

NEWS

Walker Art Center to Open Major Exhibition of Renowned Artist Sophie Calle, Featuring Both Iconic Bodies of Work and Lesser-Known Pieces

Sophie Calle: Overshare Charts Key Moments in the Artist's Career and Explores Her Works' Resonance in Our Contemporary Media Landscape

On View October 26, 2024, through January 26, 2025

MINNEAPOLIS, March 6, 2024—In October 2024, the Walker Art Center will open *Sophie Calle: Overshare*, the first North American exhibition to explore the full range of the artist's practice across the past five decades. Through examples of major bodies of work as well as lesser-known pieces, the exhibition captures the ways in which Calle's early work anticipated the rise of social media as a space to shape and present lived experience. The exhibition features photography, text-based works, video, and installations, highlighting the artist's efforts to probe the boundaries between public and private; truth and fiction; control and chance. *Overshare* is the first large-scale exhibition to engage North American audiences with the significance of Calles' recurring themes, and to capture their ongoing relevance to contemporary experiences and dialogues about our digitally mediated world.

Sophie Calle: Overshare will be on view at the Walker from October 26, 2024, through January 26, 2025. It is curated by Henriette Huldish, the Walker's Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, in close collaboration with the artist. It will be accompanied by an expansive catalog that includes essays by Huldish, Eugenie Brinkema, Aruna D'Souza, and Courtenay Finn. Following the Walker presentation, the exhibition travels to the Orange County Museum of Art.

Calle has been working since the late 1970s and has come to be recognized for her signature approach of pairing photographs and text. Her work also embraces video and object-based work. Throughout her practice, she uses the tactics associated with surveillance and voyeurism to examine the complex nature of human relationships, especially notions and experiences of love, trust, intimacy, and power. Inspired early on by the American photographer Duane Michals—whose photographic works her father collected and which often incorporated handwritten notes—Calle has leveraged her chosen media to document the interactions and emotional expressions of both loved ones and strangers alike. Her mining of interpersonal dynamics, and interest in questions of visibility, disappearance, and manifestations of the self, are the throughlines of *Overshare*, with the title itself offering both a strategic conceit and provocation.

“Calle is not on social media. It is not a sphere in which she presents her work, or is even particularly interested in. Rather, she works in analogue media, in the form of printed books as well as framed photographs with texts on the gallery wall,” said Huldish. “And yet, her approach, which lives at the nexus of photography and autobiographical writing, has consistently engaged in different strategies of self-exposure. In this way, her practice presciently foreshadowed modes of performance and staged intimacy now prominent throughout literary autofiction, reality TV, and social media. This is in part what makes her work so timely and resonant for a broad audience.”

The exhibition unfolds across four galleries organized in different thematic sections, titled “The Spy,” “The Protagonist,” “The End,” and “The Beginning.” It includes a selection of acclaimed, iconic works, including *The Sleepers (1979)* and *Suite Vénitienne (1980)*, which capture Calle’s early fascination with the real and imagined stories of people’s lives and interactions, as well as lesser-known projects such as the photographic series *Cash Machine (1991-2003)* and the related video *Unfinished (2005)*. Begun in 1988 at the invitation of a Minneapolis bank to make a work for their art collection, the series revolves around ghostly black-and-white photos of people withdrawing money from an ATM outfitted with a camera. Calle never completed the commission but spent over ten years grappling with the material. In *Unfinished*, she describes her inability to finish the project. The commission, and the story behind it, offer insight into the importance of both narrative and interpersonal exchange to Calle’s practice.

At the core of the exhibition are Calle’s *Autobiographies*, an ongoing series that the artist began in the late 1980s. Each two-part work includes a framed photograph alongside a framed descriptive text. In the complementary *True Stories* series, Calle pairs these stories with an object rather than a photograph. In either permutation, the short vignettes chronicle episodes from Calle’s life, ranging from incidental interactions and minor embarrassments to romantic breakups and loss. Regardless of subject, the *Autobiographies* are presented in Calle’s characteristic style: concise, sometimes improbable, and often very funny. The section dedicated to autobiography in *Overshare* also includes the feature-length film *Double-Blind (1992)*. Produced with Calle’s then partner, filmmaker Greg Shephard, the piece captures the couple’s precarious relationship during a road trip from New York to San Francisco. Blending home movie and road movie tropes, Calle and Shephard train their cameras on each other while they traverse a largely interchangeable American landscape of motels, diners, and auto shops, with each also recording private thoughts and shared scenes on a camcorder. This film—playing with vulnerability and voyeurism—presages our cultural obsession with reality dating series like *The Bachelor*, which captures the highs and lows of dating on camera along with the private perspectives of its protagonists in solo interviews with producers.

A group of autobiographical works considering the deaths of her charismatic parents, as well as her own mortality, comprise a dedicated section in the exhibition. The installation *North Pole (2009)* combines framed works and video from a trip to the Arctic in 2008. In the work, Calle pays tribute to her mother Monique, who never fulfilled her wish to visit the pole, by leaving some of her belongings in the ground. Additionally, the wall configuration *My Mother, My Father and Me (2024)* includes the *Autobiography* capturing how Calle accidentally called her deceased father’s mobile phone and received the following text message in response, “Who r u.” In the work, she wryly concludes that Bob, her father, had sent her a message. These works also all speak to an ongoing thread related to absence with the artist’s practice.

The exhibition concludes with two large-scale installations, *Voir la mer* (2011) and *On the Hunt* (2020/2024), which while distinct in subject matter engage with underlying ideas of longing. The newest work in the exhibition, *On the Hunt* features a compendium of personal ads that have been published in the classifieds section of the French hunting magazine *Le Chasseur Français* since 1895. For the installation, Calle selected two groups of approximately 15 classifieds each for various time periods, which she combined into a text panel, framed, and installed as a diptych, with texts by women and men presented next to each other. Mounted above these panels are photographs of hunting stands in the landscape and nighttime surveillance images of animals. The combination of elements draws a barbed connection between hunting for prey and for romantic companions.

“Visitors to the exhibition will inevitably find work that feels familiar even if they’ve never previously engaged with the artist. Her work is so much about our daily experiences: humor, curiosity, love, heartbreak, and loss. *Overshare* is about exploring these universal, human touchpoints and the ways in which Calle has brought them forward in a singularly distinct way,” added Huldisch.

RELATED PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMMING

As part of its multidisciplinary approach and its commitment to presenting groundbreaking work across genre, the Walker will present several performing arts experiences inspired by the work of Sophie Calle during the run of the exhibition. While Calle is not personally involved in these projects, these works highlight the ways in which her practice has inspired artists and innovators working across media and across the world.

***TRACES* by Rachel Jendrzejewski and Ivan Talijancić**

Throughout downtown Minneapolis

October 29 – November 10, 2024 (dates subject to change)*

TRACES is a collaborative project developed by Minneapolis-based playwright Rachel Jendrzejewski and Ivan Talijancić of the Brooklyn-based experimental theater company Wax Factory. It includes the creation of a performance, video installation, and web project inspired by the life-long opus of French artist Sophie Calle. The interactive performance will place audience-participants in an unfolding crime narrative, creating interactions with unidentified performers, taking them to locations across downtown Minneapolis, and asking them to capture their experiences through audio, video, and photography. Their experiences as well as background content on the development of the work will become part of a video installation and living website. The multi-faceted work expands on Calle’s ongoing interest in narrative, social experiments, and exploring human reactions to a variety of everyday happenings and emotions.

***Exquisite Pain* by Forced Entertainment**

The Walker’s McGuire Theater

January 9 – 11, 2025

Building on its longstanding relationship with the Walker, Forced Entertainment—the world-renowned Sheffield-based theater ensemble—will remount and present the exclusive U.S. performance of *Exquisite Pain* (2005) as part of their worldwide 40th anniversary activities. The intimate performance, using a Sophie Calle text from her seminal 2003 project of the same name, explores how language, memory, and forgetting work to help people come to terms with traumatic events. *Exquisite Pain* is about love, loss, and the stories we tell

ourselves when things have gone wrong. The performance captures the universality of the themes in Calle's work and represents the first time that Forced Entertainment worked from another artist's text.

ABOUT THE WALKER ART CENTER

The Walker Art Center is a renowned multidisciplinary arts institution that presents, collects, and supports the creation of groundbreaking work across the visual and performing arts, moving image, and design. Guided by the belief that art has the power to bring joy and solace and the ability to unite people through dialogue and shared experiences, the Walker engages communities through a dynamic array of exhibitions, performances, events, and initiatives. Its multiacre campus includes 65,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, the state-of-the-art McGuire Theater and Walker Cinema, and ample green space that connects with the adjoining Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The Garden, a partnership with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, is one of the first urban sculpture parks of its kind in the United States and home to the beloved Twin Cities landmark *Spoonbridge and Cherry* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Recognized for its ambitious program and growing collection of more than 15,500 works, the Walker embraces emerging art forms and amplifies the work of artists from the Twin Cities and from across the country and the globe. Its broad spectrum of offerings makes it a lively and welcoming hub for artistic expression, creative innovation, and community connection.

Visit walkerart.org for more information about upcoming presentations, programs, and opportunities to experience the art of our time.

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