

Leslie Reid**ARTIST STATEMENT**

Over many years I have been engaged in a very personal exploration of our tenuous perception of ourselves, in relation to both our sensory and our emotional place in the world. The work, in painting, print, photography, and recently in video, explores the physicality of our experience, through the perceptual limits of light and space, and so seeks to engage, through the ambiguities experienced in this uncertain visual field, both a thought-provoking and a deeply resonant emotional response to the act of seeing, and ultimately to being.

The imagery is derived from photographs, often of liminal spaces, which are sometimes erased in the final work, and sometimes revealed. The experience of the photograph remains in references to photographic memory, light and dark patterning, tonality and depth of field.

Earlier works looked at the Canadian landscape, in particular Calumet Island, home of my maternal grandmother and of childhood summers spent in tents on the banks of the Ottawa River, and of the Pontiac and Gatineau regions. These works explored the land in its emptied isolation and in the traces of our passage there. Similar areas of England and France, where I lived for some time, also became sources of imagery.

At a critical moment of my life, I realized that I was editing out the most central focus of my life, motherhood; the photographs of rivers and fields from which the paintings were derived now contained my children. I chose to explore this seminal shift in imagery, and the intense ambiguities I found there, through a more critical feminist engagement based on theories of maternal ambivalence. For an extended period, the psychological reality of my lived experience of relationship has been the focus of the work, in texts and presentations as well; it is the ongoing examination of the personal in the world.

In all, in reflecting shared lives of fragility, hope and longing, the images are about the poignancy of standing the moment.

Born in Ottawa in 1947, Leslie Reid received her B.A. at Queen's University, after which she moved to England and studied at the Chelsea College of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art. She exhibited in the landmark exhibition "Some Canadian Women Artists" held at the National Gallery of Canada in celebration of the first International Women's Year, and she also represented Canada at the Paris Biennale. Major solo exhibitions have been held at Canada House Gallery, London, the Centre culturel canadien, Paris, the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, and the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa. A survey of 15 years work organized by the Ottawa Art Gallery toured in California and Georgia.



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Leslie Reid has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. She was artist-in-residence at the École nationale de la photographie in France and at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Her work is in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the Canada Council Art Bank, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal, the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Glenbow Museum, amongst others.

This will be the final group of works focusing on Reid's theme of motherhood and maternal ambivalence in visual art; in effect closing a chapter that has meant a great deal to an artist who has made varied and valuable contributions to art both locally and internationally.

Leslie Reid is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Visual Arts, University of Ottawa.

Exhibition Dates

February 24 to March 9, 2011

Reception with Artist

Thursday February 24, 2011

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