

# WENDY COBURN: ANATOMY OF A PROTEST

JUSTINA M. BARNICKE GALLERY

OCTOBER 30 – DECEMBER 19, 2014



Image courtesy of the artist.

## **UPDATED EVENT INFORMATION:**

**Wednesday, November 12, 7:00pm. Reception to follow.**

**University of Toronto Art Centre**

**15 King's College Circle**

**“Anatomy of a Protest: The Art of Infiltration”:** an interdisciplinary panel discussion featuring Wendy Coburn, Jane Doe, Gary Kinsman, and Lesley Wood.

Moderated by Lisa Steele.

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Wendy Coburn's first major solo exhibition in Toronto centres on her recently completed video *Slut Nation: Anatomy of a Protest*, which revisits the world's first Slutwalk protest. Grass-roots and spontaneous, the 2011 protest offered an important rebuttal of a Toronto Police officer's comments at a safety and security panel at York University, drawing attention to the ways in which gender stereotyping diverts the focus from the perpetrators of violence, and blames survivors of sexual assault instead. The protest's critique of the persistence of rape culture inspired countless satellite protests across the globe. Coburn's reconstruction of the 2011 protest highlights the movement of an organized group of provocateurs, including their representation in the media, as they march three blocks from Queen's Park to the Toronto Police Headquarters. Bringing together footage and photographs taken by citizen journalists, the media, and the artist's friends, Coburn's work draws parallels to the haunting history of the infiltration of protests in Toronto, including those following the gay bath-house raids in 1981 through to the largest mass arrests of citizens in Canada at the G20 in 2010.

Ultimately, Coburn's expansive body of work poses a series of questions related to freedom of assembly, the critical role of protest, and tactics used to undermine social justice organizing and positive social change.

This event is being presented in conjunction with “The Politics and Poetics of Visibility,” a weekly event series at the University of Toronto Art Centre and the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery. The full event listing can be found online at:

<http://utac.utoronto.ca/index.php/2-uncategorised/280-the-politics-and-poetics-of-visibility>

## Panelists:

**Wendy Coburn's** work has been exhibited and screened in galleries and festivals including Photophobia (Art Gallery of Hamilton), the Living Effect (Ottawa Art Gallery), MIX (New York Gay & Lesbian Experimental Film/Video Festival) Transmediale International Media Art Festival (Berlin, Germany), Beaver Tales and Uneasy Pieces (Oakville Galleries), Kassel Documentary Film & Video Festival (Kassel, Germany), and the Dublin Lesbian & Gay Film and Video Festival (Dublin, Ireland). Coburn received her MFA from Concordia University, and worked several years as Assistant Dean and Associate Dean in the Faculty of Art at OCAD University, where she now teaches in the Sculpture Installation program and the Art & Social Change Minor.

Among other things, **Jane Doe** is the woman who successfully sued the Toronto Police for negligence and gender discrimination in the investigation of her rape, and sexual assault generally. Her precedent setting case is taught in law schools across the country and internationally. Her book and published research are on the curricula of high schools, colleges and universities in Canada and abroad. Jane is a sex worker ally in support of full decriminalization and the human and labour rights of sex workers, and formed a national coalition (the Feminist Coalition) in that regard. She is also a community activist, lecturer and former punk rocker. Jane Doe has helped to organize and has spoken at Slutwalks in Toronto, Hamilton and Philadelphia. She holds two honorary doctorates in law and numerous awards in recognition of her body of work.

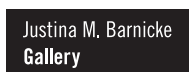
**Gary Kinsman** is a long-time queer liberation, anti-poverty and anti-capitalist activist. He is the author of *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities*, co-author (with Patrizia Gentile) of *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation*, and editor of *Whose National Security?*, and *Sociology for Changing the World*. He has recently retired from teaching Sociology at Laurentian University in Sudbury, on the territories of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek nation. His website Radical Noise is at <http://radicalnoise.ca/>

**Lesley Wood** is an associate professor of Sociology at York University. She has organized with a range of groups including OCAP and the Toronto Community Mobilization Network. Her research on social movements works to understand how ideas travel, how power operates, and how conversations influence practices. Her publications include *Crisis and Control: The Militarization of Protest Policing*, and *Direct Action, Deliberation and Diffusion: Collective Action after the WTO Protests in Seattle*.

**Lisa Steele** works in video, photography, film and performance as well as writing and curating on video and media arts. Steele's videotapes have been extensively exhibited nationally and internationally including: the Venice Biennale, the Kunsthalle (Basel), the Museum of Modern Art (NYC), the National Gallery of Canada, the Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston), Documenta, the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Long Beach Museum. Her videotapes are in many collections including: The National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Museum of Contemporary Art (Houston, Texas), Ingrid Oppenheim, Concordia University (Montreal), Paulo Cardazzo (Milan), the Canadian Embassy (Tokyo), the Akademie der Kunst (Berlin) and Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris). She is a co-founder of Vtape, a Toronto media arts resource centre. Since 1983, Steele has worked exclusively in collaboration with Kim Tomczak, producing videotapes, performances and photo/text works.

This event has been generously supported by the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto. The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery's programs are made possible by the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.

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