Louis Jung is keen on free speech. So keen that the international student founded the University of British Columbia (UBC) Free Speech Club.

Jung feels that Canada, North America and Europe are world renowned for their censorship culture. He doesn’t like that. He says that while in the military in South Korea, he could freely express himself there and no one would take offence.

"I really like that culture where you can express yourself even if people disagree. They will politely disagree with you. They’ll be curious why you believe something instead of just outright calling you names, like racist, sexist or homophobe. It seems the list of different insults is growing nowadays," he says.

Making waves to get the conversation going

Jung, who recently came to Canada from South Korea to study architecture, decided to start a freedom of speech club as a backlash to political correctness. The club, he says, has 250 members signed up, but only 30 or so students show up for the events. One controversial event he held was the "Make Canada Great" campaign. He got corporate sponsors to print big and bold hats with "Make Canada Great Again" on them. Before the election in the United States, he says, everyone looked down on Donald Trump.

"If I were to give a counter argument, they would call me a racist, sexist, or some kind of had name," he says, noting that the baseball caps they themselves wore during their campaign they now consider iconic.

Two types of people responded negatively to this campaign, says Jung: those who just yelled at them and called them names and walked away, and those who tried to argue with them. According to Jung, the latter was the best reaction the club could hope for.

"That’s the best part of it [the discussions]. That’s how I know I’m making a difference. If everyone is apathetic about it, I know for sure I’m just wasting my time," Jung says.

"I believe that open discussion, open debates lead to a healthy society, a healthy community, a healthy democracy. I hope

See "Freedom of Speech" page
Giving voice to our history

by BETTY SHEA

A panel of Japanese-Canadians will share their firsthand experiences of losing their homes, internment and separation from their family.

Landscapes of Injustice (LoI) will present “Memories of Internment and Dispossession” on Jan. 14 in the Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library (VPL).

Stanger-Ross, professor of history at University of Victoria and project director of LoI, explains how the project started. “I began research of the real estate market in east end Vancouver, and had started to do some research on the forced sale of Japanese-Canadian owned property there. And, as often happens in research, that led me down avenues that I hadn’t anticipated,” he says.

Conversations to engage in

The project’s first panel was held earlier this year at LoI’s Spring Institute, in Victoria, an annual conference that brings its geographically dispersed researchers together under one roof. Michael Abe, a third-generation Japanese-Canadian and project manager of LoI notes that outside of the Japanese-Canadian community, there is little awareness of this episode of dispossession in our history. “For some students, [the panel] was probably the most moving part of their experience at the Spring Institute. They haven’t heard the Japanese-Canadian story before and they hear firsthand from people who’ve lived through it,” he says.

Kaitlin Findlay, who is completing an MA in history at the University of Victoria, will participate in the poster session after the panel speaks. She enjoys her involvement in LoI both from an academic and personal standpoint. “I can see my research as being part of this larger conversation about people’s families,” she says. This prompted her to create a forum that fosters conversations among research assistants. “The forum is created to grapple with the question of what engaged scholarship and activism means,” says Findlay. “For me, it is a way to learn strategies to think about the ramifications of my work.”

Stanger-Ross believes this thoughtful approach is one way that the project furthers national dialogue. “Culture is a noisy place with lots of other voices,” he says. “But we do want to be a genuinely contributing part of the conversation that occurs as Canadians think about the challenges of our times, this intermingling of questions around security, perceived insecurity, international migration, racial and religious differences.”

From research to outreach

Ahe, who was recruited by Stanger-Ross as project manager, is active in several community organizations and uses his network to strengthen the project’s ties with the community. His interest in the project is also personal. “Because of my heritage, I’m very interested in seeing some of the research that goes on, putting the links together and seeing the broader picture,” he says.

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, most of the project’s budget goes towards employing around 25 student researchers yearly. Students generally spend two years with the project. By the end of its seventh year mandate, the project’s collective membership is expected to be sizeable.

“The project has a built-in time over. People’s time in the project is considered an opportunity for advancing their skills,” Findlay explains.

Stanger-Ross agrees. “I do think that we’re equipping those students to be better informed activists, to be democratic citizens, to be people who have a range of skills that would benefit the workforce. It’s the best teaching that I’ve done in the course of my career,” he says.

LoI has also produced teaching material for elementary and secondary schools, museum exhibitions, newsletters and forums. In the next two years, the project will be transitioning from the research phase to the outreach phase and will increase its efforts to engage the larger Canadian community.

For more information, visit www.landscapesofinjustice.com.

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Please call 604-324-7733, go to www.pics.bc.ca, or visit us at 200-8161 Main St, Vancouver, to find out how we can best help you.
SFU students counter extremism through competition

By Naomi Tse

SFU professor Richard Frank decided to run his fourth year Advanced Issues in Cybercrime class a little differently last semester. Instead of the usual lectures, presentations and papers, the class was structured around participating in a counter-extremism competition hosted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Frank completed a PhD in Computing Science and during his studies, was involved in working on crime data, which sparked his interest in criminology. He pursued another PhD in Criminology and eventually took an opportunity to teach cybercrime at SFU.

“I love programming. This job allows me to program, research, have students conduct analyses and write ups, and it’s the perfect field for me,” says Frank. “I get to work in crime, but at the same time my passion for computers is possible.”

Voices against extremism campaign

Frank explains that the goal of the competition was to have university students design and implement digital initiatives to combat extremist groups that recruit online. Before the fall semester started, Frank was worried not enough students would enroll for the class; he began advertising to potential students with the prerequisites about the competition over the summer.

“The people [in the class] knew what they were getting into and they were quite enthusiastic about it, which was very welcome to see,” says Frank.

The students put together a website, Voices Against Extremism, to showcase all the activities they were doing for the campaign. This included an interview series titled “Stories of Resilience” and also an art gallery at HiVE.

“The purpose of the art gallery was to attract people to the campaign and showcase how different cultures viewed Canada,” says Frank.

The silent majority

According to Frank, there are two ways that extremist groups recruit through online marketing. There is the direct approach: extremists glorify what they do through videos and on social media. The other way is through third-party advertisements via people who have already bought into the beliefs of the extremist group and attempt to recruit more members by sharing the radical ideas.

“After the class spoke to various community leaders and law enforcement personnel, they decided that the theme of their campaign was to target the silent majority. Frank explains that the majority of people are accepting of immigrants, but we don’t hear from them.”

Matty Taghipour, a student in Frank’s class, says that through their research, they learned how important a sense of community was in preventing people from turning to violent extremism.

“People go into violent extremism because they don’t have a sense of community and they turn to a wild extremist group,” says Taghipour, 23. “It comes down to building a connection. What we want to do is embrace everyone’s similarities, show that we’re not so different from one another and that we don’t have to hurt one another.”

Taghipour says that the goal of the campaign is to encourage the silent majority to take a stand and tackle extremism in their own communities.

Making it to the finals

As a result of the class’ efforts, they made it to the finals of the OSCE’s competition. Taghipour, four other team members and Frank were able to travel to Hamburg, Germany to represent Canada. According to Taghipour, over forty teams had applied and the SFU team was chosen as one of the top three. The team had to give two presentations and placed second in the competition.

“It’s been a whirlwind experience and something that I will remember for the rest of my life,” says Taghipour.

Taghipour says that various members of the class are now working on forming a non-profit organization based on the campaign so that they can continue with other projects and events that they have in mind.

For more information on the campaign, please visit www.voicesagainstextremism.ca.
Want to stop Trumpism spreading to Canada? Support public education

In just a few days, Donald Trump will be sworn in as the President of the United States. It’s really happening. Feelings of anxiety, despair, and disbeliev are hard to shake. As the north- ern neighbors of declining empires now led by an erratic and uncouth bully, what can we do in face of this new political reality?

There’s actually a lot we can do, starting with offering our unqualified solidarity to those endangered by Trump and the rise of the atavistic and xenopho bic far right. We should take this terrifying moment as an opportunity to build stronger links with groups south of the border fighting for migrant jus tice and LBGTQ rights. After all, if Washington state alone had decided the U.S. election we’d be celebrating the inauguration of President Bernie Sanders. (Bernie’s point of view is that the real Democratic Party is the state Democratic Party.)

For people in B.C., our imme diate challenge is to fight in Washington share progressive values and arguably have better organized movements for social justice and equality. Trump and his ilk have no business being anathema to the vast majority of people in Seattle, and their mi nuscule base of support should be clear they will remain a “sanctuary city” for marAUDers.

There’s no reason we can’t have a Canadian tradition of getting something about U.S. politics, especially when there’s a Trump in the White House. With Trump starring in a reality TV remake of Idaho it’s hard to resist the temptation to sump of smugness, but we should because it’s misplaced and unproducive.

The cultural and political swamp of neoliberalism from which Trump emerged is present throughout North America, and we could really take as our slogan the Americanism of the Trump administration is ceding the cultural ground of leftism to the right.

In general, what I think the virus of Trumpism can’t spread north. Trumpism is a cultural and political movement that has thrived on fear and resentment against immigrants, communities of colour, and the working classes everywhere. But in B.C., those communities are already fighting for their place in the world, and they’re determined to keep the wounds Trumpism has left from deepening.

High quality, free education for all is the bedrock of a democratic society. In fact, a society in which educational opportunities are grossly unequal is bound to produce monsters like Trump, who never misses a chance to rhetorically wave around his de mo cratic credentials.

Society can afford equal educa tion for all, but only if we stop worshipping the billionaires and start taxing them properly instead. Trump has refused to release his tax returns, but he’s openly boasted about taking advantage of loopholes that preserved him from paying his fair share of federal taxes for many years. And there would be no President Trump if he hadn’t inherited an fortune and a head start on his real estate empire from his fa ther.

Trump is a giant billboard ad vertising the need to increase educational opportunities in an unequal and wealthy society. The super-rich don’t need our support, and they shouldn’t be our masters.

The best way to stop Trumpism spreading to Canada? Support public education.
Curators spend time collaborating with communities to ensure each object accurately reflects the community of origin’s national history.

“The public doesn’t question the ways in which objects are displayed in museums – visitors don’t see how borders of identity are fluid, and not always divided into neat little boxes,” says Allison Adler, a UBC graduate student from the faculty of anthropology. Adler will share her research findings at the Resident Members’ Series hosted by Green College, an interdisciplinary residency at UBC, on Jan. 23. Her talk Questioning boxes, borders and invisible lines: Transnationalism, and Cultural Fluidity in the Museum looks at the colonial perspective of museums exhibitions.

Born with mixed heritage, Adler is curious about how borders impact a society’s frame of reference. From an early age, she observed the difficulties people had in accepting her heritage.

“Because you’re white, you’re not Hispanic enough, or you’re Hispanic and not white enough,” she says.

As an anthropologist, Adler is keen to critique the effects of traditional museum exhibitions on cultural identity, and the societal benefits of creating exhibits that express a global perspective. She says, “I’m interested in adding to the conversation of curators and progressive museums like MOA [Museum of Anthropology], who are interested in creating exhibits that demonstrate a global perspective of cultural identity.”

Adler explains that these criticisms create invisible borders, which prevent her from moving between her cultural identities. Through these personal experiences Adler formed her research goals. “I’m interested in adding to the conversation of curators and progressive museums like MOA [Museum of Anthropology], who are interested in creating exhibits that demonstrate a global perspective of cultural identity,” she says.

Museums influence cultural identity
In 2003, MOA embarked on a new project called The Partnership of Peoples. “The idea was to make the museum more welcoming and accessible for people’s belongings held in the museum,” says Dr. Jennifer Kramer, MOA curator, First Nations Pacific Northwest. “Instead of a museum being a place where the community of origin feels as though their belongings have been taken and used without their control, MOA wanted to make sure that when we returned the control, or at least, recognize the historical wrong and work towards a decolonized future,” says Kramer.

More recently Adler assisted Kramer with a temporary exhibit called Layers of Influence: Unfolding Cloth Across Cultures. Ceremonial cloths from around the world are displayed; yards of textiles are suspended elegantly in the gallery for visitors. “I’m trying to show the diversity of textile production in the aesthetics, but in all cultures we work clothing for similar reasons to amplify our identity,” says Kramer.

Working with Kramer, Adler is able to explore exhibits that take community belongings out of their boxes, literally removing the borders that traditionally have created cultural differences. “In the future, I look forward to creating spaces like these,” says Adler, “where people can question traditional ideas about culture, borders, identity and creating spaces where there is a recognition of simultaneous differences and similarities in culture.”

Green College creates space for further reflections
A resident of Green College, Adler is in a unique space that allows her to create exhibits that express a global perspective of cultural identity. As an anthropologist, Adler explains that these criticisms create invisible borders, which prevent her from moving between her cultural identities. “Because you’re white, you’re not Hispanic enough, or you’re Hispanic and not white enough,” she says.

“A university, we have a responsibility to ensure faculties and students talk to one another,” says Mark Veszsey, Phil, principal at Green College. “We don’t just want brilliant physicists; we want physicists who are talking to philosophers,” he says. Adler is one of two anthropologists who reside at Green College.

“Living here is teaching me to articulate my ideas to a wider audience of academics,” says Adler. Presenting at the public lecture series at Green College is another opportunity for Adler to engage her peers and receive feedback on her research. She hopes attendees find her presentation thought-provoking. “I eventually want to contribute to the conversation on how we want to display cultural issues in light of migration and globalization,” says Adler.

For more information, visit www.greencollege.ubc.ca.
Teaching children human rights through play

by ANNA-MARIE MIRFIN

The Britannia Community Services Centre recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of its educational program, Play It Fair!, an educational program developed by Equitas, a Canadian non-profit organization whose mandate is to promote equality, social justice and human rights throughout Canada and the world. The Play It Fair! Toolkit aims to teach children aged six to 12 human rights values through experiential learning, or play.

Tom Higashio, Recreational Programmer for Youth at the Britannia Community Centre, has been involved in implementing the program as part of Britannia’s day camps since its first formal pilot at the centre in 2006.

“As soon as I saw how effective it was and how easy the Toolkit was to use, I was hooked,” he says. “I have always been a human and children’s rights advocate at the installation of the program really excited me. I knew it was something I wanted to be a part of.”

Experiential learning opportunities for children

The Play It Fair! Toolkit takes games that children know and love and adapts them in order to provide an informal educational experience in human rights.

Higashio gives the example of musical chairs. Typically this game is about exclusion and competition but a Play It Fair! adaption of the game has the children co-operate and develop strategies to get everyone onto the chairs. The game ends with a discussion about the inclusion and exclusion involved in the games and how these concepts may apply to real life.

Program extends beyond children

Higashio says staff members at Britannia have also been influenced by their involvement with Play It Fair! Some staff have gone on to become human rights journalists, educators who use Play It Fair! in their classrooms, or human rights advocates in their communities, both formally and informally.

“It may have started at Britannia but it’s expanded so much more than that,” Higashio says. “There’s a lot more natural empathy, he says.

He says the Toolkit’s activities, used both proactively and reactively in the day camps, have successfully been used to reduce bullying and help the children deal with anger in real life conflicts.

Play It Fair! in action

Ela Esta Gunad, Regional Program Officer of Equitas B.C., says that some organizations like Britannia have gone as far as to integrate the principles of the program into their hiring process and have even started to involve children in the development of the programs that they will ultimately be affected by.

“In the end, all these small changes are leading to a very big change at the community level,” Gunad says.

It is through the result of its visible success that Play It Fair! has spread across organizations, Canada and even internationally after the program first began in Montreal ten years ago. The program is now practiced in all communities across Canada and has been used in the Middle East, Japan, Africa and Latin America, reaching an estimated 700,000 children across the world.

Through programs such as this, Equitas aims to provide human rights educators with the concrete tools they need to implement the principles laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a mission that spurred the establishment of the organization in 1985 when it was founded by a group of scholars and social activists including John Humphrey, co-drafter of the UDHR.

Higashio sees tools like Play It Fair! as instrumental in creating a society where acceptance of diversity and human rights are normalized.

“In the end, we want to have a respectful community that’s really accepting of everyone, where people value everybody for who they are just naturally. It’s where we all want and need to be,” he says.

Both Higashio and Gunad hope that Play It Fair!’s influence will continue to grow and that it will one day be implemented at a curriculum level across Canada.

Town Choir: translating text messages to song

by JAKE MCGRAIL

Theatre Replacement’s Town Choir will open on Jan. 22 at the Waterfront Theatre as part of the 2017 PuSh Festivals, and is the cross-pollination of the group’s Town Criers project, where everyday, potentially mundane observations are presented as newsworthy, with the writers/journalists travelled thousands of kilometres away from the performance.

Town Criers has been a Theatre Replacement project for two years, with shows across Canada and overseas. It pairs a writer-who is somewhere far away from where the performance is taking place—with a crier, who is on stage. The writer records observations about their immediate environment and turns them into a text message, whereupon the crier relays these observations to the audience. Town Criers is furthering of this idea, with four writers across Canada and a full choir, Vancouver Youth Choir, translating their texts into song.

The show

Town Choir doesn’t have a specific script, as the point of the show is spontaneity and reflection. Rather, the writers work within a structure, an outline that is then played out on stage.

“The structure that we give to them is fairly simple and broad,” says Maiko Yamamoto, Artistic Director of Theatre Replacement. “For example, we ask them to write ten observations about the place that they’re in, ten statements that start with ‘one day’, something that gives them freedom.”

Yamamoto says guiding a thought process for someone who is alone far away from the stage is the challenge. He says keeping the messages simple but meaningful so can be funneled through text and then filtered to a public is the key.

“We ask them to write lists about themselves, a paragraph about their everyday expertise, to see if they can meet our request,” says Yamamoto. “The choir will take one thread or thought or story and they sing it. They have their own structure as well, with each section of the performance having its own flavour.”

Yamamoto says given the number of writers and the amount of text it would be impossible for the choir to sing all of it. But the audience will get to absorb all of the messages received via the four TV screens facing them, each constantly rolling with the threads the writers send in.

“At Theatre Replacement we have been really investigating biographical and autobiographical stories,” says Yamamoto. “I think the everyday observations of people and turning that into performance – it feels like a really important thing to do. It’s about reflecting the lives of everyday people.”

A writer’s perspective

Kim Barlow, a musician and songwriter based in Nova Scotia, is one of the four writers for Town Choir. She wrote for a previous performance of Town Criers, and will again be sending messages across the country to the audience, Barlow knows the place, she says. There’s a lot of descriptions of the place around me, what it looks like, what it smells like; it gives me a sense of place and physical context and the whole thing evolves from there.

While Barlow might have some idea of what the show looks like she’ll never see the end product, and doesn’t have contact with any of the other writers while the show is taking place.

“It’s fascinating to me because I can’t see what it looks like,” says Barlow. “It’s a strange idea, but it’s been really fun.”

While Barlow will be writing about places and objects hundreds of kilometers away from the audience, Barlow knows there are plenty of things that bind people together.

“There’s a lot of things people are worried about in the world, and a lot of mundane things that people think about. Some of my thoughts and fears are fairly universal – I hope that can relate to some people.”

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

Erdem Taşdelen takes society’s obsession with titles and gives it an abrupt shake. In his upcoming exhibitions, running from Jan. 13–Mar. 17 at the Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG), *Wild Child* and *The Quantified Self Poems* redress our preoccupation with labeling. “The two projects are conflated in some ways,” says Taşdelen.

*Wild Child*

Always curious, the Emily Carr University graduate approaches his ideas through research – first through the subjects that interest him, followed by his analysis of the desired artistic process. This is how *Wild Child* came to be. Taşdelen decided to look into the premise of feral children.

“There is no such thing as a feral child. They are mostly hoaxes, myths or misunderstood cases,” he says after doing some extensive research. However, in one slightly unique case based on *An Historical Account of the Discovery and Education of a Savage Man* by Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1798), the author provided care to a person he thought to be feral. Itard, a physician, believed the boy needed to be “civilized”; however, developmental psychologists have established that this was possibly the first documented case of autism. “Realistically, he was most probably a child abandoned by his family, left on the side of the road, due to his autism,” Taşdelen says.

Intrigued by the story, Taşdelen decided to explore this concept of “othering” with a video production. Once he decided on the medium, he approached the Contemporary Art Gallery. Shaun Dacey, curator at the CAG. “These works speak to a broader context of ideas around the human condition. I’d known of his practice for quite some time and hoped that we could work with him,” says Dacey. Shortly after that Taşdelen approached them for support to produce *Wild Child*.

Taşdelen had developed a script to do a full-scale video production and he needed support to make it happen. “A big aspect to what we do at the CAG is supporting local contemporary practices,” says Dacey. Taşdelen, a Turkish-born artist, exhibits internationally which contributes to his global perspective. “It also became an exercise, as the artist tried to quantify these emotions. ‘[It became] the push and pull in the project, which is the mechanical versus non-mechanical,’ Taşdelen says.

Working with poet, Daniel Zomparelli and programmer, Ali Bilgin Arslan, the concept started to materialize. The resulting art piece juxtaposes manual screen prints based in an analog realm from their original digital foundations. With this, the perception of a particular sensory-based reality shifts.

For more info, visit www.contemporaryartgallery.com.
Making peace with Aboriginal history through art

by WENJIE SHEN

Tunics of the Changing Tide, a painting by First Nations artist Marianne Nicolson, has transformed the Dzawada’enuxw Nation’s history and story into art. Nicolson’s work will be exhibited at the Walter C.Koerner Library at UBC from Jan. 13–Apr. 9.

In the summer of 1980, at the age of eleven, Nicolson moved to Kingcome Inlet from Vancouver with her mother, a member of the Dzawada’enuxw First Nations, a tribe of the Kwakwa’ka’wakw Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Her father was Scottish.

Staying close to the land of her ancestors dramatically changed Nicolson’s life. She believes these days spent in Kingcome Inlet really helped her become who she is today.

“Tracing the push and pull of world views through the materials she uses, Nicolson’s work is part of a contemporary resurgence of Indigenous cultural practice and a means to resist its political and social assimilation,” says Lorna Brown, who works as the executive director of Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery.

Revitalizing Indigenous culture

In Nicolson’s paintings, two back views of tunics are placed on black- and grey-bordered backgrounds. A tree with thunderbirds and mink is portrayed on the tunics. Nicolson says that she did a lot of research within her own community while creating her artwork.

The artist was looking back at the Indigenous history when First Nations culture was strong enough to absorb the European influence. In early 19th century, First Nations people started to sew decorative and elaborate tunics. For more information, visit www.belkin.ubc.ca.

Marianne Nicolson will further graphically explore the symbols – eagles – that feature in the hereditary system of artist was at that time, she still made up her mind to pursue that career. "I really pursued it and there [was no thought] that being an artist is wrong," she says.

Although Nicolson completed a PhD in Linguistics, Anthropology and Art History at the University of Victoria, she sometimes still felt a little doubtful while she was working on the artwork. "Marianne Nicolson will further graphically explore the symbols – eagles – that feature in the hereditary system of..."

Nicolson was five years old when she decided to become an artist. Although she had no idea what the exact definition of artist was at that time, she still made up her mind to pursue that career. "I really pursued it and there [was no thought] that being an artist is wrong," she says.

Although Nicolson completed a PhD in Linguistics, Anthropology and Art History at the University of Victoria, she sometimes still felt a little doubtful while she was working on the artwork. "Marianne Nicolson will further graphically explore the symbols – eagles – that feature in the..."
Welcome to 2017! I hope all of you had a great holiday season, and I wish you all the best this coming year – a prosperous year! Start off the new year right by checking out the many festivals, exhibitions, talks, plays and expos throughout the Lower Mainland this month. Check out French Canadian culture at Fort Langley or take in an engaging theatrical play. And make sure to warm yourself up this winter by enjoying a cup of delicious steaming hot chocolate!

The Fighting Season
Jan. 10
Bleeding Heart Theatre, Vancouver www.thebleedingheart.org

The Fighting Season, a critical favourite from the 2015 Vancouver Fringe Festival, returns to the city this month at the Bleeding Heart Theatre. Written by Sean Har ris Oliver and directed by Evan Frank.Coming in the wake of the Afghan war through the eyes of a Canadian field medical doctor, and a doctor and his processing room nurse. The play was inspired by Oliver’s father’s real-life experiences as a military surgeon in Afghanistan. For showtimes and tickets, check out The Cultch’s website.

The Suitcase: Intergenerational Healing through Traces of the Past
Jan. 12–20
Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia www.uics.ubc.ca

Join Liu Scholars Kyna Patrick and Adilh Akins on Jan. 13 as they discuss their current exhibit The Suitcase, on display until Jan. 31 at the Lobby Gallery at UBC’s Liu Institute for Global Issues. Patrick and Akins’ interests lie in intergenerational memory and the power of art to palatably convey the experiences of children and grandchildren of the Holocaust. For more information, please check out their website.

Gluten Free Expo
Jan. 14–15
Richmond Art Gallery www.gfreexpo.ca

The Vancouver Convention Centre at Canada Place will be hosting the Gluten Free Expo on the weekend of Jan. 14, featuring numerous exhibitors, cooking demonstrations, dietitian presentations and, of course, plenty of tasty gluten-free culinary dishes to sample. Listen to presentations from registered dietitians helping you to create healthier diets, and watch chefs create healthy gluten-free versions of pão de queijo (Brazilian cheese puffs), empanadas, banana fritters, poutine and more. For tickets and further information, please check out their website.

Moved by Portraits
Deer Lake Gallery, Burnaby Jan. 16–Feb. 6 www.burnabyartscouncil.org

The Richmond Art Gallery will be hosting photographic artist Meryl McMaster’s latest exhibit Confluence from Jan. 14 to March 19. An artist of Plains Cree and Euro-Canadian heritage, McMaster explores the dimensions of contemporary Indigenous identities and the expressive power of art to palatably convey the experiences of Canadian nations. For more information on the exhibition and to check out further details, please visit their website.

PuSh International Performing Arts Festival
Jan. 16–Feb. 18 Various venues www.pushfestival.ca

For the 13th time, the PuSh Festival returns to Vancouver to showcase innovative and transformative art from artists representing 14 countries. There will be 27 performances spread over three weeks, featuring staggering spectacles, immersive encounters, virtual reality adaptations and more. Catch a Korean performance piece about sexuality and technology; an African adaptation of Macbeth, an Australian aboriginal music band and more at PuSh. For more information, please check out their website.

Vive les Voyageurs – French Canadian Winter Festival
Jan. 28–Feb. 26 Various venues Fort Langley NHS www.facebook.com/FortLangleyNHS

Bring the family down to take in the sounds of French Canada with the folklore and culture of 19th century voyageurs and fur traders. The PuSh International Performing Arts Festival will feature a display of French Canadian voyageurs with an emphasis on the French Canadian voyager as seen on full display this winter at Canada Place. Local chocolate makers will come together to make a delicious chocolate event every day, each rich in the flavours of French Canada. For more information, please visit their website.

TedXLangleyEd: Courage and Curiosity
Jan. 14, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.
Chief Sepass Theatre, Fort Langley www.tedxlangleyed.com

This independently organized TED event returns for a third year to bring together speakers and presenters dedicated to discussing the future of learning, education and environmental pedagogy at Fort Langley’s Chief Sepass Theatre on Jan. 14. Speakers will touch on many topics including empathy, community building, inclusion, imagination, reconciliation and perseverance. For further information, check out their website.

Gluten Free Expo
Jan. 14–15
Richmond Art Gallery www.gfreexpo.ca

The Vancouver Convention Centre at Canada Place will be hosting the Gluten Free Expo on the weekend of Jan. 14, featuring numerous exhibitors, cooking demonstrations, dietitian presentations and, of course, plenty of tasty gluten-free culinary dishes to sample. Listen to presentations from registered dietitians helping you to create healthier diets, and watch chefs create healthy gluten-free versions of pão de queijo (Brazilian cheese puffs), empanadas, banana fritters, poutine and more. For tickets and further information, please check out their website.

PuSh International Performing Arts Festival
Jan. 16–Feb. 18 Various venues www.pushfestival.ca

For the 13th time, the PuSh Festival returns to Vancouver to showcase innovative and transformative art from artists representing 14 countries. There will be 27 performances spread over three weeks, featuring staggering spectacles, immersive encounters, virtual reality adaptations and more. Catch a Korean performance piece about sexuality and technology; an African adaptation of Macbeth, an Australian aboriginal music band and more at PuSh. For more information, please check out their website.

TedXLangleyEd: Courage and Curiosity
Jan. 14, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.
Chief Sepass Theatre, Fort Langley www.tedxlangleyed.com

This independently organized TED event returns for a third year to bring together speakers and presenters dedicated to discussing the future of learning, education and environmental pedagogy at Fort Langley’s Chief Sepass Theatre on Jan. 14. Speakers will touch on many topics including empathy, community building, inclusion, imagination, reconciliation and perseverance. For further information, check out their website.

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The Nether
Jan. 18–28
Firehall Arts Centre, Vancouver www.firehallartscentre.ca

Come on down to the Firehall Arts Centre to take in one of the Vancouver Fringe Festival’s critics’ favourite productions, The Nether. In the near future, the Internet will host a new entity named Neth- er, a next-generation network featuring virtual-reality realms. Directed by Christy Lam and featur- ing David Bloom and Lissa Neptuno, this detective story explores the realms of virtual annuals, fantasy and morality and raises questions about ethical behaviour, bone and off- line. For tickets and showtimes, check out the Firehall Arts Centre website.

Seventh Annual Hot Chocolate Festival
Jan. 21–22, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Canada Place, Vancouver www.hotchocolatefest.com

Warm up this cold winter with a cup of delicious hot chocolate at the Hot Chocolate Festival, returning to Vancouver for the seventh time. Local chocolate makers will come together to create some of the most unique, flavoursful and delicious hot chocolate beverages for your drinking pleasure. Previous years’ concoctions have included 60 different variations of butter- nut squash almond milk with a smoked soy sauce on the side and additions like hazelnut Crown Royal whiskey marshmallows. For more information, visit the festival website.

* * *

Vive les Voyageurs – French Canadian Winter Festival
Jan. 28–Feb. 26 Various venues Fort Langley NHS www.facebook.com/FortLangleyNHS

Bring the family down to take in the sounds of French Canada with the folklore and culture of 19th century voyageurs and fur traders. The PuSh International Performing Arts Festival will feature a display of French Canadian voyageurs with an emphasis on the French Canadian voyager as seen on full display this winter at Canada Place. Local chocolate makers will come together to make a delicious chocolate event every day, each rich in the flavours of French Canada. For more information, please visit their website.

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Cultural Calendar

Defend your right to say it,” he says. Double standards Mohammed Jafar Bhamji, managing editor of Al-Ameen Post, a Surrey-based publication that serves Metro Vancouver, says there is a fine line between freedom of speech and double standards. “In most media understand. Men- tion the use of caricatures (cartoons) in Charlie Hebdo, a French satirical weekly magazine, he says that most Canadian media didn’t republic them after the terrorist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo office, not because they were afraid of being attacked, but in order to maintain peace. He feels that Charlie Hebdo had nothing to do with free speech.” “The political correctness that they’ve (here) under the guise of free speech are actually creating a problem — a point to the rest of Canadians. It gives them an opportunity to propa- gate hate against a community that is completely ill-equipped to defend itself,” he explains. Bhambh also says there are double standards and hypocrisy for publishing — one set for Muslims and one set for the rest. “The media outlets that did decide to publish the offensive caricatures would never publish material that denigrates or even stereotype Blacks, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, or Christians. I don’t see the Germans for the Holocaust or Canadians about their dark history with the aborigi- nals native Indians (sic),” he says. Shahzad Mansoory, a member of the editorial board of Al- Ameen Post, also says there is a double standard — specifically within western society’s inter- pretation of “freedom of speech” as well as “political correctness.” “Although [religious organizations] are guaranteed under the Charter to exercise their beliefs freely, without condemnation or retribution, and they are not mis- quoting anything from their texts, or crafting their own narrative versions of their history. But others, still seen as abusers [for speaking out against issues like abortion or LGBT]. Their ‘freedom of speech’ has been silenced in favour of ‘political correctness’, favouring political will or the direction politicians have taken in order to garner votes. These groups exercis- ing their ‘freedom of speech’ are seen as going against the present political direction, at times auto- matically becoming the target,” Mansoory feels. “On the other hand, Mansoory feels that when the same right wing group speaks out falsely about some right wing agenda, or propaganda against Islam and Muslims, it is considered acceptable because they are exercising their ‘freedom of speech’.” He thinks that the definition of freedom of speech is more liberal in Canada and the United States, adding that there seem to be direct consequences to individuals expressing their opinions and views against the political establishments. However, he feels that there can be indirect consequences if an in- dividual or the media does not toe the line in accordance with the government’s desires of the political leadership.
A spotlight on shadows

by EISA JIMENEZ

Mays Ersan and Jamie Robson, the duo behind Mere Phantoms, use paper prints to create miniature cities. Hand-held lights are shone upon the paper structures to bring the shadows to life on the blank walls of the room. Their exhibition, Three Cities: Prayer and Protest, will be on display at the Grunt Gallery from Jan. 12 to Feb. 18, 2017.

The exhibition focuses on three cities: Istanbul, Vancouver, and Montreal. Ersan initially grew up in Turkey before moving to Vancouver to study art. It was there she met Robson. Together they’ve travelled from city to city before settling in Montreal where they create their shadow installations as well as run their ceramics studio.

The commonalities between all three cities are the protests and outrage caused by factors such as police violence, gentrification, and tuition hikes which ultimately lead to losing access to city art spaces. Through their work, Mere Phantoms is able to create a live experience for their audience to immerse themselves in the piece.

Shadow installations

Ersan and Robson formed Mere Phantoms in 2012. Using paper cutouts of buildings, animals, and everything in between, Mere Phantoms create miniature cities. Each display includes a light that illuminates the city from below, but with the addition of handheld lamps, shadows come to life on the walls.

The resistance and the empire

Here we have the image of Carrie Fisher, as the famous Princess Leia in the original Star Wars film first presented in 1977. The image is displayed on today’s state of the art Telus building in downtown Vancouver, in some ways as futuristic as some structures seen in Star Wars. It’s an image that brings bittersweet memories of the acclaimed actress and writer. Her death epitomized a year of loss of many famous actors, writers, statesmen and journalists who significantly impacted our lives in the 20th and 21st century.

Star Wars can be seen as an entertaining sci-fi fantasy or as a comment on past and present political situations. The references to Nazi Germany abound in the Star Wars series, and the current version: Rogue One epitomizes the brutal, repressive, military police state of The Empire. Today, this type of state is defined by having a leader who acts as a dictator suppressing opposing views, especially liberal democratic tendencies, and imposes a strict economic and social order that benefits mainly those in power. Often there is racism, homophobia and repression of women and minorities. In Rogue One, it’s noteworthy that The Resistance is made up mainly of actors of colour with a female hero.

We have growing examples in today’s world of states that promote these repressive practices. What’s shocking is the current rise in western democracies of these autocratic governments. What’s truly shocking are how these practices are on our doorstep south of the border. People argue these elements have been there all along, but until the transition period of the new Trump administration have been kept somewhat in check. What’s new is the blatant disregard for truth and basic democratic values. The public is constantly lied to with such disdain illustrating the total arrogance of power. As well, there is the petty retribution towards those who disagree. Meanwhile, the new administration promises the public everything in the name of economic prosperity but here are a few examples of the true cost as illustrated with some Trump nominees to key positions in his government.

The new head of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as a state attorney general, has been suing the EPA for excessive regulation. Perhaps there will be more profits for polluting industries but our health and environment will be severely taxed and neither may easily recover.

The new Education Secretary prefers school choice in more privatized schools which many feel advocate running schools like a business to pass standardized multiple choice tests. This privatization threatens the diversity of the public system where teachers and their unions are being demonized. This will produce a more shallow and less diverse educational system.

Trump may be “draining the swamp” but it appears the purpose is just to build another “Gold Course” that will enrich the chosen but basht the rest.

In the new Trump administration, perhaps there will be more economic prosperity and some new jobs created. Who will prosper – certainly not the labourers with no union protection working at low wages.

In Canada, with all its faults, is still a beacon of light for democratic values compared to its forbidding southern neighbor.

Canada, with all its faults, is still a beacon of light for democratic values compared to its forbidding southern neighbor.

Let’s hope The Resistance is prepared when The Empire looks North!