

Vaisaiki
festival –
more than
a parade
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Women filmmakers with a Filipino angle

by MARIAM BALDEH

Women are largely underrepresented in the film industry, particularly as writers, producers, and directors. Three independent local female filmmakers are carrying out all three roles, driven by determination and a story to tell.

They all share a Filipino background, a portfolio of giving a platform to minority issues, and a passion for documentaries.

To be or not to be a filmmaker

Joella Cabalu's love for film can be traced back to the video store that her father would take her and her brother Jay to every Friday.

"We didn't have cable growing up so we would just devour entertainment magazines and learn about media and movies in that way," says Cabalu, 31, whose family immigrated to the Lower Mainland when she was seven. "We'd be in the video store absorbing all of the information from the cover of these VHS tapes."

Born in California, Cabalu grew up in Brunei before coming to Canada. She has an art history degree from the University of British Columbia, and two years ago, she graduated from the Documentary Film Production Program at Langara College.

Prior to this, Cabalu had convinced herself that she lacked the personality to be a filmmaker.

"My perception was that in order to be successful, I needed to be extroverted and aggressive. I realize now - I needed to be a man," she says.



She could only name one female director and even then, "she didn't look like me."

Cabalu has produced and directed her first feature documentary *It Runs in the Family*, which is the follow-up to "Stand Still", Cabalu's grad project about her journey mediating the relationship between her Roman Catholic parents and her gay younger brother. *It Runs in the Family* chronicles her and her brother Jay's trip from Vancouver to California to the Philippines to meet an estimated dozen other gay relatives, and ask them how they've managed to navigate their faith, sexuality, and family relationships.

"The [experiences] of queer people of colour are underrepre-

sented in the media, so I thought it would be interesting to see it from an immigrant family of colour [perspective]," says Cabalu.

Documenting women and minorities

For Angelina Cantada, 45, the decision to work in film has always been clear-cut. She recalls doing a lot of video projects at university in the Philippines and falling in love with video editing. She's been editing ever since.

"It's been over 20 years. I enjoy telling stories using pictures and music and putting all of that together," she says.

Born and raised in the Philippines, Cantada studied photography for four years in San Francis-

co before immigrating to Canada in 2008. In 2010, she was one of six filmmakers chosen through the Crazy8s competition to produce a short film. Her narrative "Sikat" is about a Filipina caregiver who is finally reunited with her son and husband in Canada.

As an independent filmmaker used to doing her own videography and editing, producing a narrative was completely new territory for Cantada.

"You need a village to be able to produce even just a short film. [Sikat] was a 10 minute film [but] I had 50 people on set with me - cast, camera crew, lighting people, costume, set design," Cantada says.

See "Women Filmmakers" page 3 >

Verbatim

Vancouver the blissful

by EDWINE VENIAT

As we know, xenophobia starts with first impressions: a simple glance allows you to see the Other's difference. If we all come from similar racial backgrounds this difference doesn't immediately show through our physical aspect, but it clearly shows up the very moment the foreigner begins to speak, revealing his accent. Surely we should marvel at the cultural assets the Other brings with him, we should congratulate him for putting so much effort into learning and speaking another language, for having the courage to travel and to start anew – with nervousness and nothing more than determination – in a new country. Sadly, most of time, this isn't happening. We are afraid of foreigners, considering them strangers. Although the English language has two words (foreigner and stranger), the French language only has one (étranger). The confusion between the two still remains, and we immediately keep our distance from the Other.

Recently a university professor came up with a new word to name that phenomenon: glottophobia, formed from the greek prefix "glotto" meaning "tongue" or "language" and "phobia" meaning "the fear of or the hate for something." I remember thinking it was a brilliant idea. Why didn't anyone mention it before?

Being a French native myself and speaking English with a thick accent, I developed a complex when travelling around the USA. I clearly saw that within the first three seconds of starting a conversation that my accent had already dissuaded some of my American interlocutors from hearing what I had to say. Actually, they weren't even listening to me anymore – body language does not lie. Each building block of my very being, my education, my university successes and achievements, my knowledge and cul-

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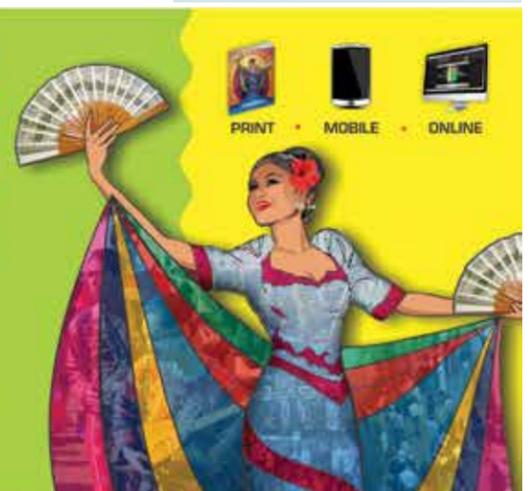


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Community Profile

From Bangladesh to Canada – building hope

by FABIO FRANCO

The Greater Vancouver Bangladesh Cultural Association (GVBCA) has been promoting the Bangladeshi national culture and heritage in Vancouver since 2002, when several organizations merged to create a unitary association, with a variety of events such as concerts, annual picnics, an Independence Day celebration, International Mother Language Day and the Bengali New Year, which will be celebrated on Apr. 14.



▲ Members of the Bangladeshi community at International Mother Language celebration.

According to the GVBCA, approximately 7,000 Bengali people live in the Greater Vancouver Area, the first big wave of immigrants arriving in the 70s, with a constant yearly influx. The majority of previous newcomers who connected with the GVBCA had an IT or entrepreneurial background, but a new trend is emerging.

“Recently, more students are coming from Bangladesh too, with the aim of improving their education and gaining international professional experience,” says Ehtesham Azad, organizing secretary of the GVBCA.

Azad says that Canada is perceived as a country that offers more opportunities to immigrants, in comparison with other competitors, namely Australia

and the UK, where the immigration process is longer and much more complicated.

rest of the population struggles just to get by,” says Azad. He says Vancouver in particular seems to offer a balanced lifestyle and a respectful workplace environment for newcomers from Bangladesh – they enjoy a laid-back lifestyle, with friendly locals and mild weather.

“Immigrants from Bangladesh like to live in a multicultural environment such as Vancouver and to be surrounded by the beautiful landscapes that British Columbia offers” Azad explains.

New challenges

Azad says that despite some initial challenges, more than 90 per cent of the immigrants from Bangladesh are happy about their choice to move to Vancouver. Embracing a new culture can prove to be more difficult than they expected though, and pursuing the career they want can add more stress to the equation.

“They usually face difficulties such as qualifications recognition, adjustment to the Canadian workplace, and in general the task to interpret a new set of values and references,” explains Azad.

He says the transition process is usually much smoother for professionals who previously worked for multinational companies in Bangladesh, since they speak English and are already familiar with the standardized procedures. For others, the social context in Canada is unfamiliar and can be confusing.

“In Bangladesh, families can be described as elementary or nuclear families. In other words, the family as a social group consists of a father, mother and their children, while in Canada, extended and single-parent families are a widespread reality,” Azad says.

The price of integration

When it comes to cultural clashes between the old and new generations, Azad says the Bangladeshi community is no exception. Children born in the new country incorporate the new values into their lives, challenging the old ones.

“Parents are happy to have secured a better education and future for their children, but would like to see their offspring standing up for their culture and passing it

on to the next generations,” says Azad.

He says only about 20 per cent of Bangladeshi-Canadian children are able to speak their native language, leading many parents to believe that integration comes with a price. ✉

For information on the GVBCA and the Bengali New Year, please visit www.gvbca.com.

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▲ Ehtesham Azad, Organizing Secretary of the GVBCA.

and the UK, where the immigration process is longer and much more complicated.

A better life

Azad says the vast majority of Bengalis move to Canada to secure a better life, at least for their children. Living in Bangladesh can be very complicated, despite some improvements in the last years. The country still faces huge challenges in terms of health care, poverty and human rights.

“There's nothing like a universal health care system in Bangladesh – only the rich can afford to pay the expensive doctor's bills and the



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Apprendre à réussir.

Social venture paves way for transition to circular economy

by NAOMI TSE

Most of us have never given a second thought to wood waste but one organization is working to improve that.

Uproot a zero-waste, wood-salvaging social venture was founded last year with the goal of making what is known as a “circular economy” more accessible, starting with re-purposing wood waste.

What is the circular economy?

Kevin Kimoto, one of the co-founders of Uproot, says that during an internship with CityStudio, his team began building “sharing libraries” made from pallet wood for the purpose of sharing sporting equipment. Today, the core team from this project is still working together at Uproot. After the internship, Kimoto realized that wood waste was a problem and wanted to do more in order to reduce our community’s ecological footprint.

“How can we continue to live in cities and have what we want without putting so much pressure on the environment?” asks Kimoto.

According to Kimoto, 27, our economy runs on a linear system which means that resources are extracted to create products and most of these products are disposed of at the end of their lifecycle. In contrast, a circular economy is one where the products are used and re-used in the system. When products reach the end of their expected life, the material can still be recovered.

“For example, if we take a table or a chair, they’ll be given a second and third life before they are reduced to their bare components,” says Kimoto, a fourth generation Japanese Canadian. “Even by-products such as sawdust, we find uses for it so that it’s ultimately used in another process.”

Kimoto explains that the name Uproot was inspired by the need to change the status quo and challenge existing attitudes with regards to the way our society lives because we are disrupting the ecosystem. Uproot works with construction and demolition companies to source material for projects. Kimoto explains that a lot of wood waste needs to be processed to remove nails, metal or paint from the wood



▲ Toast to the Coast Raft Night.

before it can be used again. Although there are some tools such as denailers to assist with the process, much of the work is still done by hand at their warehouse in False Creek Flats. As the primary builder on the Uproot team, Kimoto had five years of woodworking experience in high school as well as experience working on backyard projects at home. In addition, he also has a small workshop in his garage.

Kimoto, an SFU sociology graduate, says that one thing he’s

learned is that if you have a great idea you should pursue it.

“It’s been amazing to take an idea and go with it and then continuously refine and recalibrate it,” says Kimoto.

Community involvement

Uproot’s projects range from large art installations to practical everyday items like compost bins for community gardens. Always working with environmental sustainability in mind, one of Kimoto’s recent projects is a

pollinator garden for bees. It will be done in collaboration with 60 Grade 9 students from Eric Hamber Secondary School who will be painting their artwork on the structure.

Kimoto says that Uproot has actively partnered with various organizations that are already promoting a zero waste, circular economy. For example, they work with a company that recycles mattresses while Uproot dismantles the wooden bed frames. In addition, they are currently working on creating an online platform that other organizations can use to test launch their products.

Kimoto says that Uproot wants to support and reach more communities.

“There’s so much more that they can do and that they can take direct action to create the change that they want to see,” says Kimoto.

As of the end of 2015, Kimoto says that they have diverted 4,000 board feet of lumber, the equivalent of 27 B.C. forestry trees. ✎

For more information on Uproot, please visit www.uprootnow.com.

► “Women Filmmakers” from page 1

Cantada finds that she naturally gravitates towards minorities in her work. She is typically hired by different non-profits, particularly in the disability community and the LGBT community, to create short promotional or educational videos.

Her last short film screened at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival, “Powerful Out Women (POW!): On the Campaign Trail,” was a personal project. It offers a snapshot into the lives of three highly respected queer politicians in three levels of government.

“I was just so inspired by the work [these] women were doing. Many people are afraid to come out in the workplace, but to them sexual orientation is a non-issue,” says Cantada.

She is currently working on a documentary about labour trafficking that profiles migrant workers and the exploitation they are experiencing here in Canada.

Beach blues

It comes as no surprise that Kathleen Jayme, 27, pursued a degree in film production at UBC. Her grandfather was the youngest director in the Philippines during his time, and his

siblings were also producers in the movie industry. Jayme, born and raised in Vancouver, grew up with a camera in her hands.

“I’ve always been that friend [with the] camera. I can make a 20-minute reel of my friends telling me to turn the camera off. I just love documenting stories,” Jayme says.

During her time at UBC, she won a Leo for Best Student Production in British Columbia for her short fiction film “Little Big Kid,” and her film “Liz” was among twenty films selected to play on Air Canada flights. She was ultimately awarded the H. Norman Lidster Prize Scholarship honoring an outstanding documentary student when she graduated from UBC in 2011.

Jayme’s feature film, *Paradise Island*, is currently making its rounds. In the film, Jayme travels to Boracay, a beautiful island and popular tourist destination in the Philippines.

“I used to go there when I was a kid [in the] 90s and it was just a deserted island. Throughout the 2000s I’d go back every year, and I’d notice that it was getting more polluted, dirtier, noisier, and it would bother me but I’d just leave the next day and forget about it,” says Jayme.

Then in 2011, she met some local children making sandcastles for money.

“That’s when I started to think about what we actually do when we’re on vacation. I feel like we deserve this right to do whatever we want, but we have to realize that people live in these places that we go to visit,” says Jayme. “They are the ones who have to deal with the garbage that we produce.”

Her hope with *Paradise Island* is that a younger generation will be more mindful of how their actions affect the locals that live in the tropical destinations they visit. ✎



▲ Joella Cabalu, filmmaker.

Photo courtesy of Joella Cabalu

Finding the language within: New PhD study on the music and language of the Salish peoples

by FIONA BENSON

There is a First Nations belief that you carry your language within. You always possess it, but you just have to find it.

Valerie Bob, a member of the Hul’q’umi’num’ peoples, is embarking on a four-year PhD study to improve knowledge of the relationship between traditional Coast Salish music and the endangered Salish language Hul’q’umi’num’. She will undertake her research through a Graduate Aboriginal Scholarship awarded by Simon Fraser University.

Under the working title *The Sacred and the Secular: Hul’q’umi’num’ ceremonial music and language renewal*, Bob’s research will continue preserving First Nations heritage and identity. In particular, her own personal interest centres around the gap between knowledge and expression.

“There’s such a big disconnect between language revitalization and healing,” she says. “It’s not just about repetition and acquisition – it’s about a deeper, more intentional feeling.”

An overshadowed language

Hul’q’umi’num’ is a Salish language spoken across much of Vancouver Island and the neighbouring islands. It unites six First Nations groups and a total of over 6,000 people, yet there are only about 50 people who still speak it fluently, shadowed by the estimated 100 who are semi-fluent. Valerie Bob is one of the latter. Experiences at residential schools, she says, stole her language capabilities. Even after years of relearning, her words are sometimes choked by a feeling of guilt



▲ PhD student Valerie Bob.

for doing something that was previously banned and punishable.

Singing traditional songs in a language class gave Bob the first spark of inspiration for her research. Drawing on her own language experiences, her talks with mentors, her days as a teacher and her passion for music, Bob aims to investigate how traditional Coast Salish music can support both the Hul’q’umi’num’ language structure and the emotions connected with language revival.

“I hope to elucidate and explain the core elements of Coast Salish music, the nature of Hul’q’umi’num’ lyrics and how they work together to create a holistic cultural experience,” she says.

Valerie Bob will build on existing language research by comparing specific secular and religious genres. Songs will be taken from stories within the Hul’q’umi’num’ oral tradition and laid beside songs from the Shaker Church intended to express the spiritual heritage of the First Nations. Bob plans to select four such songs to focus on, including a woman’s warrior song and the oldest known song with Hul’q’umi’num’ lyrics.

As stated in her proposal, Bob intends to study scale, tone and rhythm, aside from lyrics and content, to determine what makes

them uniquely Hul’q’umi’num’. The analysis is expected to yield a more precise understanding of the Hul’q’umi’num’ language. The music, meanwhile, will help express the spirit of the Hul’q’umi’num’ peoples.

“Understanding the structure of Hul’q’umi’num’ songs will assist in the creation of new songs and will provide the opportunity to mentor the younger generation in a living tradition,” Bob says.

Progressing oral traditions

Since the Hul’q’umi’num’ language is carried by only 50 fluent speakers – most of them Elders – Bob is in charge of an increasingly timely project. While collecting her research, she will be preserving oral traditions under the mentorship of the Elders who have carried them. The first prong of the study, then, is scholarship and documentation. The second prong is the application of learning tools. Though language learning may be considered the purview of schools, Bob considers her research equally applicable to children and adults.

“It’s an intergenerational problem,” she says, “pushing the pain aside and remembering that from an indigenous perspective we have so many songs.”

She compares relearning language to a grieving process and has found that the repetition of traditional music can be a form of emotional therapy, something with which she has personal experience.

“I spent a lot of my life being angry at – I didn’t even know what – until I came back to my culture,” she says. “This is real to a lot of people relearning and reviving. And what is authentic is when they bring their emotions to what they are trying to learn.” ✎



Left Bank



Let's get big money out of B.C. politics once and for all

I thought maybe the *Globe and Mail* was pulling an April Fools' joke. On the front page, above the fold, their headline read, 'Clark promises fundraising transparency.' Turns out the story is legit, although the new measures the B.C. premier is proposing are underwhelming.

To set the context of that headline, let's review. Christy Clark has been facing questions for the past week, after a *Globe and Mail* investigative report revealed the B.C. Liberals have been holding a series of exclusive, high-priced fundraising dinners. For a small fee of five, ten or sometimes even twenty thousand dollars, wealthy British Columbians can enjoy a meal and conversation with the premier. The B.C. Liberals, according to the *Globe* report, refused to disclose the guest list at these big money events.

by large donations from private individuals."

This scrutiny led to Premier Clark's promise, as reported by the *Globe* on April 1: "I'm going to be asking our Chief Electoral Officer to help us change the law in the province so that we can log in the donations in real time. People should be able to see when donations come in to political parties, not just once year."

This is not the solution we need. Giving the public a chance to watch and follow political corruption "in real time" is a small step forward, but what we really need is to get big money out of politics altogether.

To this end, it's a positive development that the BC NDP plans to introduce a private member's bill in the legislature this week calling for a ban on both corporate and union donations to political par-



▲ The B.C. Liberals have refused to disclose the guest lists at high-priced fundraising dinners.

If this sort of fundraising model sounds familiar to readers in Vancouver, it's probably because Premier Clark and Mayor Gregor Robertson share a money man in common. Bob Rennie, the ubiquitous "condo king," is both the head of fundraising for the B.C. Liberals and an important backer of Robertson and Vision Vancouver. Back in 2014, it was revealed Rennie had organized an exclusive lunch fundraiser with Mayor Robertson. The price of admission was a cool \$25,000.

This type of fundraising is not illegal in B.C., but it should be. While it falls short of direct bribery, it's nevertheless a subtle, pernicious form of corruption. The small, exclusive fundraisers are advertised as a way to enjoy coveted access to the premier. This stinks of "pay to play" politics, where corporate interests pay for access and are in turn, indirectly, rewarded with contracts, regulatory changes, or advantageous policies from the government. Without even knowing who's paying to play, it's hard for media or the public to scrutinize potential conflicts of interest.

The *Globe and Mail* report on Clark's fundraising led to more questions from the legislature press corps, and a call from the provincial opposition NDP for a probe into potential conflicts of interests. NDP MLA David Eby sent a formal letter to B.C.'s conflict-of-interest commissioner Paul Fraser on the matter, and explained his rationale to the media, "The most powerful MLA in the province, the Premier, has access to decision-making power that can be seen to be influenced

ties. Just as news of this bill came out, it was reported that NDP leader John Horgan was himself holding a \$5,000-a-plate breakfast fundraiser in Toronto. Preaching, but not yet practicing. This illustrates why big money must be legislated out of politics. Clear, strict rules are needed, otherwise the temptation of big money interests is there for even the most progressive-minded politicians.

Campaign and party fundraising rules are not just one more policy issue to be tinkered with; these matters go to the heart of what type of democracy we can have, given the vast inequalities that scar our society.

British Columbia is a province with immense natural and financial wealth. With the real estate bonanza and the staggering flows of domestic and global capital it's brought into Vancouver and the province as a whole, the rich in B.C. have never been richer. Despite this, or perhaps it's more accurate to say because of this boom at the top, inequality and poverty are endemic. Wages and benefits have lagged well behind the soaring cost of living.

In a democracy, this uneven economic playing field can be tilted back at least somewhat closer to even, provided the rich are not able to use their wealth to unduly influence or game the political system. Genuine democracy does not exist so long as big money can buy political influence. And that's no joke.

The fight for democracy and greater social and economic equality go hand-in-hand. Taking big money out of the political equation is a pre-condition for winning the battle for a more just and fair society. ✍



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Benefit concert raising awareness and funds for refugees

by CURTIS SEUFERT

The Armenian Cultural Association of British Columbia (ACA) will be hosting a benefit concert on April 8 at Performance Works for Syrian-Armenian refugees arriving in Vancouver. The event is raising funds for 30 families, and will feature pieces by composers such as Khachaturian, Babajanian, and Gomidas.

As the Syrian refugee crisis continues to escalate, various communities and groups are taking action in their own way. These range from raising awareness, fundraising, and privately sponsoring families to start a new life in Canada.

The Benefit Concert for Syrian Refugees put on by the ACA is arguably a mix of those three. Arto Tavukciyan, events director of

Since then, Tavukciyan and the ACA have worked with pianist Takuhi Sedefci and vocalist Alice Antranikian, among others, to create the benefit concert helping to fund the 30 Syrian-Armenian families that have been sponsored.

Sharing her music

One performer who will be playing piano at the benefit concert, Takuhi Sedefci, is the musical director for the ACA. This is far from her first concert though, having learned piano from a very young age:

"I was born in Istanbul, Turkey, and my interest in playing the piano began when I was three and a half years old," says Sedefci, "Before I knew the alphabet I started reading music ... my first concert was at age four."

Sedefci has performed at numerous festivals and concerts. She studied at conservatories from Istanbul to Philadelphia before mov-

“Tragically [Syrian-Armenians] are experiencing the same trauma their great-grandparents endured 100 years ago.

Arto Tavukciyan, events director, Armenian Cultural Association

the ACA, notes that it is one of the biggest events that the association has been involved in for some time:

"The ACA usually hosts two or three cultural events a year, either concerts or seminars," says Tavukciyan. "Due to the seriousness of the refugees' plight, this is one of the largest events the ACA has sponsored in years."

The ties between Armenia and Syria are close and many Syrian-Armenians descend from survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. As the April 24 day of remembrance for the Armenian

ing to Montreal to be with family and to attain a Bachelor of Performance at McGill University.

Having learned from a handful of inspiring music teachers along the way, she aims to share her passion for music as a teacher herself:

"I teach all levels and ages. The most important aspect in being a musician is to pass the love of music on to my students just as I gained mine from my teachers through my own studies," says Sedefci.

Alongside Sedefci is soprano vocalist Alice Antranikian, member of the board of ACA for two years. Having studied in Paris at the École normale de musique and toured across Europe with an opera company, Antranikian is no stranger to the stage or in performing alongside Sedefci:

"We collaborated last year for a festival and had a great time doing so," says Antranikian, "It is a fantastic feeling when all the parts come together in perfect harmony. It is not an easy task for both instrumentalists to come up with the perfect arrangements for every trio piece."

With both Sedefci and Antranikian having been a part of the ACA for a number of years and having performed with each other in the past, they hope to put in work for an important cause and share their passion for music while doing it.

"One of the things that is very close to my heart is to make the general public aware of the beauty and intricacies of Armenian music. It is usually in the minor mode and is hauntingly beautiful," says Antranikian.

For more information on the event, visit www.acaofbc.ca.



Photo courtesy of Takuhi Sedefci

▲ Takuhi Sedefci practises her craft.

Genocide approaches, Tavukciyan notes the unfortunate resemblance of the current crisis with those events a century past:

"Tragically they are experiencing the same trauma their great-grandparents endured 100 years ago," says Tavukciyan.

Because of this, two years ago the Vancouver Armenian community started working with St. Gregory's Church in Richmond for the ACA to become a private refugee sponsor.



Photo courtesy of Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver

Gold Mountain dream continues

by FLORENCE HWANG

Gold Mountain is very much alive today, says a historian who specializes in Chinese history. The Chinese people who crossed the Pacific Ocean in hopes of finding wealth at Gold Mountain, contrary to popular belief, did not leave simply because of war-torn conditions. Henry Yu notes that people who were dislocated by war didn't travel very far, meaning they went to the nearby country.

"Is it California? Is it British Columbia? Is it Australia? They're all called Gold Mountain. Gold Mountain is not a specific location," says Yu, a history professor and the principal at St. John's Graduate College.

The term is about the dream of being able to make it rich and have a good life.

"(Gold Mountain) is where you're going. And that place represents the larger goals that you have of making it rich enough to have a family, to buy a house back at home, to raise your kids, and maybe have your son join you later," says Yu.

Planting the dream

Most of them didn't make it rich, but older generations planted the dream.

"The reason why that dream is there is because someone – your uncle or your father or someone else – came back to the village, all dressed up, handing out gifts and stuff to everyone," says Yu. "And that's what triggers the dreaming."

Yu points out that the Chinese migration started as early as the 16th century to southeast Asia; eight counties (clustered in China's Guangdong province) generated the majority of people who migrated (as early as the 18th

century) to North America, Central America and Australia.

Counties from Zhong San, where Yu's mother's family came from, started to go through Macao (the Portuguese port of Macao) in the 16th century.

When gold was discovered in the Fraser Canyon in the 1850s, the Chinese were attracted to British Columbia.

"The name Gold Mountain is not just about gold mining. It's [about] looking to leave, as a young man, to make it rich," he says. "That's why the term stuck after the gold rush was over."

Yu says this pattern was recurring generation after generation: a system of young men working overseas, getting married, and leaving their wife and children at home.

Young men, who saw the older generations coming back from Gold Mountain bearing chests of gifts, aspired to be like them. The young men wanted to go and get rich so they could come back to marry the prettiest girl in the village. Meanwhile, the village girls wanted to marry these men going out to Gold Mountain because of the lifestyle they and their children could have.

"What kind of things did you bring back? A Singer sewing machine – that was the top. If you came back in 1920 and gave your wife a Singer sewing machine, you were like a god," says Yu.

Back then, sewing was done by hand so the new machines meant better quality work as a seamstress.

If a poor farmer wants to go to Gold Mountain, often someone of the older generation provided the loan or bought the ticket to go overseas. They also helped the younger generation find employment overseas.

The Gold Mountain dream lives on, but in reverse. Now people

Despite the Chinese Head Tax, the Chinese, mostly from eight counties in Guangdong province, kept coming to Canada to chase the Gold Mountain dream.

In Yu's article *The Rise and Fall of the Cantonese Pacific*, he says that the networks were based upon kinship and shared origins in the clusters of villages from which the migrants came. These migrants travelled to and settled around the Pacific and into the Caribbean and the Atlantic coast of the Americas. These migration networks were based on good information about wages, available jobs, local economies, and the value of goods that could be moved. The persistence of migration flows decade after decade depended upon the long-term stability of these networks. The organization of associations (for mutual aid and support in North America) was usually based upon kinship.

The dominance of Siyup ("Four Counties") origins account for the majority of the Cantonese in Canada and the United States. Migrants from Hoisan county (originally named "Sunning" county – 新寧), which accounted for 45.5% of all migrants to Canada between 1885–1949, dominated clan associations and social and business institutions. According to a UBC research, more than 97,142 registrations of Chinese migrants to Canada between 1885 and 1949 shows that 4 out of every 5 migrants before 1949 came from the "Four Counties" region.

make their living in China and send their families to live overseas and have their children educated in North America.

"It's much harder to get your kids into a good school in Hong Kong or Shanghai or Beijing. You see this ease of getting your kids into a good school on this side, where you get more out of your money by getting your kids into a North American school where they learn English," he says.

Gold Mountain Dream! is an exhibit in Vancouver, created by the Royal BC Museum, and is also in Ottawa because of the collaboration with the Canadian Museum of History. It tells the stories of Chinese migrants in the 1850s who search for gold on British Columbia shores.

For more information, please visit www.cccvan.com.

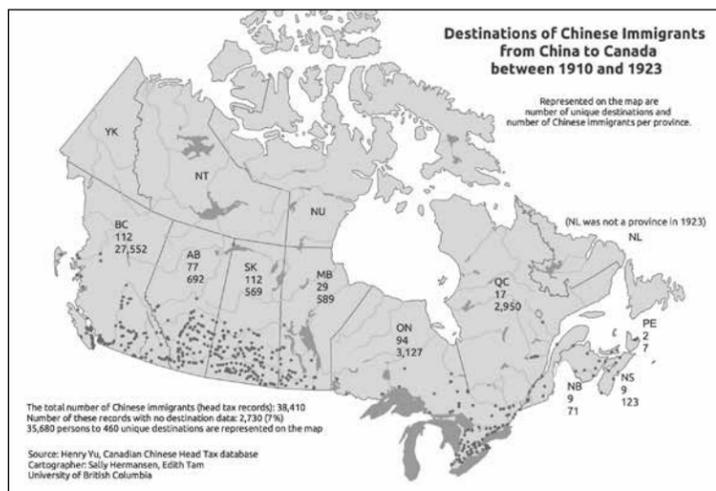


Photo courtesy of Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver

► "Verbatim" from page 1

ture, weren't relevant anymore, because – in such an incredibly short amount of time – I had been judged and put in a box where no one wants to be put.

When I set foot in the glorious city of Vancouver, I remember being struck and moved by the kindness of locals and by the open-minded culture to be found here. Some can argue that these great concepts of tolerance and

open-mindedness are empty and don't mean anything anymore. I defy each and every person who would like to contradict me: come and visit Vancouver first and then speak. Odds will likely be in Vancouver's favour.

Obviously glottophobia doesn't exist in Vancouver. Differences are welcomed with a smile. They are celebrated. Vancouverites encourage you to be yourself and to paint the city's vivid canvas with your

own colours. Vancouver invited me to embrace its vibrant culture. In doing so, Vancouver respected my identity and helped me acknowledge the vital importance of my roots. Like a good teacher, Vancouver escorted me when I was feeling my way around and waited patiently for me to take stock of my new environment, helping me adapt to a Canadian lifestyle without forgetting who I am.

Society is always hurrying you,

asking you to make a choice, to stay here or there, to speak up for your native roots or your heart's roots, wanting you to pick one over the other. Quickly you find yourself trapped between two chairs, not knowing where to sit. Vancouver's wisdom is to offer a third way: lie in the middle of these two chairs and simply be happy.

Vancouver went beyond the Tower of Babel's punishment. This city managed to turn our differ-

ences into assets. Vancouver is strong and multicultural. Vancouver knows it, and, with pride, is boasting about it. And rightly so, because it succeeds where the rest of the world fails. For this reason – among many others – it is definitely good to live in Vancouver and to be part of its vibrant community. And finally, there is no need to be born here to irreversibly be proud and honoured to be one of its citizens.

Ancient harvest festival faces the modern age

by DANNY KRESNYAK

The Sikh faith will be on display in the streets of South Vancouver for the annual Vaisakhi festival on April 16. This tradition is honoured worldwide on different dates to mark the open of the harvest season and the birth of Khalsa.

Khalsa is the living text of the Sikh religion. The scripture is recognized as the omnipotent 11th Guru that embodies Sikh identity and the core values of hard work, sharing wealth and meditation on God's name.

The event features a parade and a diversity of free vegetarian food for all attendees to enjoy. The work is volunteer-run, community funded and organized in partnership with the Khasma Diwan Society.

Going green

Pall Singh-Beesla is one of the principle organizers. He is



Photo by Danny Kresnyak

▲ Communal kitchens, an important aspect of Sikh tradition.

proud to announce this year is "the first ever green Vaisakhi." This step is a communal effort to cut down on the waste produced by a street festival which attracts more than 80 thousand spectators.

Singh-Beesla, 34, was born and raised in South Vancouver and describes himself as a "blue-collar guy who drives a city bus and takes his opportunities to give back." He says the decision to "go green" is an important component as Sikhism faces the future, particularly as many of his generation no longer see faith as a priority. Also of importance are communal meals.

"In our religion it is important that we must eat together, from the community pot," Singh-Beesla says. On the lower level of the Temple, 500 people a day are fed free vegetarian meals by a crew of volunteers. "It is against our beliefs to be apostolic. We do not demand people become Sikhs to eat here," he says.

The Vancouver Vaisakhi festival was first established in 1979, around the time Singh-Beesla's parents immigrated to Canada and construction of the current Temple facility began. The original Temple was built in 1906 at the corner of Burrard Street and 2nd Avenue. By the 1970s the need for a larger facility was evident. In response, a group of 20 members offered their homes as collateral to secure the funding to build the Temple in South Vancouver.

Singh-Beesla credits the rapid growth of the Sikh community during this period to the inclusive immigration policies of former Prime Minister Pierre



Photo by Danny Kresnyak

▲ Pall Singh-Beesla receiving an offering of Karah Parshad, a sacred pudding of the Sikh faith.

Trudeau and the industrious nature of Punjabi people, "potatoes and Punjabis can be found in every corner of the world," he says.

A rooted history

The Vaisakhi festival is a veneration of the 11th Guru, yet according to Senior Priest of the KDS Giani Harminder Pal-Singh the roots run deeper. Pal-Singh says the original Vaisakhi parade took place in the 16th century when the 6th Guru of the Sikh faith, Guru Har Gobind-Sahib Ji, was imprisoned for his refusal to convert to the official religion of the ruling class.

According to Pal-Singh, those faithful to the Sixth Guru walked from the cede of Sikh

faith in Amristar, Punjab to Agra in modern day Uttar Pradesh where their Guru was held. The journey was hundreds of kilometres and those faithful to Har Gobind-Sahib sang the traditional hymns as they walked.

Pal-Singh says Sikhism was built on the philosophy "everybody has the right to believe in what they want to believe." And that the Sikh religion recognizes only one God, yet acknowledges their way is not the only path to enlightenment.

This egalitarian spirit is still evident in the temple today. The sanctuary has doors facing in all four directions, symbolic of the willingness to let all walks of life enter. The leadership of the KDS are elected every three years. Ac-

ording the Singh-Beesla, only four members of the staff are paid wages and the annual operating budget of 1.1 million dollars is raised "a few coins at a time, plus about a sixty thousand a year grant from the provincial gaming authority." He says the funds are stretched as far as possible as the Temple "barely breaks even each year." ☞

The parade starts at 11 a.m. at the Khalsa Diwan Society Temple at 8000 Ross St., Vancouver.

Free vegetarian dishes will be available to all attendees along the route, which travels west down Marine Drive turns North on Main Street, East at 49th Avenue, South on Fraser then East on 57th before returning to the Temple at 5:30 p.m.

Hong Kong Exile: Otherness and collaboration

by GORDON GAMLIN

As part of the An Exact Vertigo project, *Hong Kong Exile*, an interdisciplinary arts company and registered non-profit organization based in Vancouver, will be hosting a talk on Wednesday, April 6 at 7 p.m. and a workshop on Saturday, April 9 at 3 p.m. at UNIT/PITT Projects. An Exact Vertigo aims to engage Vancouver's contemporary dance and art communities in discussions on critical theory, text and movement

The project hopes to broaden the traditional audience and offer space for artists to reimagine their practices in a new context.

Exile as inspiration

Hong Kong Exile's artistic investigations are insightful treatments of pressing political and artistic challenges and include vital undertakings with local and international arts communities.

"One emphasis is on cultural politics and the inclusion of under-represented identities," says Lim.

In an effort to push their creative vision and interdisciplinary process, members of *Hong Kong Exile* Natalie Tin Yin Gan, Milton Lim and Remy Siu go beyond the traditional aesthetics of dance, theatre and music. Their works aim to contribute to a vital, diverse and critical arts community that reaches beyond Vancouver.

The members of *Hong Kong Exile* most often get asked about their name.

"*Hong Kong Exile* was a piece of music that Remy composed back in 2012," Milton Lim explains. "We all felt like we could identify with the title. It spoke to us as part of the Chinese-Canadian diaspora – our sense of 'otherness' or 'exile' between our two homes. It was also one of the first few collaborations that brought us all together as a group (*Hong Kong Exile* was presented with *Exile*, a piece of choreography)."

A dynamic trio

All three members of *Hong Kong Exile* are Vancouver-based. Contemporary dance artist Natalie Tin Yin Gan specializes in improvisation and interdisciplinary collaboration and is also renowned as a producer, dramatize, dance educator and community artist. She holds degrees in both Contemporary Dance and International Studies. Theatre director and designer Milton Lim integrates digital media and live performance and is currently exploring linguistic landscapes and cultural space-making.

"It depends on the background of the artist, but I've been told that the discourse around racial politics is much more advanced in Vancouver compared to other cities. I don't know if I personally believe that. In the theatre community, we're also really well known for our collaborative nature and for site-specific theatre (theatre that takes place outside



Photo by Sepehr Samimi

▲ Performers Michelle Lui, Alex Tam, and Milton Lim in dance piece NINEEIGHT, choreographed by Natalie Tin Yin Gan with media and sound by Remy Siu.

of the black box studio and is set in a specific location)," says Milton Lim.

Composer Remy Siu's pieces have been performed in Canada and the United States by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the Victoria Symphony, and the Turning Point Ensemble, to name a few.

Hong Kong Exile extends an invitation to Vancouver's contemporary dance and art communities to participate in discussions on critical theory, text, choreography and movement through its engagement in An Exact Vertigo.

The forum poses questions on the future of art within the next 40 years and sets out to discuss inclusiveness and participatory collaborations that avoid the dichotomies of viewer/performer and artist/citizen as well as the politics of place in artist-run centres.

"In Vancouver the politics of place are on everyone's mind, because artist-run centres increasingly face the process of gentrification," says Milton Lim. ☞

For more information, please visit www.helenpittgallery.org.

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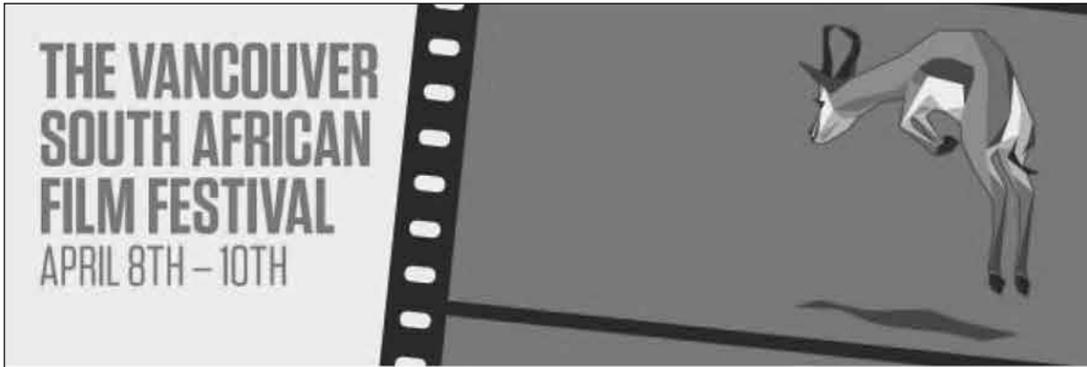
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Afrikaans language films have always been a big hit at VSAFF and we're thrilled to announce the outstanding *Dis ek, Anna* as part of our 2016 lineup. This subtle and thoughtful film takes us to a terrible place, yet manages to find hope in our shared humanity. *Dis ek, Anna* was recently nominated for seven South African Film and Television Awards, including best feature and best director for Saira Blecher.

Sun., April 10, 7 p.m.



Each year, VSAFF screens one film from an African country other than South Africa. This year our spotlight falls on Ethiopia and the powerful *Difret*, from executive producer Angelina Jolie. *Difret* is based on the true story of a young Ethiopian girl and a tenacious lawyer embroiled in a clash between cultural traditions and equal rights. **Winner:** Sundance Film Festival Audience Award.

Sat., April 9, 7:30 p.m.

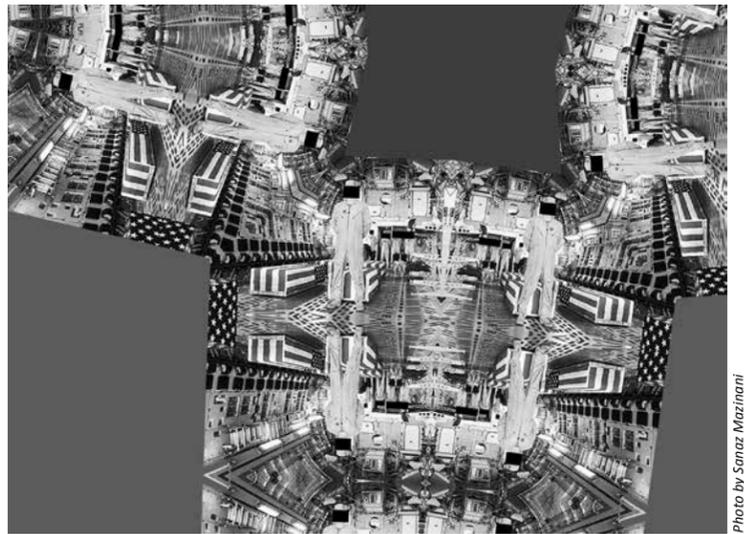


Using never before seen archival footage, *RFK In The Land of Apartheid* tells the little known story of Robert Kennedy's 1966 visit to South Africa during the worst years of Apartheid.

The film follows Kennedy to the site of his famous "Ripple of Hope" speech at the University of Cape Town and his encounter with Afrikaans students at Stellenbosch University – then a bastion of Apartheid ideology. Kennedy also meets with banned President of the African National Congress and Nobel Peace Prize winner Chief Albert Luthuli.

Sun., April 10, 1:30 p.m.

VSAFF proceeds fund the important work *Education without Borders* is doing in township schools in Gugulethu, South Africa. VSAFF and EwB are 100 per cent volunteer run.



▲ Detail of State Prism. Full image on front cover.

Mirror image

by NICOLE FINDLAY

At first glance, artist Sanaz Mazinani's kaleidoscopic works swirl with colour and repeating patterns, but a closer look reveals disturbing imagery of conflict, war and finally reflections of ourselves. An exhibition of Mazinani's art, Mirrored Explosions, will be displayed at the West Vancouver Museum from April 13 to June 4, 2016.

Of Iranian descent, Mazinani works out of studios based in both Toronto and San Francisco. Although the geographic and cultural differences between western US and eastern Canada are a source of inspiration, her work focuses on global conflicts and how these are portrayed through the media and perceived by North American audiences.

"My ideas are more about our perception of war, and how we understand it and consume it through news media," says Mazinani.

Images, perception, interpretation

To create her large, three-dimensional collages, Mazinani combs internet news sites for arresting images, usually of strife or war. Her work explores the remove between the actual event, the photograph that depicts it and the differences in perception that can shape how two individuals experience the same object.

"I often think about why certain photographs are published and how they inform our understanding of conflict," she says.

Choosing from her collection of what she estimates to be 70,000 saved images, she then digitally repurposes the photos by multiplying them into repeating patterns to illustrate the coverage the original images receive in media outlets.

"To me, repetition and reproducibility empowers images to construct and define history, so I find great power in the photographic image," says Mazinani. "One of my ongoing subjects has been the media and how it influences us. By using appropriated images that circulate around us daily, I try to highlight the media's function within our society."

To develop *Mirrored Explosions*, Mazinani worked with photographs of repatriated casualties from Afghanistan and Iraq released by the United

States Department of Defence. She describes photographs of flag-draped coffins carried by soldiers in which all identifying features and captions have been concealed.

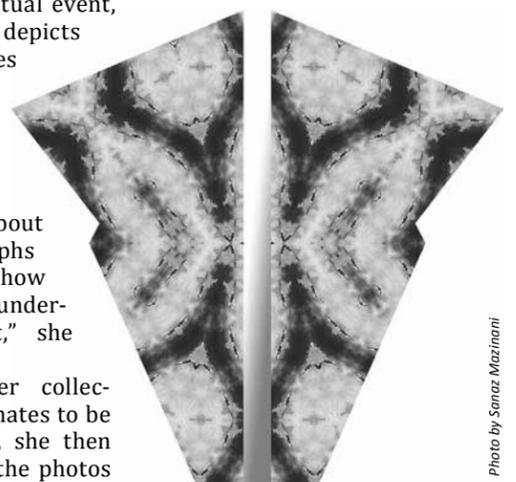
Mazinani's work also explores the interplay between the audience viewing her collages and the content each image conveys. She mounts the digital photographs on three-dimensional mirrored surfaces that reflect the person standing before it.

"I had been thinking of a way to directly involve the viewer in the subject at hand," says Mazinani. "I thought about literally using a mirrored surface in the work so that when a viewer looks at the imagery, they simultaneously see themselves and hence are implicated in the subject."

Curating the curated

Darrin Morrison, the director of the West Vancouver Museum, invited Pantea Haghghi to guest-curate the exhibitions. Haghghi is the owner and curator of Vancouver-based Republic Gallery. For *Mirrored Explosions*, Haghghi selected Mazinani's work because she wanted to introduce Vancouverites to a new artist.

"[I was] interested in how Sanaz Mazinani appropriates familiar images from news sources, yet challenges our reading of



▲ Gripen.

these images. Her work reinterprets the medium of photography," she says.

As for Mazinani, she hopes that her work will create a platform from which others can consider differing perspectives and how they shape our relationship to conflict.

"After all, what gets 'left out' is often just as important as how what's 'left in' is framed," says Mazinani.

Mazinani will give an artist talk at the West Vancouver Museum on April 14 at 7 p.m.

For more information, please visit westvancouvermuseum.ca.

Photo by Danny Krespan

Photo by Sanaz Mazinani

Photo by Sanaz Mazinani

Artist on the (mural) wall

by ALISON CHIANG

Staring at a wall on the side of the building is like looking at a blank canvas for artist Ilya Viryachev. Taking on mural painting in the last couple years, he talks about the work involved, what inspires him and how it brings the community together.

"I like the idea that one person can do such a big task. When you come to a 20-foot wall, you think, 'Wow, this is going to be a lot of work,'" says Viryachev, 24.

Viryachev paints murals on the side of building walls in Van-

building owner or the City of Vancouver – the city is easier," he says.

Spider-Man (Through the Cracks)

The 49-foot wide mural located between 3rd and 4th on Columbia Street was inspired by one of Viryachev's friends.

"My friend is quite successful in the field of animation now and I wanted to speak about resilience, hard work and effort... (on the mural) the plants are growing no matter what, through the cracks," he says.

Depending on the wall size (he didn't have to use a ladder for *Spider-Man*) and the detail of the

“When I make art for murals, I go for art that is appealing and brings a positive message to the viewer.

Ilya Viryachev, mural artist

cover. He has painted six murals in the city so far.

Murals for the city

Viryachev says mural painting is similar to having an art show, but it's one piece of work and it's accessible to more people because it's located outdoors.

"I always did sketching or doodling, but started taking it seriously in Grade 12 and ended up going into animation," he says.

Viryachev feels lucky to have a 9-5 job that is related to what he has studied, and can apply to his current interest in mural painting.

design, murals can take a couple months.

"When I make art for murals, I go for art that is appealing and brings a positive message to the viewer. I feel responsible, creating art in this public space, because it's almost like I'm putting my art in someone's face," says Viryachev.

Although he works primarily on his own, Viryachev has collaborated with others. On his last mural, with Mount Pleasant BIA and the City of Vancouver, he was asked to involve the local community.

"I ended up teaching a youth group a quick *Approach to Il-*



▲ The energy and motion of the Spider-Man mural.



▲ Ilya Viryachev in front of *In Bloom: An Ode to Vancouver*.

"There are broad similarities [animation versus mural painting] including tone, colour, value, shape design, emotions and motions... working with visual images and telling stories: it's coming through in [the] art," says Viryachev.

Mural painting has both positive and negative elements.

"From the beginning, you know you'll be working outside – which is great. On the other hand, being in Vancouver is challenging because it gets dark sooner in winter – and the rain," says Viryachev.

The City of Vancouver has been very helpful and supportive, says Viryachev, in obtaining a permit for the artist to paint his murals.

"I see a wall I like, I approach the

lustration course at the Mount Pleasant Community Center, and later the same youth joined me to paint the wall," says Viryachev.

He says it was a great experience.

"Sharing my knowledge and passion for art is important to me. It was nice to revisit that feeling again and contribute to the community," says Viryachev.

Inspiration and exploration

Viryachev is taking inspiration from his roots for an upcoming mural which will be influenced by Kazakhstan culture (traditional clothing and music). Originally from Almaty, Kazakhstan, he immigrated to Canada with his family when he was 14.

Viryachev, who speaks Russian with his family, says few people know about Kazakhstan. Their responses usually make him laugh.

"It's either through the movie *Borat* or as a wrestling/boxing power because we do well in the Olympics," he says.

Viryachev says he's lucky to be in Canada where there are more opportunities for art than in Kazakhstan.

"I've liked that I've maintained my language and cultural roots, but I don't think I have to represent a certain culture (Kazakhstan or Canadian) per say," says Viryachev. "Maybe it's a sign the world is heading in the right direction." ✍

For more information: www.ilyav.ca

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Nep Sidhu: The artist of past and present

by DIPA BARUA

Nep Sidhu, Toronto-based interdisciplinary artist, is showcasing his latest solo exhibit, *Shadows in the Major Seventh*, this summer at the Surrey Art Gallery. He was born in England, raised in Scarborough, Ontario and has showcased his art across Canada and the U.S. Sidhu is an artist of presence, claiming his art practice as being rooted in antiquity, yet connected to the present.

Sidhu, 37, describes having grown up with the beliefs of community, hard work and Mother Nature as the divine. The many occurrences of daily life provide Sidhu with creative elements for his expression.

"Everyday living is enough of an investigation," says Sidhu, about what inspires him as an artist.

His large-scale compositions are made of industrial material, textile and paint. The type of material he chooses depends on the narrative of the idea or story, and the dominant feeling accompanying the idea.

"I don't think I've ever caught myself saying, 'Boy, I really have something to say in British Romanesque Stone Faberge,'" says Sidhu. "I'm hoping that doesn't start happening – no offence to British Romanesque Stone Faberge folks."

One of the sources of inspiration for his art is the passing of his mother. In *Confirmation*, Sidhu, a welder by trade, uses brass and sheet veneer marble to construct large frames that represent the unconditional love of mothers. The text in the frames are written in Kufic, an old Arabic script. The text joins this unconditional love to infinity, where his mother loves and lives, and which Sidhu

other mystical realm, but to place them in the moment where the individual is composed of their past and present.

"I also come from a people who practice universal law for a natural balance. The adornment, levitation and the majesty that sits inside the work is all from reflections of what I've seen and experienced. None of it is made in trying to point to something that is unnatural or mystic for the sake of placing paradise anywhere but here and now," says Sidhu.

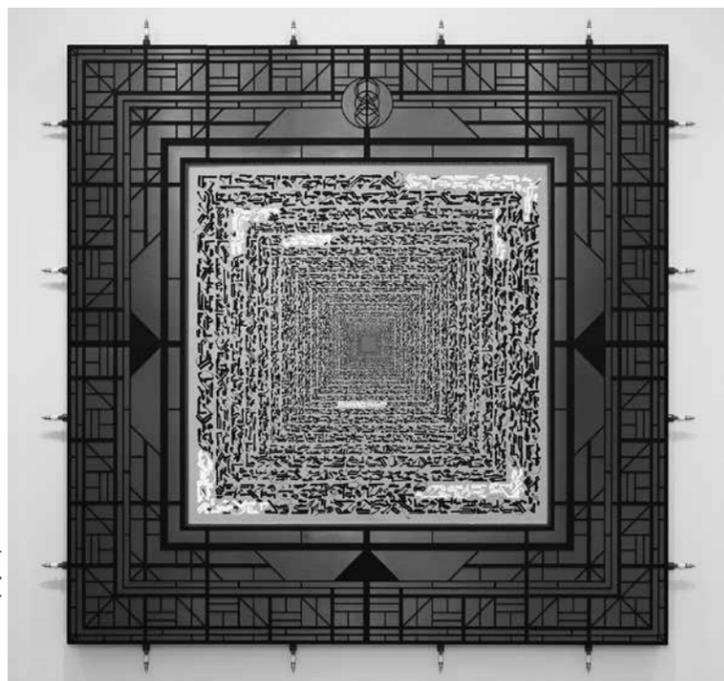
Collaboration

Rooted in a sense of community, Sidhu joined The Constellation, a group of collaborative artists and friends that formed in 2013, exhibiting their work at the Frye Museum in Seattle from 2014 to 2016.

"I'm happy to have found a group of brothers and sisters that have been sent as such at the same time to commune in this way," says Sidhu.

Sidhu has also responded to other artists' work. One of Sidhu's pieces, *Paradise Sportif*, is a collection of garments, which are colourful with rich patterns and adorned with tableaux of history. This piece is inspired by Ishmael Butler, a musician and a member of Shabazz Palaces, an American experimental hip-hop group. What emerged is a dialogue between the two artists.

"The attitudes and shifts that were in [Butler's] narrative felt like a real tangible feeling to go after in terms of its texture and vestment as a sculpture practice. It was a parallel move that also had a noise-cancelling aspect in terms of a process that had no room for unnecessary elements, as our discourse and expres-



▲ Confirmation, ink on paper, brass, sheet veneer marble.

calls a third space between architecture and the written word.

However, Sidhu does not think of his mother's passing as a loss.

"No, it wasn't a loss. It's always been about the presence and examples that I grew up around," says Sidhu.

For Sidhu, this was a confirmation of cycles.

"After the pain and hurt, the work paved a way for an opportunity for her to become bigger than she ever was as a single bodied woman. It was something that represented not just her personally, but the others that were roaming and singing," he says.

Sidhu says his art is not intended to remove individuals into an-

sions were based on a call and response that relied on simply listening and trusting," says Sidhu.

Sidhu's engagement with his community and other artists, as well as the scale of his works, continue to grow, so people can look forward to seeing more architectural pieces in the near future.

"I'm thankful in the interest and means people provide for wanting to take the care to exhibit and share the work in its full potential," says Sidhu. ✍

Shadows in the Major Seventh runs from April 9–June 12 at the Surrey Art Gallery. For more information, please visit www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/19030.aspx

Cultural Calendar

April 5–19, 2016

by JAKE MCGRAIL

Generation Axe

April 6
Queen Elizabeth Theatre
630 Hamilton St., Vancouver

If you love guitar then there is no way you can miss this concert. Five of the top hard rock and metal guitar players in the world will combine for a surefire memorable experience. Steve Vai, Zakk Wylde, Yngwie Malmsteen, Nuno Bettencourt and Tosin Abasi team up for a night of guitar collaboration and showcasing.

Spark: A Fireside Artist Talk

April 7
Native Education College
285 East 5th Ave., Vancouver
www.necvancouver.org

The Fireside Artists Talks are held at the grunt gallery, and are a series of informal talks hosted by various artists who push boundaries with their traditional and contemporary art. The hosts of the upcoming talk are Hans Winkler and Cease Wyss, who will be discussing their experience and projects regarding the ancient Hawaiian peoples of Kaho'olawe.

Anoushka Shankar

April 8
Chan Shun Concert Hall, The University of British Columbia
6265 Crescent Rd., Vancouver
www.chancentre.com

Famed sitarist Anoushka Shankar will be playing from her latest album *Land of Gold*, which she dedicated to the plight of refugees worldwide. Trained in classical Indian traditional music, Anoushka Shankar aims to bring the sitar to new spheres and create music that addresses our humanity.

Vancouver Chopin Society presents Dina Yoffe

April 8
Vancouver Playhouse
600 Hamilton St., Vancouver
www.chopinsociety.org

The incredibly talented pianist Dina Yoffe will be performing at the Vancouver Playhouse, showcasing her performance skills which won her top prizes at the Robert Schumann competition in Zwickau and the Fryderyk Chopin competition in Warsaw. The programme includes two preludes, one by Scriabin and one by Chopin.



▲ Dina Yoffe.

Vancouver South African Film Festival

April 8–10
Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
149 West Hastings St., Vancouver
www.vsaff.org



▲ Sitarist Anoushka Shankar will bring the music of humanity to UBC's Chan Centre.

The non-profit event supports development works by Education without Borders in South Africa since 2002. This year's lineup explores the history, culture and politics of South Africa and includes The Shore Break, Dis ek, Anna and producer Angelina Jolie's Difret.

Native Edible and Medicinal Tree and Plant Walk

April 9
Hastings Park

As part of Vancouver Tree Week, come explore Hastings Park with Indigenous Herbalist Lori Snyder, as she shares the knowledge and wisdom that is held in the natural world. Discover what food and medicine grows and lives abundantly all around us.

High Tea

April 12–17
Studio 1398
1398 Cartwright St., Vancouver
www.giculturalalsociety.org/studio1398

Two multi-award winning British comedians have combined to form a show that has taken theatre festivals by storm, winning Best Comedy in Victoria, Best of The Fringe in Toronto, Best Script in Montreal and Most Outstanding Show in London. Follow James and Jamesy in a performance that showcases the best of physical comedy and immersive theatre.

Science World After Dark

April 15
Science World
1455 Quebec St., Vancouver
www.scienceworld.ca

Science World is well-known as a venue for families and children of all ages, but once every two months there's a chance for adults to explore it without the

younger atmosphere. Watch an OMNIMAX film and watch a live science show in this evening of 19+ science fun.

The Legendary Yuri Shevchuk

April 19
Vancouver Playhouse
600 Hamilton St., Vancouver
www.showoneproductions.ca

The legendary musician, singer and performer Yuri Shevchuk will be presenting his solo chamber concert "Acoustic." Acoustic concerts from Shevchuk are quite rare, so this collection of songs will surely be a delight to anyone who listens to this live performance.



▲ Yuri Shevchuk.

Lulu Series: Michael Rohd

April 21
Richmond City Hall
6911 No. 3 Rd., Richmond

Since 2003, the Lulu Series has been working to educate participants on the importance of art and establishing connections with their community. The next speaker is Michael Rohd, the Executive Director for Performance and Civic Practice, as well as one of the founders of Sojourn Theatre.

And the beat goes on

From his commanding view at City Hall, Captain George Vancouver, after whom our city is named, is pointing over the domain he first explored in 1792. Captain Vancouver showed respect for and enjoyed mainly good relationships with indigenous people, easing his ability to survey the area. Less than a century later, the city of Vancouver was established on April 6, 1886. On Wednesday, April 6, 2016, Vancouver will celebrate 130 years.

Today Vancouver is a bustling place, growing, prospering with business and trade, and is one of Canada's most ethnically diverse cities. It's been much the same for the last 10,000 years. The area now known as Vancouver was a place of settlement, trade, and gathering for the Squamish, Musqueam and Tseil-Watuth peoples and is still recognized as their traditional territory. The obvious difference is the respect the new settlers are only now beginning to fully realize for the environment.

We can take False Creek, especially the Granville Island area as a good example. Pre-settlement, it was a rich tidal basin consisting of 20 acres of sandbars teeming with fish and wildlife. It was an essential food source for Indigenous people. However, by the late 1800s, it was filled with tugs, ships and barges to move timber, bricks and lime. Sawmills filled the air with smoke and the waste from sawmills and factories went into the tidal basin along with raw sewage from the surrounding neighbourhood. It gained the nickname, "Shit Creek." There



was a lot of money to be made and people did not "give a shit" for the environment. Some of the largest trees in the world grew along south False Creek, providing lumber for export and masts for sailing ships that transported the lumber to other places.

With the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1887, lumber and other goods could be loaded onto trains, goods could be shipped back and forth across the country and new settlers could be trans-

ported to this thriving hub. With the importance of fishing and the shipping industry creating Vancouver's prominence as a port, we have all the ingredients that created the city Vancouver has now become.

In many ways, the rush to gain money is still ever present. We have the mushrooming of towers staring us in the face, representing how Vancouver has become a major centre where housing has become an investment commodity for the

wealthy. Recent reports estimate a third of Vancouver's housing is purchased from China and that certainly does not represent all foreign investment. It's curious that this report comes from the U.S. National Association of Realtors when local sources seem to have trouble finding this information.

But in spite of current sources of wealth in this city and its attendant problems, at least we are slowly gaining knowledge of its makings and hopefully this will

lead to positive solutions. After all, we certainly have become environmentally conscious and are gaining a reputation as a "green city." Look at the transformation of False Creek and Granville Island. Despite all its shortcomings, Vancouver is still a remarkable place of beauty and has the potential to thrive, providing a decent life for all. With spring comes hope!

DON RICHARDSON

Recipe by Jen dela Luna

Bhapa Shorshe Chingri (Steamed mustard shrimp)

Based on the beautiful weather we've been having, I think I can safely say that spring has officially sprung here in Vancouver. There's still a hint of chill in the weather, which means the heat in this dish is absolutely perfect for eating whilst sitting out on your balcony. Seafood and fish are extremely popular in Bangladeshi cuisine, and as I was doing my research, I was delighted to see many gentler ways of cooking. Rather than roasting, grilling, or frying, this dish is steamed, preserving the moisture in the shrimp incredibly well.

Served over rice, Bhapa Shorshe Chingri can be customized exactly how you'd like – mild or hot, dry or saucy. Use my recipe as the framework and let your instincts do the rest! The best part is that this dish can be done in just about half an hour – a perfect weeknight meal for

our sunny evenings ahead. Enjoy! Serves 4.

Ingredients

- 1 lb or 500g shrimp (I prefer 16/20 or 21/25 sized), shelled and deveined
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 ½ tbsp mustard seeds
- 2 tbsp water
- 2–3 Thai chilli (green preferred)
- 2 tbsp mustard oil (or olive oil)
- ¼ cup yogurt, coconut cream or cream
- Salt and black pepper

Method

1. Season the shrimp liberally with salt and black pepper.
2. Grind the mustard seeds with a mortar and pestle, and mix in the turmeric and water to create a paste. Depending on how spicy you want the dish to be, you can chop your Thai chillies finely and mix them into this paste as well. I personally just

slit the chillies and mix them in at the end.

3. Mix in the yogurt – you can also use coconut cream or cream if you wish. This step is optional, and is only necessary if you want your dish to be more saucy as opposed to dry.
4. Coat the shrimp thoroughly in this mixture and allow it to marinate for 15 minutes.
5. Drizzle oil over the shrimp right before cooking.
6. To cook:
 - a. Bake the dish in a 350°F oven for 18–20 minutes. Make sure to use a covered container so the shrimp can steam, or cover the baking dish with foil.
 - b. OR Steam the shrimp on the stove in a double boiler (or a bowl over a water bath), again cooking for approximately 20 minutes or until the shrimp is opaque.
7. Serve over steamed rice, and enjoy!



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