

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Characters found in stories take us outside of our ordinary life.

The *Character Reference* series consists of photographic portraits drawn from figures in literature, film, folklore and mythology.

In writing, portraits describe things invisible such as thought process, attraction or repulsion, or an individual's journey.

In photography or painting, portraits can be the artist's construction that gives the character a physical presence while mirroring the artist's inner thoughts.

This figure-based work represents contemporary allusions to characters such as Madame Bovary, the woman figure in film director Douglas Sirk's melodrama, Sadie in Michael Crummey's novel *Wreckage*, Tazio in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, as well as other figures*.

Using film, in-camera soft focus, minimized colours and light values, this work visually depicts fictional characters and re-imagines the narrative.

Mak's aesthetic renders her subjects anonymous: the half-turned back, the undisclosed face, and the abstracted environment invites the viewer to step into the consciousness of each protagonist, and perhaps discover, from these fictitious moments, their own sense of flight.

*Other characters alluded to in this exhibition include: Madame Butterfly, the film noir figure inspired by Raymond Chandler or James M. Cain novels, the bracketed inner voice of Elizabeth Bishop's poem *One Art*, Thomas Hardy's women, Sylvia Plath described in Ted Hughes' poem *St Botolph's*, and Virginia Woolf's self-image as implied in her diary, etc.

Born in Hong Kong, Mak lives in Toronto most of the year and Harbour Grace in the summer. After graduating with a Philosophy degree from the University of Calgary, she went on to study Photography at the Ontario College of Art and Design. Mak has exhibited her photographic works widely across Canada and also in Hong Kong. She is a recipient of various grants from the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. Her work has been included in numerous public and private collections in North America.

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