

## **Kim Waldron ltée : société civile**

Expression's invitation was to make a first survey exhibition of Kim Waldron's artistic projects. For the artist, who has always been interested in power structures and ways of working, it was only natural that this retrospective work should itself become the subject of an artistic project in its own right. The exhibition would thus be a kind of meta-project of her earlier projects, revealing the real, often hidden, cost of artistic creation. It was to this end that Société Kim Waldron ltée. was born.

But the company's roots go further back. Kim Waldron's work experiences have always informed her artistic projects. In 2003, *Working Assumption* captured her restless excitement at having to choose a profession; in 2010, *Beautiful Creatures* was inspired by her desire to know where the meat she cooked in a restaurant came from; in 2015, *Made in Québec* recognized the effort that Chinese workers saved her in her work. After running as an independent candidate in the 2015 federal election to advocate for greater diversity of voices in government (Public Office project), Kim Waldron became highly critical of the corporatist tendencies of Canadian political parties. The opening of the offshore company Kim Waldron Ltd. in Hong Kong in 2016 was therefore a logical extension of her political action, since it enabled her to integrate the financial structures used to house passive income and thus "follow the money".

Since then, the artist has repeatedly observed that the conduct of human affairs is currently determined not primarily by democratically elected states, but by multinational corporations and their overriding goal of profit. It was in response to this state of affairs that the new Société Kim Waldron ltée. was founded on Quebec soil on May 4, 2023. Artist Kim Waldron is its president; curators Louise Déry, Michèle Magma and Anne-Marie Ninacs are its directors. The company sells nothing and offers no services. Its sole purpose is to reflect on the structure of the company in the context of producing an exhibition. In so doing, it evokes the figure of the artist-entrepreneur, but also the strength of dedication, the resistance to risk and the enormous expenditure of energy required to produce its product-projects, all without any guarantee of a 'return on investment'.

Rebecca Solnit's book, *Orwell's Roses*, was an important stimulus for this latest Waldron project, as it seeks to understand the relationship between George Orwell's pleasure in tending his rose garden and the creation of his political writings. Similarly, the question that immediately presented itself in an extremely concrete way to the members of Société Kim Waldron ltée. was that of reconciling the desires of community involvement with the imperatives of private life. Based on her previous work experience, the artist was particularly keen to highlight the way in which, in today's global society, the lack of adequate resources and the focus on productivity and net profit squeeze out all that is wonderful, invisibilize individuals and destroy what good we might have to offer each other.

In order to model a corporation that would not exploit resources for its own profit, but truly work for the common good, could we make pleasure a guiding principle of Société Kim Waldron ltée.? Would this company manage to operate without dissociating itself from bodies and their ability to do things? Would its Board of Directors agree to base its orientations on what is feasible rather than on an ideal? Could a company's

actions, without losing their rigor, be calibrated according to individual desires and energies? In short: would it be possible to turn a corporate structure into a space of trust and creation? These are the ethical questions that accompanied the realization of this survey exhibition, and which gave rise, on May 18, 2023, to the following statement of values.

Société Kim Waldron ltée. intends to :

- put human beings and what makes them human at the heart of its activities;
- generate, through its very structure, a place of trust, transparency and knowledge-sharing in order to cultivate quality of life and well-being, with the aim of bringing about the desired community life, now;
- challenge individual existence in favor of that which we have in common and shared narratives that include marginalized experiences;
- seek to reduce gaps between individuals in the interests of social equity;
- occupy a feminist position and take an interest in the treatment and representation of women;
- foster an interest in research-creation and the ability to act in all areas of human activity;
- engage in environmentally sustainable activity;
- promote our Quebec roots (our locality, our place);
- work in French in North America;
- demonstrate the appropriateness of one's intentions, discourse and actions;
- demonstrate positive reciprocity and accountability.

In addition to these meeting notes, a few other documentary and photographic traces remain of this collective work of incorporation, but the essence of the Société Kim Waldron ltée project is to be found in the joyful and continuous attention paid by four researchers-curators-artists-administrators to the distribution of material, temporal and financial resources, to the sharing of tasks, the fluctuation of energies and the recognition of skills, to the selection of works and their arrangement in a non-proprietary pooling of ideas, so as to offer a retrospective exhibition worthy of the ambitious and profoundly human projects carried out by Kim Waldron in the field for over twenty years.

Les administratrices commissaires

Louise Déry, Michèle Magema, Anne-Marie Ninacs et Kim Waldron