

Sylvia Safdie

October 29 – December 19, 2015

Body – Transforming – Gesture

Opening:

Photography, sculpture, video

Saturday, October 31, 2015, 4pm-6pm



Untitled III, (Body/Stone/Water), 2010, Video HD couleur

“The Body is the most personal place that you can express from”, S. Safdie

«Continuing her decades-long investigation into the ways artistic media can uncover the continuities between the human and the natural, and the power of gesture to reveal that which is obscure to the naked eye, this collection of videos, photos and sculptures invites us to interrogate the intentionalities and commonalities behind artistic form and human expression. Exploring the ways gestures unfold in both space and time, these works distill the rich meanings and implications of gesture into images, both created and captured, but always subject to **Safdie's** subtle yet purposeful manipulation.

The video *Body/Stone/Water* effects a subtle transformation of **Safdie's** own body into stone, her corporeal gestures merging with and suggesting the form of the stone. The sculptures in this exhibit from the series *Heads*, work in reverse, transforming stone into body via careful manipulations of form and the gestures inherent in them. Here **Safdie** reveals the power of frozen gestures to reveal the living and changing; the sculpted heads act as three-dimensional stills from the video.

The video series *Morning in Varanasi* and the photos produced from highly manipulated stills from these videos, find **Safdie** observing the gestures, and their implications in the bodies now of others. Working from a fixed viewpoint, and at distances where the images are abstracted and stylized from the very beginning, the gestural body which she so carefully constructed in *Untitled III (Body/Stone/Water)* is now shown, if one looks carefully, to be inherent in the world at large.

Presenting us with moments of this extended seeing-into-the-world via the photos shown here, both the mystery and the familiar in bodily gesture--both the utterly human yet alien and unknown--are now fixed in a single image, space and scale serving as the ground in lieu of time and change as in the videos. Bodily gestures are crystalized, frozen in a play of light and mass. And so collectively these works not only explore the transformations and commonalities between human bodies, nature, and their mutual gestures, but the commonalities between artistic media, and the artistic gestures that enable distinct media the power to move us in unexpected ways.»



Text by Eric Lewis

Body Series n°1, 2015,
Inkjet print on paper

Biography

Sylvia Safdie is a visual artist who works in the media of painting, drawing, sculpture, installation and video. Born in Aley, Lebanon, in 1942, she lived in Israel before moving to Canada in 1953. In 1975, she obtained a BFA from Concordia University (Montréal). Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, with recent solo exhibitions at the Prefix Institute of Contemporary art, (Toronto, 2014), MacKenzie Art Gallery (Regina, 2011), Galerie de la Porte d'Italie (Toulon, France, 2010), Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery (Montréal, 2010), Lentos Kunstmuseum (Linz, Austria, 2008), Tom Thomson Art Gallery (Owen Sound, ON, 2002), the Canadian Cultural Centre (Paris, 2000) and Wan Fung Art Gallery (Beijing, 1996), among others. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections, including the Art Gallery of Hamilton (Hamilton, ON), Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, (Halifax), Canada Council Art Bank (Ottawa), Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, and Musée des beaux-arts (Montréal), among others. Her work has been the subject of the film *Earth Marks* by Doina Harap and of several publications, most recently *The Video Art of Sylvia Safdie* by Eric Lewis. **Sylvia Safdie** is represented by Joyce Yahouda Gallery.

Gallery hours : Wednesday-Saturday from 12 pm to 5 pm and by appointment / Office hours bureau: Tuesday – Saturday from 10:30 am to 6 pm.