

## Shirley Bruno

b. 1980

### **Tezen, 2016**

video, 28 min. 12 sec.

Courtesy of the artist and Le Fresnoy - Studio national des arts contemporains

*...foregrounding quietness and conveying the things that words fail to deliver is a recurring idea for me in my work. There's so much knowledge and memory just anchored in our bodies alone, there's much, much communicating unveiled in how we look at each other, how we share space. Especially within the intimacy of a community or within a family. I love mining that collective knowledge that doesn't need qualification or explanation (we can lie or shield with words what we can't with our bodies).*

– Shirley Bruno, email, September 21, 2022

Working with a cast of non-professional actors, Shirley Bruno reworks a popular Haitian folktale for her short film *Tezen*. Featuring members of a real-life three-generational family living together under one roof in rural Haiti, *Tezen* portrays in quiet, unhurried detail the daily rhythms of domestic life: collecting water, preparing food, eating and talking together as a family. With a sensory attention to lush landscape, *Tezen* compellingly functions as a celebration of Haitian storytelling, delicate pastoral poem, intimate family portrait, critique of traditional gender roles, and timeless coming-of-age story. Bruno underscores the close-knit connection of family members, even as she hints at the adolescent daughter's burgeoning sexuality and longing for escape, agency, and change—manifested by the apparition of a mysterious voice in song, embodied within the water.

This video contains brief nudity.

## **Aleesa Cohene**

b. 1976

### ***Kathy*, 2020**

video, 8 min. 16 sec.

with music by Isabelle Noël

Courtesy of the artist

This video contains brief nudity.

## Aleesa Cohene

b. 1976

### *Kathy*, 2022

poster (offset print on 80 lb paper), edition of 250

Courtesy of the artist

With *Kathy*, Aleesa Cohene continues their practice of crafting alternative or queer narratives from video clips gleaned from North American and European film. While typically Cohene edits together clips of different actors, for *Kathy*, they focused solely on the corpus of Kathy Bates from the 1970s to the 2010s. Throughout her career, Bates has often been hired to play either secondary or so-called character roles because she does not fit Hollywood's standards of acceptable beauty, but here Bates has the starring role. Cohene highlights the moments of fleeting interiority within the range of Bates' performances in order to create a hybrid character—a new type of protagonist, complex and infinitely complicated.

Accompanying the video is a poster that features a composite image of all the roles played by the actor—the nightmarish result is a hairy monster. Offering a critique of Hollywood's pervasive toxic ideology with *Kathy*, Cohene has collected various descriptions of Kathy Bates' roles found online (reviews, readers' comments, etc.) and listed them on the back of the poster. The often casually cruel homophobic and sexist descriptions function as both archive and deconstruction of the dominant narrative tropes, gender norms, and body aesthetics of mainstream cinema, whose restrictive limitations Cohene's *Kathy* powerfully overturns and refutes.

## Caroline Monnet

b. 1985

### *Creatura Dada*, 2016

video, 3 min. 3 sec.

Courtesy of the artist

*I decided not to include the voice recordings because I like the fact people might think we are planning a revolution. These conversations and sharing of experiences belong to us.*

– Caroline Monnet, email, May 7, 2018

For *Creatura Dada*, Anishinaabe/French Canadian artist Caroline Monnet imagines a lavish feast with an abundance of fresh fruit, seafood, and champagne. This video centres on the internationally renowned 90-year-old Anishinaabe filmmaker and activist Alanis Obomsawin, who has been working since the 1960s with such important and influential documentary films as *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993). Here she is fêted by a group of Indigenous women artists—opulently clad in rich colours—including Monnet herself, her sister Émilie Monnet, and visual artist Nadia Myre, among others. The radiantly charismatic Obomsawin is pictured speaking, laughing, and gesturing as her cohorts revel in her vivacious presence. *What is she saying? What wisdom does she share?* Monnet has dubbed over the conversation with an original soundscape—Obomsawin’s almost century-long knowledge and experience thus reserved for her invited guests, rather than broadcast for general consumption. The video ends with a stunning sequence in which the group walk toward the camera, apparently fortified by their intimate meal together, equipped to face the challenges of the outside world and hungry to create revolutionary new art forms.

## Cauleen Smith

b. 1985

### ***Black and Blue over You (After Bas Jan Ader for Ishan)***, 2010

video, 9 min. 38 sec.

Courtesy of the artist and Morán Morán Gallery

This deceptively simple film video by Cauleen Smith harks back to the Dutch conceptual performance artist Bas Jan Ader's videos *Primary Time* and *Untitled (Flower Works)* (1974). In these videos, Ader, dressed in black, makes and remakes bouquets of flowers in the three primary colours: yellow, red, and blue. Ader himself is said to have made these works as a playful nod to fellow Dutch artist Piet Mondrian, known for his grid-like works in yellow, red, and blue—what the Modernist artist described as “pure” colours.

Smith mimics many aspects of Ader's videos: the stationary camera, the perspective showing mostly her black clad torso, the flower arranging in endless loop. However, Smith's act goes beyond the aesthetic formalism of Ader's exercise, and is instead rooted in the messy, cyclical processes of grief. Here she mourns the tragic death of Ishan, the nephew of a friend, and other Black youth like him. She makes rough bouquets of hydrangeas and lilies in shades of black, blue, and white—which she points out are the colours of bruising—the flowers sometimes breaking or falling during the process as she struggles to fit them in the vase. Eschewing the silence of Ader's videos, Smith adds a soundtrack of improvisations by saxophonist Anthony Braxton suggesting that only music—and not words—can communicate the depths of her pain, and the complexity of her grief.

## **Toni Onley**

b. 1928; d. 2004

(left to right)

***Zone #2, 1963***

***Zone #9, 1963***

***Untitled 212, 1963***

oil on canvas

Donation of Jacques and Margaret Barbeau, Collection of the City of Richmond

Toni Onley is known for his elegantly spare abstract paintings and muted palette. While in the late 1950s Onley was influenced by the vigorous mark-making of Abstract Expressionism, by the 1960s, he was using a pared down approach, creating what he called “archetypal” landscapes, devoid of geographic detail, reduced to simple configurations of colour and shape. Alongside a generation of west coast painters including Gordon Smith and Takao Tanabe, Onley is known for his unique contributions to the landscape genre—aptly described by Canadian curator David Burnett and art historian Marilyn Schiff as expressing “a sensibility of landscape rather than a description.”

**Toni Onley**

b. 1928; d. 2004

***Drift Log and Rock, East Point Saturna, 1980, 1980***

watercolour on paper

Donation of Jacques and Margaret Barbeau, Collection of the City of Richmond

## Leslie Poole

b. 1942

### ***After Manet/Lilacs*, 1989**

acrylic on hardboard

Donation of Sharole Browne and Walter Stasiuk, Collection of the City of Richmond

For his series of paintings titled *After Manet*, Leslie Poole was inspired by sixteen still lifes of flower bouquets painted by Édouard Manet (1832-1883). The French artist made this remarkable series while housebound and sick with syphilis during the six months leading up to his death. In the hours after receiving these floral gifts from friends, Manet would quickly capture on small canvases the fleeting freshness of the blooms, using sparkling splashes of paint—the energy of these paintings belying his deteriorating physical condition and poignant awareness of his imminent demise.

In this painting of roses and lilacs painted over two days, Poole evokes the immediacy of Manet's late still lifes—and perhaps his lust for life in the face of death. Poole's use of bright colours and boldly expressive brushstrokes on a large canvas brings the still life genre squarely into the present.



# Harry Stanbridge

b. 1943

(left to right)

***Ellipse #1, Watchman Series, 1992***

***Ellipse #7, Watchman Series, 1994/1995***

***Ellipse #8, Watchman Series, 1994***

acrylic on canvas on board

Collection of the City of Richmond

*Human existence is punctuated with passages, doors in and out, exits and entrances through which we move, at times hindered, at other times freely. [...] Every canvas, (shape as a vertical rectangle) is itself a passage, one preceding onto and into the next, carrying along the spiritual, emotional and intellectual baggage...].*

– Harry Stanbridge, 1983

Harry Stanbridge was influenced by the Hard Edge painting movement while studying at the Vancouver School of Art (now Emily Carr University of Art and Design) with such painters as Takao Tanabe in the 1960s. His abstract paintings are often infused with a spiritual quality, and have drawn comparisons to artworks by artists like Mark Rothko or Yves Klein. This multi-hued series of ellipses functions as portals that draw viewers into a meditative state.

**The artist invites visitors to take home  
a copy of this limited edition poster.**