

Catriona Jeffries

Brenda Draney

Unfinished Business

May 26–July 8, 2023

Vancouver

Brenda Draney
Installation view, *Unfinished Business*, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, 2023



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Brenda Draney
Chrome, 2023, oil on linen, 64 x 79 in. (163 x 201 cm)



Brenda Draney
Chrome (detail), 2023, oil on linen, 64 x 79 in. (163 x 201 cm)



Brenda Draney
Reap, 2023, oil on canvas, 39 x 34 in. (99 x 86 cm)



Brenda Draney
Reap (detail), 2023, oil on canvas, 39 x 34 in. (99 x 86 cm)



Brenda Draney
Installation view, *Unfinished Business*, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, 2023



Brenda Draney
Work Boots, 2023, oil on canvas, 48 x 36 in. (122 x 92 cm)



Brenda Draney
Work Boots (detail), 2023, oil on canvas, 48 x 36 in. (122 x 92 cm)



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Installation view, *Unfinished Business*, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, 2023



Brenda Draney
Snowsuit, 2017, watercolour on paper, 19 x 16 in. (48 x 41 cm)



Brenda Draney
Dream, 2012, watercolour on paper, 11 x 14 in. (27 x 36 cm)



Brenda Draney
Ken, 2011, watercolour on paper, 18 x 11 in. (46 x 29 cm)



Brenda Draney
From Descendent, 2013, watercolour on paper, 10 x 7 in. (24 x 18 cm)



Brenda Draney
Installation view, *Unfinished Business*, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, 2023



Brenda Draney
Arthur's House, 2014, watercolour on paper, 11 x 15 in. (28 x 38 cm)



Brenda Draney
Muscle Shirt, 2022, watercolour on paper, 23 x 30 in. (57 x 76 cm)



Brenda Draney
Tent, 2020, watercolour on paper, 11 x 18 in. (28 x 45 cm)



Brenda Draney
Kneel, 2021, watercolour on paper, 9 x 12 in. (23 x 31 cm)



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Brenda Draney
Split Pea, 2023, oil on canvas, 65 x 109 in. (165 x 277 cm)



Brenda Draney
Split Pea (detail), 2023, oil on canvas, 65 x 109 in. (165 x 277 cm)



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Installation view, *Unfinished Business*, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, 2023



Brenda Draney
Trio, 2023, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in. (122 x 152 cm)



Brenda Draney
Trio (detail), 2023, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in. (122 x 152 cm)



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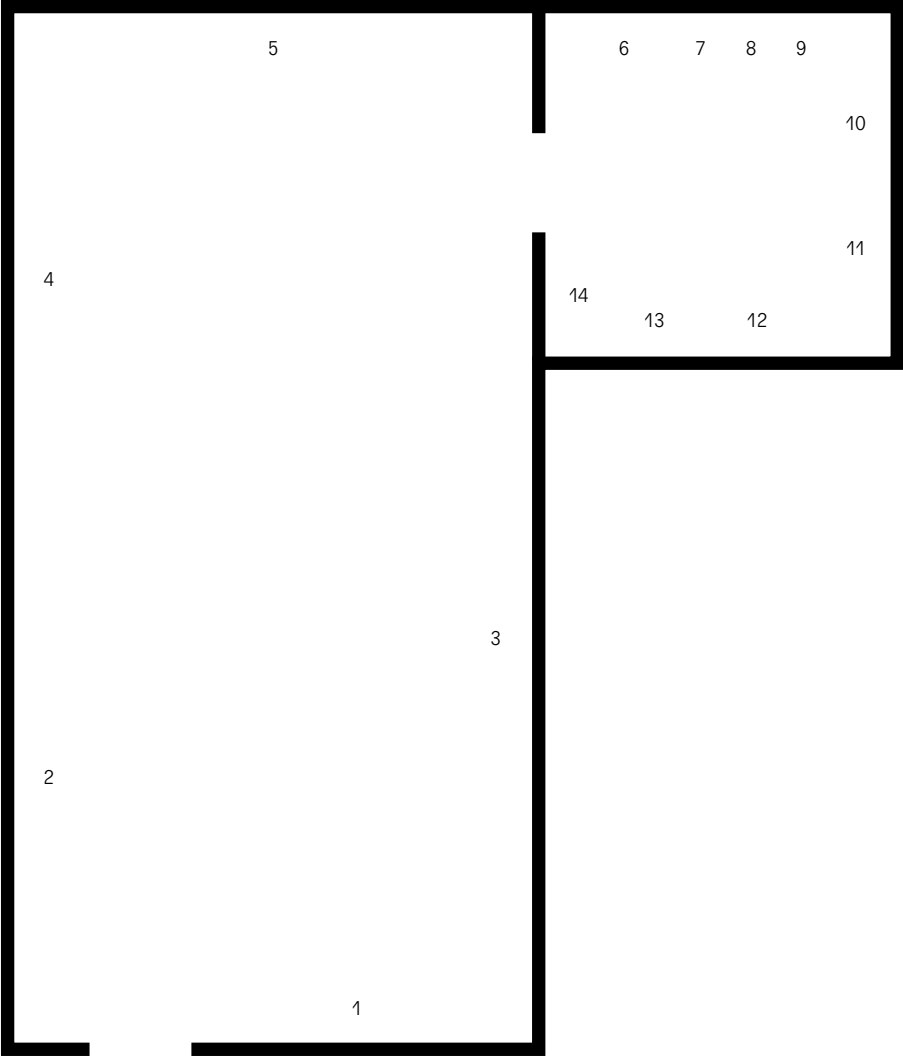
Brenda Draney

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Catriona Jeffries

950 East Cordova Street Vancouver, British Columbia V6A 1M6 Canada



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on paper, 11 x 18 in. (28
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Kneel, 2021, watercolour
on paper, 9 x 12 in. (23 x
31 cm)

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Bear Trails Study, 2021,
watercolour on paper, 9
x 13 in. (23 x 32 cm)

Brenda Draney's recent exhibitions include The Arts Club of Chicago (2023); The Power Plant, Toronto (2023); Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver (2022); McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Canada (2020); NS Dokumentationszentrum, München (2019); Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff (2019); Fogo Island Arts, Canada (2019); Oakville Galleries, Canada (2018); Kitchener-Waterloo Gallery, Canada (2017); Audain Gallery, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver (2017); National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2016); The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton (2015); and Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon (2013). She received her Master of Applied Arts from Emily Carr University of Art and Design (2010), and her BFA from the University of Alberta (2006). In 2014, Draney was the recipient of the Eldon and Anne Foote Visual Arts Prize, Edmonton and was winner of the 2009 RBC Painting Competition.

In *Unfinished Business*, Brenda Draney's representational paintings explore memory, identity, and the complexity of relationships in the lived wake of colonial devastation. Typically marked by stretches of void canvas, her works often portray fragmented narratives from her communities in Slave Lake and Northern Alberta. Dreamlike, the paintings present a tension between representational specificity and unpainted space, their imagery often alluding to uneasy domestic and social scenes, drawn from sources that are remembered, inherited, and imagined. Rendering with the most minimal of means, as well as highly worked detail, Draney provides enough marks for the viewer to simultaneously hold the artist's stories alongside one's own memories and imagined narratives.

The human body is often her works' central subject. Frequently depicted without clothing regardless of context, this nudity further emphasizes a desired ambiguity. By translating skin through a variety of painting techniques, these works speak to a long history of the body in Western art history, encompassing medieval depictions of hell, World War-era expressionism, to more recent representations of bodies as fleshly paint or the abstraction of humorous cartoons.

Alongside these abstractions, Draney includes precise cultural details and situations, arguing for the importance of considering experiences that are both her own and shared. These allude to difficult stories and realities that are typically avoided, left unsaid, and overlooked. Whether detailing with precision specific markers of class and era, such as linoleum floor and couch fabric patterns, particular wood chairs and kitchen cabinets, or a revving motorcycle in a seemingly interior space, she articulates that these experiences are not abstract but real, true, and have identity and substance. Rather than speak to the distant past or the demands of the future, the work asks us to honour and confront the often difficult truths of what has just recently been lived.

Through this generous, formal balance of the ambiguous and the specific, the work offers a "doorway or entry point for a viewer to come and bring their own stories to bear and enter the work on their terms." Although her paintings are marked by absences, these spaces do not simply repeat the unsaid legacies of what has come before; rather these voids are calls to action, pointing toward the unfinished business that has yet to be redressed.