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Literary Collections

Joyce Wieland: Writings and Drawings, 1952-1971
Jane Lind, editor
The Porcupine's Quill
978-0-88984-321-9
(September 30, 2010)

In *Joyce Wieland: Writings and Drawings*, editor Jane Lind curates a collection of journals and sketches, granting readers a multi-dimensional look at the life of Canadian artist Joyce Wieland. Wieland, born into a "rough-and-tumble" life in Toronto, wrote of her complicated circumstances in her diaries, scribing decades of love, art, and travel. Driven by her two disparate desires—to marry and to make a name for herself as an artist—Wieland often captures the tensions between these pursuits in both her writing and drawings. In one entry, while living in France, Wieland decreed in her journal "…I must before the time passes, show in my work, what it is to love…to show in my work how glad and good and magical it is to live and feel, smell, think, etc." In her imperfect grammar, her raw and declarative prose, we read of her sweeping desires to effect change through art—change which certainly shaped, according to Lind, the Canadian contemporary art scene.

Accompanying Wieland's written thoughts and stories are her drawings, some in color and some black-and-white. The sketches, mostly of people and animals, are both whimsical and serious, adding spirit and dimension to the diary entries. Here, we see talking bespectacled dogs and disembodied phalluses; we find artists painting to a crowd and barely discernible sweeping lines in the shape of a woman's torso. Lind also includes several short narrative sketches, showing Wieland's storytelling range. Intimate and detailed, these sketches help illustrate the private life of Wieland, her thoughts and fears about making art: in one drawing, a "New 'Old Master' Machine" paints a masterpiece, with the artist holding its buttons and levers. This echoes a written phrase of Wieland's from early in her career: "Although Im [sic] making a little money with my art Im not doing any serious work—which bothers me."

Together, the entries and the drawings create a complete picture, a complex and multi-faceted portrait of an artist preoccupied with the meanings of making art and finding love. Lind has done a superb job of culling all sorts of compelling multimedia, including—at the

collection's end—facsimiles of Wieland's poetry. In this way, the reader is able to see the artist even more clearly, through the dips and curls of her handwriting. Readers intrigued by the interworkings of an artist's inner realm—the private life of the public figure—will certainly find much of interest in this well-shaped collection.

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