Yoga embraces historic and cultural divides

by DAVID LEWIS

As diet and exercise become increasingly prominent in Canadians’ lives, many Vancouverites have turned to yoga to supplement their fitness regimen. It is now the second most popular leisure activity in the country. Many Vancoverites have turned to yoga to supplement their fitness regimen. It is now the second most popular leisure activity in the country. More than just a physical activity, yoga is also one of the most diverse spiritual traditions in the world, influencing numerous faiths and cultures.

The diversity of the yoga tradition may be shown in the very ambiguities of defining the term “yoga,” a word that has had different meanings for different people over separate time periods going into the present day. “It’s a personal question,” says John Buchanan, Buddhist teacher and practitioner of Tibetan Heart Yoga, on the meaning of the term, “because every person that does yoga or does a form of yoga is going to have a different answer for that.”

The word’s etymology is just as diverse, indicating a “method” or “discipline,” deriving from the Sanskrit root yuj, meaning to yoke or join together. “Yog means to unite,” says traditional Hindu yogi Acharya Aman on the Hindi word for yoga. “To unite one’s individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. If you study science you know that the biggest mystery in this universe is what consciousness is. Yog is to understand that.”

This desire to unite has driven people to connect with other human beings along with a deeper spiritual order. “If you try to follow the principles – the eight limbs of yoga, say – then you’re doing your best to figure yourself out,” says Buchanan. “I think what it comes down to is how anyone interacts with other beings, and that’s going to directly relate to how they interact with themselves, how much love and acceptance they have for themselves.”

Origins in Hinduism

The precise origins of yogic practice are, as with most ancient traditions, murky. Some evidence indicates that the seeds of yoga may have been planted during the beginnings of settled culture in India: the Indus Valley Civilization.

“Yoga embraces historic and cultural divides”

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Decolonizing: healing the crisis of modern cultures

by JAKE MCGRAIL

Creative performances at the third international Babylon Conference (Sept. 23-25) marks the beginning of a three-day event on the Sunshine Coast, bringing the Filipino community together and forging relationships.

There will be a multitude of presentations and workshops over the weekend to help with the process of decolonization and re-learning the sense of Filipino indigeneity.

“A lot of things that are happening in the world are happening because of history. People are looking for a way to heal, and a way to move forward,” says Leny Strobel, project director of the Center for Babylonian Studies.

Focus on community dialogues

The term Babylon refers to prominent figures in pre-colonial Filipino society. The Babylonians (who were usually women) were healers, prophets and mediums and served and assisted in a similar fashion to shamans, medicine men and the like. They were central figures in the community and participated in the Philippine Revolution in the fight to overthrow Spanish authority in the Philippines.

“I did research on the pre-colonial history of the Philippines, focusing on the Babaylans,” says Strobel, “I wanted to learn from them as revolutionaries and healers, for justice and peace.”

The Center for Babylonian Studies does that very thing. Since being founded in 2009, they have hosted conferences and symposiums in Canada, the U.S. and the Philippines.

This year’s conference, co-hosted alongside the Kathara Indigenous peoples, as well as cultural relationships with the local First Nations.

“Decolonizing is to form relationships and help decolonize,” says Sohey Wing, a board member of the Kathara Society, “especially in light of the interest of reconciliation between the Filipino indigenous peoples and Canada’s First Nations.”

There will be relationships built and strengthened at the conference: with the Squamish Nation and other indigenous groups present and a part of the event. The weekend will begin with a canoe ceremony from the Squamish Nation, as well as an opening ritual. What follows will be dozens of presentations and workshops from a large array of people sharing their thoughts and experiences.

“I’m sharing with a group my own decolonization and story,” says Wing, who will be presenting at the conference, “in a way that I think can possibly shape our survival, with and as indigenous people, locally and abroad.”

The presentations are focused on different areas of indigeneity (the preserved customs and traditions of their ancestors); tattowing traditions, healing music, language revitalization, climate change activism, indigenous solidarity in the Philippines, Canada and more.

“This is one of our responses to what we feel is the crisis of modernity, crisis of modern cultures,” says Strobel. “We’re finding the right practices that make us whole, which is why we focus on healing colonial and historical traumas.”

For more information, visit www.evensi.ca/bird- international-babylonian-conference-ymcamp-77716503

Decolonizing the Kathara

The Kathara Filipino Arts Collectivity, Society is about Babaylans – and a lot more.

“This Babylonian discourse is under the broader heading of Filipino culture and practice,” says Strobel. “We’re providing space for people to experience, or to learn about, the process of decolonizing ourselves, getting in touch with your own indigeneity.”

Most of the attendees to the conference are Filipino settlers in Canada and the U.S., as well as people coming from the Philippines and Europe. They’re coming to listen, share experiences and simply enjoy or re-discover their own indigenous culture.

“It’s more than learning,” says Strobel, “it’s helping people experience it. The conference is focused on doing that, and bringing the community together.”

Building and sharing

The Kathara Filipino Arts Collectivity Society was once a performing group, but was incorporated into a society in 2012. It is based in the Lower Mainland and looks to promote the art and culture of the Philippine

Design a fantastic resume and cover letter. Fine tune your interview techniques, learn valuable skills to succeed in the Canadian workforce. Access basic computer skills, access services for skilled workers – all at NO COST! The Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) Society, Vancouver Branch, has been helping immigrants and newcomers to Canada for over 14 years.

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PICS Vancouver also offers one-on-one employment assistance, paid on-the-job work experience through our Wage Subsidy program, and a one-stop Career Centre with a broad-range of job hunting resources. Funding for all programs is provided by the Ministry of Social Development, Employment and Labour Market Services Division.

Need the skills to find a job? We can help!
Asian Canadian history takes festival form

**By Fiona Benson**

Vancouver’s Asian Canadian community will be hosting their annual literary event, literASIAN, from Sept. 21–25. The theme, History and Memory, will be presented through a series of panels, workshops and book launches of all knowledge-able and respected authors, including Jean Barman, Paul Yee and Joy Kogawa.

Paul Yee, author of many works inspired by growing up in Vancouver’s Chinatown, builds historical records both as author and as city archivist. Yee says that as someone who usually talks through the pages of a book, writer’s festivals are the rare opportunity to have a live connection.

“When I go in front of audiences, I don’t read to them, so there’s no book standing between us. I look right into people’s faces because I want to see how they respond,” he says. “Are they shocked at unexpected turns? Do they smile when there’s something funny?”

Writer’s festivals also offer Yee the chance to show how creative and critically thinking can flesh out the historical record. The personal touch is what he strives to achieve. He writes his books for whoever can see in them the reflections of real life and real people – even, or especially, them- selves.

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Jean Barman, historical writer.

“My writing reflects a certain political outlook. I wouldn’t say that every person of Chinese descent in an audience is automatically in my community, and often people who are not of Asian descent ‘get it,’ and tell me that they like my writing because it achieves shared social goals,” says Yee.

Sharing the load

Jean Barman, historical writer and UBC professor emerita, is not of Asian descent but her novel as a historian is such that she sits on the opening panel of the literASIAN festival. She became interested in the Chinese-Canadian story while writing a general history of British Columbia.

 “[The book] brought home to me both the very significant role played by almost-wholly male arrivals from China in the early history of British Columbia and the long-time lack of interest in telling that story, and I have remained concerned,” she says.

Barman became a founding board member of the Chinese Canadian Historical Association of BC (CCHSC) in order to encourage the uncovering and cherishing of family stories.

Though Barman is happy to say she has seen the historical record of both British Columbia and Canada become much more inclusive in recent years, her ongoing mission as a historian is to encourage people to discover, share and, in the case of this festival, to write.

Lighting the way

Joy Kogawa, a Vancouver-born Japanese-Canadian author well known for her 1981 novel Obasan, will be launching her new memoir Gently to Nagasaki at literASIAN 2016.

Kogawa says audiences can expect unpublished extras and behind-the-scenes insight on what she expects to be quite a controversial subject. She ventures into the realms of joy, hope and forgiveness, and says that her life is now about growing the seed of the spirit.

“I find that there is a clutching, fearful scarcity way of being and there is a joyful abundant way of being, and I would rather choose that,” she says.

The memoir was not written as a publication, but rather as a personal record of urges and insights Kogawa felt leading her towards a full and joyful life. Her own deeply-felt brushes with animosity and sorrow lend conviction to her efforts to transform alienation to friendship.

“Forgiveness is almost impossible for us when we have been hurt, but when we are filled up with what is joyful and abundant it is then that forgiveness is very easy.”

Kogawa says Gently to Nagasaki is a book on passion and compassion, on things taken for granted and often overlooked, on what is familiar turning to dust and what is new and unexpected growing inside, on overcoming a haunting past and finding a beautiful future.

The literASIAN writing festival runs from Sept. 21–25 at various Vancouver locations. For more information on the schedule, events and authors, please visit the website: www.literasian.com

The Red Turtle

Michael Dudik of Weta Workshop

Maliglutit (Searchers)

Zacharias Koki – Canada

Window Horses

Ann Marie Fleming – Canada

Sins of the Flesh

Raheld El Haj – Egypt

Chocolat

Nicola Yoon – France

Human

Yann Arthus-Bertrand – France

Ex-Libris

Online: VIFF Passport – Ticket Packs & more

Via Ticketing:

Online: Ticketing in-studio or on-line

Ex-Libris

From Yann Arthus-Bertrand, who has spent 35 years travelling the world making films about the world’s most poverty stricken areas. His goal is to inspire us to think, care, and act on a larger scale.

Breath-taking in scope and a glorious spectacle, Yann Arthus-Bertrand’s Earth shows the world from above, from the highest mountain peaks to the depths of the ocean. The Earth as only the movies can, Aerial Earth captures the beauty of the planet in full glory, as never before. The lights of cities, the canyons of rivers, the forests of trees, the endless oceans, and the clouds that cover the sky all come together to create the planet Earth as we have never seen it before. The camera captures the beauty of the planet in full glory, as never before. The lights of cities, the canyons of rivers, the forests of trees, the endless oceans, and the clouds that cover the sky all come together to create the planet Earth as we have never seen it before.

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On March 2, 1999, BCTV's news feature a live BCMP door knock at the East Vancouver residence of then NDP Premier Glen Clark. The cops were there at the behest of the province's top politician to execute a search warrant issued in connection with an investigation into breach of trust involving a casino license approved for a man who had done renovations on Clark's home. BCTV reported that Daly just happened to get tipped off.

Clark would be forced to resign, although he was eventually acquitted. Personally, he bounced back, switching teams of sorts by going to work in the upper echelons of the business empire of B.C.'s top oligarch, Jimmy Pattison. But the NDP has arguably never recovered. After Clark resigned, the party was decimated in the 2001 election, reduced to two seats. They've lost three more elections since, leaving the last one a come-from-behind win by Christy Clark and the B.C. Liberals.

That 2013 loss was such a stunner that many now see Christy Clark as invincible. Despite her government's growing roster of scandals, it feels like many in the opposition camp don't really think they can win. Perhaps this pessimism is just the intellect's self-defence against another electoral heartbreak. Although the 1999 media-assisted dethroning of Clark stands out as particularly over-the-top, in each contest the weight of the mainstream corporate media in this province has played a role in tipping the scales against the NDP. Now matter what outrages committed by the government, the vast majority of major print and broadcast media in B.C. could always reliably be counted on to chime in with endorsements of the establishment's party of choice.

On the eve of Election Day back in 2005, for example, I remember the Vancouver Sun and Province had people handing out free issues of their papers at the main downtown transit hubs. This was back in the days when there was little competition to the city's twin-headed Canwest corporate paper of record. But times have changed. Canwest filed for bankruptcy protection in 2009 and was bought up by Postmedia, which today itself looks like a media empire on its last leg. Free distribution papers like Metro Vancouver, while still owned by large corporate media interests, have noticeably improved their coverage of local and provincial politics, and tend to allow more progressive opinions to be featured prominently.

Most importantly, the digital media revolution, including the rise of social media and the slow but steady proliferation of independent online news and politics sites, has diluted the power once wielded by the big corporate outlets. Even online video, growing in reach everyday, threatens the hold of big broadcasters like Global TV (which used to be BCTV, and as it happens John Daly just retired from Global two weeks ago.)

Having once worked on B.C. NDP campaigns, before turning to focus on journalism, I know that the party's staffers lived in fear of the big players in the corporate media. That has reinforced the tendency for the party to talk to the political centre, especially when they're fearful a particular position will be framed by the mainstream media as "anti-growth" or "anti-jobs.

Just last week, we saw NDP leader John Horgan wobble on his party's opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline, telling reporters "I can be persuaded" to support the tar sands export project, if new facts emerge to change his (and his party's) mind. The Vancouver Sun's Vaughn Palmer, unofficial dean of the B.C. legislative press gallery, promptly wrote a column about Horgan "heaving his options open." Clark's senior reporter, Keith Baldrey, was positively giddy about Horgan opening the door to the pipeline, tweeting "the B.C. NDP (or at least its leader) no longer has a firm position on Kinder Morgan pipeline."

For the NDP, this type of wobbling by the leader is deadly. It will demoralize and confusion their own supporters. Horgan would be wise to hold firm, especially since polling has consistently shown opposition to the pipeline remains strong.

Rather than giving the old media openings like this to muddle the waters, the NDP should stick to its guns where they have staked out progressive positions. And then they should creatively use digital media to amplify their message, and to involve their supporters and members directly in this effort. The Bernie Sanders campaigns in the U.S. showed the power of social media to completely change the terms of political debate and bypass traditional media gatekeepers.

The NDP need not live in fear of Palmer and Baldrey anymore. There's a new media landscape taking shape in B.C. and world-wide, and a renewed hunger for principled and unashamedly left-wing politics. If John Horgan and the NDP can keep their nerve, corporate media bosses won't get to determine the results of next year's election.
**Still life in all shapes and sizes**

**Artists Talk & Opening Reception:** September 17, 6:30–9:30pm

Kick off the fall with a fabulous art party. Still life—one of the most popular genres of art—takes over the Surrey Art Gallery this fall with five still-life inspired exhibitions and projects filling the galleries and halls. You’ll get to see people’s relationships with objects around their home and studio and glimpse the sometimes odd yet intriguing treasures people collect.

**Himetic Workshop:** Studio Still Lives of Fiona Ackerman and Kelly Lynn

September 17 – December 4

The artist’s studio—a space frequently depicted with a carer’s worth of painted canvases, numerous paintbrush filled-on pots or carved sculptures in progress—is said to have been disappearing in the past few decades. No longer needing to make work in a studio or with their own hands, many artists prefer instead to make their art exclusively from their portable computing devices in or office environments and cafes, and often contracting manufacturers to complete the work. Yet, the artist’s studio endures both for artists who work in the home and as a subject in popular films and videos. Funded by the large archive of photographic documentation and feature films of modern artists (such as Matison, Picasso, Pollock) at work in their studios, the last thirty years have seen a dramatic increase in the art made about the artist’s studio. Painters Fiona Ackerman and sculptor/photographer Kelly Lynn are two Canadian artists who explore the space and symbolism of the studio in their image and object making. While the power of their art lies on a tension between the real material objects or spaces and imagined ones, their images also strike at the very nature of creativity and creation itself.

**Small Stages: Still Life from the Permanent Collection**

September 17 – December 4

Paintings of bowls of fruit, flowers, and objects on a table top are imagery commonly associated with classic still life art, but what about a photograph of books with miniature figures on them, or a chandelier sculpture of kitchen and garden utensils? Drawn from the Gallery’s permanent collection, the artworks in this show depict carefully arranged—and sometimes unusual—scenes that reflect on and expand the still life genre. This exhibition features a range of still life compositions, from traditional to contemporary, including works by Janette Chilisa, Go Yu, Carole Itte, Alex McLeod, and Joe Faktett. There’s painting, sculpture, photography, and prints to explore—something for everyone!

**Memento Mori: A Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Still Lifes**

Until November 13

The Arts Council of Surrey presents this juried exhibition of artworks by local artists that explore the space and symbolism of the studio in their image and object making. While the power of their art lies on a tension between the real material objects or spaces and imagined ones, their images also strike at the very nature of creativity and creation itself.

**April Hickox: Variations Primaries**

February 26 – April 13

Painting of bowls of fruit, flowers, and objects on a table top are imagery commonly associated with classic still life art, but what about a photograph of books with miniature figures on them, or a chandelier sculpture of kitchen and garden utensils? Drawn from the Gallery’s permanent collection, the artworks in this show depict carefully arranged—and sometimes unusual—scenes that reflect on and expand the still life genre. This exhibition features a range of still life compositions, from traditional to contemporary, including works by Janette Chilisa, Go Yu, Carole Itte, Alex McLeod, and Joe Faktett. There’s painting, sculpture, photography, and prints to explore—something for everyone!

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**Dual projects for media duo**

**By Kate Murray**

Kashif Pasta and Shyam Vara of Dunya Media have hit it big with their entry into Telus StoryHive entitled **Welcome to Surrey.** StoryHive is a community powered funding program for new content creators.

The annual competition welcomes all citizens of Alberta and B.C. to take part in creating their own web series. The winner in each province receives a $10,000 dollar grant to finish their series and expand their stories.

**The path to StoryHive**

When asked why they decided to put their project forward, Pasta explained that it wasn’t always in the plans for them. While they had heard of StoryHive, they hadn’t considered submitting their work before. They changed their minds after speaking with Prem Gill, the CEO of Creative B. “She used to be at Telus and was aware of StoryHive and was aware of us, and really encouraged us to go for it,” she said. “She really thought it would be a good fit. It was really great having someone who knew what they were doing telling us to go for it,” Pasta says.

The competition had two parts. The first was a surprise when the duo realised they only had a few days to get their document, video pitch and voting story up and running. After becoming one of the top 10 submissions, Dunya Media was given a budget of $1,000 to create their pilot.

**The known and the unknown**

Welcome to Surrey follows the story of Sanee, a law student working part-time and comes home to Surrey to take care of her ailing father. After reconnecting with past friends and family, she is forced to choose between the known and the unknown.

“The idea came about when we were students at SFU,” Pasta says. “One of our friends moved to Montreal for about a year and he was one of the most enthusiastic guys you could know. In our old high school, there is literally a spirit award named after him. When he came back from Montreal there was a reverse culture shock for him. Everyone experiences it when they come back from travelling. You come back and you feel like you’ve changed but the place hasn’t. That’s where the idea stemmed from and we took it from there,” Pasta explained.

**Background influences**

“Growing up in Surrey with a really large South Asian population, it was a bit different. Technically I grew up as a minority but in my locale I’m not really one, so do you have that mixed experience,” says Pasta. Although her locale’s primary location is Surrey, the premise can be translated to my small world of the city and the larger scope of the world. What makes this experience different however, is the diverse and culturally expressive experience that Vancouver has to offer.

“We grew up in a place where people have Bollywood music and Kanye West on their ipod and that’s a uniquely Canadian thing,” Pasta explained.

Although they did not get to make their series through Telus, Dunya Media is still working on getting it funded through a number of different avenues.

**Looking ahead**

Expanding on what they’ve learned from their initial proj ect, the duo has used this experience for their upcoming project: **Dunya Health**. Realising that the South Asian population in their locale has a lot of health information that was not delivered in an engaging manner, Dunya Media looks to address the need which is described as a “Bill Nye meets Buzzfeed” show for South Asian seniors, and that’s an advantage, especially while learning other languages, habits and customs.

“The Canadian dream remains a dream, and I’ll keep that image intact across borders and over oceans.”

**Translation by Brady Brisaisto**
Vancouver Cantonese Opera chose the challenging musical Reunion at the Moon Pavilion and artistic director Rosa Cheng hopes the accessible and engaging work resonates with local audiences. The opera will be performed at the Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby (Sept. 16-17 p.m.).

Reunion at the Moon Pavilion is a love story that had been adapted from the “Yuan Dynasty four drama of love” called Praying to the Moon. The opera was written by Tong Dik San, a famous dramatist and playwright who wrote the opera for the legendary Fei Fan Ho and Ng Gwan Lai. The arcs in this opera were written in rhythmic and rhymed poetry. “The script was well-structured, dramatically coherent and elegantly written. Mr. Tong was an icon of his time in Cantonese opera,” says Cheng.

Storyline

The story takes place during the war torn period of the Yuan Dynasty. It reflects the rigid class and feudal system in society and within the family where conflict exists between filial piety (obedience to one’s parents) and the freedom to choose one’s marriage partners.

“Both of the central characters were prepared to choose death as the means of resistance. Fortunately, all’s well that ends well, a happy ending ensues after a number of setbacks,” says Cheng. The opera’s lyrics are a daunting challenge for the performers to gracefully interpret the characters in this classic.

Fifty years after Tong’s death, his operas are still highly respected and performed by many Cantonese opera companies around the world, she notes. “The librettos were outstanding works of literature. The music is so exquisitely embroidered with the characters and the plot, the dazzling lyrical music leaves the audiences breathless,” says Cheng.

The moral of this opera is still relevant and conveys the heritage/culture of China. Agha said, “Just like all the plays from Shakespeare, will they ever come out of date? It is considered a very important part of Chinese history.”

Principal players

Wai Ling Ho, the principal performer, is a famous professional Cantonese opera artist from Hong Kong. She specializes in playing male characters. When Ho was a teenager, she started studying under her uncle, Fei Fan Ho, who was a famous opera artist during the 1950s. He was compared to Holmwood’s Clark Gable. Under his guidance, Ho built a solid foundation in the Chinese opera performing arts. For many years, she has become the lead performer of many Cantonese opera troupes in Hong Kong, Southeast Asia and North America. Ten years ago, she formed her own company “Fei Fan Heung Cantonese Opera Troupe.”

He has been the principal performer for Cantonese Opera since 1993. Cheng began studying Cantonese opera in Vancouver in 1993, and has studied under many renowned Cantonese and Beijing opera artists like Lee Siu Wah, Li Xiao Fu and Tweli Ming in singing and performing arts. She has performed in many Cantonese operas and has also been involved in many Cantonese opera productions and multicultural heritage festivals.

Cheng hopes the accessible and engaging work resonates with local audiences. The opera will be performed at the Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby (Sept. 16-17 p.m.).

For more information, visit www.vancanopera.com.
Italian sensibilities in the Downtown Eastside

by Fabio Franco

Italian-Canadian poet Diego Bastianutti and Italian photographer Jon Guido Bertelli have combined their works to shine a spotlight on the stark contrasts of Vancouver. They have focused on illustrating the humanity that revolves around the Downtown Eastside and the stories of its inhabitants. The exhibit opens on Sept. 10 at the Italian Cultural Centre – Il Centro.

The Source: When and how did this project start?
Diego Bastianutti: In 2011, I met Jon Guido Bertelli at one of his expositions in Vancouver and we hit it off right away. We discovered a shared interest in the Vancouver community of the Downtown Eastside. We both had touched first-hand the human texture of that community: we had met, shared meals and listened to stories that had brought low so many of the individuals living there. A joint exhibit was the inevitable result.

Exploring the Downtown Eastside
T.S.: The Downtown Eastside is either perceived as a celebration of diversity and genuine local culture or a neighbourhood that harbours low lifes. Where do you stand in this ongoing debate? Do you think the originality of the Downtown Eastside should be preserved?
D.B.: We all tend to pre-judge individuals by their dress, demeanour or colour of their skin before we even attempt to find the reality beyond the cover. I was as guilty as anyone else until I made the effort to meet and talk to some of the Downtown Eastside residents. That is when I saw myself in the mirror of their faces. I saw how easy it is for anyone to fall on hard times, to lose one’s job, home and family as a result of depression, of a terrible accident or simply being unable to keep up with our fast-paced world. But most of all, I was struck by the stories of First Nations women, who had been denied their language, their culture, their name, their very identity. And yet they all were able to maintain a sense of dignity, a sense of belonging to a greater and more enduring reality.

J.G.B.: One day, while photographing old hotels and taverns, a friendly voice behind me asked, “Good afternoon Sir. How are you?” It was Alex, my first contact in the Downtown Eastside. Alex came as a young kid to Canada from Holland, served in the Canadian army and worked as a technician for Polaroid cameras. Digital photography changed Alex’s life. He was not able to keep up with the new technology and found himself out of work and soon after that, living in the streets.

A marriage of contrasts
T.S.: What was the most challenging part of the project?
J.G.B.: The emotional cost of writing poetry. I felt the pain, the humiliation, the horror and the hopes each individual had felt. I had to identify physically and emotionally with what I wrote about them. I would emerge from these writing sessions completely drained. I had descended into a hell.

T.S.: Is combining poetry and photography a way to outline contrast?
For more information about the new exhibit, please visit www.italianculturalcentre.ca.
Talking about the cultural currency

by Alison Chiang

With two exhibitions currently showing in Vancouver, Dutch artist Mirjam Linschooten and Canadian artist Sameer Farooq say it’s a blend of research, asking questions, engaging in dialogue and working together. The exhibition features a mix of installation, photography, design and writing.

Farooq says White, Steel, Slice Mask which is on display in the windows of the Contemporary Art Gallery (Sept. 20–Jan 8) is an exhibition with some humour and even some violent aspects – such as a shelf cutting an object in half.

The artists want people who walk by the exhibition to be surprised and to have a sense of wonder.

“For a moment, we want people to be stopped and think, ‘Hey, what is going on here!’. It’s this visual interruption on a daily walk in the city,” says Linschooten.

The second exhibition is an off-site piece: Bear Claw Salad Hands located at the Yaletown Skytrain Station which Farooq explains it is more immediate and urgent.

“We discovered some online souvenir inventory lists from Gastown and what really peaked our interest is the way by which these stores kind of cater to building the city of Vancouver, how they are using replicas of cultural objects to tell the story of the city now,” she says.

There are four panels on the Yaletown Station with the names of souvenir items taken from these online inventory lists; featuring a mix of objects such as cell phone covers with Canadian maple leaves.

“We were really confounded by it so rather than inventing our own text, we just used what we saw to use this work to act as our mirror. It’s a way for the city to reconstruct itself and what it is telling us,” says Farooq.

The questions and the conversations

Visits to museums such as MOA enable Linschooten and Farooq to gather ideas for their work – most recently on White, Steel, Slice, Mask and Bear Claw Salad Hands.

“We are taking a very conservative, pristine, proper idea from an anthropological museum, having fun and taking it apart,” says Farooq.

Linschooten explains their research for projects is two-fold; one is theoretical such as reading other artists’ works, historical and philosophical texts while the second part is based on observations at ethnographic and anthropological museums.

The subsequent visits to MOA and conversations with the community meant it took approximately a year to a year and a half for the Vancouver exhibitions to come together.

“We are looking into how they [museums] display objects, how they speak about culture, material culture and we take photographs and notes. There are some similarities and differences; we relate this back to the theory we have been reading and writing,” says Linschooten.

Linschooten, having had the experience abroad and her work in Canada, says Canada allows for a more sophisticated conversation than the Dutch in terms of acknowledging their colonial past.

“For me as an outsider, from an European background and its large role in colonial history, it’s interesting for me to look at the roles, who’s speaking for who and who’s examining who and how these hierarchies come about. Hopefully I can bring this dialogue and conversation back to the Netherlands,” says Linschooten.

A decade (plus) long collaboration

Linschooten and Farooq first met at a graphic design school art school in Amsterdam but kept in touch as they both traveled and gained experience through their individual work.

“We already worked together in school and after we went our separate ways and developed our own projects and ideas, we still collaborated; our first project outside of school was in Istanbul,” says Linschooten.

Farooq says what makes their collaboration interesting is their own very distinct backgrounds.

“I'm a queer person of colour and Mirjam is a straight, white European woman,” says Farooq.

Farooq mentions that although maintaining a relationship (over 10 years together) can be challenging, it helps that they have a strong friendship. They make it work by listening to each other and being honest about expressing their own ideas.

“I think a lot of our work mirrors this great potential of collaboration through difference. A lot of the reason we work so well together is that we constantly get into dialogue around these issues of culture, representation and responsibility: it’s a beautiful collaboration that way,” says Farooq.

For more information, www.contemporaryartgallery.ca.

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by SYMON JEE

Mid-September officially ushers in the start of autumn, with its falling leaves, cooling temperatures and shorter days. The days of summer may be over, but the events continue! From art gallery openings and literary readings to movie night and youth fests, there are plenty of festivals, celebrations, exhibits, conversations, roundtables and performances to check out throughout the month of September. Check out the artsy tidbits below and show us your favorite events or activities from this September.

**Visit the Place des Arts Gallery**

September 9–Oct. 2
Place des Arts, Coquitlam
www.placearts.ca/gallery

The Tower of Babel is an ancient myth that tells the story of the or-igin of different languages. When men wanted to build a tower tall enough to reach the heavens, God “confused their language” and spread them throughout the world. Emily Carr instructor Keith Langergraber’s “Betrayal at Babylon” follows a gang of hunters and prospectors on their journey back to Babel, who, along the way, work to recover and spread the ancient language as a source of knowledge and come to grips with the problematic nature of narrative.

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**Keith Langergraber: Betrayal at Babylon**

September 9–Oct. 2
Burnaby Art Gallery
www.burnabyartgallery.ca

Catch the Vancouver premiere of CoRAGSA’s “Collected, Traces, and Still Here,” by award win-
ing dance artist and choreogra-pher Ian Angus. The exhibition fea-
turing drawings of iconic Norwe-
gian maps, explores the ways in which nature, climate, culture and science combine to reveal new meanings and expressions, revitalizing the notation of texts as a matrix. Finally, Art Feats, show-
cases the various artworks of the best of Place des Arts’ vibrant and creative community.

**Sci-Fi Fall ft. Star Trek**

Various dates in September & October
Vancouver
Scotiabank Dance Centre, Vancouver
www.companyerasgadance.ca

The Mid-Autumn Festival is an important Chinese festival hon-oring family and togetherness and worshiping the first full moon in the fall equinox. In Van-
couver, you can eat moon cakes, gaze at the moon through tele-
sopes, listen to stories about Chang’e, the Moon Goddess, and much more at the Classical Chi-
nese Garden on Sept. 16. This family friendly festival will en-
tertain adults and children alike with Chinese lore, fun art and crafts, live music, martial arts demonstrations and more. Space is limited; tickets are available on their website.

**Arts in the Streets**

September 17–18
Coquitlam
www.burnabyarts.ca

The Visual Space Gallery will be hosting the photographs of 11 year old Syrian refugee Ab-
bas Dukhan, which depict the devastation and suffering happening in Syria as a result of the Syrian Civil War. Amidst the shattered dreams and destruc-
tion, Dukhan wants his photo-
graphs to highlight the hope, beauty and Syrian people and bring voice to the struggles of earlier generations are illuminat-
ing the face of the planet. At SFU
Goldcorp, environmental activist Dr. Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden, Vancouver
www.vancouverchinesegarden.com

scientists from the Anthropo-

**Burnaby International Folk Dancing**

Tuesdays, 7–9 p.m.
Charles Bmmel Community Centre, Burnaby
www.burnabyfolkdance.org

Fifty years ago on Sept. 8, 1966, the first episode of the most sci-fi franchise ever to grace television aired: Star Trek. This cult phenomenon has influenced many facets of our society, from technology to medicine, culture and language and, of course, space explora-
tion. Sci-fi aficionados can con-
verge at H.R. MacMillan to attend a double bill of the second and fourth Trek movies. On Sept. 17, watch the fifth Trek movie with genre behemoths becker and bar-ber. For more information, visit the Space Centre’s website.

**Music on the Point: Celebrating the Quinquagenary**

September 16–27
St. Andrew’s United Church at the old AEC auditorium
www.musiconthepoint.com

The Source
This 104-year-old steam engine pulls a vintage train along the remaining 10 km (6 miles) of the famed Kettle Valley Railway (KVR). It’s a no-comfort tourist ride and well worth it. Skirting through the beautiful Princeton, summer homes and vineyards, the train ride offers beautiful vistas of vineyards and fruit orchards, a hallmark of the Okanagan Lake region. The conductor and volunteers offer insights on points of interest along the route. We were told sometimes a bear can be spotted and luckily we found a large brown bear in an orchard, tattening up for the winter. It was nice to be safely out of his way on the train. However, Pete, the llama, was a more popular character to see. Entertainment is provided by Felix Puczak who plays the banjo and sing-songs. At other events, he plays piano, harp, guitar, accordion and provides vocals in 15 languages! Just check his website at banjo.ca.

Near the end of the trip, the train stops on the Trout Creek Bridge that crosses Trout Creek Canyon. The horizon was a major obstacle in the original KVR route between Pentiction and Princeton. It’s the third largest steel girder bridge in North America, originally 189 m (620 ft.) long and 73 m (239 ft.) high. KVR engineer Andrew McCulloch built it in 1915. His measurements were so accurate they came within six mm (¼ inch) at the joint. Its construction was considered one of the major engineering feats of its time.

Historically, the KVR opened in 1915 and operated in the Thompson/Okanagan region. It extended from Hope, B.C. for about 600 km (373 miles). The route, with many stops along the way and several branches, went north from Hope to Merritt and beyond. It went east at Brokmere and then south to Princeton, north again to Summerland, south to Penticton and then north again skirting most of the Okanagan Lake region, then turned south all the way to Midway, B.C. There was also a southern route from Pentiction to Osoyoos. The building of the KVR required going over and through many mountain ranges, requiring many tunnels aided by the expertise of Andrew McCulloch. At this time in B.C.’s history, railroads were essential on many fronts for this difficult southern B.C. route. For one thing, Lord Shaughnessy, the president of Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), had bought 4000 acres of a cattle ranch in the area, which was to become hammerland, a town founded by him. He created irrigation systems and sold orchard land to CPR executives. This fruit needed a good transportation system to get to market, and the growing population in the area needed reliable transport. More importantly, silver had been discovered in the area in 1879 and American miners were establishing themselves in the area through the easier route from Spokane by the US Northern Pacific Railroad. It was fast becoming a commercial area controlled by US interests. Therefore, the establishment of the KVR became a matter of sovereignty over territory and mining rights. Lord Shaughnessy was influential in the KVR for this reason as well and eventually the railway became a subsidiary of CPR.

Due to the development of highways and airways, as well as deteriorating conditions on some routes of the KVR, portions were abandoned starting in 1961 and operations completely ended in 1989. Most of the original route has been converted to a multi-use recreational trail: Kettle Valley Rail Trail, which also serves as the Trans-Canada Trail through this part of B.C.

Of special interest is that most of the historical facts you read about the KVR’s development were accurate, if anything, to say regarding the impact on First Nations people who live in the area. First Nation reserve sizes were reduced for the right of way of the railway. Although there was land added in compensation, its value was often much less than the value of the land taken away. KVR benefitted from undertakings of this sort. Today affected First Nations bands are legally suing for the return of their land, which is no longer in use by the KVR. Of note are the comments one can read by non-First Nations residents in a 2010 request by the Penticon Indian Band to the federal government for return of a KVR rail bed. Some of these residents were outraged that their homes and golf courses might have been threatened. I wonder if European settlers ever considered how First Nations people felt when their land was expropriated and they were confined to reserves.

DON RICHARDSON

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**Ginataang manok (Chicken stewed in coconut milk)**

Whether the weather turns chilly or summer returns, this delectable Filipino stew is the perfect dinner meal any time of year. With no shortage of coconut trees in the Philippines, gata or coconut milk is a very common ingredient found in our cuisine. It’s easy to harvest and more affordable than dairy from cows or goats, and thus is easily utilized in both savoury and sweet preparations. Its versatility shines in Southeast Asian cuisine: growing up, I have fond memories eating countless dishes with coconut milk or flesh, from bibingka at Christmas to laing as a veggie side dish.

This farmer's stew is easy to make and can be done with a host of substitutions. Instead of chicken, you can use pork or perhaps sablefish. If done in a larger skillet, you can even poach a whole tilapia in the broth. For a vegetarian option, long beans and cubed squash make a hearty meal.

**Ingredients**
- 1 can (400 mL) coconut milk
- 1 onion, medium, diced
- 2 tbsp ginger, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 boneless and skinless chicken thighs, cubed
- 5 chilies, dry
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 2–3 cups spinach
- ½ tsp cornstarch (optional)

**Method**
1. Pour the coconut milk into a saucepan on medium heat.
2. Add the onion, ginger and garlic, and bring to a boil.
3. Add the chicken, chilies, and pepper to the saucepan. Bring to a simmer and cover.
4. Lower the temperature down to a simmer and cover for approximately 28-30 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through.
5. Season the stew with fish sauce to taste.
6. Optionally, you can dissolve cornstarch in a small water slurry and add it to the stew to thicken it. This is optional and preferred.

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**Erratum**

In “Tech company brings conscience to the cutting edge” by Roxy Sproule (Vol 16 No 25), we incorrectly implied that the company Animikii was based in Vancouver. It is actually based on Songhees territory in Victoria. The website that Animikii designed is www.indigenousyouthwellness.ca, which was incorrectly spelt in the article. We apologize for the errors.

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