

in a single breath

SOPHIE JODOIN

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ARTEXTE

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Foreword

MANON TOURIGNY

Having arrived at Artex te in the fall of 2022, I never had the opportunity to follow Sophie Jodoin's long research process in our collection, but I still witnessed it. I occasionally caught a glimpse of her, focused and attentive to what she had found in the boxes she was looking through. She always had a notebook nearby, and its pages grew darker with each visit. I imagine she was writing down the names of the women she had selected to keep track of her research. Sometimes she would sit by the window and, with her cellphone camera, capture select fragments to create a new archive. Artex te's consultation space became her temporary studio.

In the interest of preservation, the entire collection is carefully treated and made available to artists, curators, art historians, students, and the broader public. Artex te holds over 9,018 artists' files, 5,761 of which are in section 410—Canadian artists. However, since these are not identified by gender, it's impossible to know the exact number of female artists' files. In her quest, Sophie Jodoin chose 135 of these. The names of these women, along with a few authors, can be found on the wall adjacent to the exhibition space. These are only a sampling, but we can assume that there are far fewer female artists' files than there are male ones, and even fewer for curators and writers.

elle précède celle qui suit [she precedes the one who follows]

This phrase is an excerpt from Sophie Jodoin's project *on entend son cœur battre à grands coups [we hear her heart beat fast and loud]* (2018). This phrase lingered in my mind. I felt like it was addressed directly to us, to the collection that we've held for more than forty years. The founders of Artex te preceded us, then they moved on. They built the foundations of this organization. Now we are here, as guardians of the documents that members of the visual arts community have given us for posterity. But, as Sophie Jodoin states in her text, there are gaps in our collection. In the history of art, women's contribution is too often forgotten. We must break this cycle and work toward increasing the number of files from women, non-binary and LGBTQIA2S+ people who are also artists, art critics, and curators. Sophie's research underlines the importance of promoting Artex te's mandate to every generation of artists and to all who contribute to bringing attention to art in the making.

To not forget. To recognize ourselves. To find ourselves. To tell ourselves. To see ourselves.

Finally.

On *in a single breath*

MOJEANNE BEHZADI

During her research residency at Artexte, artist Sophie Jodoin became intimately familiar with all the dormant files on Canadian women artists in our collection. Over the course of her extensive project, she tended to these documents with utmost care and respect, devising a rigorous process for surveying the contents of every file. She catalogued her findings carefully, by photographing, scanning, and photocopying each meaningful discovery. The artistic lens through which she has treated each image imbues the collected findings with a warm grey hue and surface texture emblematic of industrial photocopy prints. This Xerox quality serves both to unify the images and to immerse us into Jodoin's soft visual perspective, all the while highlighting the documentary nature of her source materials.

Central to Jodoin's considerations during her residency and for this exhibition is the notion of the archive. Her work calls attention to the importance of printed matter, venerates the act of documenting artistic practices, and pays tribute to organizations such as ours: the libraries and collections that catalogue these paper trails and ensure the posterity of creative pasts and presents. Her visual lexicon traces the act of safe-keeping and points to the infinite possibilities and continued relevance of material information, as both an alternative and a complement to ubiquitous digital information systems.

The exhibition's centrepiece is a filmic collage which consists of a selection of image and textual snapshots from Artexte's files. The facsimiles of these archival items are arranged in an associative sequence, creating a visual record in which Jodoin's voice blends with those of the women she invokes in her research; together, they converse in a single breath. To accompany the video, Sophie approached artist Karen Trask to create a piano piece as a score for the film. Using only two notes, which repeat slowly throughout the video, Trask's accompaniment fills the space with a haunting quality.

in a single breath is a love letter to women, to artists, to women artists, to mothers, to Jodoin's own mother—who is at the root of this quest for existential knowledge. The exhibition pays homage to the life force in women, chronicling their existence, witnessing their experiences, their inner worlds, their tribulations, across generations, across realities. Time is a significant component of the work. The many temporalities encountered across this sea of documents gesture at life itself and its precarity: our mortality. Time is felt in poetic citations, seasonal shifts, the light of day, the cosmos, the artist's own hands. Time is also invoked in the duration of Jodoin's project and her patient dedication in bringing all these moments together, to form a visual poem, a choir.

in a single breath

SOPHIE JODOIN

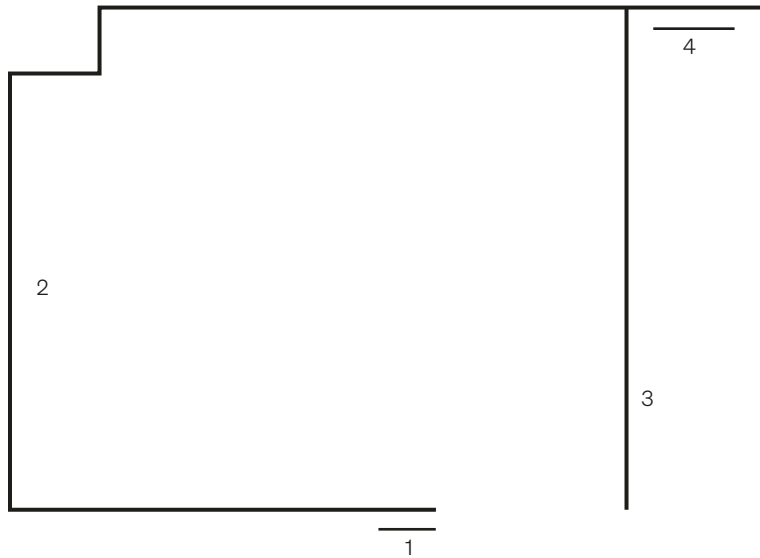
The exhibition *in a single breath* is a continuation of my work in which text, images, and selected fragments document the traces of a life. This project is the result of a generous invitation from Artexte to conduct a research residency based on their collection. By considering archives and writings as vectors of speech, and guided by my interest in filial bonds, an inventory gradually began to take shape between 2021 and 2022. Through a familiar working process of searching, collecting, and editing, this intuitive and methodical incursion allowed me to explore the entire archive of Canadian women artists in the 410 section of the collection, which led to a very personal rereading of its contents. How could I (re)embody these archives, (re)incarnate their voice, and translate them differently?

This residency was guided by the desire to take these artists out of their boxes, and sometimes out of oblivion, and treat each of them equally—with no regard for any hierarchy of age, practice, history, or geography—in the hope of creating a dialogue between them. Hundreds of visual and textual fragments were documented in the moment and the emotion of their discovery. Like a diary, together they form a personal lexicon of the mother-daughter relationship. The black and white projection revealed itself as a mode of presentation quite naturally since it allows several decades of creative work to coexist. What transpires is a kind of narrative river; a long, open poem; a polyphonic choir; an imagined sorority.

In Artexte's two-part exhibition space, *in a single breath* takes the form of an installation. In the main gallery, the projection scrolls through a series of still images that evoke the aesthetics of the document. It weaves an intimate and poetic narrative that oscillates between reality and fiction, past and present: a mother's portrait composed by her daughter through the many voices she has assembled. On the wall in the adjoining space, the names of the featured artists and authors are listed. On a nearby shelf, a book-based document combines names and images while also echoing the projection—its breath and rhythm. In this way, it becomes the project's trace and its archive.

in a single breath is the site of a personal and collective composition about desire, dreams, the banality of life, old age, memory, grief, and loss. It's an incomplete portrait that can be (re)deployed indefinitely. This exhibition is its first breath.

Gallery layout



1
Sophie Jodoin: Drawing Shadows: Portraits of my Mother / 2004
Artist's book in Artexte's collection

2
in a single breath / 2022-2023
Black and white video projection, 21 min 15 sec, 182 images in a loop
Soundtrack: Karen Trask, *Sketch for The Waves in E flat and F (conversation with my mother) / 2023*

3
List of the artists and authors featured in the video projection

4
Reference document for the video projection *in a single breath / 2023*
Black and white digital print, 380 bound pages
Edition 1/3

About the artist

SOPHIE JODOIN

Sophie Jodoin is a visual artist who questions various manifestations of femininity, intimacy, loss, absence, and language. Her hybrid work combines drawing, collage, writing, found objects, installation, and video. In 2017, she was the recipient of the Prix Louis-Comtois as well as the Prix Giverny Capital.

She lives and works in Tiohtià:ke/Mooniyang/Montréal.

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A very special thank you to all of the women artists in the 410 section of Artexte's collection who inspired this residency and without whom this project could not have happened, and to Karen Trask who agreed to revisit her composition *Sketch for The Waves in Eflat and F (conversation with my mother)*, which accompanies my projection *in a single breath*.

