

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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For Immediate Release (February 9, 2017)

PREFIX PRESENTS *HOUSES AND WHISPERS*, A SURVEY OF RECENT WORK BY GUNILLA JOSEPHSON

(Toronto) – Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Houses and Whispers*, the first solo exhibition in a public art gallery in Toronto of the work of **Gunilla Josephson**. Curated by Stuart Reid, the show brings together a selection of new and recent video installations that engage with fundamental questions about life, relationships and loss.

An **opening reception** will be held on **Thursday, February 16, 2017** from **7 to 10 PM** at Prefix, located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto. The artist and curator will be present. The exhibition continues until April 22, 2017. The gallery is open to the public from Wednesday to Saturday, 12 to 5 PM, and by appointment. Admission is free.

In *Houses and Whispers*, Gunilla Josephson acknowledges the subtle energies and quiet voices of residual, intermural memories. Her multi-channel video installations chart a passage through fleeting glimpses of life, at once universal and intimately personal. This exhibition marks a departure of sorts in her practice—from linear, filmic narrative towards sustained video portraiture as a means of suspending time for contemplative viewing. The artist writes: “The face, isolated and observed closely over time, with all its minute variations, greater emotional repertoire and its exposed naked presence, becomes a drama in itself. Truth and fiction collapse into each other.”

Each work in this exhibition is based on surreal digital manipulations of images of the artist's family and close friends. As such, the works ponder human mortality and reflect on the inevitable confrontation with loss and death. Included in the exhibition are *The Big Goodbye* (2016), a video projection depicting a slow, graceful, hot-air-balloon ride over the artist's home city of Stockholm; *Mommy's Crystal Tears* (2013), a multi-channel video installation featuring images of two women's faces, a mother and a daughter, triangulated with a slow, moving close-up of a swinging chandelier; *P.L.A.T.O.* (2014) (an acronym for “Please, leave all tickets on board”), an endless loop of a panoramic view of the side of a tall cruise ship; and the eponymous *Houses and Whispers* (2014), a sequence of videos of the façades of Swedish houses from the early twentieth century, the windows of which are animated with appropriated films, hinting at the interior life behind the modernist idea of architecturally planned happiness.

Together, this assemblage of video installations creates a visual environment of looped moments, sliced together to run continuously. The sounds of breathing, whispering and quiet singing pervade the gallery. Presence comforts, but absence is palpable. The artist gathers together images and stories from her own history, emotional entanglements and existential questioning. Ultimately, the severe and tender symmetries that frame them reveal time folding over on itself, the past becoming the future, the beginning mirroring the end.

Supported by



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About the artist

Gunilla Josephson is a visual artist whose practice includes video, film and objects in an installation format. She received a BFA from Stockholm University and an MFA from Konstfackskolan (Stockholm University of Art and Design). For nearly twenty years, she has presented exhibitions, screenings and performances worldwide, including at the Canadian Cultural Centre (Paris), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Whitney Museum of American Art (New York) and Rodman Hall Art Centre, Brock University (St. Catherine's, ON). In September 2017, her work will be presented at the Struer Museum (Denmark) within the context of the ET4U symposium; it will also be included in *Voices*, a survey of Canadian artists digitally circulated across Canada through Harbourfront Centre (Toronto). She lives and works in Toronto, where her work is distributed by Vtape.

About the curator

Stuart Reid is an award-winning writer and curator of contemporary art with more than twenty-five years of experience in Canada's public art galleries. Formerly the director and curator of Rodman Hall Art Centre, Brock University (St. Catharines, ON), the executive director of the Mackenzie Art Gallery (Regina, SK) and the director of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery (Owen Sound, ON), he is currently the executive director of Community Foundation Grey Bruce in Owen Sound. An active community volunteer, he currently serves on the board of directors of Craft Ontario, and is a former president of the Ontario Association of Art Galleries. In 2013 and 2015, he won the Ontario Association of Art Galleries' Curatorial Writing Award.

About Prefix

Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is a public art gallery and arts publishing house based in Toronto. A registered charitable organization, Prefix fosters the appreciation and understanding of contemporary photographic, media and digital arts through exhibitions, publications, public programmes and related activities.

Acknowledgements

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Photo: Gunilla Josephson, Video still from *The Big Goodbye*, 2016. Courtesy the artist and Vtape (Toronto)

For more information, print-ready images or to schedule an interview with the artist or curator, please contact the Gallery Manager at 416-591-0357 or info@prefix.ca.