

Erika DeFreitas: close magic February 13 - April 25, 2021

An image, less than a memory but more than a feeling, lingers. *A woman runs rosary beads between her fingers. A mother and daughter laugh hysterically to the point of tears. Two hands intertwine.* These simple yet vivid vignettes reveal something akin to muscle memory, where intellect and biology falter and intuition and magic take over. “It is impossible for language to fully articulate the experience of magic,” and so the body and art represent what cannot otherwise be expressed (*Photography Is Magic*, 2015, 2).

GALLERY HOURS

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Erika DeFreitas, *On Pincushions and Lace (les pâles se sont ouverts)*, 2017, digital inkjet print, Courtesy of the artist.

About the Exhibition

I have long felt an intimate connection to the art of Erika DeFreitas. It embodies what I have always struggled to communicate: the fear of losing my mother. This profound anxiety that many of us share stems from the intimate overlaps between togetherness and separation, longing and letting go.

This solo exhibition focuses on lens-based artworks DeFreitas has made over the last five years. Many of her artworks feature her mother, whom she has been working with as a subject for more than a decade. The collection of photographs, video, and works on paper illuminates recurring themes in her practice, through which DeFreitas intertwaves the personal and the historical. She touches upon her own cultural histories, connected to her matrilineal Guyanese heritage and Catholic background, while turning to cultural figures like Gertrude Stein and Carrie Mae Weems, as well as the many unnamed female subjects of art history. Hands and the body—symbols of care and of labour—reoccur throughout the exhibition, as DeFreitas asserts the agency of a racialized and gendered body in art, revealing both strength and vulnerability, trauma and joy. These threads are all connected by the artist’s continual search for “all that is left out of the frame,” using the body as vessel to hold what might otherwise be out of reach.



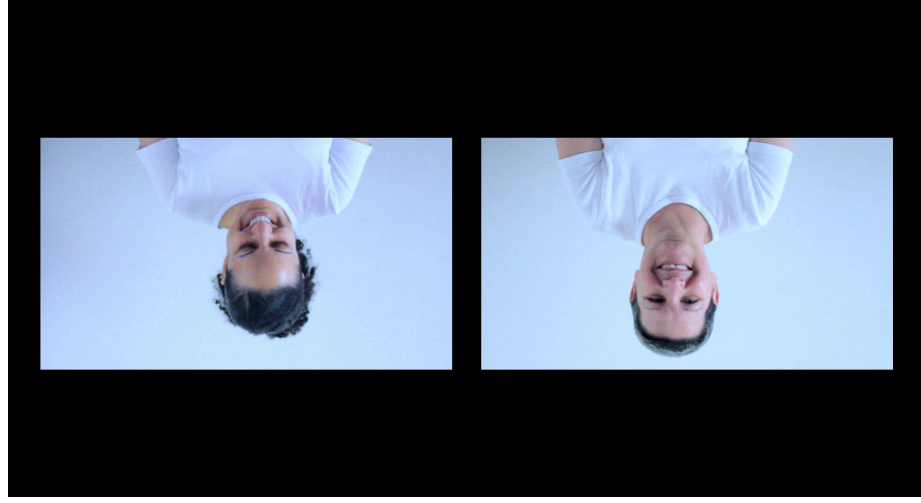
Erika DeFreitas, *an earnest weight in the crease (still)*, 2017, single channel video, Courtesy of the artist.

Erika DeFreitas is an artist whose practice includes the use of

performance, photography, video, installation, textiles, works on paper and writing. Placing an emphasis on process, gesture, the body, documentation and paranormal phenomena, she works through attempts to understand concepts of loss, post-memory, inheritance and objecthood. DeFreitas’s work has been exhibited nationally and internationally with solo exhibitions at such galleries as Gallery TPW, Toronto; Gallery 44, Toronto; and Platform Centre for Photographic + Digital Arts, Winnipeg. Group exhibitions include the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Koffler Gallery, and Art Gallery of York University (all Toronto), among many others. She is the recipient of the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts 2016 Artist Prize and 2016 John Hartman Award and was longlisted for the 2017 Sobey Art Award. DeFreitas holds a Master of Visual Studies from the University of Toronto.

Capture Photography Festival

This is the artist’s first solo exhibition in British Columbia. *Erika DeFreitas: close magic* is part of the 2021 Capture Photography Festival Selected Exhibition Program.



Erika DeFreitas, *Her body is full of light (often, very often, and in floods) (still)*, 2016, single channel video, Courtesy of the artist.

Erika DeFreitas



close magic



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Erika DeFreitas, *On Pincushions and Lace (les pâles se sont ouverts)*, 2017, digital inkjet print. Courtesy of the artist.