-staging not only of a performance but of an experience of breaking down the cinematic fourth wall: Lake engages members of the audience directly and invites them to replay the same feeling of anxiety and angst that she felt as she wrestled with this question.

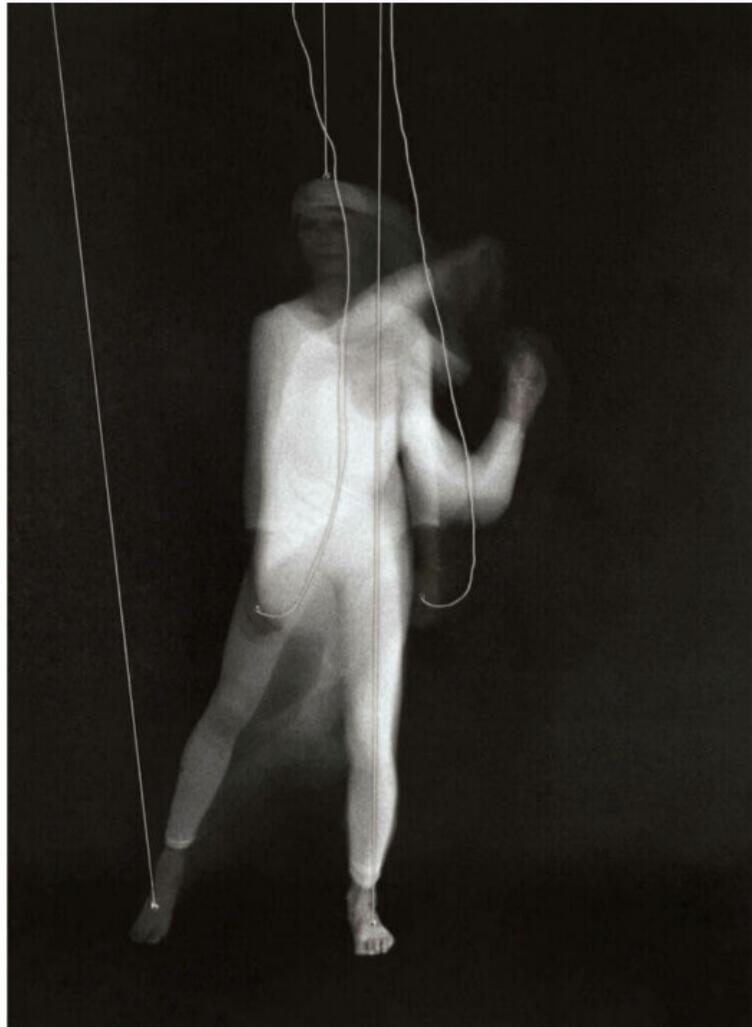
Lake's performances are inextricable from the act of taking the photograph, and the body—Lake's body—becomes a medium in and of itself, open to the very types of manipulations and distortions that Lake performs and experiments with in her photographs. These aspects mirror Lake's concerns with process, duration, and endurance. In *Box Concert*, 1973-74, an early video piece, for example, Lake holds a long box (a container for a roll of backdrop paper) and lifts it over a table again and again. Her attempt to repeat the original movement sets the narrative of the piece in motion and also employs the body—Lake's body—as the necessary force to permit the action to continue.

Lake has acknowledged the influence of 1960s experimental dance by artists including Yvonne Rainer (b.1934) and Simone Forti (b.1935), as well as Anna



Suzy Lake, *You Really Like Me #1*, 1998, light-jet chromogenic print laminated on canvas, 77 x 67 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Halprin (b.1920), Deborah Hay (b.1941), and Meredith Monk (b.1942), saying that she “learned something from each one.”<sup>5</sup> In addition to Lake’s training in mime, she identifies Rainer’s use of daily life as a narrative and Forti’s animalistic movements that cross-pollinate between dance and mime as being particularly influential.<sup>6</sup> Lake has also noted that, while studying mime, she often took dance classes, and it was likely there that she first learned about the Judson Dance Theater.



LEFT: Peter Moore, *Untitled (Yvonne Rainer, *The Mind Is a Muscle*)*, April 11, 1968, gelatin silver print, paper: 25.4 x 20.3 cm; image: 17.8 x 24.1 cm. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *Puppet Study #10*, 1976, gelatin silver fibre-based print, selenium toned, 35.6 x 27.9 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

As its title suggests, *Choreographed Puppets* involves dance and the choreographies of the body.<sup>7</sup> Although it is regularly described as “performance-photos,” it evokes Rainer’s multipart performance *The Mind Is a Muscle*, 1968, which is often referred to as a “dance-theatre situation” and “image-making in live form.”<sup>8</sup> *Choreographed Puppets* is complex and multilayered. In it, Lake not only explores loss of identity in the face of control by others, but also retains a physical control as the director of the scene. She establishes the construction as well as the script for the unpredictable performance that occurs; she remains the author despite the work’s attempt to subvert authority.

Lake shares this control with Forti, whose *Five Dance Constructions and Some Other Things*, 1961, sprung from a set of scripted directions that functioned as the groundwork for a series of seemingly unpredictable movements that she

expected to emerge from the dancer’s body in relation to force and gravity.

Dancers improvised movements as a mode of negotiating the objects included in the performance, such as ropes and plywood boxes. Rainer and other dancers also performed works where their bodies encountered other bodies and inanimate objects in loosely scripted yet unpredictable ways. All the works now exist only in photographic documentation.

While Lake was influenced by these experiments with the body, for her the camera became an invisible yet ever-present witness. A re-enactment of *Choreographed Puppets* by Toronto-based choreographer and dancer Amelia Ehrhardt during the exhibition *Introducing Suzy Lake* at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2014 illustrated how dance could be translated back from photographic documentation. In the course of the performance, spectators were straining, simultaneously, to take in both Ehrhardt's intense re-performance and Lake's original photographic sequence. In this way, Lake's work continues to bridge the gap between performance and image in new ways that defy convention.



Toronto choreographer Amelia Ehrhardt recreates Lake's performance piece *Choreographed Puppets* during the AGO First Thursday event for *Introducing Suzy Lake* at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, in 2014, photograph by Nicholas Lachance.

### MANIPULATING PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

Although Lake abandoned painting in the early 1970s as she became invested in photographic processes and modes for documenting performance, she transferred the tactile qualities of painting to her work in photography—notably by using camera film and other photographic techniques as tools for studying and testing the limits of time and representation. She not only embraces but also stretches photographic technologies to explore different modes of perception.

Through her tactile manipulation of the photographic surface, both pre- and post-exposure of film, Lake evokes the innovations of early photographic practitioners and avant-garde artists testing the perceptual possibilities afforded by photography, for instance, the composite photography of Oscar Rejlander (1813–75), the late-nineteenth-century experiments in chronophotography by Étienne-Jules Marey (1830–1904), and the perfection of the technique known as solarization by Man Ray and Lee Miller in 1929.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Co-Ed Magazine #2*, 1973/1998, gelatin silver fiber-based print, selenium toned, 35.6 x 27.9 cm, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Suzy Lake, *16 Over 28*, 1975, gelatin silver fibre-based print and graphite drawing, 96.5 x 71 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

Early in her career, Lake began to manipulate photographs. She drew or painted directly onto photographic prints, referring both to her own training as a painter and the hand-tinted photographs from the late nineteenth century. In *A Genuine Simulation of ... No. 2*, 1974, Lake explores the painterly qualities of makeup. In just six black and white headshots, she applied cosmetic makeup directly to the photographs themselves. In this way she evoked early photographic hand-tinting and her own training in painting even as she explored the tactility and malleability of the photographic medium. She also produced composite images, such as *Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith*, 1973–74, in the *Transformations* series, by using stencils in the darkroom to print selected areas of a picture. Lake also experimented with manipulating film itself: to make *ImPositions #1*, 1977, Lake heated her negatives and stretched them to produce a distortion effect.



Suzy Lake, *Self Portrait #1*, *Self Portrait #2*, *Self Portrait #3*, 1974, gelatin silver print, graphite, coloured graphite, 27.9 x 35.6 cm each, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.

In addition to the physical manipulation of her film, Lake has also experimented with strategies of perceptual manipulation, engaging the space between the content of the image and its borders to confuse the limits of the photographic frame. In *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, 1983–85, and *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones*, 1994–95, she showed her fascination with illusion and with the boundaries of the photograph and its frame. In both works, she used her body to produce a *trompe l'oeil* effect similar to those adopted by Canadian artist Michael Snow—for example, *In Media Res*, 1998, where three people chase a bird over a panoramic photograph glued like a rug to the gallery floor. In these two works by Lake, the viewer is able to perceptually look “beyond” the surface of the photograph, into the recessed space Lake appears to be excavating, for instance, by demolishing the red wall depicted in *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, or by scratching at bits of torn wallpaper on the surface of the wall in a photograph overlaid on a photograph of the same wall in *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones*.



LEFT: Suzy Lake, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #6*, 1983–84, chromogenic print, oil paint and lumber, 162.6 x 109.2 x 10.2 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton. RIGHT: Michael Snow, *In Media Res*, 1998, colour photograph on Lexan, 260 x 360 cm, Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Ministry of Culture and Communication, Paris.

In recent years Lake has continued to challenge the limits of photography, often experimenting with duration and exposure time to create powerful visual effects. In *Reduced Performing*, 2008–11, Lake “photographed” herself on an eight-foot flatbed scanner engaging in various subtle and expressive gestures such as blinking, breathing, or crying as the scanner captured her over the course of twelve minutes. The result of direct engagement with the digital scanning technology—different from photographic capture—was that instances in which Lake moved slightly, such as in breathing, resulted in digital drag (blurring and smudging of the image) on Lake’s clothing, while movement resulting in contrast, as with Lake’s eyes, resulted in RGB colour breakup—an effect where the colours appear to break apart and breach the authenticity of the image.



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Lake again used her body to explore the long-time photographic questions around movement, light, and exposure in *Extended Breathing*, 2008-14. In this series she stood still for an hour-long exposure as the camera captured her surroundings with perfect clarity. Lake herself appears slightly blurred because of her physical need to breathe. Once again, the body—the constant—allows invisible perceptual phenomena to become visible.



From left to right: Suzy Lake, *Reduced Performing: Breathing #1*, 2008/2011, light-jet chromogenic print, 203.2 x 81.3 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto; Suzy Lake, *Reduced Performing: Breathing #5*, 2009-11, light-jet chromogenic print, 204 x 82.6 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto; Suzy Lake, *Reduced Performing Crying #1*, 2009/2011, light-jet chromogenic print, 203.2 x 81.3 cm, Georgia Scherman Projects, Toronto.



## WHERE TO SEE

Suzy Lake's works can be found in numerous public and private collections across Canada. The works listed below may not always be on view and do not represent the complete collection of Lake's work at each institution.



# SUZY LAKE

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## ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON

123 King Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
905-527-6610  
artgalleryofhamilton.com



**Suzy Lake, *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #6*, 1983-84**

Chromogenic print, oil paint, and lumber  
162.6 x 109.2 x 10.2 cm

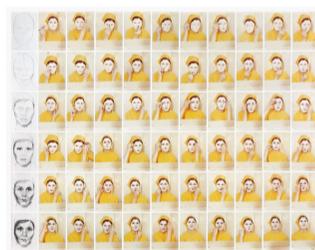
## ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
416-979-6648  
ago.ca



**Suzy Lake, *On Stage*, 1972 (reprinted 1996)**

Gelatin silver print, selenium toned  
40.1 x 91.3 cm



**Suzy Lake, *The Natural Way to Draw*, 1975**

Colour emulsion transfer on uncoated canvas  
102.5 x 134 cm



**Suzy Lake, *The Natural Way to Draw*, 1975**

Colour video, sound  
15 minutes



**Suzy Lake, *Are You Talking to Me? #3*, 1979**

5 gelatin silver fibre-based prints with applied colour and 2 chromogenic prints  
Installed dimensions variable



# SUZY LAKE

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**Suzy Lake, *Beauty at a Proper Distance / In Song*, 2001-2**

3 colour transparencies and lightboxes  
134 x 99.4 cm; 134 x 115.2 cm;  
134 x 99.4 cm



**Suzy Lake, *Extended Breathing in the Rivera Frescoes*, 2013/2014**

Inkjet print  
152.4 x 200.7 cm

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## METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

1000 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York, USA  
212-535-7710  
[metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)



**Suzy Lake, *Miss Chatelaine*, 1973**

Gelatin silver fibre-based print  
(printed 1996)  
22.3 x 22.4 cm

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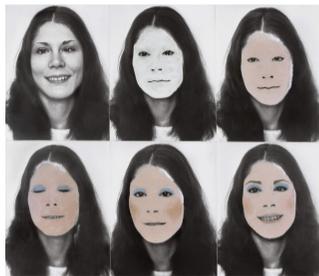


# SUZY LAKE

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## MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

1380 Sherbrooke Street West  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
514-285-2000  
mbam.qc.ca/en



### **Suzy Lake, *A Genuine Simulation Of... No. 2*, 1974**

6 gelatin silver prints and  
commercial makeup mounted on  
fibre-based print  
70 x 82.5 cm

## NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
613-990-1985  
gallery.ca



### **Suzy Lake, *A Genuine Simulation Of...*, 1973/1974**

90 chromogenic prints  
Total size 152 x 142 cm



### **Suzy Lake, *Suzy Lake as Gilles Gheerbrant*, 1973-75**

4 gelatin silver fibre-based prints  
91.4 x 76.2 cm



### **Suzy Lake, *Cautioned Homes and Gardens: Barb and Janie*, 1991**

Triptych; chromogenic print, photo montage  
151.8 x 58.4 cm;  
151.8 x 103.5 cm;  
151.8 x 58.4 cm



# SUZY LAKE

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## WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

300 Memorial Blvd  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
204-786-6641  
wag.ca



**Suzy Lake, *A One Hour (Zero)*  
*Conversation with Allan B., 1973***

Gelatin silver fibre-based print,  
felt pen on paper  
63.5 x 105.8 cm

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## NOTES

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1. Daniel Baird, "Self-Inventions: The Photography of Suzy Lake," *Border Crossings*, no. 119 (September 2011), accessed July 1, 2016, <http://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/self-inventions-the-photography-of-suzy-lake>.
2. Suzy Lake, "Introducing Suzy Lake," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London, UK: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 15.
3. Michelle Jacques, "Born in Detroit," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 20, 23.
4. Suzy Lake, "Researching the Self: Robert Enright Interviews Suzy Lake," *Border Crossings* 13, no. 1 (January 1994): 12.
5. Baird, "Self-Inventions: The Photography of Suzy Lake."
6. Through the 1950s and early 1960s, civil rights activism advocated non-violence (Martin Luther King Jr., assassinated 1968), civil disobedience, and Black Nationalism (Malcolm X, assassinated 1965). The influence of Malcolm X was felt in subsequent, more militant groups such as the Black Panther Party, founded by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton in 1966.
7. The other institutions were Sir George Williams University and the School of Fine Arts at the Saidye Bronfman Centre.
8. Suzy Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
9. Sophie Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," and Gabriele Schor, "Gabriele Schor on *Imitations of Myself #1*," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 68 and 44.
10. Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," 65.
11. Communication from Suzy Lake to the author, July 2018.
12. Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
13. Baird, "Self-Inventions: The Photography of Suzy Lake."
14. Quoted in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 109.
15. Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
16. Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," 65.
17. Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
18. Suzy Lake in Chris Ironside and Suzy Lake, "Suzy Lake: Renaissance Woman," *Magenta Magazine* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2011), accessed May 28, 2018, <http://mag.magentafoundation.org/5/features/suzy-lake>.



19. Bill Jones, quoted in "Bill Jones: Suzy Lake As Patty Hearst, November 21–December 20, 2008," exhibition statement, Paul Petro Contemporary Art, accessed July 3, 2020, <http://paulpetro.com/exhibitions/88-Suzy-Lake-As-Patty-Hearst>.
20. Suzy Lake, correspondence with author, May 16, 2018.
21. The other artists included Gary Coward (b.1940), Tom Dean (b.1947), Jean-Marie Delavalle (b.1944), François Déry (b.1941), Andrew Dutkewych (b.1944), Dennis Lukas (1947–2003), Kelly Morgan (b.1945), Gunter Nolte (1938–2000), Milly Ristvedt (b.1942), Henry Saxe (b.1937), Serge Tousignant (b.1942), and Bill Vazan (b.1933).
22. Véhicule Canada Council project proposal, 1972.
23. William A. Ewing, "William A. Ewing on *Choreographed Puppets*," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 123.
24. Lake was one of only three women represented; the other two were Barbara Astman and Mia Westerlund; see Georgiana Uhlyarik, "A Movie for One: Barbara Astman's Journey of the Self," *Canadian Art* (Spring 2014): 114.
25. Catherine Kustanczy, "The Many Faces of Suzy Lake," *Hyperallergic*, February 26, 2015, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://hyperallergic.com/185709/the-many-faces-of-suzy-lake/>.
26. Suzy Lake, "Authority Is an Attribute ... Revisited," *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études canadiennes* 33, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 112.
27. Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
28. Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
29. Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
30. Suzy Lake, in Sky Goodden and Suzy Lake, "The Difficulty in Distilling Suzy Lake," *Momus*, March 23, 2015, accessed May 28, 2018, <http://momus.ca/interview-the-difficulty-in-distilling-suzy-lake/>.

## KEY WORKS: ON STAGE

1. Gabriele Schor, "Gabriele Schor on *Imitations of Myself #1*," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 44.
2. Suzy Lake, "Artist Statement," *Portraits as an Issue of Identity*, Suzy Lake website, accessed March 19, 2019, <http://www.suzylake.ca/artist-statement#1>.
3. Suzy Lake, "Artist Statement," *Portraits as an Issue of Identity*, Suzy Lake website, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.suzylake.ca/artist-statement#1>.



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4. Suzy Lake, "Artist Statement," *Portraits as an Issue of Identity*, Suzy Lake website, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.suzylake.ca/artist-statement#1>.

5. Alisia Chase, "Introducing Suzy Lake," *Afterimage* 42, no. 4 (January-February 2015), accessed July 1, 2016, <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-403784354/introducing-suzylake>.

## KEY WORKS: MISS CHATELAINE

1. Sara Angel, "Sara Angel on *Miss Chatelaine*," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 40.

2. Gabriele Schor, "Gabriele Schor on *Imitations of Myself #1*," and Robert Longo, "Robert Longo on *A Genuine Simulation of ...*" in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 44 and 51.

## KEY WORKS: SUZY LAKE AS GARY WILLIAM SMITH

1. Sophie Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 81. Bill Vazan, Gilles Gheerbrant, Willy Wood, and Andrea Stannard are also included in the *Transformations* series.

2. Lake originally shot this work between 1973 and 1974 but didn't have time to print it for a planned exhibition at Galerie Gilles Gheerbrant. She forgot about the negative for many years but when she rediscovered it she subsequently printed it—in 2012.

## KEY WORKS: THE NATURAL WAY TO DRAW

1. Elizabeth A.T. Smith, "Elizabeth A.T. Smith on *The Natural Way to Draw*," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 114.

## KEY WORKS: CHOREOGRAPHED PUPPETS

1. Communication from Suzy Lake to the author, July 2018.

2. Though imprecision is controversial among photographers, it holds an important place in the history of photography. During the Pictorialist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, photographers manipulated images to create rather than simply record a scene, thereby emphasizing the artistic value of their art form.

3. William A. Ewing, "William A. Ewing on *Choreographed Puppets*," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 123. Ewing invited Lake to exhibit at Galerie Optica in Montreal, and she first showed *Choreographed Puppets* there in 1977.

## KEY WORKS: IMPOSITIONS #1

1. Sophie Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 98.



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2. Suzy Lake, quoted in "Art Gallery of Ontario News Release," reproduced in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 107.

3. Robert Enright, "The Many Faces of Suzy Lake," *Border Crossings* 33, no. 4 (December 2014): 30.

## KEY WORKS: ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?

1. Robert Enright, "Researching the Self," *Border Crossings* 13, no. 1 (January 1994): 20.

2. A term coined by J.L. Austin that refers to language that serves a performative function. It would also become central to gender theorists Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Judith Butler.

## KEY WORKS: PRE-RESOLUTION: USING THE ORDINANCES AT HAND

1. Suzy Lake, "Artist Statement," *Body as an Issue of Authority*, Suzy Lake website, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.suzylake.ca/1461524-artist-statement#1>.

2. Suzy Lake, "Artist Statement," *Body as an Issue of Authority*, Suzy Lake website, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.suzylake.ca/1461524-artist-statement#1>.

3. Georgiana Uhlyarik, "Home in Toronto," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 149.

## KEY WORKS: AUTHORITY IS AN ATTRIBUTE ... PART 2

1. Suzy Lake, "Authority Is an Attribute ... Revisited," *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études canadiennes*, 33, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 108.

2. Lake, "Authority is an Attribute ... Revisited," 113.

## KEY WORKS: FOREVER YOUNG

1. Suzy Lake, "Artist Statement," *Beauty as Celebrity*, Suzy Lake website, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.suzylake.ca/1461546-artist-statement#1>.

## KEY WORKS: BEAUTY AT A PROPER DISTANCE / IN SONG

1. Quoted in Bill Clarke, "The Maker of Change: The Many Identities of Suzy Lake," *Canadian Art* 29, no. 4 (2013): 110.

## KEY WORKS: EXTENDED BREATHING IN THE GARDEN

1. Suzy Lake, quoted in Daniel Baird, "Self-Inventions: The Photography of Suzy Lake," *Border Crossings* 30, no. 3 (September 2011), accessed 20 May 2020, <https://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/self-inventions-the-photography-of-suzy-lake>.

## KEY WORKS: PERFORMING HAUTE COUTURE #1

1. Suzy Lake, quoted in Becky Rynor, "An Interview with Suzy Lake," *National Gallery of Canada Magazine*, February 3, 2015, <https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/artists/an-interview-with-suzy-lake>.



## SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Sophie Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 68.
2. Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 87.
3. Georgiana Uhlyarik, "Home in Toronto," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 157.
4. Suzy Lake, "Introducing Suzy Lake," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 15.
5. William A. Ewing, "William A. Ewing on *Choreographed Puppets*," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 123.
6. Ono is indelibly associated with the use of the body as an artistic medium in and of itself for her 1964 performance *Cut Piece*, in which audience members were invited onto the stage to cut away small pieces of her clothing.
7. These works, such as Forti's *Dance Constructions*, 1960, exist only in photographic documentation except for occasional, tightly controlled re-performances—for instance, Rainer's *Trio A* (choreographed in 1966 and made into a film in 1978).
8. Suzy Lake, email to author, May 21, 2018.
9. Annie Gérin, *Françoise Sullivan: Life & Work* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2018), accessed May 25, 2020, <https://aci-iac.ca/art-books/francoise-sullivan/key-works/dance-in-the-snow>.
10. When the city of Detroit filed for bankruptcy in July 2013, some people suggested that the valuable collection belonging to the Detroit Institute of Art be sold.
11. Sophie Hackett and Suzy Lake, "Rhythms of a True Space: Feminisms, Resistances, Collaborations," *Art Institutions and the Feminist Dialectic*, December 4, 2008, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://feministdialectic.ca/en/video.php?id=6>.
12. Lake explained that she perceived herself as a "constant" that was always available to her. Other artists, such as Francesca Woodman (1958-1981), featured themselves as the central subject of their work.
13. American artist Cindy Sherman has also avoided an explicit alignment of her work with the feminist cause. Sherman said: "The work is what it is and hopefully it's seen as feminist work, or feminist-advised work, but I'm not going to go around espousing theoretical bullshit about feminist stuff." Sherman, quoted in Betsy Byrne, "Studio: Cindy Sherman," *Tate Magazine*, June 1, 2003 (Tate Publishing), accessed May 24, 2020, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/cindy-sherman-1938/studio-cindy-sherman>.



14. Martha Hanna, *Suzy Lake: Point of Reference* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1993).

15. Georgiana Uhlyarik in conversation with Grace O'Connell, *Open Book Toronto* (December 8, 2014), accessed May 25, 2020, [http://m.openbooktoronto.com/news/ago\\_curator\\_georgiana\\_uhlyarik\\_introducing\\_suzy\\_lake](http://m.openbooktoronto.com/news/ago_curator_georgiana_uhlyarik_introducing_suzy_lake).

16. Meryl McMaster, Artist Statement, *Second-Self*, 2010. Artist's website, accessed May 25, 2020, <http://merylmcmaster.com/>.

## STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. Suzy Lake, quoted in Sophie Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, ed. Georgiana Uhlyarik (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 65.

2. Hackett, "A New Scene in Montreal," 68.

3. Suzy Lake, "The Studio," in *Introducing Suzy Lake*, 201.

4. Robert Enright, "Researching the Self," *Border Crossings* 13, no. 1 (January 1994): 16-17.

5. Suzy Lake, correspondence with author, May 16, 2018.

6. Lake, correspondence with author, May 16, 2018.

7. Around the same time, Lake created a series of drawing and photo-collage works that she loosely organized as "Choreographies." Unlike *Choreographed Puppets*, however, in these works the body is engaged in a stylized program of movement.

8. *The Mind Is a Muscle* was an evening-length work by Rainer, performed by seven dancers at the Anderson Theater in New York in 1968. The performance, which was interspersed with film and text, included variations on Rainer's most famous piece of choreography, *Trio A*, which was originally performed in 1966 and subsequently performed for the camera in 1978.



## GLOSSARY

### **Abstract Expressionism**

A style that flourished in New York in the 1940s and 1950s, Abstract Expressionism is defined by its combination of formal abstraction and self-conscious expression. The term describes a wide variety of work; among the most famous Abstract Expressionists are Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Willem de Kooning.

### **Aguilar, Laura (Mexican American, 1959–2018)**

A largely self-taught photographer whose work explores her identity as a lesbian Chicana woman. In the late 1980s and 1990s, Aguilar made powerful portraits of herself nude in various settings, from natural landscapes to interior domestic spaces. During this period, she also began taking portraits of other queer Chicana women in her community of East Los Angeles. Aguilar's best-known work is *Three Eagles Flying*, 1990, a self-portrait articulating the complexities of her bicultural identity.

### **Anastasi, William (American, b.1933)**

A pioneering figure in American Conceptual and Minimal art, aligned with Carl Andre, John Cage, Eva Hesse, Robert Rauschenberg, and Richard Serra. Anastasi was one of the first modern artists to create site-specific works; *Six Sites*, 1966–67, led the way for later artists and curators interested in this form.

### **Angelucci, Sara (Canadian, b.1962)**

A Toronto-based artist working with photography, video, and audio. Angelucci's practice investigates the commemorative function of vernacular photographs and films, as well as their role in constructing narratives and histories. Initially drawing from her family's archives, Angelucci has turned her attention to working with found materials. Her recent work explores the relationship between photography and natural science.

### **Antin, Eleanor (American, b.1935)**

A pioneering Conceptual and feminist artist working in performance, film, and installation. From the 1970s to the 1990s, Antin explored the construction of self-identity by developing different alter egos—including a king, a ballerina, and a nurse—that blurred the boundaries of gender, class, and racial identity. Since the early 2000s, her work has consisted of large-scale photographic tableaux that draw on Greek and Roman history and mythology to critique contemporary culture.

### **automatism**

A physiological term first applied to art by the Surrealists to refer to processes such as free association and spontaneous, intuitive writing, drawing, and painting that allow access to the subconscious without the interference of planning or controlled thought.

### **avant-garde**

From the French for "vanguard" or "advance guard," avant-garde entered discussions about art in the early nineteenth-century work of the socialist thinker Henri de Saint-Simon, who believed that artists had a role to play in



building a new society. The meaning of “avant-garde” has shifted over the years, referring to artists in relation to their times rather than to a particular group of artists working at a specific time in history. It connotes radicalism and rejection of a status quo and is often associated with work that is provocative and confrontational.

### **Baldessari, John (American, 1931–2020)**

A California-based artist credited as one of the founders of Conceptual art. In the mid-1960s, Baldessari, then a painter, began incorporating photography and text into his work, and in the 1970s ventured into sculpture, installation, film, and printmaking. He often appropriated images and modified, erased, recombined, and placed them alongside text to transform their meaning, as well as to provide social commentary on contemporary culture. Baldessari is known for his photographic images overlaid with coloured dots.

### **Barr, David (American, 1939–2015)**

A Structuralist sculptor known for his wall-hanging reliefs and large-scale public sculptures. The Michigan-based artist spent his fifty-year career creating artworks that draw on mathematics to explore the structures underlying the natural world. Barr founded the Michigan Legacy Art Park, an outdoor sculpture park located near Thompsonville, Michigan, in 1995.

### **Bealy, Allan (Canadian, b.1951)**

A Montreal-born, Brooklyn-based artist working primarily with collage and mixed media. Bealy attended the School of Art and Design at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. A member of the artist-run gallery Véhicule Art, Bealy used the printing press there to publish his first art and literary magazine, *Davinci*. After moving to New York in 1975, he worked as an advertising art director and founded the interdisciplinary arts magazine *Benzene*, which ran through the 1980s.

### **Beveridge, Karl (Canadian, b.1945)**

A Toronto-based artist who has collaborated with Carole Condé as an artistic duo since the late 1960s. Their early interest in the Conceptual art movement gave way to creating socially engaged art in the 1970s. Condé and Beveridge have collaborated with numerous trade unions and community organizations to produce staged photographic images that address the connections between paid labour, environmental issues, human rights, and class divisions.

### **Cage, John (American, 1912–1992)**

An avant-garde composer, John Cage worked from principles of randomness and indeterminacy, his influence extending beyond minimalist and electronic music to conceptual and performance art. Perhaps his best-known piece is *4'33"*, in which a performer remains silent on stage, often seated at a piano, for an unspecified amount of time. Other works relied on the *I Ching* to generate structure, or were composed for a prepared piano—prepared in that Cage inserted objects into the strings to add a percussive element to the instrument. He had a long romantic partnership and artistic collaboration with modern dance pioneer Merce Cunningham.



## **Cahun, Claude (French, 1894–1954)**

A Surrealist photographer, sculptor, and writer who challenged conventional notions of gender identity. Cahun is known for taking gender-ambiguous self-portraits dressed up as various characters, including a soldier, an angel, an aviator, and a doll. Born Lucy Renée Mathilde Schwob, Cahun began using the pseudonym Claude Cahun in 1917. After moving to Paris with their romantic and creative partner Marcel Moore (born Suzanne Alberte Malherbe) in 1920, they joined the Surrealist movement and also participated in avant-garde theatre.

## **Cassatt, Mary (American, 1844–1926)**

Cassatt painted figurative work, often featuring women and children. Her paintings were shown regularly at the Salon in Paris. She was the only American painter officially associated with the French Impressionists.

## **Chambers, Jim (Canadian, b.1945)**

A Hamilton-born photographer who in 1977 founded the Toronto Photographers' Co-operative (now Gallery TPW), a major artist-run centre devoted to exhibiting photography, film, and video. Two years prior, Chambers helped found the artist-run centre Hamilton Artists Inc, and frequently exhibited his street photography and mixed-media works there. He was a professor in the Creative Photography department at Humber College for twenty years.

## **Chicago, Judy (American, b.1939)**

A painter, sculptor, and educator, and an important feminist artist and intellectual. Chicago explores the role of women in art history and contemporary culture. Her best-known work, *The Dinner Party, 1974–79*, commemorates thirty-nine historically significant women with specially designed place settings for each one at a vast triangular table.

## **chronophotography**

A photographic technique that records a sequence of movements in a single photographic image. Chronophotography was invented in the early 1880s by French physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey to aid in the study of the anatomical movement of humans and animals. The technique influenced Futurist painters, notably Giacomo Balla, who replicated the effect in the painting *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash, 1912*.

## **composite negative**

A photographic negative made by combining several negatives. Composite negatives were largely a phenomenon of the nineteenth century, when technological limitations made it impossible to capture different areas of a particular scene—such as sea and sky—at once.

## **Conceptual art**

Traced to the work of Marcel Duchamp but not codified until the 1960s, “Conceptual art” is a general term for art that emphasizes ideas over form. The finished product may even be physically transient, as with land art or performance art.



## **Condé, Carole (Canadian, b.1940)**

A Hamilton-born, Toronto-based artist who has collaborated with artistic partner Karl Beveridge since the late 1960s. Initially part of the Conceptual art movement, in the 1970s Condé and Beveridge began exploring socio-political issues in their work. Collaborating with trade unions and community organizations, they create staged photographic series to explore the relationship of paid labour to environmental issues, human rights, and class divisions.

## **Cubism**

A radical style of painting developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914, Cubism is defined by the representation of numerous perspectives at once. Cubism is considered crucial to the history of modern art for its enormous international impact; famous practitioners also include Juan Gris and Francis Picabia.

## **Dada**

A multidisciplinary movement that arose in Europe in response to the horrors of the First World War, whose adherents aimed to deconstruct and demolish traditional societal values and institutions. Artworks, often collages and readymades, typically scorned fine materials and craftsmanship. Chief Dadaists include Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, and Hans Arp.

## **David, Jacques-Louis (French, 1748–1825)**

A Neoclassical painter regarded as the preeminent painter of the late eighteenth century. David is best known for his large-scale history paintings, such as *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, although he was also a gifted portraitist. A prominent figure in the French Revolution of 1789 because of his involvement in politics, David completed only one oil painting during this period, *The Death of Marat*, 1793, a famous work from the unfinished series *The Martyrs of the Revolution*.

## **Dean, Tom (Canadian, b.1947)**

A Toronto-based artist whose practice is broadly concerned with the interplay between the everyday and the mythological. After completing his studies in Montreal in the late 1960s, Dean became a founding member of the avant-garde artist-run gallery Véhicule Art in 1972. He settled in Toronto in 1976, and became widely known for his monumental sculpture *The Floating Staircase*, 1978–81, which floated in Toronto harbour for two years. Dean represented Canada at the 1999 Venice Biennale.

## **Expo 67**

The world's fair of 1967, held in Montreal, was a celebration of Canada's Centennial. With sixty-two participating nations and attendance of over 50 million people, Expo solidified Montreal's reputation as an international city and Canada's as a place for innovation.

## **Fluxus**

A movement started in Germany in 1962 defined by an attitude of rebellion against artistic conservatism and professionalism rather than a particular style.



Street art and festivals figured prominently in Fluxus activities, which were eventually centred in New York City and lasted until the early 1970s. Major influences were the composer John Cage and the artist Marcel Duchamp.

## **formalism**

The study of art by analyzing a work's form and style to determine its meaning and quality. It emphasizes colour, texture, composition, and line over narrative, concept, or social and political context. In the 1960s, the American critic Clement Greenberg strongly championed formalism. By the end of the 1960s, postmodernism and conceptual art began to challenge formalism as a system of critique.

## **Forti, Simone (Italian American, b.1935)**

An artist, dancer, and choreographer who was an important figure in the development of experimental dance and Minimalism in the 1960s. Born in Italy, Forti moved to New York in the early 1960s, where she invented a style of dance based on improvisation and natural movements. In 1960, she introduced her Dance Constructions, in which dancers' bodies together form a dance that may also be interpreted as sculpture.

## **Front de Libération du Québec**

A militant organization supporting Quebec sovereignty that was formed in 1963 by Raymond Villeneuve, Gabriel Hudon, and Georges Schoeters. The Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) emerged in response to major political and cultural shifts taking place in Quebec, as well as other revolutionary movements against foreign imperialism occurring around the world, notably in Algeria. The FLQ disbanded in 1971 following the arrest of multiple members linked to the October Crisis.

## **Gaucher, Yves (Canadian, 1934–2000)**

An internationally recognized abstract painter and printmaker, associated with the Plasticiens. Gaucher's inquisitive nature made him an individualistic figure and artist who drew from many sources, including jazz and atonal music, Georges Braque, Mark Rothko, and the New York Abstractionists. He fought to modernize printmaking and open the medium up to experimental and innovative techniques. Gaucher founded the Associations des peintures-gravures de Montréal in 1960 and was named a Member of the Order of Canada in 1981. (See *Yves Gaucher: Life & Work* by Roald Nasgaard.)

## **German Expressionism**

A modernist movement in painting, sculpture, theatre, literature, and cinema. Expressionism's birth is often traced to 1905, when Die Brücke (The Bridge), a group of Dresden painters, broke with the practices and institutions of the academy and bourgeois culture, declaring themselves a "bridge" to the future. Another bold new group, Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), formed in 1911, focused more on the spiritual in art. Significant Expressionist painters include Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Franz Marc, and Egon Schiele.

## **Goya, Francisco (Spanish, 1746–1828)**

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was an influential painter of the Spanish



Enlightenment whose expressive style would guide the Romantic, realist, and Impressionist painters of the nineteenth century, particularly French artists including Édouard Manet. Though he rose to prominence as a court painter for the Spanish monarchy, Goya's drawings and etchings of the horrors of the Napoleonic Wars and Spanish struggles for independence in the early nineteenth century, none of them published during his lifetime, would prove some of his most enduring work.

### **Grauerholz, Angela (Canadian, b.1952)**

A German-born photographer based in Montreal since 1976. Grauerholz's black and white, sepia-toned, and colour photographs document vaguely familiar architectural spaces and objects that provoke meditation on the nature of collective memory. By focusing on overlooked physical aspects of museums, libraries, archives, and other sites of collective memory, Grauerholz disrupts the authoritative power of these highly regulated institutional spaces.

### **Haacke, Hans (German, b.1936)**

A leading exponent of Institutional Critique, a form of Conceptual art that targets the ideologies and power structures of art institutions. Haacke is known for problematizing relationships between art institutions and corporate donors. He was awarded the top prize at the 1993 Venice Biennale, where his mixed-media installation, entitled *Germania*, explored the role of the German pavilion in promoting nationalism at the Biennale during the Nazi era.

### **Happenings**

Beginning in the early 1960s, these precursors to performance, film, and video art were associated with George Maciunas and the international art group Fluxus. These ephemeral performances challenged conventional views of what was meant by "art," breaking down the barriers between art and life and subverting traditional, academic notions of the authority of the artist. Happenings tended to be collaborations and involve audience participation.

### **Hay, Deborah (American, b.1941)**

A highly conceptual and experimental dancer and choreographer who has often worked with largely untrained dancers, though she herself trained with the luminaries Merce Cunningham and Mia Slavenska. Hay has written four books on her artistic practice and experiences as a dancer, most recently *Using the Sky: A Dance* (2015).

### **Heartfield, John (German, 1891–1968)**

Born Helmut Franz Josef Herzfeld, John Heartfield was a pioneer of Dada and actively integrated his leftist, pacifist politics with artistic practice. He worked in print design and typography and as an editor for the German Communist Party. With George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, and Hannah Höch, Heartfield developed photomontage, combining images from mass media to support his political perspective.

### **Hershman Leeson, Lynn (American, b.1941)**

An artist and filmmaker who was a central figure in the emergence of new media art in the 1980s. In her earlier performance work of the 1970s, Hershman Leeson developed an alter ego named Roberta Breitmore, who participated in



everyday activities, such as obtaining a credit card and joining Weight Watchers. Hershman Leeson's new media works focus on the moral and ethical issues surrounding the relationship between people and technology.

### **Höch, Hannah (German, 1889–1978)**

A Dada artist known for her political collages and photomontages. Within the male-dominated Berlin Dada movement, Höch created art that appropriated, fragmented, and recombined imagery from mass media to critique popular culture, gender roles, and the Weimar Republic after the First World War. In her examination of societal gender roles, Höch questioned the emergent ideal of the New Woman and its limitations.

### **Impressionism**

A highly influential art movement that originated in France in the 1860s, Impressionism is associated with the emergence of modern urban European society. Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and other Impressionists rejected the subjects and formal rigours of academic art in favour of scenes of nature and daily life and the careful rendering of atmospheric effects. They often painted outdoors.

### **Jonas, Joan (American, b.1936)**

A pioneer of video, performance, and body art. Jonas was one of the earliest artists to create a video performance, which was entitled *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, 1972. In this pivotal feminist piece, Jonas plays herself as well as her alter ego Organic Honey, exploring questions around female identity, subjectivity, and narcissism. Her subsequent work explores the self and the body using symbolic gestures and objects, notably mirrors and masks.

### **Klein, Yves (French, 1928–1962)**

An important figure in the history of Minimal, Pop, and performance art, known for his interest in "pure colour" and his invention of International Klein Blue, the pigment he used in many of his famed monochrome paintings. He was also a sculptor, writer, and—significantly for a Westerner of his time—judo master.

### **Kruger, Barbara (American, b.1945)**

An American Conceptual artist and collagist. Kruger is best known for appropriating black and white magazine images and overlaying them with concise phrases in white Futura Bold text on red background. First begun in 1979, these political works provide social commentary on mass consumerism, gender roles, religion, sexuality, politics, and other facets of contemporary culture.

### **LeRoy, Hugh (Canadian, b.1939)**

A Constructivist sculptor who was born in Montreal and trained at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, School of Art and Design, under Arthur Lismer and Louis Dudek. He was awarded first prize at Perspective '67, a visual arts competition funded by the Centennial Commission. LeRoy's large-scale public sculptures are on display in Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa.

### **Levine, Les (Irish/American, b.1935)**

An important figure in twentieth-century Conceptual art, Les Levine's work



addresses questions of consumerism and disposability. Levine is noted particularly for his pioneering use of mass media, including television, radio, billboards, posters, and telephone conversations; he was among the first artists to work with videotape. Born in Dublin, he lived in Canada in the 1960s and early 1970s.

### **McMaster, Meryl (Plains Cree/Euro-Canadian, b.1988)**

An Ottawa-based artist whose photographic self-portraits explore aspects of her personal identity, mixed Plains Cree and Euro-Canadian heritage, and relationship to the land. McMaster transforms her appearance using costumes, makeup, and props, conjuring fantastical personae that inhabit remote natural landscapes. Her work evokes personal and ancestral narratives, examines the effects of settler colonialism on the lives of Indigenous people and the natural environment, and considers how the past informs our understanding of the present.

### **Mendieta, Ana (Cuban American, 1948–1985)**

A key figure in the development of body art, Land art, and feminist art. Mendieta's performance, photography, and video works address themes of gender fluidity, violence, marginalized bodies, and the relationship of the female body to nature. Mendieta's traumatic departure from Cuba as a refugee at the age of twelve deeply informed her art.

### **Minimalism**

A branch of abstract art characterized by extreme restraint in form, Minimalism was most popular among American artists from the 1950s to 1970s. Although Minimalism can be expressed in any medium, it is most commonly associated with sculpture; principal Minimalists include Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and Tony Smith. Among the Minimalist painters were Agnes Martin, Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, and Frank Stella.

### **Molinari, Guido (Canadian, 1933–2004)**

A painter and theorist who was a member of the *Plasticien* movement in Montreal. His work, beginning in the mid-1950s, set new models for geometric painting internationally. His "razor-edged" Stripe Paintings create the illusion of a dynamic space, evoked by the viewer's active engagement with how colours appear to change as they rhythmically repeat themselves across the canvas.

### **Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**

Founded in 1860 as the Art Association of Montreal, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has an encyclopedic collection of artworks and artifacts dating from antiquity to the present day. From its beginnings as a private museum and exhibition space to its current status as a public institution spread over four buildings on Sherbrooke Street, the museum has accumulated a collection of more than 43,000 works and hosts historical, modern, and contemporary exhibitions.

### **Morris, Robert (American, 1931–2018)**

A pioneer of Minimalist art, Process art, and Land art. Morris began creating his first Minimalist artworks in the late 1960s, and was a principle theorist of the



movement. He was also an active member of the avant-garde Judson Dance Theater, where he choreographed and performed several pieces. In the 1960s and 1970s, Morris started making Process art, which focused on the process of artistic creation rather than the product. He also created a series of major earthworks.

### **Nauman, Bruce (American, b.1941)**

A major contemporary artist whose diverse conceptual oeuvre explores the meaning, nature, and experience of artworks as well as of human existence. Perhaps best known for his neon signs of the 1960s and 1970s, Nauman has also created performance pieces, films, sculptures, photographs, prints, and holograms.

### **October Crisis**

On October 5, 1970, members of the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) kidnapped British trade commissioner James Cross. On October 10, the FLQ kidnapped and subsequently murdered Pierre Laporte, the Minister of Immigration, Manpower and Labour. In response, the federal government invoked the War Measures Act, which suspended civil liberties in Quebec and enabled the police to arrest over 450 people without charge.

### **Ono, Yoko (Japanese, b.1933)**

A multimedia artist who was an influential figure in performance and Conceptual art in the 1960s. Ono moved to New York in the late 1950s and joined the avant-garde art scene there. In 1960, she began hosting performance events in her Manhattan loft. Inspired by avant-garde composer John Cage, Ono presented Conceptual works consisting of simple instructions for participants to follow. Her performance *Cut Piece*, 1964, is regarded as an important example of early feminist art.

### **performance art**

A genre of art presented live and in which the medium is the artist's body in time. The performance may involve multiple participants, as well as the audience. Performance art originated in the early twentieth century with movements like Dadaism and Futurism and found wider prominence in the 1960s and 1970s after the decline of Modernism. Common themes of this genre concern the dematerialized art object, ephemerality, the artist's presence, anti-capitalism, and the integration of art with life.

### **Perron, Maurice (Canadian, 1924–1999)**

A photographer close to the Automatistes, Perron first met Paul-Émile Borduas when he was a student at Montreal's École du meuble, where Borduas taught until 1948. His elegant and sometimes striking photographs of the group's members, activities, artwork, and performances illustrate most of the Automatistes' publications. Perron was a signatory to the 1948 *Refus global* manifesto.



## **Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973)**

One of the most famous and influential artists of his time, Picasso was a prominent member of the Parisian avant-garde circle that included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. His painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1906–7, is considered by many to be the most important of the twentieth century.

## **Piper, Adrian (American, b.1948)**

A Conceptual artist and philosopher whose work addresses issues of race, gender, and class, and is often inspired by her professional and personal experiences. Encompassing performance, installation, and photography, Piper's practice has informed the work of other visionary feminist artists, including Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman. Among her best-known works is *My Calling Card*, 1986–1990, a performance piece in which she gave personally written cards to people that addressed racist comments they had made.

## **Post-Impressionism**

A term coined by the British art critic Roger Fry in 1910 to describe painting produced originally in France between about 1880 and 1905 in response to Impressionism's artistic advances and limitations. Central figures include Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh.

## **Quiet Revolution**

During the 1960s, Québécois society underwent a rapid change. Following the 1960 provincial election, which brought Jean Lesage's Liberal government to power, Quebec opened up to political and social reforms. A new Quebec identity replaced the more common French-Canadian identity and, in addition, the Catholic Church's influence began to diminish. The idea of an independent and autonomous Quebec state was introduced to the international scene.

## **Rainer, Yvonne (American, b.1934)**

An avant-garde dancer, choreographer, and filmmaker. After moving to New York in the late 1950s, Rainer became one of the principal organizers of the Judson Dance Theater, which served as a centre for avant-garde dance throughout the 1960s. Rainer introduced a Minimalist form of dance that emphasized the variety of movements the body could produce rather than the expression of emotion or drama. In the 1970s, Rainer began creating experimental feature films exploring personal and socio-political concerns.

## **Rauschenberg, Robert (American, 1925–2008)**

A significant figure in twentieth-century American art whose paintings, sculptures, prints, photographs, collages, and installations span styles and movements from Abstract Expressionism to Pop art. Together with Jasper Johns he led a revival of interest in Dada. Among Rauschenberg's best-known works is *Bed*, 1955, one of his first "combines," or paintings that incorporate found objects.



## **readymade**

A “readymade” is an artwork composed of an existing, pre-fabricated, everyday object, that has been slightly modified or not at all; it is “art” only by virtue of being presented as such. The most famous readymades are those of Dadaist artist Marcel Duchamp, who created and engaged with the concept as a means of questioning the nature of art and the role of the artist.

## **Riopelle, Françoise (Canadian, b.1927)**

A dancer, choreographer, and pioneer of Quebec modern dance, Riopelle was a signatory of the 1948 *Refus global* manifesto. In 1959 she co-founded the École de danse moderne de Montréal. In 1969 Riopelle began to teach theatre and dance at the newly opened Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). From 1985 to 1991 she served on the board of directors of Danse-Cité, Montreal.

## **Riopelle, Jean Paul (Canadian, 1923–2002)**

A towering figure in Québécois modern art who, like the other members of the Automatistes, was interested in Surrealism and abstract art. Riopelle moved to Paris in 1947, where he participated in the last major exhibition of the Parisian Surrealists, organized by Marcel Duchamp and André Breton. (See *Jean Paul Riopelle: Life & Work* by François-Marc Gagnon.)

## **Rivera, Diego (Mexican, 1886–1957)**

A painter, draftsman, and celebrated muralist. Rivera was deeply committed to the idea of art’s transformative power and to socialist ideals; his large-scale works typically exalt workers, revolutionaries, and indigenous and folk culture through a style and iconography that combines traditional and avant-garde techniques. He was famously married to Frida Kahlo from 1929 until her death in 1954.

## **Rosler, Martha (American, b.1943)**

Employing a range of media, Rosler creates art that engages with political and social issues, in particular as they relate to women. Her photomontages concerning the Vietnam War placed images of soldiers and warfare in domestic spaces as depicted in magazines, revealing connections between foreign conflict and consumer culture at home. Many of Rosler’s other works address the politics of housing and ownership. She was born in Brooklyn, where she lives and works.

## **Sawyer, Carol (Canadian, b.1961)**

A Vancouver-based artist working primarily with performance, photography, installation, and video. Since the 1990s Sawyer’s work has explored the relationship between photography and fiction, memory, performance, and history. One of Sawyer’s best-known works is *The Natalie Brettschneider Archive*, 2017-ongoing. A feminist critique of the male-dominated art historical canon, this conceptual art installation presents the archive of a fictional Canadian woman artist who was part of the Parisian avant-garde in the interwar period.



## **Schneemann, Carolee (American, 1939–2019)**

A groundbreaking feminist artist known for her performance art dealing with the female body, gender, and sexuality. Moving to New York in 1961, Schneeman joined the avant-garde dance scene and was a founding member of the Judson Dance Theater. Her best-known performance pieces include *Meat Joy*, 1964, and *Interior Scroll*, 1975, both of which confront social taboos concerning the human body. In the 1980s Schneeman shifted her focus to video, multimedia installation, and writing.

## **Sekula, Allan (American, 1951–2013)**

A Los Angeles-based photographer, filmmaker, theorist, and critic whose work examines globalization and its impact on class relations and labour conditions. Sekula is credited with re-establishing the significance of socio-politically engaged documentary photography following the Conceptual art movement. His artistic practice was informed by the history of documentary photography, Conceptual art, and postmodernism.

## **Sherman, Cindy (American, b.1954)**

A highly influential photographer whose work critically examines gender and identity. Since the mid-1970s, Sherman has portrayed herself in photographs dressed up as popular female archetypes found in film, television, magazines, and advertising. She is one of the foremost figures of the "Pictures" Generation, comprising artists who critiqued the world of mass media using strategies of appropriation, collage, and montage in the 1970s.

## **Snow, Michael (Canadian, b.1928)**

The paintings, films, photographs, sculptures, installations, and musical performances of artist Michael Snow have kept him in the spotlight for over sixty years. Snow's *Walking Woman* series of the 1960s holds a prominent place in Canadian art history. His contributions to visual art, experimental film, and music have been recognized internationally. (See *Michael Snow: Life & Work* by Martha Langford.)

## **solarization**

A photographic effect in which the light and dark tones are reversed in a photograph, achieved by extreme overexposure of the photographic film. The effect was noted by several of the earliest photographers in the mid-nineteenth century. The Surrealist artists Man Ray and Lee Miller were the first artists to experiment with solarization in their photography as a stylistic device in 1929.

## **Steele, Lisa (Canadian, b.1947)**

A Toronto-based video, performance, and installation artist who has played a crucial role in the development of video art. Since 1983 Steele has collaborated solely with Canadian artist Kim Tomczak. Their work explores the human body, often showing the physical changes wrought by age and disease. Steele's best-known solo work is the video piece *Birthday Suit: Scars and Defects*, 1974, in which she identifies and explains each scar on her body on the occasion of her twenty-seventh birthday.



## **Sugino, Shin (Canadian, b.1946)**

A Japanese-born artist practising art and commercial photography in Toronto. Sugino immigrated to Canada at the age of nineteen to study photography at Ryerson Polytechnic Institute (now Ryerson University). In addition to completing assignments for *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the National Film Board, he has worked in advertising photography and produced still photography for feature films. Recurring themes in Sugino's art photography include religion, identity, and cultural dislocation.

## **Sullivan, Françoise (Canadian, b.1923)**

Born in Montreal, Sullivan—an artist, sculptor, dancer, and choreographer—studied at the city's École des beaux-arts (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) in the early 1940s, where she met Paul-Émile Borduas. His vision of automatism would become a great influence on her modern dance performances and choreography. (See *Françoise Sullivan: Life & Work* by Annie Gérin.)

## **Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri de (French, 1864–1901)**

A painter and printmaker best known for his depictions of Parisian nightlife, who created a vast body of work despite physical and psychological hardships. Toulouse-Lautrec was celebrated by both the avant-garde and the general public, and the distinctive aesthetic of his turn-of-the-century posters influenced commercial art well into the twentieth century.

## **Tousignant, Serge (Canadian, b.1942)**

A Montreal-based artist whose interdisciplinary practice has focused on photographic experimentation since the early 1970s. Tousignant co-founded the avant-garde artist-run gallery Véhicule Art in 1972 and was a crucial figure in the development of Montreal's Conceptual art movement. His photography-based work is largely concerned with light, perspective, optical illusions, and geometric abstraction.

## **trompe l'oeil**

French for "deceives the eye," *trompe l'oeil* refers to visual illusion in art, especially images and painted objects that appear to exist in three dimensions and even aim to trick the viewer into thinking that they are real. Common examples are the painted insects that appear to sit on the surface of Renaissance paintings, and murals that make flat walls appear to open into spaces beyond.

## **Vazan, Bill (Canadian, b.1933)**

A leading figure in the Land art and Conceptual art movements in Montreal in the 1960s. Born in Toronto, Vazan studied fine arts at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) in Montreal. Vazan is known for his Land art installations, stone sculptures, and Conceptual photography, which explore how cosmology and geography inform our understanding of the world.



## **Véhicule Art**

Active from 1972 to 1983, Véhicule Art was the first artist-run centre in Montreal. Its founding members included Gary Coward, Bill Vazan, Henry Saxe, Suzy Lake, and Milly Ristvedt. Véhicule Art aimed to be an interdisciplinary, experimental exhibition space as well as a centre of education for artists and the public. In the 1970s the gallery added experimental dance to its programming. By the end of the 1970s, video works dominated its roster.

## **Wilbert, Robert (American, 1929–2016)**

A figurative painter and professor in the art department at Wayne State University, in Detroit, for thirty-eight years. Wilbert painted a variety of subjects, including portraits, figures, and objects of everyday life, imbuing ordinary scenes with a mystical quality. A prominent figure in the Detroit art scene, Wilbert was commissioned to design the first commemorative state postage stamp celebrating the 150th anniversary of the state of Michigan in 1987.

## **Wilke, Hannah (American, 1940–1993)**

A groundbreaking feminist artist whose work examines issues of gender, sexuality, and feminism. Wilke was one of the first artists to employ vaginal imagery as a feminist visual motif. From the late 1950s to the early 1970s, she created delicately folded sculptures that evoke female genitalia. In the 1970s, Wilke developed a type of performance that she called “performalist self-portraits,” in which she used her own body to critique the objectification of women.



# SOURCES & RESOURCES

Suzy Lake has been exhibiting nationally and internationally since the early 1970s, with important early career solo exhibitions in Montreal and Toronto (at commercial galleries, artist-run centres, and museums) and, through the past four decades, significant exhibitions that have toured across Canada. In 2014 she had a major retrospective, *Introducing Suzy Lake*, at the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), which was accompanied by an extensive catalogue. In 2017 she was honoured with an exhibition at the Ryerson Image Centre as part of her Scotiabank Photography Award win.



She has also participated in important group exhibitions internationally, notably exhibitions on feminist art, including *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* in 2007 and, more recently, *WOMAN: The Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s, Works from the Sammlung Verbund* (Vienna). She continues to exhibit, and is represented by Toronto dealer Georgia Scherman.



Installation view of *So Whose Gaze Is It Now?*, April 20-May 26, 2012, at Georgia Scherman Projects in Toronto, photographer unknown.

## KEY SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 
- 1977**      *Choreographed Puppets*, Optica Gallery, Montreal.

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  - 1978**      *imPOSITIONS*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Mohawk Gallery, Hamilton.

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  - 1979**      *Are You Talking to Me...?*, Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto; Optica Gallery, Montreal; Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon (1980); Station Gallery, Whitby; White Water Gallery, North Bay (1981).

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  - 1984**      *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand*, Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto.

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  - 1991**      *Authority Is an Attribute... part 2*, Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, University of Guelph; Gallery TPW, Toronto; WKP Kennedy Gallery, North Bay (1992); Art Gallery of Peterborough (1995).



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- 
- 1993** *Point of Reference*, CMCP retrospective tour, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa; Surrey Art Gallery; London Regional Art Gallery, London (1996); Glenbow Art Gallery, Calgary (1997).
- 
- 1997** *Re-Reading Recovery*, Le Mois de la Photo, Montreal.
- 
- 2006** *Suzy Lake: Revealment/Concealment*, Hallwalls Gallery, Buffalo (catalogue).
- 
- 2008** *Rhythm of a True Space*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival public installation, Toronto.
- 
- 2011** *Political Poetics*, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto (touring); Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax; McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London; Peterborough Art Gallery; Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, University of Guelph (catalogue).
- 
- 2014** *Introducing Suzy Lake*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (retrospective, publication).
- 
- 2017** *Suzy Lake: Scotiabank Photography Award*, Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto (catalogue).

## SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 
- 1975** *Quebec 75*, Musée d'art contemporain, Montreal.
- 
- 1992** *Beau*, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa.
- 
- 2006** *Faking Death: Canadian Photography and the Canadian Imagination*, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York City.
- 
- 2007** *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (travelling exhibition): Museum of Contemporary Art/Geffen Contemporary, Los Angeles; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; MoMA PS1, Queens, New York; Vancouver Art Gallery (2008) (catalogue).
- Identity Theft: Eleanor Antin, Lynn Hershman and Suzy Lake*, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica (catalogue).
- 
- 2010** *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980*, University of Toronto Galleries, Toronto (travelling exhibition); Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, Anna Leonowens Gallery, NSCAD University, Halifax; Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton; Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal (2011); Vancouver Art Gallery (2012).
-

- 2013** *WOMAN: The Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s: Works from the Sammlung Verbund*, Vienna (touring exhibition): Circulo de Bellas Artes de Madrid; the BOZAR, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; Mjellby Konstmuseum, Halmstad, Sweden (2014); Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany (2015); Photographers Gallery, London, England (2016); Museum of Modern Art, Vienna; ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany (2017); Brno House of Arts, Brno, Czech Republic; Stavanger Art Museum, Norway (2018).

## PERFORMANCES

Although predominantly a visual artist whose work often represents performances for the camera, Lake has occasionally performed as herself or in the character of Suzy Spice. Her early performance experimentations were held in her studio but have gone on to be considered important early works in her oeuvre.

- 
- 1969–72** *Annual Feast*, the artist's studio, Montreal.
- 
- 1972** *Behavioural Prints*, the artist's studio, Montreal.
- 
- 1998** *Spice Girls at the Rivoli*, YYZ benefit performance at the Rivoli, Toronto.
- 
- 2013** *Extended Breathing in the Rivera Frescoes*, Detroit Institute of the Arts, Detroit.

## MAJOR PUBLICATIONS/CATALOGUES

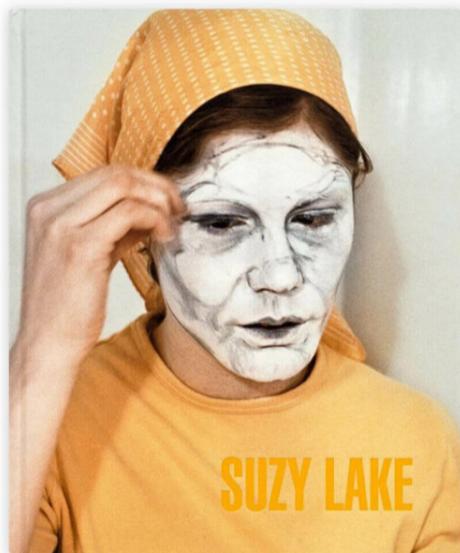
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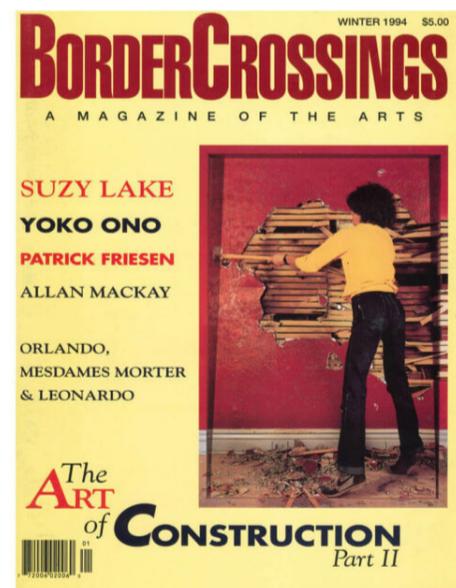
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LEFT: Cover of *Suzy Lake* produced for the Scotiabank Photography Award, 2018.  
RIGHT: Cover of *Border Crossings Magazine*, no. 49, published January 1994, featuring Suzy Lake's *Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #3*, 1983/1984.





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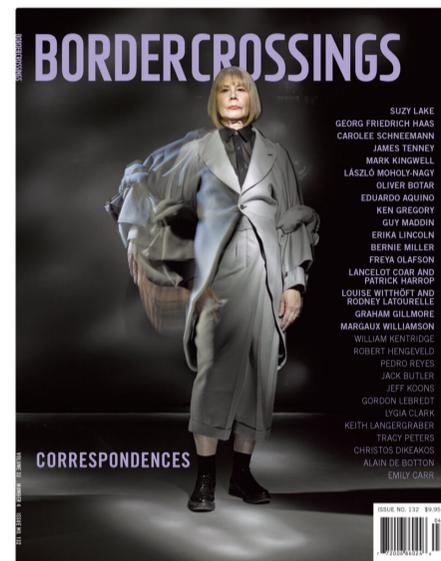
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Cover of *Border Crossings Magazine*, no. 132, published December 2014, featuring Suzy Lake. On the cover is a reproduction of Lake's *Performing Haute Couture #1*, 2014.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### ERIN SILVER

Erin Silver is an assistant professor in the Department of Art History, Visual Art & Theory at the University of British Columbia. A historian of queer and feminist art, visual culture, performance, and activism, she earned a PhD in Art History and Gender and Women's Studies from McGill University (2013) and an MA (2009) and BFA (2007) in Art History from Concordia University. Silver has taught at the University of Southern California, the University of Guelph, the University of Toronto, OCAD University, and Concordia University.

She is the co-editor (with Amelia Jones) of *Otherwise: Imagining Queer Feminist Art Histories* (Manchester University Press, 2016) and co-editor (with taisha paggett) of the winter 2017 issue of *C Magazine*, "Force," on intersectional feminisms and movement culture. In 2016–2017, she was the Horizon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Histories of Photography in Canada at Concordia University. She has curated exhibitions at the FOFA Gallery (Concordia University, Montreal), the ArQuives (formerly the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto), and the Doris McCarthy Gallery (University of Toronto Scarborough).

Silver's writing has appeared in *C Magazine*, *CAA Reviews*, *Canadian Art*, *Ciel Variable*, *Prefix Photo*, *Fuse Magazine*, *Momus*, *Performance Matters*, *Visual Resources*, and in the volume *Narratives Unfolding: National Art Histories in an Unfinished World* (ed. Martha Langford, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), as well as in various exhibition catalogues in the areas of Canadian photography and queer and feminist art. She is an editor of *RACAR (Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review)*.



**"Lake's work, practice, and world view reflect many of my own preoccupations: a desire to understand, and to master, the scaffolding—or "underside"—of things (notably, for Lake, at a time when women artists were not encouraged to pursue technical skills) through rigorous experimentation; a curiosity about the rhythms, choreographies, and reflexes of the body in its environments; and a commitment to and belief in the power of the image to contribute to political and social change."**



# SUZY LAKE

Life & Work by Erin Silver



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Suzy Lake, *Imitations of Myself #2* (detail), 1973/2013. (See below for details.)

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### Credits for Banner Images



Biography: Suzy Lake, *Performing Haute Couture #1*, 2014. (See below for details.)



Key Works: Suzy Lake, *Extended Breathing in the Garden*, 2008-10. (See below for details.)



Significance & Critical Issues: Suzy Lake, *Peonies and the Lido #9*, 2000-2002/2010. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Suzy Lake, *My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones #2*, 1994. (See below for details.)



Sources & Resources: Suzy Lake, *Behavioural Prints*, 1972. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



Where to See: Installation view of *So Whose Gaze Is It Now?* at Georgia Scherman Projects, 2012. (See below for details.)



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## Credits for Works by Suzy Lake



*Annual Feast, 1969-72.* Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Are You Talking to Me? #3, 1979.* Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchased with the assistance of Art Toronto 2009 Opening Night Preview and the David Yuile and Mary Elizabeth Hodgson Fund and Greg Latremaille, 2009 (2009/101.1-.7). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*Beauty at a Proper Distance / In Song, 2001-2.* Collection of Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Gift of the Artist, 2015 (2015/51). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.

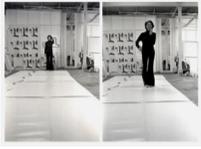


*Behavioural Prints, 1972.* Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*Behavioural Prints*, 1972. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Bisecting Space*, 1970. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Boundaries I*, 1984. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*Bridge*, 1982-83. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Car Key Drawing*, 1972. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Cautioned Homes and Gardens: Barb and Janie*, 1991. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchased 1993 (EX-93-198.1-3). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*Cautioned Homes and Gardens: Three Sisters*, 1991. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Choreographed Portrait #2*, 1976. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Choreographed Puppet #3*, 1976/1977. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Choreographed Puppets Mural, Negative #7*, 1976/2011. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Chrysalis #2*, 1996. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Ciccolina Bar #2*, 1999/2000. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Co-Ed Magazine #2*, 1973/1998. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*Contact X*, 1973. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Extended Breathing on the DIA Steps*, 2012/2014. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Extended Breathing in the Garden*, 2008-10. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Extended Breathing in the Rivera Frescoes*, 2013/2014. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchase, funds donated by Donna G. Billes and Diana Billes, 2014 (2014/12). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Extended Breathing at the World Trade Center*, 2012/2014. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*The Extended Good-bye #2*, 2008-9. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Forever Young*, 2000. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*A Genuine Simulation Of...*, 1973/1974. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Jared Sable, Toronto, 1993 (EX-93-399). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*A Genuine Simulation Of... No. 2*, 1974. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, purchase, Saidye and Samuel Bronfman Collection of Canadian Art (1974.7). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Photo credit: Christine Guest. © Suzy Lake.



*Imitations of Myself #1*, 1973/2012. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



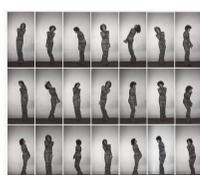
*Imitations of Myself #2*, 1973/2013. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Imitations of the Self (study #3)*, 1973/2012. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*imPositions #1*, 1977. Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa (78/9-0028). Courtesy of the Canada Council Art Bank. Photo credit: Brandon Clarida. © Suzy Lake.



*imPositions (storyboard)*, 1977. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*Lake Superior Via*, 1973. Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa (74/5-0340). Courtesy of the Canada Council Art Bank. Photo credit: Brandon Clarida. © Suzy Lake.



*Miss Chatelaine*, 1973. Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Vital Projects Fund Inc. Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 2017 (2017.334). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*My Friend Told Me I Carried Too Many Stones #2*, 1994. Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa (94/5-0283). Courtesy of the Canada Council Art Bank. Photo credit: Brandon Clarida. © Suzy Lake.



*The Natural Way to Draw*, 1975. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Nancy Hushion, 2009 (2009/107). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*The Natural Way to Draw*, 1975. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchased with funds donated by AGO Members, 2009 (2009/26). © Suzy Lake.



*A One Hour (Zero) Conversation with Allan B.*, 1973. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. William F. Campbell (G-83-240). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Suzy Lake.



*189 Pierce Street, 1892*, 2014/2016. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*On Stage*, 1972 (reprinted 1996). Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Carol and Morton Rapp, 2009 (2009/290). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*On Stage/Bank Pose*, 1972/2013. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*On Stage*, 1972-74 (installation view from 2011). Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenschied. © Suzy Lake.



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*Peonies and the Lido #9*, 2000-2002/2010. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Performing Haute Couture #1*, 2014. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Pluck #2*, 2001. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #6*, 1983-84. Collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Gift of the Volunteer Committee, 1984 (84.2848). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Hamilton. © Suzy Lake.



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*Pre-Resolution: Using the Ordinances at Hand #8*, 1983/1984. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Puppet Study #10*, 1976. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Reduced Performing: Breathing #1*, 2008/2011. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Reduced Performing: Breathing #5*, 2009-11. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Reduced Performing Crying #1*, 2009/2011. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Reduced Performing Series*, 2013. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Re-Placed Landscape*, 1972. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



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*Re-Reading Recovery #1*, 1997. Collection of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP, Toronto. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Rhythm of a True Space #1*, 2008. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Self Portrait #1, Self Portrait #2, Self Portrait #3*, 1974. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*6 Over 28*, 1975. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*16 Over 28*, 1975. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Standing Binocular Figure #3 (Sid)*, 1992. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Suzy Lake as Françoise Sullivan*, 1973-74/2012. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Suzy Lake as Gary William Smith*, 1973-74. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. Photo credit: Isaac Applebaum. © Suzy Lake.



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*Suzy Lake as Gilles Gheerbrant, 1973-75.* Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchased 1975 (75-X-1141). Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Thin Green Line, 2001.* Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Vertical Pull #1, 1977.* Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Whatcha Really, Really Want, 2003.* Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*You Really Like Me #1, 1998.* Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



*Your Field of Contestants, This Week's Top Ten and Voting Material, 2004.* Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.

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*Al Rivero (cousin), 2004,* by Sara Angelucci. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Sara Angelucci. © Sara Angelucci.



Architectural drawing of Jeffries housing project, n.d. Collection of Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library (bh000006). Courtesy of the Detroit Public Library.



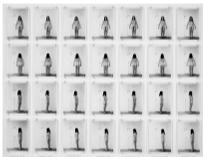
Artist-poet-activist Roy Kiyooka performing *Poetry/Slides/Video* at Véhicule Art Inc., in 1973. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects.



*Authorization*, 1969, by Michael Snow. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchased 1969 (15839). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. © Michael Snow.



*Blood and Feathers (2)*, 1974, by Ana Mendieta. Collection of the Estate of Ana Mendieta. Courtesy of Galerie Lelong and Co., New York. © Estate of Ana Mendieta / SOCAN (2020).



*Carving: A Traditional Sculpture (detail)*, 1972, by Eleanor Antin. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, Twentieth-Century Discretionary Fund (1996.44). Courtesy of Eleanor Antin and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York. © Eleanor Antin.



*Catalysis III (photograph #2 of 3)*, 1970, by Adrian Piper. Collection of the Generali Foundation, Austria, 2003 (GF0003364.00.0-2003) - Permanent Loan to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria. Courtesy of the Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin. Photo Credit: Rosemary Mayer. © Generali Foundation and Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin.



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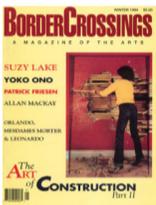
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*Catalysis III* (photograph #3 of 3), 1970, by Adrian Piper. Collection of the Generali Foundation, Austria, 2003 (GF0003364.00.0-2003) - Permanent Loan to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Austria. Courtesy of the Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin. Photo Credit: Rosemary Mayer. © Generali Foundation and Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin.



*Cleaning the Drapes*, c.1967-72, by Martha Rosler. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Martha Rosler and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York. © Martha Rosler.



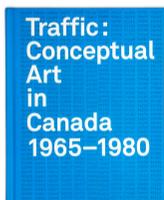
Cover of *Border Crossings Magazine* #49, January 1994. Courtesy of *Border Crossings Magazine*. © Border Crossings Magazine.



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Cover of *Suzy Lake*, 2018. © Steidl GmbH & Co. OHG, Göttingen, Germany.



Cover of *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980*, 2012. © Art Gallery of Alberta, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, and the Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Dance in the Snow* (*Danse dans la neige*), 1948, by Françoise Sullivan. Images from the album *Danse dans la neige*, published by Françoise Sullivan in fifty copies, S.I. Images Ouareau (1977). Courtesy of the artist. © Françoise Sullivan / SOCAN (2020).



Documentation of the early meetings of the Toronto Photographers' Co-operative, 1978. Collection of Gallery TPW, Toronto. Courtesy of Gallery TPW.



*Emily Dickinson Plate*, 1979, by Judy Chicago. Collection of the Brooklyn Museum, Gift of The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation (2002.10-PS-34). Courtesy of Judy Chicago. Photo credit: Donald Woodman. © Judy Chicago / SOCAN (2020).



*Eye Body #21*, 1963, by Carolee Schneemann. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the artist (1780.2015.5). Courtesy of the Carolee Schneemann Foundation. © Estate of Carolee Schneemann / SOCAN (2020).



*Green-blue Bi-serial*, 1967, by Guido Molinari. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, purchase, Horsley and Annie Townsend Bequest (1981.98). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Photo credit: Christine Guest. © Estate of Guido Molinari / SOCAN (2020).



*If You Knew Suzy #1*, 1976/2008, by Bill Jones. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Paul Petro Contemporary Art. © Bill Jones.



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*In Media Res*, 1998, by Michael Snow. Collection of Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Ministry of Culture and Communication, Paris, purchase, 1999 (FNAC 991014 (1 to 6)). Courtesy of Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Ministry of Culture and Communication. © Michael Snow / CNAP.



Installation view of *Are You Talking to Me?* at Oakville Galleries, 2010. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. Photo credit: Suzy Lake.



Installation view of *So Whose Gaze Is It Now?* at Georgia Scherman Projects, 2012. Collection of Georgia Scherman Projects. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects. © Suzy Lake.



Installation view of *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, March 4 - July 16, 2007 at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, photograph by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.



Looting on 12th Street, Detroit Riots, 1967. Collection of Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit (25996). Courtesy of the Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs.



*Meryl I*, 2010, by Meryl McMaster. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery and Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain. © Meryl McMaster.



*MoMA Poll*, 1970, by Hans Haacke. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Courtesy of Hans Haacke and Paula Cooper Gallery. © Hans Haacke / SOCAN (2020).



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*The Mythic Being, Cycle I: 11/63, 1973*, advertisement in *Village Voice* of Nov. 29th 1973, #3 of 17, by Adrian Piper. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, purchased with funds provided by Donald L. Bryant, Jr., Agnes Gund, Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, Donald B. Marron, The Edward John Noble Foundation, Katherine Farley and Jerry Speyer, and Committee on Drawings Funds in honor of Kathy Fuld (1120.2009.1-17). Courtesy of the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. © Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin.



*The Mythic Being, Cycle I: End of Cycle, 1974*, advertisement in *Village Voice* of Sept. 26th 1974, #13 of 17, by Adrian Piper. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, purchased with funds provided by Donald L. Bryant, Jr., Agnes Gund, Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, Donald B. Marron, The Edward John Noble Foundation, Katherine Farley and Jerry Speyer, and Committee on Drawings Funds in honor of Kathy Fuld (1120.2009.1-17). Courtesy of the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. © Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin.



*The Mythic Being, Cycle II: 10/13/61, 1974*, advertisement in *Village Voice* of Oct. 31st 1974, #14 of 17, by Adrian Piper. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, purchased with funds provided by Donald L. Bryant, Jr., Agnes Gund, Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, Donald B. Marron, The Edward John Noble Foundation, Katherine Farley and Jerry Speyer, and Committee on Drawings Funds in honor of Kathy Fuld (1120.2009.1-17). Courtesy of the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. © Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin.



*The Mythic Being, Cycle II: 12/63, 1974*, advertisement in *Village Voice* of Dec. 30th 1974, #16 of 17, by Adrian Piper. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, purchased with funds provided by Donald L. Bryant, Jr., Agnes Gund, Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, Donald B. Marron, The Edward John Noble Foundation, Katherine Farley and Jerry Speyer, and Committee on Drawings Funds in honor of Kathy Fuld (1120.2009.1-17). Courtesy of the Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation Berlin. © Adrian Piper Research Archive (APRA) Foundation Berlin.



*Nature Self-Portrait #1, 1996*, by Laura Aguilar. Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council (2019.19.1). Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum. © Laura Aguilar Trust of 2016.



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*Nature Self-Portrait #2, 1996*, by Laura Aguilar. Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council (2019.19.2). Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum. © Laura Aguilar Trust of 2016.



*Oshawa, A History of Local 222, 1938-45 (Part 2, #3 of 6), 1982-83*, by Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchased 1989 (EX-89-88). Courtesy of the artists. © Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge.



*Photograph of "Slant Board" Performance at the Stedelijk Museum, 1982*, by Simone Forti. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Committee on Media and Performance Art Funds (1762.2015.2). © Museum of Modern Art, New York.



*Relief Construction No. 20, c.1964*, by David Barr. Collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum Collection Purchase Prize and Albert Kahn Associated Architects and Engineers Purchase Prize, 54th Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists, 1964 (64.143). Courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.



*Self-portrait, c.1983*, by Michael Mitchell. © Estate of Michael Mitchell.



*S.O.S. Starification Object Series (Back), 1974*, by Hannah Wilke. Collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, purchased with funds contributed by the Photography Committee and The Judith Rothschild Foundation, 2001 (2001.32.2). Courtesy of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Estate of Hannah Wilke / VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SOCAN, Montreal (2020).



Suzy Lake in her studio on Craig Street in Montreal, c.1970s. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects.



Suzy Lake in Montreal, c.1973, photograph by Tom Dean. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects.



Teme-Auguma Anishinabai road blockade, 1988, photograph by Brian Back. Courtesy of Brian Back and Ottertooth.com. © Brian Back.



Toronto choreographer Amelia Ehrhardt recreates *Choreographed Puppets*, 2014, photograph by Nicholas Lachance. Courtesy of Nicholas Lachance.



*Untitled (Your Body Is a Battleground)*, 1989, by Barbara Kruger. Collection of The Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles, 1989 (F-KRUG-1F89.17). Courtesy of The Broad Art Foundation. © Barbara Kruger.



*Untitled (Yvonne Rainer, The Mind Is a Muscle)*, April 11, 1968, by Peter Moore. Collection of Barbara Moore. Courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. © 2020 Barbara Moore / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



*Véhicule Art Inc.*, Montreal, Quebec, 1974, by Allan Bealy. Collection of Concordia University Library, Special Collection, Montreal (A05280). Courtesy of Concordia University Library, Special Collections. © Allan Bealy.



*Véhicule Art Inc. meeting*, Montreal, c.1972-73. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects.



Wedding photo of Helen and Robert Marx, 1944. Courtesy of Suzy Lake and Georgia Scherman Projects.



*White Rectangle*, 1959, by Guido Molinari. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Marc Bellemare (2015.319). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Photo credit: Christine Guest. © Estate of Guido Molinari/SOCAN (2020).

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