



JOYCE WIELAND

Life & Work by Johanne Sloan

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Biography

PART 1

Joyce Wieland (1930–1998) began her career as a painter in Toronto before moving to New York in 1962, where she soon achieved renown as an experimental filmmaker. The 1960s and 1970s were productive years for Wieland, as she explored various materials and media and as her art became assertively political, engaging with nationalism, feminism, and ecology. She returned to Toronto in 1971. In 1987 the Art Gallery of Ontario held a retrospective of her work. Wieland was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in the 1990s, and she died in 1998.

Early Years

Joyce Wieland was born in Toronto on June 30, 1930, the youngest child of Sydney Arthur Wieland and Rosetta Amelia Watson Wieland, who had emigrated from Britain. Her father's family included several generations of acrobats and music-hall performers. Both her parents died before she reached her teens, and she and her two older siblings, Sid and Joan, experienced poverty and domestic instability as they struggled to survive. Showing an aptitude for visual expression from a young age, Wieland attended Central Technical School in Toronto, where she initially registered in a fashion design course. At this high school she learned the skills that later enabled her to work in the field of commercial design. It was also at Central Tech that she first came into contact with sculptors and painters, such as Doris McCarthy (1910–2010), with whom she studied. McCarthy, who was committed to her art and had an independent spirit and sense of style, became an important role model for Wieland.



Joyce Wieland, *Untitled (Myself as a Young Girl)*, n.d., ink on paper, 20 x 20.2 cm, private collection



Joyce Wieland in 1955, photographed by Warren Collins

Emergence as an Artist

After graduating in 1948 Wieland worked as a graphic designer during the early 1950s, simultaneously developing her own art practice. She shared lodgings with friends but eventually moved into a studio space of her own in downtown Toronto, living independently at a time when that was not the norm for young women. She lived alongside other artists and became part of the city's bohemian scene. In her early

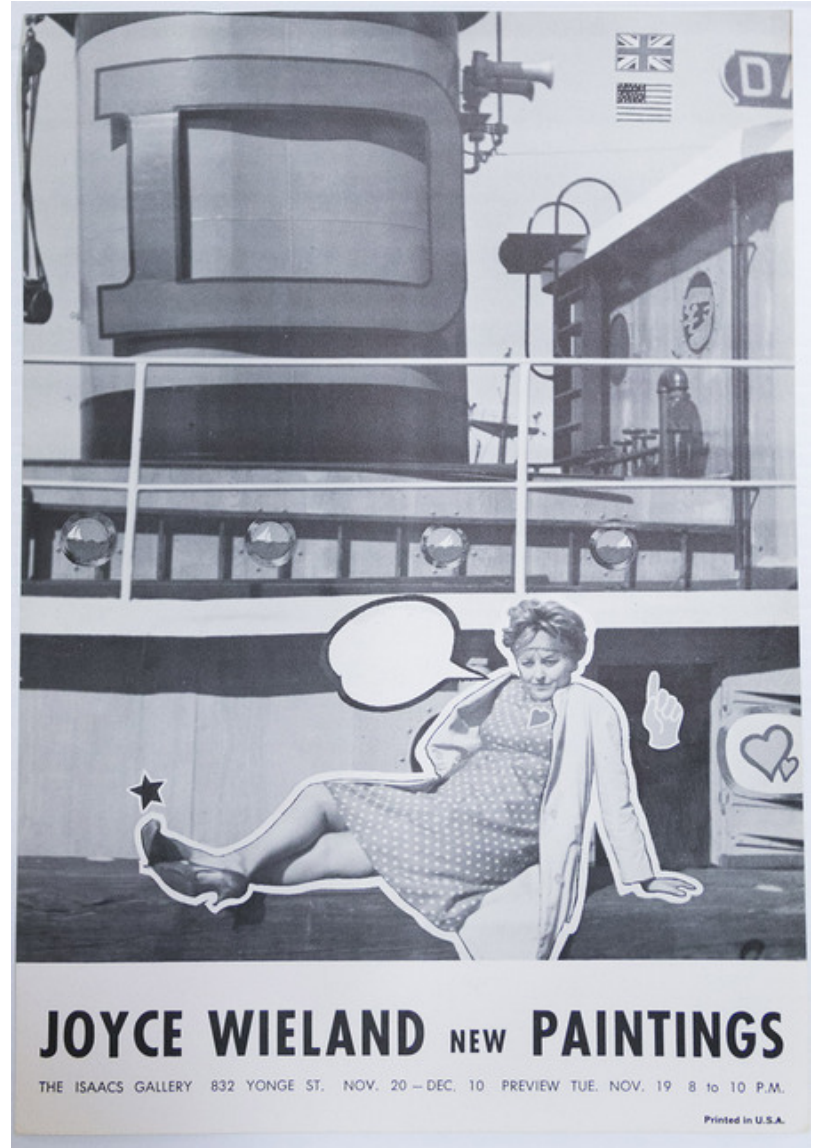
A Joyce Wieland

Life & Work by Johanne Sloan

twenties she also travelled to Europe on a couple of occasions. By all accounts Wieland was tremendously vivacious and quick-witted, and she acquired many friends and admirers throughout her life. While employed at the firm Graphic Associates, which made animated and commercial films, she met fellow artist Michael Snow (b. 1928), who was also working there. Wieland and Snow married in 1956, and they remained together for over twenty years.



Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow in 1964, photographed by John Reeves



Invitation to *Joyce Wieland: New Paintings* at the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, 1963

Wieland began to achieve success as an artist in the late 1950s, as part of group exhibitions, and she received her first solo show in 1960. Soon after, she began an affiliation with the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto, a relationship that continued for many years. Avrom Isaacs represented numerous prominent Canadian artists, such as Graham Coughtry (1931–1999), Gordon Rayner (1935–2010), Jack Chambers (1931–1978), Greg Curnoe (1936–1992), and Snow.

The New York Years

In 1962 Wieland and Snow moved to New York City, where they remained until 1971, living in adapted industrial spaces in lower Manhattan. The sixties were remarkably productive years for Wieland. She continued to paint, at least in the early sixties, while opening up her art practice to encompass a range of new materials and media.



Joyce Wieland in New York in 1964, photographed by John Reeves

Wieland's work from these years shows how responsive she was to the period's key artistic currents, such as Pop art and Conceptual art, though her interpretations of them were always original and idiosyncratic. Several coherent bodies of her work have emerged from this decade: quasi-abstract paintings that reveal messages, signs, or erotic drawings; collages and sculptural assemblages; filmic paintings; disaster paintings; plastic film-assemblages; quilts and other fabric-based objects; and language-based works. It was also during this period that she produced most of her experimental films.

At this point in Wieland's artistic life, a rift developed between her visual art practice and her experimental film career. The New York gallery scene was a closed-off, exclusive world that she never broke into, and so her streams of paintings, assemblages, and mixed media works were exhibited back in Toronto (and elsewhere in Canada), while in New York she was part of a supportive and stimulating experimental film community. Even today her filmmaking is admired internationally, but her visual-art practice is barely known outside of Canada.

Wieland had learned filmmaking and animation techniques while working in the commercial-design milieu, so she was able to enter this field with confidence. In 1963 she began screening her films alongside those of American friends and collaborators such as Hollis Frampton (1936–1984), Shirley Clarke (1919–1997), and the Kuchar brothers (Mike, b. 1942; George, 1942–2011), as well as Snow. This initial exposure

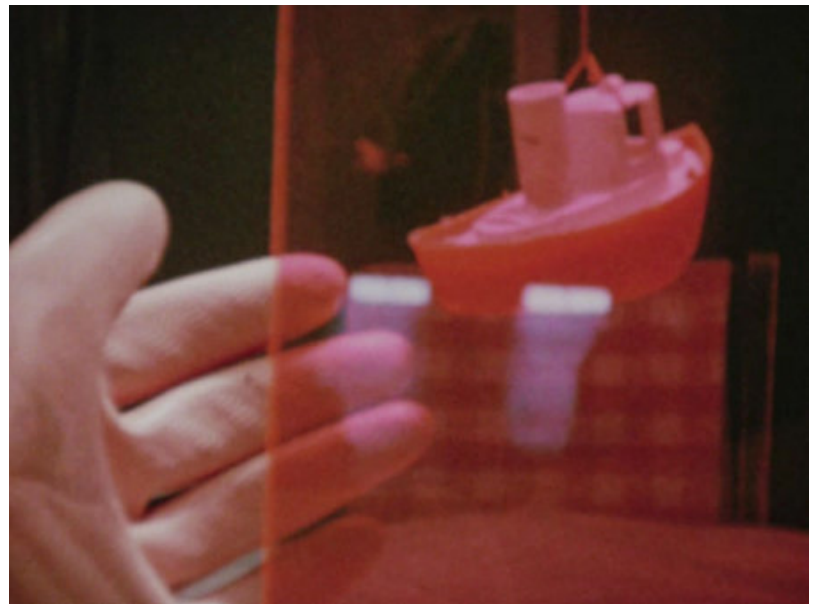


Joyce Wieland, *Cooling Room No. 1*, 1964, wood, metal, and plastic, 73.7 x 58.9 x 27.9 cm, University of Lethbridge Art Collection

took place at informal screening sessions in New York organized by the critic and underground filmmaker Jonas Mekas (b. 1922) or others, but soon her experimental films were being shown at prestigious institutions (in 1968 the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented *Five Films by Joyce Wieland*, for instance) and international film festivals in France, Belgium, Germany, and elsewhere. Her films—such as *Patriotism, Part II*, 1964; *Water Sark*, 1965; *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968; and *Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion*, 1969—received considerable attention and were admired for their combination of formal rigour, political edge, and humour.



Joyce Wieland, *Water Sark*, 1965, 16mm film, colour, sound, 13:30 min., National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



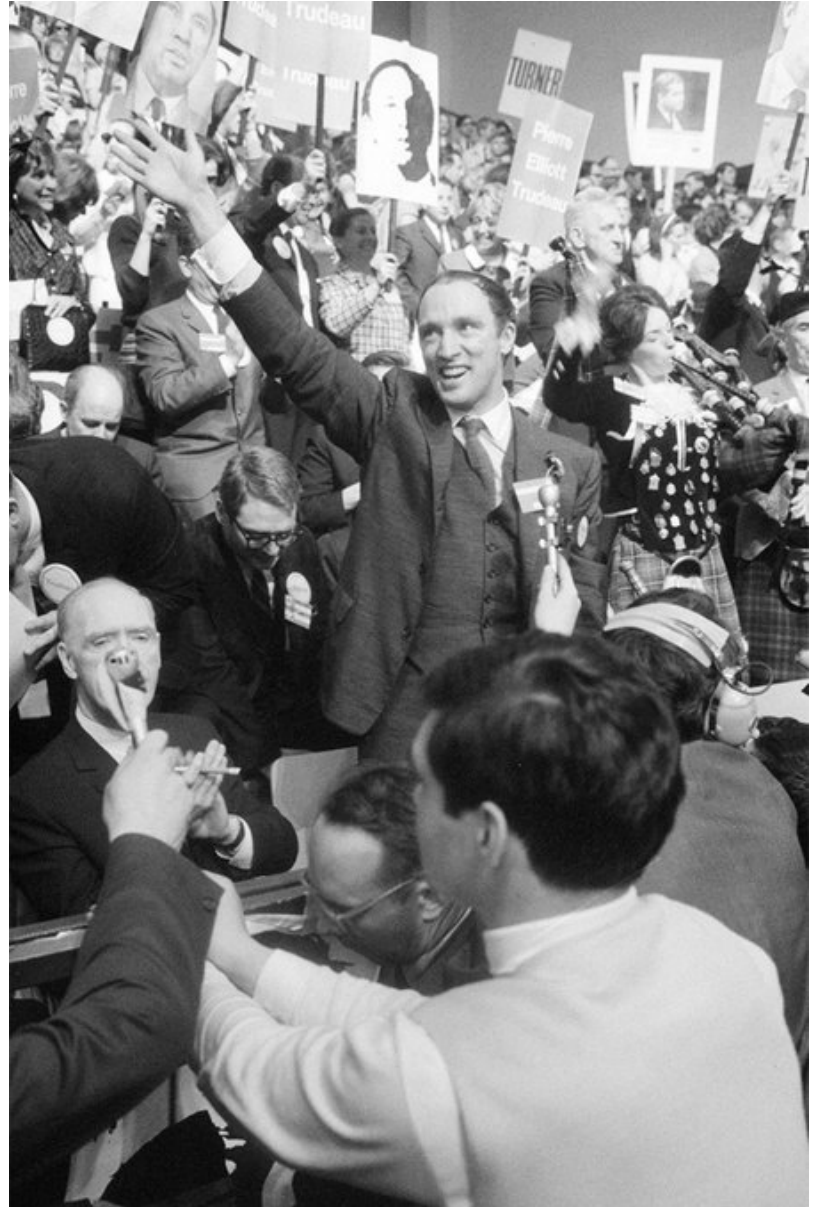
Wieland films herself and objects in her kitchen to chronicle a feminine space in her film *Water Sark*, 1965

A Political Consciousness

During the 1960s Wieland also became more concerned with politics, nationalism, and activism. Like many others of her generation she joined collective actions to oppose the Vietnam War. She was ahead of her time in recognizing the importance of ecological issues, she was attuned to the racial injustices in the United States, and her espousal of feminist ideals also became part of an expanded political consciousness. While still living in New York Wieland began to follow political debates in Canada. In the late 1960s she was initially swept up in Trudeaumania, the wave of excitement generated by Pierre Elliott Trudeau's rise to power. Just a few years later she was drawn to the radical, nationalist branch of the New Democratic Party, the Waffle, founded in 1969.



Joyce Wieland, *Betsy Ross, Look What They've Done to the Flag You Made with Such Care*, 1966, mixed media, 56 x 34.3 cm, private collection



Prime Minister Trudeau at the Liberal Leadership Convention in Ottawa in 1968

Life in New York during the 1960s was stimulating for Wieland at many levels, but the ideological orientation of the United States seemed to weigh heavily on her. She justified her eventual return to Canada by saying, “I felt I couldn’t make aesthetic statements in New York any more. I didn’t want to be part of the corporate structure which makes Vietnam.”¹

In 1971 Wieland was accorded a solo exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, *True Patriot Love*, which opened on July 1, Dominion Day (now called Canada Day). It was the first time the National Gallery had given a solo show to a living Canadian female artist. Pierre Théberge—the exhibition’s organizer, the gallery’s curator of contemporary Canadian art, and later the gallery’s director—held Wieland’s work in high esteem, as did Jean Sutherland Boggs, the gallery’s director at the time, and its first woman director, serving from 1966 to 1976.

Wieland's exhibition consisted of works that manipulated the symbols and familiar icons of Canadian nationhood: knitted maple-leaf flags; a small sculpture of a female figure with a beaver at each breast, titled *The Spirit of Canada Suckles the French and English Beavers*, 1970–71; an image of lips singing the national anthem; idiosyncratic landscape views; bilingual slogans. In addition various ephemeral elements were included, such as the massive, edible *Arctic Passion Cake*, 1971, and bottles of perfume called *Sweet Beaver*, which were for sale. She also created a bookwork, titled *True Patriot Love*, that accompanied the exhibition.

While not exactly a celebration of nationhood, *True Patriot Love* was a challenge to visitors to reconsider the terms of their nationalist commitment, and it deliberately contrasted Canadian and American sensibilities. And, even though this exhibition did not engage directly with the issue, Wieland was not oblivious to the rise of Québécois nationalism. Indeed, in 1972 she made an experimental film featuring the well-known Quebec writer and separatist Pierre Vallières. Through her artwork Wieland participated in a larger debate about national identity, though she was determined that her practice not be didactic in conveying a political position.

The Return to Canada and the Years Following

Soon after the National Gallery exhibition, Wieland and Snow left New York and returned to live in Toronto. Her political activism continued: she participated in protests against the building of a hydroelectric dam in James Bay, in solidarity with Cree inhabitants of the area, and she was also involved with the group Canadian Artists' Representation (CAR, later CARFAC, with the addition of the French counterpart, the Front des artistes canadiens), which initiated the system of payment by institutions and organizations to artists for exhibiting or reproducing their artworks.



Installation view of Joyce Wieland's *Arctic Passion Cake*, 1971, a mixed media construction at the artist's *True Patriot Love* exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

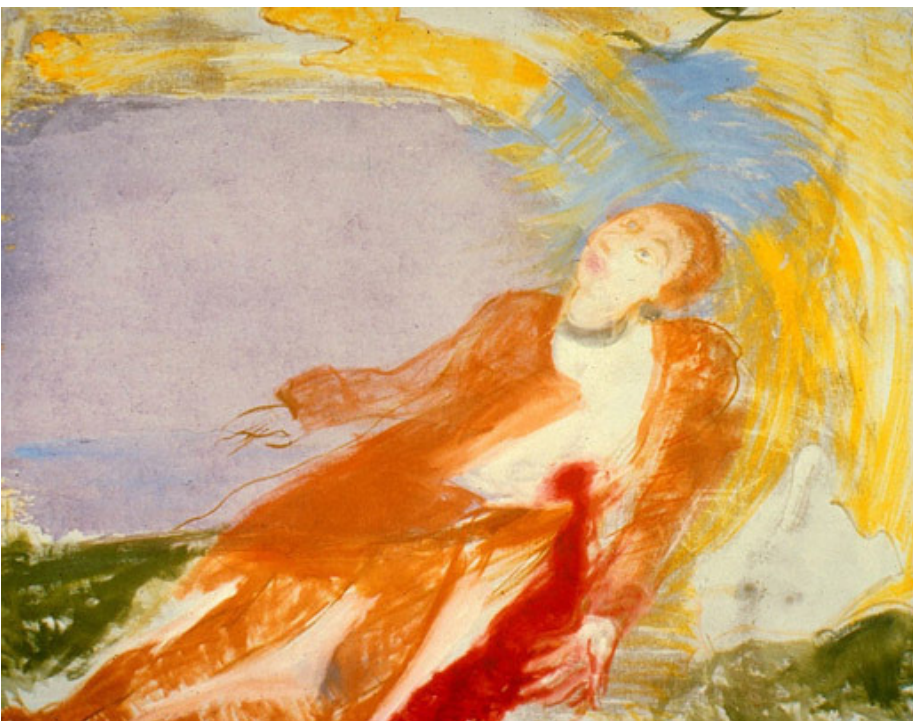


Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore*, 1976, 35mm film, colour, sound, 105 min., Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa



In this still from *The Far Shore*, 1976, the painter Tom McLeod and his lover, Eulalie de Chicoutimi, swim in a northern lake

In the early 1970s Wieland's creative efforts were largely marshalled into the making of a feature film, *The Far Shore*; she wrote the script, directed the film, co-produced it, and also spent a lot of time fundraising. When the film was released in 1976, some fans of Wieland's experimental films did not know what to make of this melodramatic period piece, a kind of alternative history based on the iconic Canadian painter Tom Thomson (1877–1917) and his lover, an entirely fictional female character. The film is now appreciated for its innovative approach to gender and landscape and as a genuine experiment with genre.



LEFT: Joyce Wieland, *The Death of Wolfe*, 1987, oil on canvas, private collection **RIGHT:** Joyce Wieland, *Untitled (Woman and Fox)*, 1986–88, oil on canvas, 235 x 245 cm, estate of Joyce Wieland

The Wieland-Snow marriage broke up in the late 1970s. Wieland returned to painting in the 1980s, often devising hallucinatory imagery concerned with sexuality and spirituality rather than overtly political questions. In 1987 she was given a retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario. This exhibition provided a critical overview of her work, while synthesizing the two streams of her creative output: Wieland's visual art production and her experimental films could be seen side by side.

In the 1990s Wieland's health deteriorated, and she was eventually diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. A supportive community of women friends cared for her during her last years. Joyce Wieland died in Toronto on June 27, 1998.



Joyce Wieland in 1988, photographed by Michael Torosian

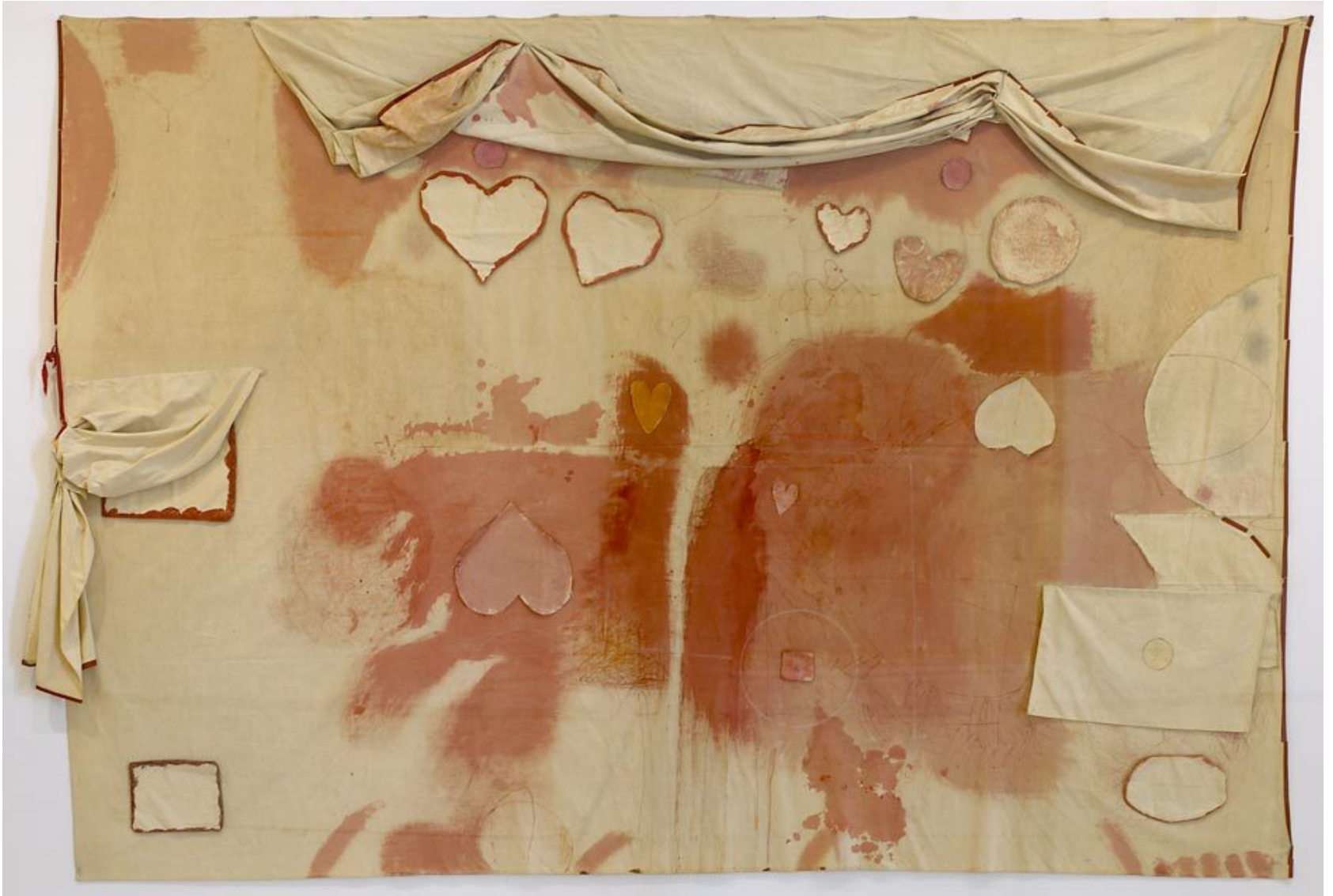


Key Works

PART 2

Joyce Wieland created a remarkably diverse body of work throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The artworks selected for this section have been drawn from these two decades. They represent Wieland's aesthetic innovation, her experimentation with non-traditional materials and media, and her commitment to making art that is socially and politically relevant.

Heart On 1961



Joyce Wieland, *Heart On*, 1961

Red electrical tape, chalk, crayon, and ink, with linen and wool on unstretched canvas, 177.8 x 251.5 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

At first sight this artwork's pinkish-red colour scheme and cluster of hearts are reminiscent of a valentine, but the stain-like shapes also incite more unsettling associations with bodies and blood. The punning title, *Heart On*, shows off Wieland's sense of humour, as she brashly mixes up references to both sentimentality and sexuality.

In the early 1960s Wieland began testing the limits of paint as a medium and approached the paintings she made as material objects.

Heart On is one of several works in which she applies paint to canvas and adds pieces of draped, torn, rolled, or appliquéd fabric, as in the Summer Blues series, from 1961. This impulse resulted in a body of work that includes collages, assemblages, and mixed media sculptural works, sometimes involving found objects.

In *Heart On* the canvas is not stretched onto a wooden frame or transformed into a rigid surface but hangs loosely on a wall. The distinctive stained effect is achieved by pouring paint onto absorbent raw canvas, a technique explored by some abstract painters of the 1950s and 1960s, such as the Americans Helen Frankenthaler (1928–2011) and Morris Louis (1912–1962). Wieland's artwork, however, moves beyond abstraction: the loosely hanging canvas resembles a crumpled bedsheet, and female viewers may be reminded of accidental menstrual bloodstains. The cloud-like formations of red paint appear to be produced directly by a human body.

Although the attempt to integrate art and everyday life was a recurrent avant-garde impulse of the twentieth century, Wieland's introduction of female embodiment into the hallowed sphere of abstract painting can be regarded as an act of feminist subversion. In this work, as in many others during her career, Wieland situates artmaking in the very midst of the everyday—in the domestic sphere, in the bedroom, and within intimate human relationships.



Joyce Wieland, *Summer Blues—Ball*, 1961, mixed media collage, 91.5 x 83 cm, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston

Stranger in Town 1963



Joyce Wieland, *Stranger in Town*, 1963

Collage and oil on canvas, 117 x 82 cm

Collection unknown

In this work, made a year after *Heart On*, Wieland again combines cloth and pigment to create a hybrid assemblage. The palette is darker and moodier this time, but what immediately catches the viewer's attention is a large white speech balloon with the hand-printed words "Howdy Stranger!" This is a work with multiple layers: a stretched canvas painted with abstract shapes serves as the base, while strips of painted cloth (a ripped-up painting) casually flop along the surface. Out of this semi-ruined modernist background the speech balloon pops up.

The title, *Stranger in Town*, raises the possibility that this is a nocturnal cityscape. The vertical format implies an urban passageway, and the voice emerging out of the gloom suggests an encounter between strangers, a daily occurrence in a modern metropolis. Wieland made a number of paintings and painting-assemblages that evoke urban signs and sensations both before and after moving to New York, such as *Cityscape*, 1960, and from 1963 *The Battery* and *West 4th*. But if Wieland was responding to street life with such artworks, the year 1963 marked her full-on engagement with pop culture.

It would be limiting to define Wieland only in relation to Pop art, but she did incorporate some fragments of pop culture—such as advertising, signage, exaggerated coloration, and comics—into her artworks. But whereas an artist like Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997) enlarges entire panels from action or romance comic books, Wieland borrows only one distinctive comic-book element for *Stranger in Town*: the white speech balloon that she uses to introduce language into visual art is unmistakably derived from pop culture. "Howdy, stranger!" is a common vernacular greeting; here, though, we might ask, who is talking? Is this voice emanating from the artwork itself, and is it hailing us, the viewers?



Joyce Wieland, *Cityscape*, 1960, oil on canvas, 127.5 x 152 cm, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa

The Battery 1963



Joyce Wieland, *The Battery*, 1963

Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown

Private collection

The Battery is the neighbourhood at the southernmost tip of Manhattan, and though this artwork provides neither a conventional nor a realistic picture of the city, it is an unabashedly figurative painting. Wieland had painted people and objects during the 1950s, but those works tend to be expressionistic and painterly. Notable here in stylistic terms are flatness, graphic outlines, and comic-book features that Wieland uses to depict a woman's profile, a white car, a sailboat, a chalkboard, some large numbers, and what might be a flag.

This work points to an important development in Wieland's art: the division of the painted surface into a series of boxed forms or panels, providing a grid-like structure. In a sense the grid is a typical modernist device, one that allows objects to be neatly organized and categorized, as in *Notice Board*, 1961, and *Brad's Bridge*, 1963. Here Wieland's use of the grid functions differently, however, and raises the possibility that a narrative is unfolding. The meaning of the painting emerges as the viewer "reads" the sequence of images beginning in the top left corner, continuing across and downward toward the bottom right. There is no obvious storyline here, but the montage of close-up and distanced views creates an impression of events occurring across time and place. The woman's head in profile is repeated, and the surrounding imagery veers between an immediate urban environment and the dream of an ocean voyage.

Once again, as with *Stranger in Town*, 1963, Wieland is willing to borrow the appearance and logic of pop-culture forms—as found in comic books, animation, and cinematic storyboards—to create a new kind of narrative painting.



Joyce Wieland, *Notice Board*, 1961, oil on Masonite, 122.5 x 122 cm, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa

First Integrated Film with a Short on Sailing 1963



Joyce Wieland, *First Integrated Film with a Short on Sailing* (detail), 1963

Oil on canvas, 66 x 22.7 cm

Private collection

Wieland paradoxically titles this painting a “film,” or rather two films. The feature film consists of three vertically stacked squares showing a white woman and a black man melting into a kiss, while running along the bottom of each of these squares is the short film—a horizontal sequence of little images, showing a sailboat, heads in profile, and speech balloons. The lovers are like comic-book figures, with faint strokes highlighting the closed eyes and pouting lips, and little red hearts bouncing between the two faces. Yet the simplicity and goofy charm of this image is deceptive, because the artwork is complex in its pictorial organization while dealing with a serious social issue.

Looking at this artwork, the viewer is easily reminded of Hollywood movies featuring scenes of heart-pounding kisses during which the music soars, the camera zooms in, and the lovers' lips meet. The kiss signifies the reconciliation of conflict and misunderstanding. However, in 1963 there were no mainstream films or television programs showing romantic bliss between interracial couples, and likewise no possibility of a narrative climax based on a racially integrated union. Wieland's "first integrated film" is a fiction that exists only in painted form, and one that serves as a reminder of the racism deeply embedded in North American pop culture. The words "Oh! Walt!" that appear in a free-floating speech balloon in the horizontal panel could be a reference to the entertainment empire headed by Walt Disney.

Wieland's painting is formally radical in that the artist introduces a sense of narrative sequence and momentum that moves in two directions simultaneously. We follow one story from top to bottom even while our eyes zigzag from left to right. These are still images, and yet they are presented as if they were components of a multidirectional cinematic flow.



Joyce Wieland, *First Integrated Film with a Short on Sailing*, 1963, oil on canvas, 66 x 22.7 cm, private collection

Boat Tragedy 1964



Joyce Wieland, *Boat Tragedy*, 1964

Oil on canvas, 50 x 122 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

This multi-framed painting of a sinking sailboat is part of an interconnected body of work known as the Disaster paintings, which date from 1963 to 1966. Variations on this sequential work picture sinking boats and ocean liners, along with a few plane crash paintings, such as the striking *Double Crash*, 1966. In each of the boat paintings the narrative sequence is simple: a sea vessel appears, horizontally positioned against the line of the horizon, and frame by frame it tilts and founders, until it is swallowed up by the waves in the last panel.

Wieland reduces the visual information required to construct these scenarios. In some frames the boat consists of little more than a white triangle to suggest a sail, and the sea is indicated by an expanse of striated blue paint. Despite this shorthand the geometric shapes are intelligible as objects and spaces, and it is easy to empathize with the boats that have starring roles in these quasi-cinematic sequences. In some cases Wieland explicitly refers to films in the titles: *Boat (Homage to D.W. Griffith)*, 1963, for instance, names the silent-film director. In others an abrupt transition from close-up to long shot clearly represents cinematographic strategies for visually constructing a story.



Andy Warhol, *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times*, 1963, silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on two canvases, 268.9 x 416.9 cm, © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, inc. / SODRAC (2014). Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY

The Disaster paintings can be compared to the car crash paintings of Andy Warhol (1928–1987), made around the same time. Both artists are concerned with a commoditized world that serves up disaster on a daily basis as part of a media and entertainment spectacle. Wieland's paintings are more fanciful than Warhol's photo-based work, though. She also devises a clever way of manipulating the viewer's emotional response. The little bobbing boat in *Boat Tragedy* may be absurd, but it is difficult to remain aloof from the drama, and from the sense of a tragic ending.

Stuffed Movie 1966



Joyce Wieland, *Stuffed Movie*, 1966

Mixed media, 142.2 x 36.8 cm

Vancouver Art Gallery

Stuffed Movie is part of a series from 1966–67 that makes use of shiny plastic and other brightly coloured synthetic materials. With these sewn-together assemblages meant to be hung on a wall, Wieland leaves painting behind entirely while continuing her preoccupation with sequentiality, temporality, and narrative, as linked to the experience of film.

Stuffed Movie is film-like: Wieland stacks multicoloured plastic sleeves encasing various images and small objects ranging from snapshots and mementos to newspaper clippings about the Vietnam War. The rectangular plastic sleeves are reminiscent of individual frames connected vertically in a film strip. This artwork is obviously hand-sewn, but Wieland's crafty sensibility did not necessarily result in objects that resemble traditional handicrafts.

Stuffed Movie can be linked to the mid-century Pop art movement, not so much because of its subject matter but because the piece evokes the allure of commodities. It mimics the glossy, translucent packaging that, by the 1960s, was beginning to envelop almost every object offered for sale in the Western world. *Stuffed Movie* and the other plastic works in this series hover between commodity and craft object. In adapting this material Wieland points to the shiny, mood-enhancing promises of North American consumer culture, even though what is meticulously assembled and sealed within these plastic bubbles are items both personal and political.

Other examples of this mixed media series include *N.U.C.*, *Home Art Totem*, *War & Peace*, *8mm Home Movie*, and *Betsy Ross, Look What They've Done to the Flag You Made with Such Care*—all from 1966—as well as *Home Work* and *Don't Mess with Bill*, both from 1967.

Reason over Passion 1968



Joyce Wieland, *Reason over Passion*, 1968

Quilted cotton, 256.5 x 302.3 x 8 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

The title of this quilt-like work is spelled out in bold multicoloured lettering, with little hearts scattered on the background. *Reason over Passion* attracted particular attention because of its direct reference to the newly elected prime minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau: Wieland was inspired by an assertion made by Trudeau, “Reason over passion—that is the theme of all my writing.”

In this work Wieland not only engages directly with current events but also reinterprets and transforms political language by using folk art and craft traditions sustained by women for centuries. Joyce Wieland was a true feminist-art pioneer in this respect. Many artists of her generation critiqued an art world that systematically excluded

women, but Wieland recognized that remarkable art forms undertaken by women had historically been devalued because they were categorized as craft, or “women’s work.”



Joyce Wieland, *La raison avant la passion*, 1968, quilted cotton, 244.7 x 305.5 x 8 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Joyce Wieland, *Film Mandala*, 1966, quilted cloth, 138 x 160 cm, private collection

Such deep-rooted prejudices were turned on Wieland herself. When she showed this and other fabric-based and stitched artworks at the National Gallery of Canada as part of her exhibition *True Patriot Love* in 1971, one critic wrote scornfully about “Joyce the housewife” filling the gallery with pillows and quilts.¹ And yet the genius of Wieland’s art is that she created innovative, hybrid art forms by paying homage to aspects of traditional quilt-making, embroidery, and needlework, while still engaging with Pop, Conceptual, and other neo-avant-garde art practices.

Reason over Passion is often described as a quilt, which is accurate in that Wieland drew on the expertise of quilt-makers to fabricate it and other related works, such as *Film Mandala*, 1966, and *The Camera’s Eyes*, 1967. These latter works refer to cinematic elements, whereas *Reason over Passion* highlights language in a way that is reminiscent of Conceptual art’s linguistic emphasis.

In many ways Wieland’s “quilts” are radically different from traditional quilts, though part of their impact derives from that association. *Reason over Passion* is normally encountered hanging on the wall of a museum, but we can imagine what the words might connote if the quilt was draped over a bed. With this piece Wieland creates the conditions under which the political meets the personal, a place where the masculinity of public life encounters feminized domesticity, and where reason and passion become bedfellows.

Indeed, this artwork consists of two objects, one in each official language—as if art has to adhere to the federally sponsored bilingualism program. The French-language version, *La raison avant la passion*, 1968, was presented as a gift to the prime minister and hung in his official residence. His wife, Margaret Trudeau, recounts that she, in a fury, yanked off the letters and flung them at her husband, the very person who had uttered the words.²

In 1969, a year after making the two fabric works, Wieland completed a feature-length experimental film, also titled *Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion*. The film consists primarily of degraded footage of landscapes shot from vehicles moving across the country; meanwhile, 537 computer-generated permutations of the film's title appear like subtitles—the letters are scrambled over and over again, undermining the meaning of this famous quotation.



Joyce Wieland, *Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion*, 1969, 16mm film, colour and black and white, sound, 83:40 min., National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Rat Life and Diet in North America 1968



Joyce Wieland, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968

16mm film, colour, sound, 14 min.

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Rat Life and Diet in North America is a short film that tells a story about rats (actually pet gerbils) held as political prisoners in the United States (their jailer a cat), who make a heroic escape to Canada. Although this narrative is recounted through wryly worded intertitles, Wieland's film nonetheless conveys a sense of menace and urgency. For these protagonists "Canada" becomes a utopian destination, promising abundance, pleasure, and peace. The film was created in 1968, a time of international student protests against the military and capitalist establishments, the rise of the New Left, and worldwide demonstrations against the Vietnam War; many young American men were fleeing to Canada to avoid being drafted into the military.

This is one of Wieland's most admired films. Jonas Mekas (b. 1922), a leading figure on the American experimental film scene, writes that *Rat Life and Diet in North America* "may be about the best (or richest) political movie around."¹ Although Mekas uses the term "movie," this is clearly an experimental project that plays with cinematic conventions while taking advantage of a typical movie audience's willingness to identify with characters on the run, lusting for freedom.

With this work Wieland updates the animal fable found in many cultural traditions, where the misadventures of animals are understood as moral or political allegory. In *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, the act of crossing the Canada-U.S. border is construed in political terms. Somehow the sight of rodent escapees on Canadian soil, happily munching on fruit and flowers, stands in for the desires of a peace-loving, anti-war, countercultural generation and the determination to forge an alternative to the dominant American ideology.



Joyce Wieland, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968, 16mm film, colour, sound, 14:30, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Rats seeking freedom in Canada are held captive by a cat in the United States in Wieland's *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968

O Canada 1970



Joyce Wieland, *O Canada*, 1970

Lithograph in red on wove paper, 57.4 x 76.4 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

To make *O Canada*, Wieland, wearing bright red lipstick, sang the national anthem while pressing her lips to a lithographic stone with each syllable. The resulting print shows rows of lips in various stages of opening and closing. Using the title as an important clue, viewers will likely feel their mouths twitch in recognition. In effect, this is a kind of interactive art.

With this artwork Wieland actively responds to one of the new symbolic artifacts adopted by the government of Canada in the 1960s: the maple leaf flag (replacing the British-affiliated Red Ensign) was officially unfurled in 1965, and “O Canada” was officially approved as the national anthem in 1967. Wieland made a number of artworks that adopted or reinterpreted the new flag, as well as this piece, inspired by the new anthem. Her act of patriotic allegiance has been deliberately gendered, moreover: these are female lips, and possibly sexy lips. The art historian John O’Brian remarks that “the print ironically conflates male patriotic love with female erotics, while refusing to collapse



the tension between the two.”¹

O Canada was displayed in Wieland’s exhibition *True Patriot Love* at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971, where it was part of an extravaganza of objects and images made by the artist. All the artworks strategically distorted or transformed recently introduced or traditional Canadian national symbols to make a new kind of political art. Instead of taking national identity for granted, Wieland called on visitors to reimagine and reclaim nationhood.

Wieland would on other occasions use the distinctive image of lips that appear to move as they speak or sing, such as in *The Maple Leaf Forever*, 1972; *The Arctic Belongs to Itself*, 1973; and *Squid Jiggin’ Grounds*, 1974. The national anthem was featured again in *O Canada Animation*, 1970, this time with the sequence of red lips embroidered onto a piece of white cloth.



TOP AND ABOVE: Wieland working on *O Canada* in 1970, photographed by Robert Rogers

The Water Quilt 1970–71



Joyce Wieland, *The Water Quilt*, 1970–71

Embroidered cloth and printed cloth assemblage, 134.6 x 131.1 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

The Water Quilt was first shown in Wieland's exhibition *True Patriot Love* at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971. Wieland called it a quilt, and although it shows evidence of meticulous needlecraft, it differs markedly from a traditional bedcover: concealed within it are the pages of a book. The surface of this fabric

assemblage is delicate and decorative, owing to its off-white colour and the little embroidered flowers that adorn its sixty-four squares of cotton. Each of these flowers is a botanically correct rendition of an arctic flower—and the scientific accuracy is important. Lifting one of the fabric squares from the bottom reveals a page of printed text. The pages of text are selections from James Laxer's *The Energy Poker Game: The Politics of the Continental Resources Deal*, published in 1970.

Laxer's book concerns the future of Canadian natural resources; he reports critically on plans by American business interests (as far away as California) to seize control of Canada's northernmost fresh water and divert it south of the border. Wieland was apparently so alarmed by this possibility, euphemistically referred to as the sale of "bulk water," that she asked Laxer's permission to incorporate the book into her artwork.¹

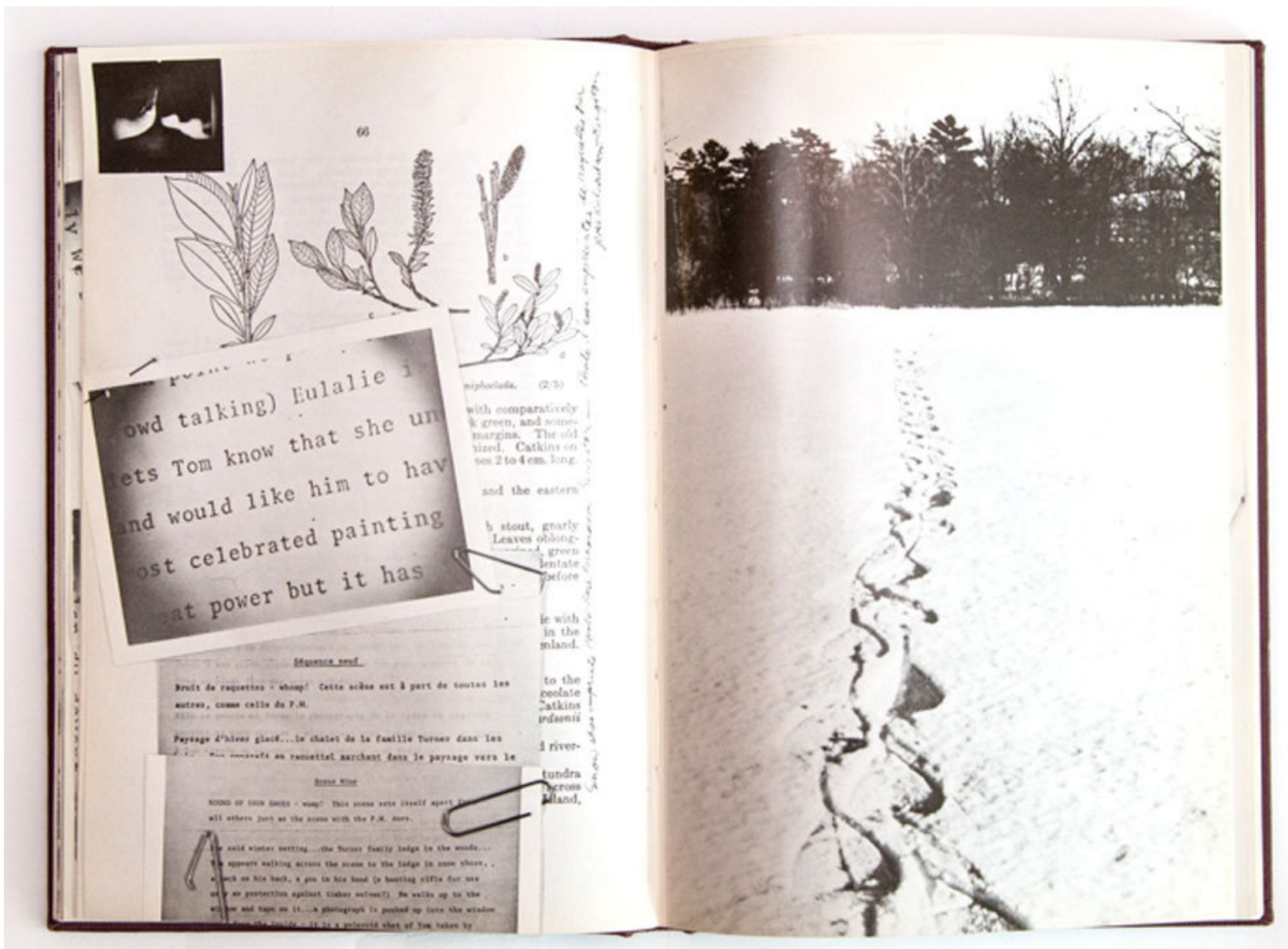
By this time she had grown sympathetic to the Waffle—the furthest left, nationalist group within the New Democratic Party. Laxer was co-founder of the Waffle, as well as one of the authors of the group's "Manifesto for an Independent Socialist Canada."

Here Wieland depicts the delicate flowers to suggest an ecologically threatened northern environment, while linking the problem to questions of national sovereignty. This way of understanding and representing landscape was unique among artists at the time. *The Water Quilt* is also a profoundly interdisciplinary object, in that scientific knowledge (the botanical specimens on display) intersects with economics (Laxer's analysis) as well as with aesthetics.



Joyce Wieland, *The Water Quilt* (detail), 1970–71, embroidered cloth and printed cloth assemblage, 134.6 x 131.1 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

True Patriot Love 1971



Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love*, 1971

Bookwork, 25 x 17 cm

Published by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

With this manifestation of *True Patriot Love*—created to accompany her same-titled exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada—Wieland joined other artists of the 1960s and 1970s who made one-of-a-kind books, or multiple-edition bookworks, that played with the form, appearance, and purpose of the conventional book.

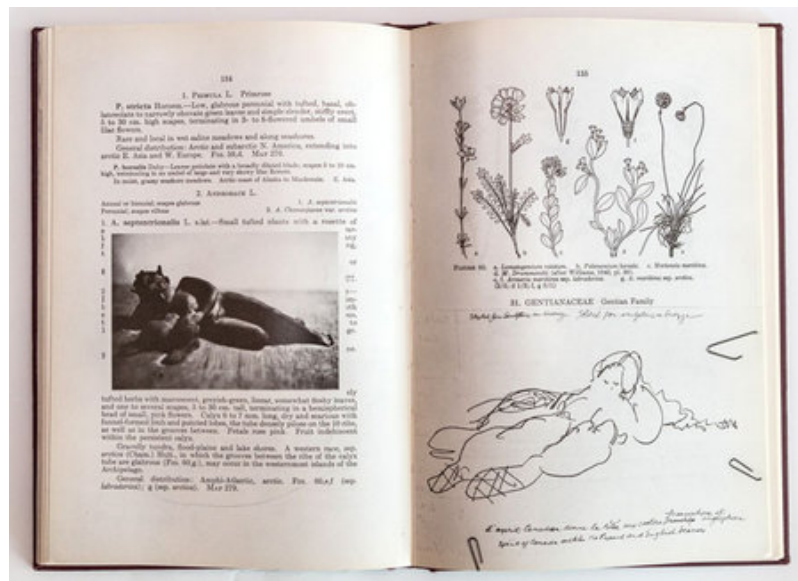
Here Wieland uses a Canadian government publication about arctic flowers—an official-looking document with a deep-burgundy binding and embossed gold writing. On top of the original content that consists of scientific prose, simple line drawings of botanical specimens, and a few maps, Wieland overlays photographs and textual material for a collage-like result. She also affixes images to the pages of the book by stitching them together so that the threads remain visible.

Ultimately the entire book was re-photographed, printed, and sold in the guise of an exhibition catalogue. Some practical material related to the exhibition is tucked into a sleeve at the back of the bookwork, but otherwise it is clearly not a catalogue. Some

photographs refer to artworks in the exhibition, but these are often blurry, partial views, or else the images are jumbled together.



Photo of Tom Thomson in Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love*, 1971, bookwork, 25 x 17 cm, published by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Wieland's sculpture *The Spirit of Canada Suckles the French and English Beavers* (left) and sketch (bottom right), alongside Canadian wildflowers (top right) in Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love*, 1971, bookwork, 25 x 17 cm, published by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Although Wieland's exhibition *True Patriot Love* was colourful and humorous, the black and white imagery of her bookwork leaves a very different impression. Indeed, this object can be hailed as a significant contribution to Conceptual art, as reflected in its page-by-page interplay between image, text, and other kinds of mark making.¹ Fragments of writing, whether printed or handwritten, appear and trail off; these texts are in multiple languages: English, French, Inuktitut, and Gaelic. The writings include newspaper clippings, songs, and historical information, as well as parts of a film script that Wieland had written about Tom Thomson (1877–1917). (Wieland's feature film *The Far Shore*, 1976, was the eventual outcome of these script fragments.)

The photographs that are clipped or sewn into the book include landscapes, the pattern of snowshoe tracks, multiple reproductions of Thomson's painting *The West Wind*, 1916–17, as well as images of Wieland re-enacting Laura Secord's heroic trek during the War of 1812. Through these added elements, the original volume about arctic flowers is transformed into a more complex kind of landscape representation. Leafing through it, the reader finds no singular picture of the Canadian territory that dominates. Instead the land is regarded as a kind of palimpsest, criss-crossed by various voices, images, and texts.

The Far Shore 1976



Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore*, 1976

35mm film, colour, sound, 105 min.

Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

When *The Far Shore* was released, admirers of Wieland's experimental films were surprised by this melodramatic costume story. Set in 1919 in Toronto and at a lake in Ontario, the film is about a painter based on Tom Thomson (1877–1917) and includes a cast of invented characters. By the time Wieland set out to make this feature film, the wild-looking scenery painted by Thomson and the Group of Seven had been both mythologized and institutionalized. In her film Wieland decides to tell a new story about Canada's art history, not by debunking Thomson but by reinventing him as a freethinking and heroic figure—re-mythologizing him in some respects.

And yet the main protagonist of *The Far Shore* is not the Thomson figure, Tom McLeod, but a wholly fictitious female character, Eulalie de Chicoutimi, who moves to Toronto from Quebec, becomes disillusioned with her greedy capitalist husband, and falls in love with Tom. Wieland's story is a romance and a tragedy; it was not until the 1980s that scholars argued that her use of the melodrama genre could be understood in feminist terms.¹

The Far Shore features landscape as background, plot device, and object of desire. All the main characters want something from the land, and the film shows how their desires coincide or clash. On its release, some viewers could not understand how Wieland could make such a conventional narrative film after achieving such renown as an experimental filmmaker. Wieland, however, considered *The Far Shore* as part of a trilogy, along with *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968, and *Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion*, 1969.² What unites these films is an emphasis on landscape. In keeping with a long tradition of landscape painters, Wieland captures the genuine pathos that accompanies our encounters with the natural world.



Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore*, 1976, 35mm film, colour, sound, 105 min., Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa



In *The Far Shore*, 1976, Tom McLeod paints a landscape reminiscent of Tom Thomson's work



Significance & Critical Issues

PART 3

Joyce Wieland was a pivotal figure in Canadian art during the 1960s and 1970s, and her work continues to be influential in contemporary art. She began her career as a painter, but her art practice expanded to incorporate a range of media and materials, including film, and indeed she achieved renown as an experimental filmmaker. Wieland's work was often politically engaged with issues of war, gender, ecology, and nationalism, while remaining aesthetically powerful and filled with humour.



Joyce Wieland, *The King & Queen*, 1960, oil on canvas, 122.3 x 122.3 cm, private collection

Significance

Joyce Wieland belongs to that 1960s generation of artists sometimes referred to as the neo-avant-garde. In Canada and internationally, trained modernist painters were breaking away from a medium-specific understanding of art, developing practices that used a wide range of materials, media, and subject matter. The American art critic Clement Greenberg famously wrote that the great modern artists “derive their chief inspiration from the medium they work in.”¹ This idea was central to Abstract Expressionism and colour-field painting, which spread from New York through North America during the postwar era, including the 1950s Toronto art world. Wieland emerged from an environment in which Painters Eleven, a group of Canadian Abstract

Expressionist artists, was committed to exploring form, colour, line, movement, and composition, using the medium of paint applied to canvas.

Wieland, however, pushed the boundaries of the modernist painting, showing that she was unafraid to contaminate its legacy with elements drawn from folk art, pop culture, or politics. As a result some of her artworks are veritable mash-ups. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Wieland's practice became hybridized and omnivorous. She incorporated film, photography, everyday found objects, and industrialized materials such as plastic, while making extensive use of fabric and sewing techniques traditionally viewed as "women's work."

Exploring this arsenal of materials and media, Wieland challenged the notion that art should occupy a protected cultural space, removed from politics and daily life. After she moved to New York in 1962, her artmaking became entwined with the countercultural activism of the sixties. The anti-war, feminist, ecological, and civil rights causes that inspired Wieland would remain just as important when the artist turned her attention toward Canada to explore the question of national identity.



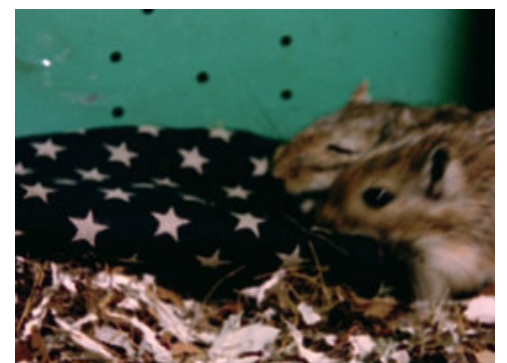
Installation view of Wieland's *Flag Arrangement*, 1970–71, created in knitted wool, at the artist's *True Patriot Love* exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Activism and Nationalism

When Wieland made assemblages and films that alluded to the Vietnam War, she joined a generation of activists, intellectuals, students, and artists outraged by a war that resulted in carnage. But Wieland's treatment of serious political issues would often be allusive, ironic, or even comical. For instance, in *Stuffed Movie*, 1966, references to the Vietnam War appear in the form of newspaper clippings semi-camouflaged within candy-coloured plastic assemblages, implying that the media coverage of war inevitably collides with the consumerism of everyday life. Wieland's experimental film *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968, makes reference to the stream of young Americans who refused to be sent to Vietnam and so fled to Canada—except that the protagonists of Wieland's fable-like work are cute rodents filmed in a sequence of artfully arranged tableaux.



Joyce Wieland, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968, 16mm film, colour, sound, 14:30, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



The rats devour the American flag in Wieland's *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968



Joyce Wieland, *March on Washington*, 1963, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 45.7 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton

Political issues are apparent in much of Wieland's art practice from the 1960s: pollution and ecological questions are raised, and the civil rights movement and racism are referred to in paintings such as *March on Washington*, 1963, and *First Integrated Film with a Short on Sailing*, 1963. She also became more attuned to the places of Aboriginal

peoples within the national imaginary, most notably in her bookwork *True Patriot Love*, 1971, which features traces of Inuit language and culture.



Joyce Wieland, *Confedspread*, 1967, plastic and cloth, 146.2 x 200.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Joyce Wieland, *Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion*, 1969, 16mm film, colour and black and white, sound, 83:40 min., National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

While still living in New York, Wieland became preoccupied with the question of national identity and began to make artwork related to Canada. In 1967 Canada celebrated its Centennial with spectacular events and exhibitions. The following year Pierre Elliott Trudeau was elected prime minister, regarded by many as the ideal leader for a forward-looking nation. Wieland too was temporarily swept up by Trudeaumania and incorporated his words and image into some of her work, such as her fabric pieces *Reason over Passion* and *La raison avant la passion*, 1968, and her 1969 film of the same title. Ultimately her vision of Canadian nationhood was more utopian, radical, and left wing than that espoused by Trudeau's Liberal government.

By the time of her exhibition *True Patriot Love* at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971, Wieland was sympathetic to the principles of the Waffle group, the emphatically socialist branch of the New Democratic Party; she invited Waffle co-founder Mel Watkins as a guest of honour at the exhibition opening. She had also incorporated pages of a book by the other co-founder, James Laxer, into *The Water Quilt*, 1970–71. Wieland shared with these political activists the idea of Canada as a nation-state un beholden to American corporate interests.



Joyce Wieland, *The Spirit of Canada Suckles the French and English Beavers*, 1970–71, bronze, 6 x 19.3 x 12.5 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton

Despite the gravity of the issues she was addressing, Wieland's humour was often in evidence as she set out to make political art. Occasionally a blatant political slogan appeared, as in the quilted work *I Love Canada—J'aime le Canada*, 1970, in which large bold letters spelling out the title are complemented by a small handwritten text that reads "Down with US technological imperialism" in both English and French. And during her *True Patriot Love* exhibition, the gallery's gift shop sold bottles of *Sweet Beaver*, described as "the perfume of Canadian liberation."

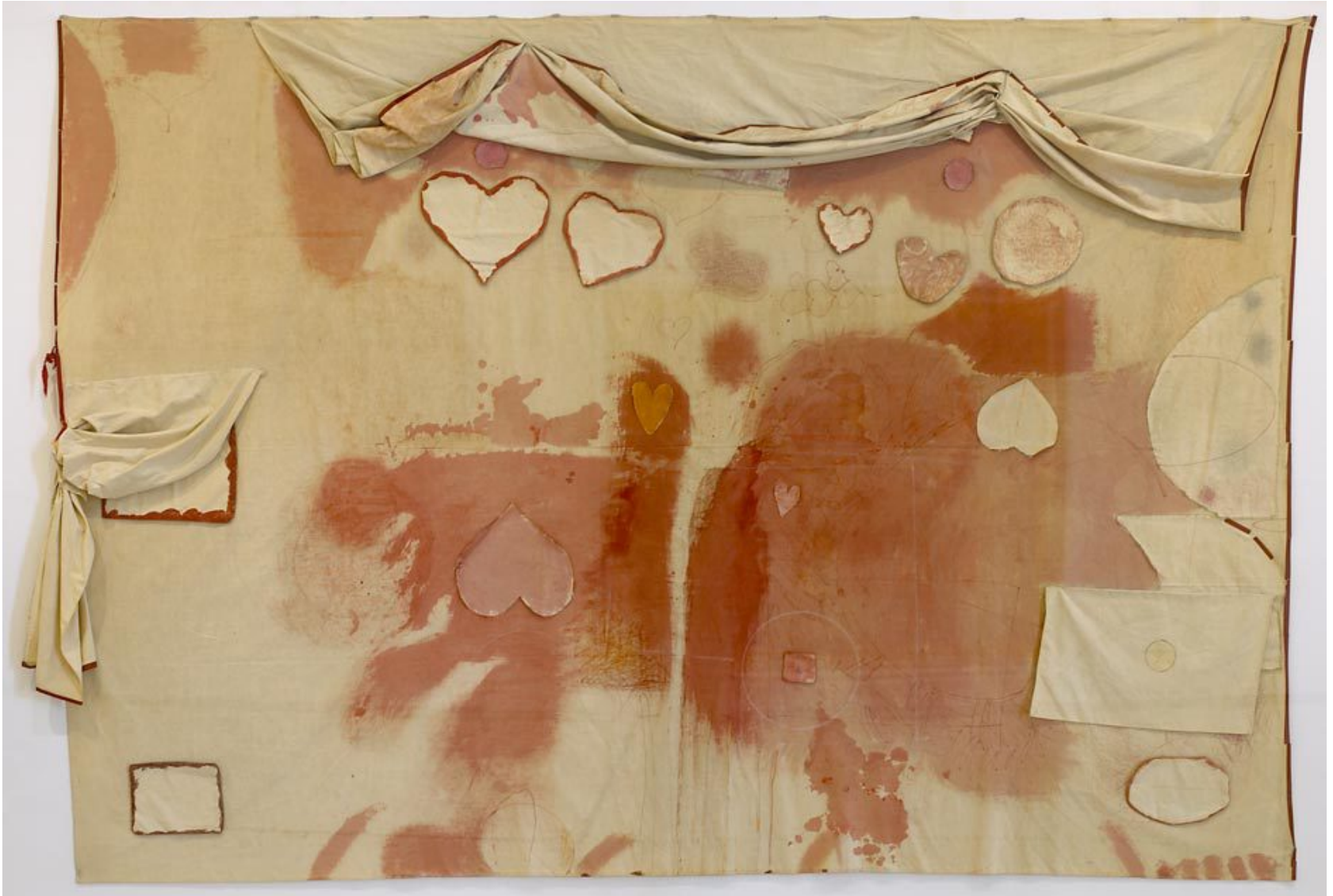
This new form of political art proposes that liberating the nation also means freeing its national symbols. A flag should be not just something that is waved at political rallies or while tanks roll by in a military parade. Wieland's project of tampering with national symbols elicited a mixed response, even from critics who shared her left-wing politics. Barry Lord, an art writer and cultural nationalist in the 1970s, writes that "this burlesque of our national symbols was a slap in the face to patriotic Canadians."² However, by drawing on these foundations of Canadian visual culture Wieland reminded her fellow citizens that the terms of the national contract should continue to be questioned.

Feminism

In 2008–9 Joyce Wieland was included in the exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* when it travelled to the Vancouver Art Gallery from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.³ Her art and experimental films were powerful contributions to an international phenomenon—the transformation of twentieth-century art as it came into contact with feminism. Exhibitions such as *WACK!* reveal that Wieland was hardly alone in making art that spoke to her circumstances as a woman, while addressing the changing roles of women in the labour force and in the art world.

Such impulses were often undertaken by individual women who could not grasp at the time the scope of the revolution they were involved in. Wieland herself struggled to be taken seriously as an artist and filmmaker. Her marriage to Michael Snow (b. 1928), also a successful artist, may have both helped and hindered her career. Certainly no

other Canadian artist from this period was as committed to exploring the social performance of gender. The scholarship of Lauren Rabinovitz and Kay Armatage has laid the foundations for a feminist interpretation and analysis of Wieland's career, an approach furthered by other authors.



Joyce Wieland, *Heart On*, 1961, red electrical tape, chalk, crayon, and ink, with linen and wool on unstretched canvas, 177.8 x 251.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Feminism plays itself out in various ways in Wieland's art practice: as it relates to sexuality and embodiment; through the reclamation of needlecraft, otherwise known as "women's work"; and with the creation of a heroine in her feature film *The Far Shore*, 1976. The emphasis on sex and bodies appears early in Wieland's work. We find it as a sly insertion into an abstract painting such as *Redgasm*, 1960, while her multimedia work *Heart On*, 1961, evokes sexuality with its red markings that resemble menstrual bloodstains. Many of Wieland's Pop art-influenced paintings from the mid-1960s feature cartoon-like penises; this comic attitude toward male genitalia suggests a confident and emancipated woman. In Wieland's film *Water Sark*, 1965, her interest in reflection and perception had her aim the camera toward both her domestic environment and her own naked body.

Wieland was also a leader when it came to the feminist reappropriation of quilting, sewing, and knitting. Historically girls and women had perfected these practices in domestic and community contexts, with no expectation that the results would be recognized as significant artworks. By incorporating cloth and sewing into her art

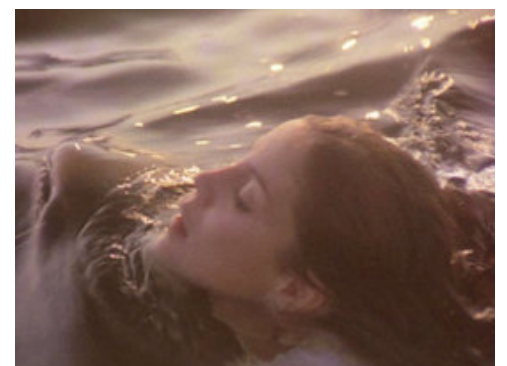
practice, and by exhibiting these new objects alongside more conventionally appreciated paintings and sculptures, Wieland challenges the age-old institutional hierarchy that debases the value of women's work.



Joyce Wieland, *I Love Canada—J'aime le Canada*, 1970, cotton and metal link chain, 153.1 x 304.7 cm, MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina

In her art practice, folk art and craft are ingeniously interwoven with impulses drawn from Pop and Conceptual art. *O Canada Animation*, 1970, for instance, consists of neat strands of hand-embroidered red lips mouthing the words of the national anthem. Embroidery is used to replicate handwritten letters, as in *Montcalm's Last Letter / Wolfe's Last Letter*, 1971, or to create dialogue, as in *The Water Quilt*. Wieland also produced stitched and knitted works in the form of quilt-like hangings, cushion-like objects, language-based cloth assemblages, and other hybrid art objects. She did not accomplish all this singlehandedly: on a number of occasions she hired women who were expert needleworkers to execute her designs.

Wieland alluded to gendered experience throughout her art practice, but it was her feature film *The Far Shore* that allowed her to invent a fully complex female character, positioned at the centre of Canadian art history. In this alternative-history tale, Eulalie de Chicoutimi is the lover of a character based on Tom Thomson (1877–1917), but she is no simple muse for the male artist. The film tells her story as an unhappily married woman, and the male artist appears as her object of desire. A musician herself, Eulalie shares the painter's passion for the land as she attempts to find her place in the world. Wieland had created a detailed storyboard for this film—whose full professional crew included the respected Canadian cinematographer Richard Leiterman⁴—and she ensures that the camera positioning and movement correspond to Eulalie's experience.



Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore*, 1976, 35mm film, colour, sound, 105 min., Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

The melodrama that Wieland uses to construct the story is also important, revealing the domestic and ideological constraints faced by women.

As a twentieth-century artist searching for new forms of expression, Wieland was evidently empowered by feminism. Her artistic production should be considered as part of a wide-ranging “feminist revolution”: her paintings, assemblages, and films eloquently address the changing social status of women, while challenging the customary exclusion of female experience from the realm of art and aesthetics.

Environment, Ecology, and Landscape

Joyce Wieland was deeply responsive to the natural environment, both as an activist and as an artist/filmmaker. In the early 1960s she spoke out against the widespread use of pesticides, and in later years she was involved in other ecological causes and protested the construction of massive hydroelectric dams in northern Canada. By the time of her 1971 National Gallery of Canada exhibition, her artworks often focused on the land, usually avoiding the conventional format of landscape pictures. A work such as *The Water Quilt*, for instance, packs a powerful ecological and political message about the North by presenting a grid of delicately embroidered arctic flowers that is literally underwritten by a printed text—one that criticizes Canada’s free-market sale of resources

such as water and energy. Another non-traditional depiction of the land is *Arctic Passion Cake*, 1971, an actual cake measuring 1.67 metres across, covered with snow-white frosting and encrusted with emblems and allegorical figures (the bronze sculptures *Bear and Spirit of Canada*, 1970–71, and *The Spirit of Canada Suckles the French and English Beavers*, 1970–71).

The *True Patriot Love* bookwork is also a piece of unconventional landscape art, with its page-after-page montage of photographs, maps, mementos, and handwritten notes evoking the layers of meaning that accumulate as people occupy or move through environments. In other instances Wieland’s approach to the natural environment is less overtly political and more comical: *109 Views*, 1970–71, features landscape imagery, except that each separate “view” in this monumental (8-metre-long) work is hand-stitched out of scraps of colourful fabric. During the late 1960s and early 1970s Wieland’s experimental attitude toward landscape art was shared by fellow Canadian artists such as Jeff Wall (b. 1946), N.E. Thing Co., Jack Chambers (1931–1978), and Michael Snow. These artists might all have wilfully deviated from the wilderness paradigm associated with the Group of Seven, but it was Wieland more than any of her compatriots who seemed determined to reinvent the aesthetic category of “Canadian landscape.”



Wieland’s *True Patriot Love* exhibition opening on July 1, 1971, at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

The Canadianness of landscape art was explored in Wieland's films as well, in the three that she described as a trilogy: *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968; *Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion*, 1969; and *The Far Shore*, 1976. Made at the height of the Vietnam War, the first is an animal fable in which Canada becomes a utopian destination for the rodent heroes who are fleeing a militarized American state. *Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion*, made the following year, shows coast-to-coast scenery rushing by in a technological blur, interrupted occasionally by a patriotic symbol and, in the middle, images of Pierre Elliott Trudeau from the 1968 Liberal convention.

These first two titles are part of Wieland's experimental/underground film production, whereas *The Far Shore* is a feature-length

fiction film set in 1919, with a cast of invented characters who interact with a thinly disguised Tom Thomson figure. These are dramatically different films in style and sensibility, and yet they form a genuine trilogy: in all cases Canada's natural environment comes into focus—not as some detached object of beauty but rather in relation to politics, social relations, nationalism, art, and human agency.

In the 1980s Joyce Wieland returned to painting, and once again the representation of natural environments would become central to a body of work. The paintings from this period are very different, however, from the earlier assemblages and films, notably because the locations are no longer identifiably Canadian. With their intense colours and almost psychedelic effects, Wieland's late landscapes are environments that reverberate across time and space.



Installation view of Wieland's *Arctic Passion Cake*, 1971, mixed-media construction, part of the artist's *True Patriot Love* exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Wieland's *La raison avant la passion*, 1968, is visible in the background

Style & Technique

PART 4

Joyce Wieland explored a wide range of materials, media, and subject matter in her work. Three major impulses dominate the evolution of her visual art: the legacy of painting, the emergence of a cinematic style as she experimented with filmmaking, and the adoption of traditional needlecrafts historically viewed as “women’s work.” In staging dramatic encounters between these three artistic modes, Wieland generated new forms of meaning and aesthetic pleasure.

Beyond Painting

Wieland began and ended her career as a painter: the artistic tradition remained important to her, even when she was not wielding a paintbrush. The paintings she first exhibited share qualities with the modernist abstraction of the Toronto group Painters Eleven and other international abstract art movements in the 1950s. However, by 1960 Wieland was already adding words, graffiti-like scribbles, and crudely drawn intimate body parts to otherwise abstract paintings, as well as cloth and assorted objects to her canvases. In other instances she drops in pop culture elements such as speech balloons to interrupt the terrain of abstract art, as in her 1963 work *Stranger in Town*. Thus Wieland sustained a dialogue with the legacy of abstract painting over a period of several years. She remained attentive to formal concerns but also playfully pushed the boundaries of what could be done to the painted surface. In this respect Wieland can be compared to the American artists Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) and Jasper Johns (b. 1930).

Soon Wieland's imagination would be taken over by cinematic paradigms, and then she not only made films but also allowed the logic of films to determine the shape and structure of her paintings. Some paintings are narrow and vertically oriented, mimicking film strips, as in *First Integrated Film with a Short on Sailing*. Other canvases are divided into grids and offer film-like narrative sequences, complete with jump cuts, close-ups, and other filmic devices, as in *Boat Tragedy*.

From the latter 1960s until the 1980s Wieland rarely painted, but she continued to engage with the medium's influence in specific ways. Her quilts and plastic assemblages are hung on gallery walls, just like paintings. In one of her most striking fabric works, *109 Views*, 1970–71, she parodies a mass of landscape paintings, each one with its own frame, in a monumental assemblage measuring over 8 metres in length. Shown as part of Wieland's exhibition *True Patriot Love* at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971, this work illustrates her deep connection to Canada's national tradition of landscape art.



Joyce Wieland, *Young Woman's Blues*, 1964, wood, paint, found objects, and plastic, 53.3 x 30.5 x 22.2 cm, University of Lethbridge Art Collection



Installation view of Wieland's *109 Views*, 1970–71, quilted cloth assemblage, 256.5 x 802.6 cm, York University, Toronto

When Wieland finally returned to painting later in life, she often depicted fantastical or imaginary landscapes. Her practice of painting on canvas was a mode of image making

that remained integral to her vision over the years, even as she experimented with diverse materials and technologies.

The Impact of Needlework

In the 1960s and 1970s Wieland often incorporated sewing, knitting, quilting, and embroidery into her artworks—a radical decision for an artist at that time. These domestic skills are usually classified as craft, folk, or decorative traditions rather than art. The bias has deep cultural and institutional roots. What women traditionally did in the home tends to be undervalued, while museums isolate the great masterpieces of painting and sculpture (of course largely done by men), exhibiting them far away from supposed minor modes of material or visual culture. Wieland deliberately set out to reclaim this kind of “women’s work,” to acknowledge the skills, inventiveness, and shared knowledge embodied in a quilt or embroidered fabric.

While Wieland deliberately drew on traditional forms of needlework, she also brought these traditions into contact with twentieth-century artistic currents. Many of Wieland’s sewn and embroidered artworks prominently feature language, illustrating an affinity with linguistically based Conceptual art. Rather than replicating traditional samplers, Wieland included language in her art as a way to engage with contemporary political rhetoric. At times Wieland called attention both to the material properties of sewn artifacts and to the performative aspects of these traditions. Through “accidental” effects or close-up photos of stitches in the bookwork *True Patriot Love*, 1971, she exaggerates carefully sewn seams and loose threads to give the viewer a sense of an incomplete narrative.

Describing and labelling these polyvalent artworks is a challenge. The terms “fabric assemblage” and “quilted cloth assemblage” came into use to suggest that these are hybrid artifacts. As they engage with an avant-garde tradition of sculptural assemblage, Wieland’s artworks pay homage to domesticated folk traditions. In this regard she was on the cutting edge of feminist scholarship and artistic practice.

The American artist Judy Chicago (b. 1939) used needlework as a political tool in her installation *The Dinner Party*, produced between 1974 and 1979, and it was not until 1984 that Rozsika Parker’s groundbreaking book *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* was published.¹



Joyce Wieland, *The Camera's Eyes*, 1966, textile and wood, 203 x 202 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton

A Cinematic Style

During the 1960s Wieland sustained her visual art practice while branching out into experimental film. The exploration of cinematic framing, sequentiality, and narrative momentum was not limited to her actual filmmaking, though. She also set out to transfer these aspects of cinematic style to her visual art practice, making a range of paintings, assemblages, and fabric objects that in some way mimic or evoke films. During this period Jack Chambers (1931–1978) was also intent, in his own distinct way, on opening a dialogue between painting and cinema.²



Joyce Wieland, *Water Sark*, 1965, 16mm film, colour, sound, 13:30 min., National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

In 1971 the influential American film critic Andrew Sarris announced that “the talented Canadian Joyce Wieland leads the contingent of women film-makers in the experimental, abstract, poetic, avant-garde, underground categories.”³ Wieland achieved this reputation as she showed her films alongside those by other artists grouped around New York’s Film-Makers Cooperative, including Jonas Mekas (b. 1922), Hollis Frampton (1936–1984), Shirley Clarke (1919–1997), the Kuchar brothers (Mike, b. 1942; George, 1942–2011), Jack Smith (1932–1989), Flo Jacobs (b. c. 1933) and Ken Jacobs (b. 1933), and her husband, Michael Snow (b. 1928). Many of the films produced by these artists are short. They provide neither heroes nor romantic leads for the audience to emotionally identify with, and they frequently dispense with a narrative line.

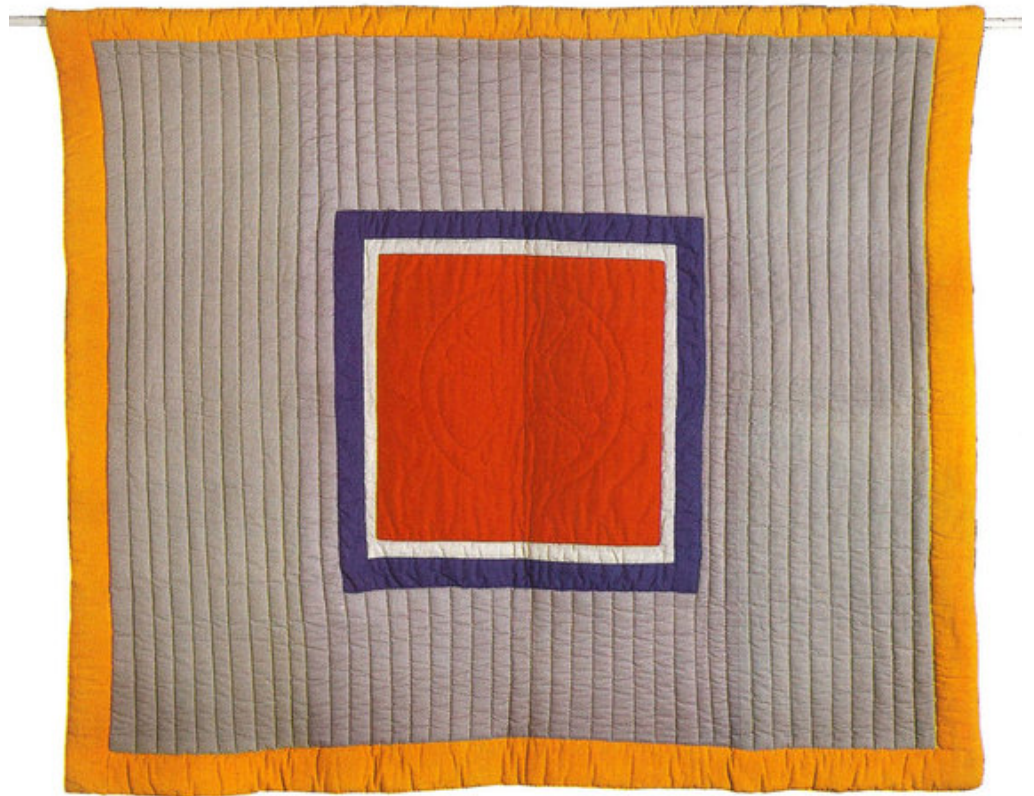
Wieland has often been associated with the Structural film movement, whose practitioners concentrated on the material properties of film, projection, light, and camera movement, while generally avoiding narrative completely. Wieland was never a perfect fit with the Structural school, though, and the term “underground film” is perhaps as appropriate, in that films from this genre and era are often rooted in subcultural or

countercultural social groups. Wieland was inspired by Jack Smith's cheaply made *Flaming Creatures*, 1963, a fantastical vision of cross-dressing made by Smith and his friends.⁴ Engaging with both underground and Structural approaches to filmmaking, Wieland's films unravel the material qualities of the cinematic image, while also introducing storylines related to politics, patriotism, sexuality, embodiment, and other themes of interest to the counterculture.

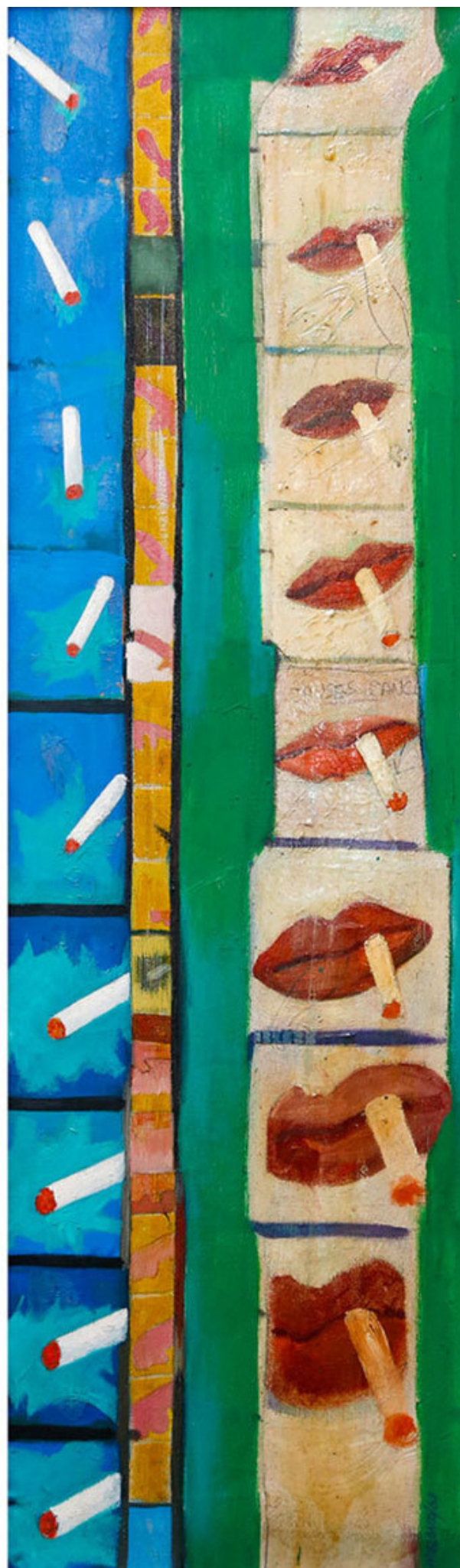
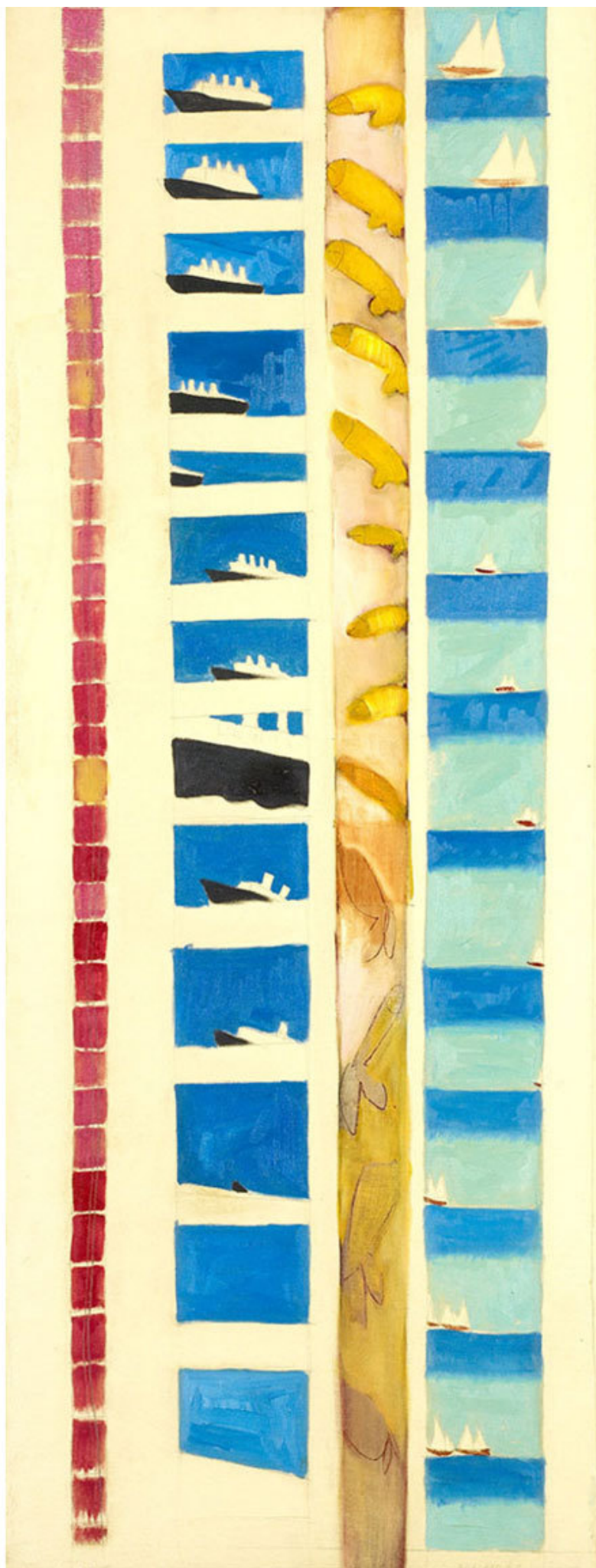
While Wieland was making films—such as *Patriotism II*, 1964; *Water Sark*, 1965; *Hand Tinting*, 1967; and *Sailboat*, 1967—she was also creating paintings, plastic assemblages, and quilts using diverse materials that transform and adapt cinematic language and technique. From 1963 onward many of her paintings are divided into frames that are read sequentially, implying both movement and narrative progression, even when the storyline is as rudimentary as the plight of a sinking ship, as in *Boat Tragedy*, 1964, or a romantic kiss, as in *First Integrated Film with a Short on Sailing*, 1963. These paintings often include cinematic devices such as frame-by-frame advances to a close-up, as if in a deconstructed zoom, and sudden shifts of perspective.

In 1966–67 Wieland made a series of soft hanging sculptures using plastic. These sculptures resemble vertical strips of film and are explicitly titled “film” or “movie,” as in *Stuffed Movie*, 1966. In the quilts she made in 1966, such as *The Camera's Eyes* and *Film Mandala*, the familiar geometric aspect of traditional quilts now accommodates the square form of an old movie camera and the round shape of the lens.

The recurrence of cinematic motifs in Wieland's art practice is a clear acknowledgement of the profound impact that movies had on all aspects of twentieth-century visual culture. By complementing her actual filmmaking with hybrid art forms that borrow aspects of cinematic experience, Wieland contributed to a new way of making art in the 1960s—between and across media.



Joyce Wieland, *Film Mandala*, 1966, quilted cloth, 138 x 160 cm, private collection



LEFT: Joyce Wieland, *Flicks Pics #4*, 1963, oil on canvas, 106.7 x 40.6 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto RIGHT: Joyce Wieland, *West 4th*, 1963, oil on canvas, 77 x 30 cm, collection of Dennis Reid



Where to See

PART 6

Joyce Wieland's artworks can be found in many public museums and galleries across Canada, including the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; the Vancouver Art Gallery; the MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina; the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Many of her paintings and multimedia works are in private and corporate collections, however, and without a comprehensive list (catalogue raisonné) of her works it is difficult to grasp the entire scope of Wieland's artistic production.

Wieland's films can be rented in DVD format, individually or in five separate volumes of a set titled *The Complete Works of Joyce Wieland, 1963–1986*, from the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, which provides an online catalogue of its holdings at www.cfmdc.org. Cinémathèque québécoise makes the DVDs available for viewing by appointment at its location in Montreal; see www.cinematheque.qc.ca.

Although the works listed below are held by the following institutions, they may not always be on view.

Art Gallery of Hamilton

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



Joyce Wieland, *March on Washington*, 1963
Oil on canvas
50.8 x 45.7 cm



Joyce Wieland, *The Camera's Eyes*, 1966
Textile and wood
203 x 202 cm



Joyce Wieland, *The Spirit of Canada Suckles the French and English Beavers*, 1970–71
Bronze
6 x 19.3 x 12.5 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario

317 Dundas Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1-877-225-4246 or 416-979-6648
ago.net



Joyce Wieland, *Boat Tragedy*, 1964
Oil on canvas
50 x 122 cm



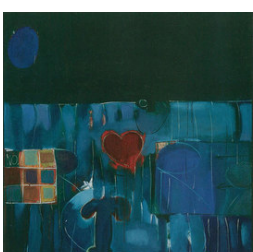
Joyce Wieland, *The Water Quilt*, 1970–71
Embroidered cloth and printed cloth assemblage
134.6 x 131.1 cm

Canada Council Art Bank

150 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
1-800-263-5588
artbank.ca



Joyce Wieland, *Cityscape*, 1960
Oil on canvas
127.5 x 152 cm



Joyce Wieland, *Notice Board*, 1961
Oil on Masonite
122.5 x 122 cm

Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre

401 Richmond Street West, Suite 245

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

416-588-0725

cfmdc.org



Joyce Wieland, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968

16mm film, colour, sound, 14 min. 30 s.



Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore*, 1976

16mm film, colour, sound, 105 min.

Mackenzie Art Gallery

3475 Albert Street

Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

306-584-4250

mackenzieartgallery.ca



Joyce Wieland, *I Love Canada—J'aime le Canada*, 1970

Cotton and metal link chain

153.1 x 304.7 cm

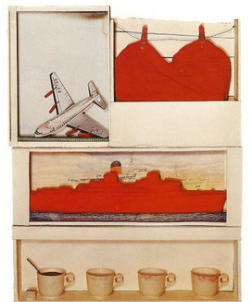
National Gallery of Canada

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



Joyce Wieland, *Heart On*, 1961

Red electrical tape, chalk, crayon, and ink, with linen and wool on unstretched canvas
177.8 x 251.5 cm



Joyce Wieland, *Cooling Room II*, 1964

Metal toy airplane, cloth, metal wire, plastic boat, paper collage, ceramic cups with lipstick, and spoon, mounted in painted wooden case
114.4 x 94 x 18.3 cm



Joyce Wieland, *Reason over Passion*, 1968

Quilted cotton
256.5 x 302.3 x 8 cm



Joyce Wieland, *La raison avant la passion*, 1968

Quilted cotton
244.7 x 305.5 x 8 cm



Joyce Wieland, *O Canada*, 1970

Lithograph in red on wove paper
57.4 x 76.4 cm

University of Lethbridge Art Gallery

4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada
403-329-2666
uleth.ca/artgallery



Joyce Wieland, *Cooling Room No. 1*, 1964

Wood, metal, and plastic
73.7 x 58.9 x 27.9 cm



Joyce Wieland, *Young Woman's Blues*, 1964

Wood, paint, found objects, and plastic
53.3 x 30.5 x 22.2 cm

Vancouver Art Gallery

750 Hornby Street
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
604-662-4700
vanartgallery.bc.ca



Joyce Wieland, *Stuffed Movie*, 1966

Mixed media
142.2 x 36.8 cm

Notes

Biography

1. Wieland, quoted in Myrna Kostash, "Women as Film-makers: Hey, It's Happening!," *Miss Chatelaine*, Winter 1973.
-

Significance & Critical Issues

1. Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989; first published 1961), 7.
 2. Barry Lord, *The History of Painting in Canada: A People's View* (Toronto: NC Press, 1974), 214.
 3. Wieland was not included in the Los Angeles exhibition in 2007. The exhibition, curated by Cornelia Butler, was accompanied by a catalogue: Cornelia Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, eds., *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).
 4. Richard Leiterman won the 1976 Canadian Film Award (later called the Genie Awards) for cinematography for *The Far Shore*.
-

Key Works: Reason over Passion

1. Tom Rossiter, "Weiland vs. Picasso: Patriotism's Absurdities Lose to Art," *Ottawa Citizen*, August 7, 1971. Note: the artist's name is misspelled throughout the article.
 2. Kristy Holmes, "Negotiating Citizenship: Joyce Wieland's *Reason over Passion*," in *The Sixties: Passion, Politics and Style*, ed. Dimitry Anastakis (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 42–70.
-

Key Works: Rat Life & Diet in North America

1. Jonas Mekas, "Movie Journal," *Village Voice*, April 3, 1969. This was his opinion after watching the film eight times.
-

Key Works: O Canada

1. John O'Brian, "Anthem Lip-Sync," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 21, nos. 1, 2 (2000): 144.
-

Key Works: The Water Quilt

1. James Laxer, *The Energy Poker Game: The Politics of the Continental Resources Deal* (Toronto & Chicago: New Press, 1970).
-

Key Works: True Patriot Love

1. In 1999 Wieland's *True Patriot Love / Véritable amour patriotique* bookwork was included in the influential exhibition *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s*, at the Queens Museum of Art, and in the accompanying catalogue. See Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss, *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (Queens, NY: Queens Museum of Art, 1999).

Key Works: The Far Shore

1. Lauren Rabinovitz, "The Far Shore: Feminist Family Melodrama," *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, ed. Kathryn Elder (Toronto: Cinematheque Ontario, 1999; first published 1987), 123.

2. Wieland's discussion of these films as a trilogy appears in Adele Lister, "Joyce Wieland," *Criteria* 2, no. 1 (February 1976): 15.

Style & Technique

1. Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: Women's Press, 1984).

2. See Mark Cheetham, *Jack Chambers: Life & Work* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2013). www.aci-iac.ca/jack-chambers.

3. Andrew Sarris, "Films in Focus," *Village Voice*, March 18, 1971, 65.

4. "When I saw *Flaming Creatures* something went 'pop'.... It was the biggest release to know that that was possible." Wieland, cited in Lauren Rabinovitz, "An Interview with Joyce Wieland," *Afterimage*, May 1981, 8.

Glossary

Abstract Expressionism

A style that flourished in New York in the 1940s and 1950s, 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.

catalogue raisonné

A meticulously researched listing of an artist's entire oeuvre, with information including the medium, date, dimensions, provenance, and exhibition history recorded for each work. Typically compiled by scholars, catalogues raisonné are indispensable tools in advancing awareness and understanding of a given artist.

Chambers, Jack (Canadian, 1931–1978)

A London, Ontario, painter and avant-garde filmmaker, whose meditative paintings typically depict domestic subjects. Chambers was committed to regionalism, despite the international outlook he developed during five years of artistic training in Madrid. He was one of the founders of CARFAC, Canada's artists' rights protection agency. (See *Jack Chambers: Life & Work* by Mark Cheetham.)

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.

Clarke, Shirley (American, 1919–1997)

An important figure in American avant-garde cinema in the 1950s, and one of the New York scene's few women filmmakers. In the 1960s Clarke pursued social concerns with her documentary filmmaking; her 1967 film *Portrait of Jason* is considered a watershed in the history of LGBT film.

colour-field painting

A term first used to describe Abstract Expressionist works that use simplified or minimalist forms of flat or nuanced colour, as in paintings by Morris Louis. It was later applied to works by such artists as Kenneth Noland and Barnett Newman in the United States and Jack Bush in Canada, whose geometric or abstract motifs highlight variations in colour. Post-Painterly Abstraction, a description coined by the critic Clement Greenberg, includes colour-field painting.

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.

Coughtry, Graham (Canadian, 1931–1999)

An influential painter and teacher known for his conceptual use of colour, expressive brushwork, and abstract representations of the human figure. Coughtry's first exhibition was with Michael Snow in 1955; he went on to represent Canada at the Bienal de São Paulo of 1959 and the Venice Biennale of 1960.

Curnoe, Greg (Canadian, 1936–1992)

A central figure in London regionalism from the 1960s to the early 1990s, Curnoe was a painter, printmaker, and graphic artist who found inspiration in his life and his Southwestern Ontario surroundings. His wide-ranging art interests included Surrealism, Dada, Cubism, and the work of many individual artists, both historical and contemporary.

Frampton, Hollis (American, 1936–1984)

Initially known as a photographer, Frampton is now largely remembered for his theoretical writings and experimental, non-narrative films. He was also an influential teacher of film, film history, photography, and design, holding posts at various institutions in the New York area during the last twenty-five years of his life.

Frankenthaler, Helen (American, 1928–2011)

A New York School artist who developed specific techniques to create atmospheric effects in her paintings, including blotting and staining unprepared canvas with thin pigments. Frankenthaler also experimented with woodcuts, colour printing, and sculpture.

Greenberg, Clement (American, 1909–1994)

A highly influential art critic and essayist known primarily for his formalist approach and his contentious concept of modernism, which he first outlined in his 1961 article "Modernist Painting." Greenberg was, notably, an early champion of Abstract Expressionists, including Jackson Pollock and the sculptor David Smith.

grid

A structural basis for paintings formed by a series of lines crossing each other at right angles, used most famously by Piet Mondrian. Grids affirm the common characteristics of modern painting: flatness and "all-overness," as the critic Clement Greenberg described it.

Group of Seven

A progressive and nationalistic school of landscape painting in Canada, active between 1920 (the year of the group's first exhibition, at the Art Gallery of Toronto) and 1933.

Founding members were the artists Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Franz Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley.

Isaacs Gallery

A Toronto art gallery opened in 1955 by Avrom Isaacs. Originally called the Greenwich Gallery, it supported emerging Canadian artists—including Michael Snow, Graham Coughtry, Joyce Wieland, and Robert Markle—and hosted poetry readings, experimental music performances, and film screenings.

Jacobs, Flo (American, b. c. 1933)

An actor and the long-time artistic collaborator of her husband of fifty years, the filmmaker Ken Jacobs. She appears in many of his films, as well as in movies by their son, Azazel Jacobs, and those of Jonas Mekas.

Jacobs, Ken (American, b. 1933)

A filmmaker and professor of cinema, and a key figure in New York experimental cinema of the 1960s. Jacobs studied painting with Hans Hofmann before taking up film in 1955. In 1966 he founded New York's Millennium Film Workshop, a co-operative that supported and encouraged underground filmmakers.

Johns, Jasper (American, b. 1930)

One of the most significant figures in twentieth-century American art, Johns—a painter, printmaker, and sculptor—is credited, with Robert Rauschenberg, with renewing interest in figurative painting following Abstract Expressionism's dominance of the New York scene. Among his best-known works are those incorporating the motif of the American flag.

Kuchar brothers (Mike, American, b. 1942; George, American, 1942–2011)

Twin brothers and experimental filmmakers, active from their teenage years on the New York film scene alongside Andy Warhol, Stan Brackhage, Ken Jacobs, Michael Snow, and Joyce Wieland. The Kuchars' renowned 8mm films include *I Was a Teenage Rumpot*, 1960, and *The Devil's Cleavage*, 1973—ultra-low-budget versions of Hollywood genre movies.

Leiterman, Richard (Canadian, 1935–2005)

A cinematographer whose technical creativity and sensitive style helped shape the look of English-Canadian film in the formative 1960s and 1970s. Leiterman worked in television and on numerous milestone documentaries and feature films; he was the cinematographer for Joyce Wieland's 1976 film *The Far Shore*.

Lichtenstein, Roy (American, 1923–1997)

A significant American Pop artist known for appropriating the forms of comic books. His large-scale paintings enlarge the motifs of his source material, highlighting their artificiality and the compositional rules that govern their appearance. In the 1960s Lichtenstein began to work with offset lithography, the medium of commercial printing.

Louis, Morris (American, 1912–1962)

An abstract painter whose minimalist approach anticipated Minimalism proper. Using techniques learned from Helen Frankenthaler, he stained and streaked his canvases and submerged them in colour baths, producing forms that referred more to the medium of painting than to any external reality.

McCarthy, Doris (Canadian, 1910–2010)

Trained by members of the Group of Seven, McCarthy went on to produce hundreds of landscape and abstract paintings and educate generations of students over the course of her remarkable eighty-year career. She was the first female president of the Ontario Society of Artists.

Mekas, Jonas (Lithuanian/American, b. 1922)

Considered the godfather of American avant-garde cinema, Mekas began making 16mm films upon arriving in New York in 1949. He was instrumental in forging and advocating for the city's underground film scene. He organized screenings, founded the journal *Film Culture*, co-founded the Anthology Film Archives, and collaborated with artists including Salvador Dalí, Allen Ginsberg, John Lennon, and Andy Warhol.

modernism

A movement extending from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century in all the arts, modernism rejected academic traditions in favour of innovative styles developed in response to contemporary industrialized society. Beginning in painting with the Realist movement led by Gustave Courbet, it progressed through Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism and on to abstraction. By the 1960s anti-authoritarian postmodernist styles such as Pop art, Conceptual art, and Neo-Expressionism blurred the distinction between high art and mass culture.

N.E. Thing Co.

The incorporated business and artistic handle of Iain and Ingrid Baxter, which the couple founded in 1966 to explore the interactions between their daily lives and various cultural systems. The artworks produced by the N.E. Thing Co. are among the earliest examples of Conceptual art in Canada. It was disbanded in 1978.

Painters Eleven

An artists' group active from 1953 to 1960, formed by eleven Abstract Expressionist Toronto-area painters, including Harold Town, Jack Bush, and William Ronald. They joined together in an effort to increase their exposure, given the limited interest in abstract art in Ontario at the time.

Pop art

A movement of the late 1950s to early 1970s in Britain and the United States, which adopted imagery from commercial design, television, and cinema. Pop art's most recognized proponents are Richard Hamilton, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein.

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.

Rayner, Gordon (Canadian, 1935–2010)

A prominent artist in Toronto from the early 1960s, Rayner explored in both painting and sculpture the complex relationship between representation and abstraction. He was a member of the Artists' Jazz Band.

Smith, Jack (American, 1932–1989)

An important figure in the New York underground cinema scene of the 1950s and 1960s, despite gaining little recognition during his life. Smith was inspired by B movies and interested in exaggerated performance, and while his films are campy and sexually provocative they are also poignant commentaries on sincerity and theatricality.

Snow, Michael (Canadian, b. 1928)

An artist whose paintings, films, photographs, sculptures, installations, and musical performances 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.)

Structural film

A term coined by the American film historian P. Adams Sitney in the late 1960s to describe films that privilege form over narrative, with the audience asked to consider a work's construction rather than its plot—a new trend in avant-garde cinema at the time.

tableau

French for "picture," the term *tableau* refers to a formal grouping of people or objects, a striking scene.

Thomson, Tom (Canadian, 1877–1917)

A seminal figure in the creation of a national school of painting, whose bold vision of Algonquin Park—aligned stylistically with Post-Impressionism and Art Nouveau—has come to symbolize both the Canadian landscape and Canadian landscape painting. Thomson and the members of what would in 1920 become the Group of Seven profoundly influenced one another's work.

Wall, Jeff (Canadian, b. 1946)

A leading figure in contemporary photography since the 1980s, whose conceptual, life-size colour prints and backlit transparencies often refer to historical painting and cinema. Wall's work exemplifies the aesthetic of what is sometimes called the Vancouver School, which includes the photographers Vikky Alexander, Stan Douglas, Rodney Graham, and Ken Lum, among others.

Warhol, Andy (American, 1928–1987)

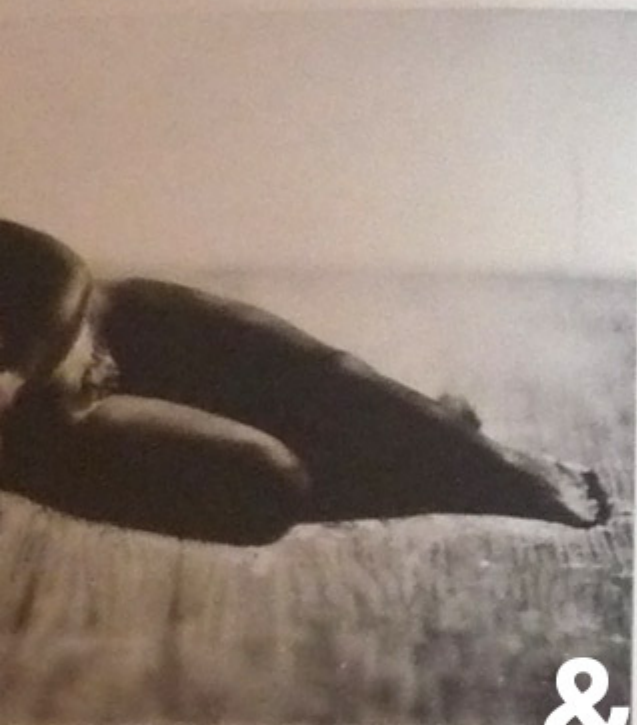
One of the most important artists of the twentieth century and a central figure in Pop art. With his serial screen prints of commercial items like Campbell's Soup cans and portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Elvis, Warhol defied the notion of the artwork as a singular, handcrafted object.

adows. Arctic coast of Alaska to Mackenzie. E. Asia.

2. ANDROSACE L.

- 1. *A. septentrionalis*
- 2. *A. Chamaejasme* var. *arctica*

s.lat.—Small tufted plants with a rosette of



ar- any ng,

or

77.

E— im- oth us, to ge.

ne

Sources & Resources

greyish-green, linear, somewhat fleshy leaves, to 30 cm. tall, terminating in a hemispherical Calyx 6 to 7 mm. long, dry and scarious with lobes, the tube densely pilose on the 10 ribs, veen. Petals rose pink. Fruit indehiscent

ains and lake shores. A western race, ssp. h the grooves between the ribs of the calyx may occur in the westernmost islands of the

mphi-Atlantic, arctic. FIG. 60,e,f (ssp. MAP 279.



FIGURE 60. a. *Lomatogonium rotatum*. b. *Polemonium* d. *M. Drummondii* (after Williams, 1944) e, f. *Armeria maritima* ssp. *labradorica*. (2/5; d 1/2; f, g 3/1)

31. GENTIANACEAE G

Sketch for Sculpture in bronze SKetch f

PART 5



L'esprit Canadian donne la t
spirit of Canada suckles the F

Joyce Wieland's art was widely known in Canada during her lifetime, largely owing to two important exhibitions—her solo show at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971 and a retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1987. Although there have been no more recent major exhibitions of Wieland's artwork, her films circulate internationally. Film scholars and art historians continue to have lively discussions about Wieland's impact on the art world.



Invitation to the opening of *Joyce Wieland Retrospective, 1957–67* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1968

Key Exhibitions

Wieland had numerous solo exhibitions at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto throughout her career: 1960, 1962, 1963, 1967, 1972, 1974, 1981, 1983.

1968

1968, *Five Films by Joyce Wieland*, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

January 9–February 4, 1968, *Joyce Wieland Retrospective, 1957–67*, Vancouver Art Gallery.

1969

February–March 1969, *Joyce Wieland Retrospective*, Glendon College Art Gallery, York University, Toronto.

1971

July 2–August 8, 1971, *True Patriot Love*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Artist's bookwork.

1980

1980, *Joyce Wieland and Judy Chicago*, Powerhouse Gallery, Montreal.

1987

April 16–June 28, 1987, *Joyce Wieland Retrospective*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Subsequently travelled to Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown; Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton; MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina. Catalogue.

Writings by Wieland

True Patriot Love / Véritable amour patriotique. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971. Artist's bookwork.

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Joyce Wieland: Writings and Drawings, 1952–1971. Edited by Jane Lind. Erin, ON: Porcupine's Quill, 2009.

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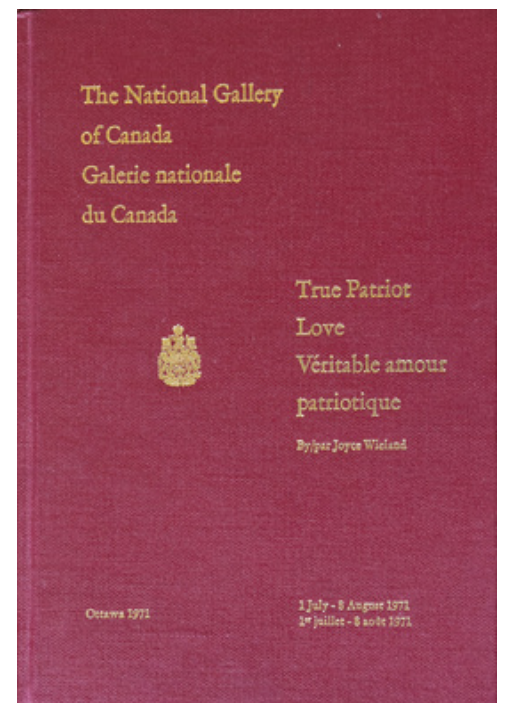
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Joyce Wieland's bookwork *True Patriot Love*, 1971, which accompanied her exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada

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Lippard, Lucy. "Watershed." In *Joyce Wieland*, edited by Marie Fleming, 1–16. Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987. Exhibition catalogue.

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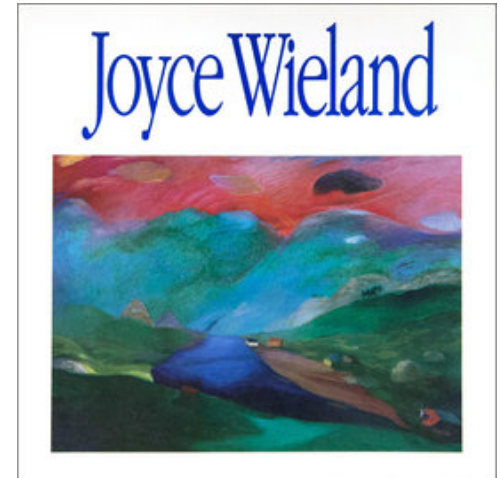
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Armatage, Kay, dir. *Artist on Fire: The Work of Joyce Wieland*. Dominion Pictures, 1987. 16mm film, colour, 54 min.

Wieland, Joyce. *The Complete Works of Joyce Wieland, 1963–86*. Toronto: Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, 2011. Boxed set of five DVDs. Accompanied by critical texts by scholars Kristy Holmes, Anne Low, Allyson Mitchell, Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof, Johanne Sloan, and Leila Sujir.

This set includes all of Wieland’s films and is available from the CFMDC and Cinémathèque québécoise.

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Joyce Wieland in her studio in 1962, photographed by Michel Lambeth

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About the Author

Johanne Sloan

Johanne Sloan is Professor of Art History at Concordia University in Montreal. Her teaching and research encompass aspects of Canadian and international art since the 1960s, urban art and visual culture, and landscape art and aesthetics. She is the principal investigator for the collaborative research project *Networked Art Histories: Assembling Contemporary Art in Canada*, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2013–16). She has written on the aesthetics of material culture (catalogue for Québec Triennial 2011, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal), and has described how contemporary artists are reinterpreting the *plein air* artistic gesture (catalogue for *À ciel ouvert: Le nouveau pleinairisme*, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2012). She co-edited, with Rhona Richman Kenneally, *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir* (University of Toronto Press, 2010) and continues to conduct research on the expanded-cinema experiments at Montreal's Expo 67. She also edited the interdisciplinary volume of essays *Urban Enigmas: Montreal, Toronto and the Problem of Comparing Cities* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

She has published extensively on Joyce Wieland as an artist and filmmaker, including *Joyce Wieland's The Far Shore* (University of Toronto Press, 2010), about Wieland's 1976 feature film. She places Wieland in the context of countercultural and "new left" politics in "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left, and the Question of Political Art in Canada" (*Journal of Canadian Art History*, 2005), and considers the conceptually inflected landscape art of both Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow in "Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow: Conceptual Landscape Art," in *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*, edited by John O'Brian and Peter White (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).



“ I first became interested in Joyce Wieland’s art practice because of her idiosyncratic way of transforming national symbols. Eventually I realized that during the 1960s and 1970s Wieland created a varied and complex body of work, and that she deserves to be recognized as one of Canada’s most innovative twentieth-century artists. ”

—
Johanne Sloan

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Joyce Wieland, *O Canada*, 1970. (See below for details.)

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Biography: Joyce Wieland in 1961, photographed by Michel Lambeth. Estate of Michel Lambeth.



Key Works: Joyce Wieland, *Notice Board*, 1961. (See below for details.)



Significance & Critical Issues: Joyce Wieland, *Confedspread*, 1967. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore*, 1976. (See below for details.)



Sources & Resources: Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love* bookwork, 1971. (See below for details.)



Where to See: Installation view of Joyce Wieland's "True Patriot Love" exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.

Credits for Works by Joyce Wieland



The Battery, 1963. Private collection. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Betsy Ross, Look What They've Done to the Flag You Made with Such Care, 1966. Private collection. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Boat Tragedy, 1964. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



The Camera's Eyes, 1966. Art Gallery of Hamilton, Gift of Irving Zucker, 1992. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo: Carlo Catenazzi, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



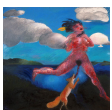
Cityscape, 1960. Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa. Photo credit: Yvan Boulerice. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Confedspread, 1967. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



Cooling Room No. 1, 1964. From the University of Lethbridge Art Collection; Gift of Vivian and David Campbell, 1989. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



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I Love Canada—J'aime le Canada, 1970. MacKenzie Art Gallery, University of Regina Collection. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo credit: Don Hall.



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March on Washington, 1963. Art Gallery of Hamilton, Gift of Irving Zucker, 1992. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Notice Board, 1961. Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa. Photo credit: Yvan Boulerice. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



O Canada, 1970. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



La raison avant la passion, 1968. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



Rat Life and Diet in North America, 1968. Collection: Cinémathèque québécoise / © Cinémathèque québécoise.



Reason over Passion, 1968. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



Reason over Passion / La raison avant la passion, 1969. Collection: Cinémathèque québécoise / © Cinémathèque québécoise.



The Spirit of Canada Suckles the French and English Beavers, 1970–71, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Gift of Irving Zucker, 1992. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Stranger in Town, 1963. Unknown collection. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Stuffed Movie, 1966. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Murrin Estate Funds, VAG 68.6. Photo: Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



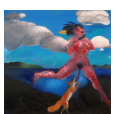
Summer Blues—Ball, 1961. Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston. Purchase, Chancellor Richardson Memorial Fund, 1992 (35-010). Photo credit: Bernard Clark.



True Patriot Love bookwork, 1971. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photograph by Kayla Rocca.



Untitled (Myself as a Young Girl), n.d. Unknown collection. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Untitled (Woman and Fox), 1986–88. Estate of Joyce Wieland. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



The Water Quilt, 1970–71. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Water Sark, 1965. Collection: Cinémathèque québécoise / © Cinémathèque québécoise.



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Young Woman's Blues, 1964. From the University of Lethbridge Art Collection; Purchased with funds provided by the Canada Council Special Purchase Grant, 1986. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

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Catalogue for the Art Gallery of Ontario exhibition *Joyce Wieland*, 1987, edited by Marie Fleming. (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario and Key Porter Books, 1987.) Photograph by Kayla Rocca.



Installation view of Joyce Wieland's *Arctic Passion Cake*, 1971, and *La raison avant la passion*, 1968, at the *True Patriot Love* exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



Installation view of Wieland's *Arctic Passion Cake*, 1971, at the *True Patriot Love* exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



Installation view of Wieland's *Flag Arrangement*, 1970–71, at the *True Patriot Love* exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



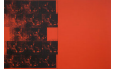
Installation view of Wieland's *109 Views*, 1970–71. York University, Toronto. © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photograph by Kayla Rocca.



Invitation to *Joyce Wieland: New Paintings at the Isaacs Gallery*, Toronto, 1963. York University Libraries, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, Avrom Issacs fonds (F0134), Accession 1996-036/033 (10). York University, Toronto, F0445 S00036. Photograph by Kayla Rocca.



Invitation to the opening of *Joyce Wieland Retrospective, 1957–67* at the Vancouver Art Gallery. York University Libraries, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, Avrom Issacs fonds (F0134), Accession 1996-036/033 (10). Photograph by Kayla Rocca.



Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times, 1963, by Andy Warhol. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, inc. / SODRAC (2014). Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.



Prime Minister Trudeau at the Liberal Leadership Convention in Ottawa in 1968. Library and Archives Canada / Credit: Duncan Cameron / PA-111213.



Wieland and Michael Snow in 1964, photographed by John Reeves. Courtesy of John Reeves.



Wieland in her studio in 1962, photographed by Michel Lambeth. Estate of Michel Lambeth.



Wieland in New York in 1964, photographed by John Reeves. Courtesy of John Reeves.



Wieland in 1955, photographed by Warren Collins.



Wieland in 1988, photographed by Michael Torosian. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Michael Torosian.



Wieland working on *O Canada* in 1970, photographed by Robert Rogers. Photography Credit: Robert Rogers. Courtesy of NSCAD University, Gallery Archives, Lithography Workshop Fonds.



Wieland's *True Patriot Love* exhibition opening on July 1, 1971, at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Unknown photographer.

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From the Author

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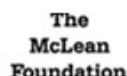
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