

International students: returning home or finding a new one?
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The Source

forum of diversity

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Forging ahead with Virtual Reality



by FLORENCE HWANG

The second annual Consumer Virtual Reality Conference will show off the latest technology, but the use won't be applicable in everyday life yet. The CVR will be coming to the Vancouver Convention Centre from May 5-7. It will have demonstrations from Secret Location, Cloud-head Games, Ydreams, Serious Simulations and many others.

People who are dissatisfied with everyday reality will actively change it, says Ray Hsu, PhD.

"They (activists) will create new 'realities' (if we're talking

about VR/AR/MR) for others to experience," says Hsu.

Technical glitches

Hsu is one of the researchers pushing the boundaries of real-world applications by integrating Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality/Mixed Reality and other emerging technologies (Artificial Intelligence and machine learning). He thinks VR has impacted daily lives as an idea more than as technology. The available modes of experiencing VR, such as hardware, are still yet to be determined.

"[The technology is] also too expensive for mainstream con-

sumption and also need to address basic problems like motion-sickness," says Hsu.

Barnhard Riecke, an Associate Professor at SFU-SIAT (School of Interactive Arts and Technology), also acknowledges these issues that arise with VR.

"How can we help them leverage the technology without getting people sick or disoriented, or eyestrain or other potential negative side effects which technology can also have? It depends very much on the application. It certainly doesn't solve all the issues. There are some things you want to do immersively and others not," says Riecke.

However, Riecke thinks there are some practical uses of VR and AR.

"Say you're looking to buy a place and it's across town. You don't have enough time to drive there. If you could virtually experience it well enough to know what you're looking at, then this would save you a lot of time," says Riecke. "Say an architect wants to show their designs to people without having to have a physical mock-up: they could let their clients walk through and experience the building, or the architect could guide them through the environment."

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Verbatim

Dream or reality

by MARINA BISHARA

Sept. 27, 2014 found me on a plane, my heart palpitating with fear. The unknown was what terrified me most. In my backpack I had a sleeping mask, a pen, my diary and very precious memories. "This journey will unsettle me forever. I am not ready," I wrote. I was on my way from Egypt to Canada. I had no idea what was awaiting me, and I felt that uncertainty as a challenge. I wondered about my need to continue my education, to find communities in which I could get involved, and most importantly, to meet new friends. Since I have a very social temperament that's what worried me the most. I had certainly heard about the kindness of Canadians and their warm welcome to immigrants, but I also wondered how much they let them integrate into their society.

A week later, school began. The counsellor showed me to the classroom and whispering to me, encouraged me to speak with everyone. I immediately noticed an interesting phenomenon: all the groups sitting together were divided by nationality. Even if I could not distinguish the Chinese from the Koreans, I could still judge that no group had a Mediterranean air. Not feeling at ease, I sat apart, alone. It seemed absurd that this diversity of people did not mix. In fact, without making the least effort, I could count a dozen languages spoken around me. I had to summon all my courage and towards the lunch break I introduced myself to one of the groups. Even though I felt like a fish out of water, I tried to converse, but the language barrier prevented me from expressing myself freely. Later, when I did not understand something, I chose to use the technique of smile and nod, which my new friend soon knew how to decipher.

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Cultural Spotlight

Indigenous groups turn to Chinese medicine

by YUSHENG CAI

In Olivia Jim's deep memories, there's a garden where her grandmother grew plants.

"My late grandma used to make her own medicines out of the dandelions in the backyard garden," says Jim. "She had her own medicines, made her own tea."

As a member of the Wet'suwet'en First Nations, Jim grew up outside of Smithers, B.C., but she fled the community with her mother after a history of domestic violence and settled in Vancouver. In the city, Jim struggled to reconnect with the natural medicine of her childhood. One day, she went to see a Chinese doctor to treat her migraine.

"She reminded me of my grandma's garden," says Jim.

Now, as executive director at Helping Spirit Lodge Society, an organization that supports women dealing with domestic violence, Jim brings in traditional Chinese medicine practi-

"We use devil's club, dandelions – everything that is naturally outside," says Jim. "I'm not quite sure if I can say it's different [from traditional Chinese medicine]."

No access to indigenous medicine

Being away from her land for years, Jim feels the connection is cut between Indigenous people and their medicine. Among many First Nations people who use the lodge, it's become a common feeling. Cree woman Anne Savard says she can remember very little of the traditional medicines of her childhood.

"The only thing I remember is what we called rat root. We used to chew on it if we were getting a cold or sore throat. That's the only sort of Indian medicine that I've experienced," she says.

Savard, who used to be dubious about traditional Chinese medicine, is now using Chinese herbal therapy after she got worried about how many prescription drugs she was taking.



▲ Claire Gao in her clinic at Helping Spirit Lodge.



▲ Anne Savard at Claire Gao's clinic.

Another patient who comes to the lodge, Lillian Antelope, also worries about the loss of knowledge.

"We get our knowledge in person on the territory. When we leave the territory, we know nothing about indigenous medicine. So here's the thing, we don't have a systematic practice as traditional Chinese medicine does," says Antelope.

Common thread of nature

People from both groups – Indigenous and Chinese – say they see similarities with the other.

"We are closely related in culture. That's why Indigenous people embrace our medicine," says Claire Gao, a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine who goes to the Helping Spirit lodge once a week to provide free treatment.

With chronic back pain, Lillian Antelope comes to Gao every week for series of oral and topical herbal treatments. For Antelope, the treatment brings

See "Chinese Medicine" page 5 ➤

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Post-graduation migration: non-binary for international students

by NAOMI TSE

A new study from the University of British Columbia (UBC) is shedding light on the post-graduation plans of international students: migration plans correlate with concepts of home.

Cary Wu, PhD candidate in the department of sociology, conducted the study when he realized there was little research done on where international students go after they graduate.

“Most studies care about how they adapt to society while they’re students,” says Wu.

According to Wu, it is important to find out where these highly educated students go once they graduate, as many countries are interested in attracting global talent and some countries would like students to return after their studies are completed.

Four concepts of home

Wu’s study used a data set from UBC sociology professor Wendy Roth’s study. In Roth’s study, there was a question about where students will go after they graduate and Wu noticed a lot of the students talked about home when they were interviewed. Their perception of home determined where they would go after graduation.

“Some people have grown up traveling a lot and they may have a lot of places they can call home,” says Wu. “They may not have a strong sense of belonging to a particular place.”



▲ Graduates determine “home” based on sense of belonging.

After interviewing over 200 international students, Wu came to the conclusion that students had four ways of viewing

the concept of home: as host, as ancestral, as cosmopolitan and as nebulous. Cosmopolitan means that they are open to either staying or returning home. Almost 57 per cent of students were considered nebulous, as they were open to moving to a new place or another place that they’ve already lived in.

“UBC is a diverse university and if you interview students from a smaller university they may not have this kind of migration experience,” says Wu.

Adaptation affects home perception

Wu explains that home perception is dynamic and may change over time, as evidenced by differences in responses by undergraduate

students versus graduate students. Graduate students may have lived elsewhere for their undergraduate degree or the difference in perception may simply be due to age and adaptation to their new home depending on how long they have lived there. Wu says these perceptions also depend on whether the student’s experiences in their new home have been positive or negative.

Pinia Chandra, a third year computer science student from Indonesia, says that her interest in staying in Vancouver increased based on the connections she was building here.

“I think the most important part of where I live is the people. So I’ve narrowed it down to either here or back home,” says

Chandra, who was not part of Wu’s study.

Originally from China, Wu became interested in sociology during his undergrad—he was also fascinated with the concept of migration and rapid city growth in China. Wu went to the University of Chicago for graduate studies and when he was considering where to do his PhD, he chose UBC in order to work with professor Rima Wilkes, who was working on research that he was interested in.

Wilkes has been researching at and teaching in UBC’s sociology department for 15 years. As Wu’s co-author and supervisor, Wilkes says that Wu’s study helped provide a window into the lives of international students and the challenges many of them faced.

“If they feel that it’s too hard or they don’t feel welcome, then they don’t want to stay,” says Wilkes. “Language difficulties will also make it harder for them to stay.”

Other motivations to return home included social and family ties, as well as feelings of obligation. However, Wilkes says that further research will need to be conducted on cultural differences in perceptions of home. As for Wu himself, he may stay in Vancouver, but he is also open to moving elsewhere. ✍

For more information on the study, please visit www.news.ubc.ca/2017/02/16/international-students-concept-of-home-shapes-post-graduation-plans



Photo courtesy of Cary Wu

▲ Cary Wu, PhD candidate in UBC’s department of sociology.

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Education transforms a life

by BETTY SHEA

As part of the Aga Khan Foundation Canada’s Together project, the Vancouver Public Library will be hosting an evening of storytelling on May 2. An international Masters student at Simon Fraser University passionate about global development and education opportunities for youth, Anna Kim will share her journey from Uzbekistan to Korea and to Canada.

“Education is something that drives your life to a different level,” she says.

Global development and empowerment

Anna Kim volunteers as a Development Champion for the Aga Khan Foundation Canada. Established in 1980 in Canada, the foundation is part of a global network of non-profit organizations seeking to improve opportunities for the poor without discriminating against their faith, origin or gender.

“International organizations that support scholarships and help students actually have an impact on a person’s life,” says Kim. “If not for the foundations that created the scholarships, I wouldn’t be here.”

Kim describes her upcoming talk as a story about empower-

ment. For those who are interested in global development and in raising living standards in developing countries, she wants to use her story as encouragement to get involved. She will also provide practical information on ways to support the cause.

Opportunities and new horizons

Growing up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Kim dreamed of seeing the world.

“I wanted to be more international and to see other countries, cultures and people,” she says.

Ethnically Korean, Kim longed to experience life in Korea and to learn more about her heritage. However, income differences between developing and developed countries made it impossible for her to afford tuition in Korea. Ultimately, Kim’s determination and good grades helped her get accepted into three universities, and she chose to attend Sogang University as a Masters student in International and Global Studies. Besides waiving her tuition, the university also offered a living stipend. It was crucial to Kim who, at the time, spoke no Korean and had few means to support herself.

“No relatives and no friends in Korea,” recalls Kim with a laugh. “Just a plane ticket and hope for the best!”

Eventually, Kim’s optimism and hard work paid off, and she graduated as valedictorian of her class. She remained in Korea after graduation, developing business in Africa for a Korean multinational company. Ever restless, Kim started looking for her next challenge after a few years.

“I reached a point where I wanted to take the next step,” says Kim. “If I wanted to grow personally and professionally, I needed to challenge myself more and to get more education.”

Taking the next step and helping others

Kim’s next step led her to Vancouver in 2015. She is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Political Science at Simon Fraser University. Kim wants to combine business and government policy.

“My research is on Uzbekistan and so I hope that it would help [the Uzbekistan government] improve policies regarding energy companies coming in to invest,” she says.

Kim believes that work should be meaningful and shouldn’t only revolve around monetary rewards. Her long-term goal is to help others fulfill their dreams through education.

“Even in Canada, there are students from less fortunate



▲ Anna Kim.

families who are also trying to make something of their lives,” she says. “Many people just don’t know who to talk to and what organizations to seek.”

Kim wants to play a part by connecting underprivileged students to foundations and scholarships.

“I understand how it feels when you don’t have resources but you have potential,” she says. “All you need is the right opportunity at the right time. It can change the trajectory of your life.” ✍

Anna Kim will be speaking at the Kitsilano Branch of the Vancouver Public Library at 7 p.m. on May 2.



Left Bank



John Horgan should welcome the hatred of B.C.'s real estate barons

They only call it class warfare when our side fights back

The B.C. election is going to come down to the wire. Polls show a tight race between the BC Liberals and the NDP, with the Green Party in third place and within striking distance in a few seats on Vancouver Island. On May 9, voters in B.C. will make a clear choice on whether to extend the 16-year rule of the Liberals.

Since 2001, when the Liberals first swept into power, B.C. has indeed been the “Best Place on Earth” for corporations and the super-rich. The remarkable natural wealth of this province, and the fruits of the labour of those at the bottom, has flowed into the coffers of those at the top. It's no wonder the big corporate interests in B.C. are near-unanimous in their support of the Liberals. That's how it's always been here: anybody but the socialists, as they used to say back in the days when the ruling party was Social Credit.

Perhaps no one has enjoyed the Liberals' time in office more than the real estate barons who dominate the extremely profitable and overheated real estate market. While homelessness numbers have been growing, and the affordability crisis has spiralled out of control, those in the development and real estate business have been laughing all the way to the bank. It's no wonder that eight of the top ten donors to the BC Liberals in 2016 were real estate development or construction firms.

The NDP has put forth a serious platform for dealing with the housing crisis, with promises to cool speculation through

Given who Beedie is and what interests he represents, voters should take this tweet as making a strong case for the NDP. “I ask you to judge me by the enemies I have made,” as U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt once put it. FDR also once famously said he welcomed the hatred of the finance capitalists and predatory corporate interests who opposed aspects of his New Deal agenda. Horgan should take a similar line, welcoming the hatred of the Beedies of this province.

As for “class warfare,” we can only wish the NDP's program reflected a more militant class-based response to the warfare that the super-rich have been waging on the rest of us for the past 16 years. For the elite, it's only considered class warfare when our side fights back.

In a candid moment some years back, legendary billionaire U.S. investor Warren Buffett conceded, “there's been class warfare going on for the last 20 years, and my class has won. We're the ones that have gotten our tax rates reduced dramatically.”

Beedie, like many who have profited from Vancouver's housing bubble, inherited control of his business from his father. In fact, you can also find on Twitter photos of Beedie mugging for the cameras with Ivanka Trump, celebrating with the children of the far right U.S. president at the announcement of their new luxury tower in Vancouver. (A development which is bankrolled by the Holborn Group, yet another real es-



▲ BC NDP leader John Horgan on the campaign trail.

taxation, provide more money for social housing, and to give relief to renters in the form of a \$400 annual rebate and the closing of loopholes that landlords have been abusing to “renovict” or gouge tenants. These measures would be a step in the right direction, even if they don't go nearly far enough.

Despite the relatively cautious reforms being proposed by the NDP, some of the real estate barons are crying foul. Ryan Beedie, who runs the billion-dollar Beedie Development Group, took to Twitter to warn against the NDP menace: “#NDP leader John Horgan resorts to class warfare in a divisive and pathetic attempt to win the election.”

tate giant run by the son of its billionaire founder.)

Raised with that kind of financial privilege, Beedie and his ilk know how to defend it. He and his corporate entities have donated hundreds of thousands to the BC Liberals in recent years.

Horgan and the NDP have not only promised to cool off speculation in the real estate market, they've also vowed to ban big money from electoral politics. Both of these measures would represent a small but significant restraint on the unrestrained power Ryan Beedie and his fellow real estate baron enjoy. Unfortunately it's hardly class warfare – more like long overdue defensive measures. ✍



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Photo courtesy of Loretta Todd

Kid's science show shines lights on Indigenous science

by VINH NGUYEN

Coyote's Crazy Smart Science Show stands out from competitors, especially for First Nations youth, with its central focus on Indigenous audience.

The show, created by Loretta Todd and team, is broadcasted on Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) television network from Feb. 11 to May 6, 2017. Todd is an independent Indigenous filmmaker who also produces television programs for youth; her team consists of many people with a First Nations background who value their cultural heritage.

“It was important for me to do that so that Indigenous kids and their friends could see Indigenous science reflected back.”

Loretta Todd,
Indigenous filmmaker

Todd attributes her motivation behind the show's creation to her desire to encourage youth interest in Indigenous science. She feels if kids could see and learn about their own diverse cultures within the school curriculum, they'd be more interested and engaged.

“Most science classes don't reflect that back – any cultures back other than Western – so it was important for me to do that so that Indigenous kids and their friends could see Indigenous science reflected back,” says Todd.

Indigenous science and the students

The show primarily focuses on exploring various scientific topics with a twist and a humorous overtone. Two show hosts, Coyote and his companion Isabella White from Nanaimo First Nations, guide the audience into a magical, thrilling adventure for new knowledge.

In each episode a new riddle appears, which is solved by Coyote and his friends by using various creative methods. Todd says that both Western and Indigenous scientific methods are utilized and incorporated in the show.

“Indigenous science method was basically go to a knowledge holder and find out more,” says Todd. “We also sometimes incorporate Western science techniques, which is basically experiment of some sort.”

Within the show, there are many characters that embrace their roles as either inquirers or hosts of knowledge. The ‘science questers’ is one of the inquirer roles comprised of youth going on a quest to solve the riddle, according to Todd. Meanwhile, Indigenous scientists, who are knowledgeable in their fields, can help the kids understand more in their quests.

Role models

The ephemeral John Herrington, first Indigenous astronaut to walk in space, has also joined the show to share his knowledge with the local youth.

“[Herrington] looks at things like the engineering feat of Machu Picchu in our architecture episode, or nixtamalization in the chemistry episode, which is basically using ash with corn to create a hominy as a healthier food source – which is something that Indigenous people have been doing two thousand years ago,” says Todd.

Indigenous celebrities also make appearances in the show, which Todd hopes will encourage kids to study science.

Indigenous science does not have the same image as ten years ago, says Todd, who has a positive outlook on her show.

“People didn't think there was such a thing as Indigenous science and people who have been trying to bring it into the educational system had a lot of trouble,” she says. “But the door seems to be open now.”

Todd says the show is something she had been wanting to do for a long time, and recalls the initial process of getting the project started.

“It was pretty intense,” she says. “It's very expensive to film in Vancouver these days.”

She attributes much of the tediousness and costs to getting permits.

“[But in the end], everything was sort of fun,” she says, expressing her joy for having accomplished the task she set out for.

Todd emphasizes the importance of Indigenous shows for children in the local community, and hopes that her show will continue to be successful in providing them with scientific and cultural knowledge.

“I really think that our kids need to see the next wave of scientists, who are going to bring cultural values, different ways of looking at the world,” she says.

Audiences can view all up-to-date episodes, including DIY guides and interactive web games featured in the show, online. ✍

For more info, please visit www.coyotescience.com.

Book Unlaunch: The Muslimah who Fell to Earth

by SUSAN HANCOCK

Saima S. Hussain, editor of *The Muslimah Who Fell to Earth* started collecting stories on Muslim women after a work colleague suggested she was her only Muslim friend.

“Our conversation made me realize that we don't really know each other,” says Hussain. “We live side by side, but we don't really live together in Canada. I wanted to compile the voices of Muslim women in an effort to share my culture with other Canadians.”

The book explores the Muslim culture through the personal stories and reflections of twenty-one Canadian Muslim women.

Simon Fraser University presents Book Unlaunch: *The Muslimah Who Fell to Earth* on May 8, 2017 at Djavad Mowafaghian World Art Centre for the Arts in Vancouver.

Removing the labels that separate us

The book title came from Janetta Munirah Maclean, a contributing author from Montreal. Muslimah, meaning Muslim woman, *Who Fell to Earth*, or more specifically Canada, reflects the theme of the book.

“We are often made to feel like aliens from outer space because we look or act differently,” says Hussain. “Yet our stories show that Muslim women are not so different, and we are part of Canada.”

The right to wear the niqab

Readers explore the life of Zurena Ishaq, a devout Muslim woman, before she made national headlines in 2015. Ishaq convinced the Canadian government to withdraw from a controversial court case that would require women to remove any head coverings during their Canadian citizenship ceremony. The case went to the



▲ Saima S. Hussain, editor of *The Muslimah Who Fell to Earth*.

“Chinese Medicine” from page 2 her back to the days when her mother would soothe her flus and colds with herbs.

“She mixed mustard plaster and put it on my chest. The pain would go away,” Antelope says. “Miss Claire uses herbs too. My back has been getting better now.”

But the similarities between the two medicines do not end with herbal treatments. Both medicines use sweat lodges to cleanse one's body and treat illnesses, according to Jim.

“We believe sweating can get rid of flus and colds too,” says Gao, referring to the important

Supreme Court, and on October 15, 2015, she was viewed by millions of people across the country as she received her Canadian citizenship wearing the niqab.

“I began legal proceedings because I wanted the Canadian government to know that my rights and freedoms were being ignored,” says Ishaq.

The media portrays Ishaq as a spokesperson for all Muslim women, yet Ishaq reveals that she was only trying to express her own religious beliefs to the Canadian government.

“My father, even my husband, never forced me to wear the niqab. I was wearing the niqab before my marriage, so nobody ever made the decision for me.”

Meet a contributing author

Two contributing authors will join Hussain for the public lecture in Vancouver. Meharoon Ghani, a published writer, will share excerpts from her manuscript *Letters to Rumi*. Readers follow Ghani's private and uncensored conversation with Rumi, a 13th century mystical spiritual leader.

Azia Kassam, expresses her deep and everlasting love for a Norwegian Christian man.

“My story is about the strength that came from combining our different backgrounds,” says Kassam who is a practicing Ismaili Muslim, a branch of the Shia branch of Islam. “Our relationship was based on respect, friendship and companionship, and more importantly, we honoured one another's faith and traditions.”

Real life stories of women from different Muslim branches living in traditional and non-



▲ Contributors Meharoon Ghani (left) and Azia Kassam (right).

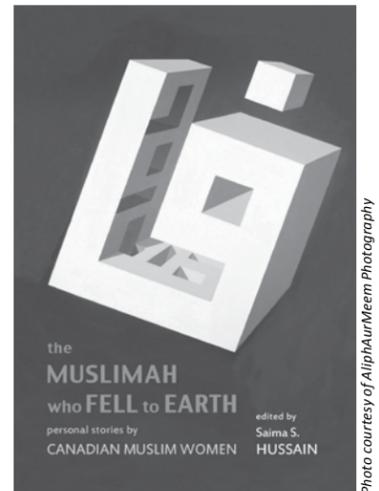
traditional ways are shared throughout the book. Tarek Ramadan, is an outreach coordinator for the Muslim Association of Canada, a non-profit organization representing 2.4 per cent of the Muslim population

role that saunas play in traditional Chinese medicine.

Hope for further co-operation

One of the challenges for Indigenous communities in Canada trying to hang onto traditional medicine is that they are losing the territory they once had where herbs grew. Chinese medicine, in contrast, has a stable source of herbs.

Traditional Chinese practitioners in Vancouver source raw herbs from mainland China or concentrated solution from Taiwan, according to Gao. Due to its popularity, many farmers choose to cultivate traditional Chinese medicinal plants.



▲ The cover features Islamic calligraphy by Bosnian artist Meliha Teparic.

in Greater Vancouver. Ramadan suggests that the book demonstrates the variety of unique voices of Muslim women.

“These stories show the richness of the Muslim world and the different cultures that people often misunderstand,” says Ramadan. “Islam is often misinterpreted because the media only focuses on a certain Muslim group.”

Ramadan's only criticism of the book is that some of these women's stories are one-sided. “It takes two to tango,” says Ramadan.

Muslims are Canadians

Hussain explains that these women's anthologies remind us that Muslim women come from different backgrounds, they live independent experiences, and like other Canadians they build their opinions based on their own ideas and the environment that surrounds them.

“This book tells the reader that no, Muslims are Canadians,



we're part of the community, we may look and act differently, but we're all individuals, we're not stereotypes,” says Hussain. ✍

For more information, visit www.sfu.ca/sfuwoodwards/events

“Urbanization isn't really a challenge for traditional Chinese medicine, as medical plants are preserved well as a system,” Gao says.

After years working to promote health care in Indigenous communities, Jim says she will continue to integrate traditional Chinese medicine into her work. Meanwhile, she looks for knowledge keepers in her community who can document indigenous medicine.

“They knew their medicine, they knew their wits and everything,” she says. “I wish somebody could document it and put it on a piece of paper.” ✍

Searching for home

by JAKE MCGRAIL

A diner threatened by corporate takeover. A group of youths determined to keep the place they see as an integral part of their community.

This is the setting of *Home*, a new and original play from the Some Assembly Arts Society that will be performed from May 3-6. Written and performed by youth, it is a piece that speaks for them, and one that is centred on the issues they feel are most important.

Community

The production of *Home* is a fully original story written and staged by youth. It is set in a diner, a favourite hangout for many in the community, but one that is threatened by an outside force. The question posed by the play and its characters can be both

of Some Assembly Arts Society, “and from that came all this great dialogue where everyone was sharing their ideas on what it can mean and what can get in the way of it.”

From there the play developed and *Puzzles Diner*, the hangout in question, was born. The diner was made to be its own small representation of a community, reflected through the “Diner Agreement” that all of its customers created to ensure it is a safe and comfortable space, another home. It’s a creative space, where everyone can express themselves. When the diner is threatened by a potential corporate takeover, the community comes together to save it, as the diner isn’t just a place to eat but a valuable piece of their community.

“This is about a community coming together,” says Methot, “the diner itself is called *Puzzles* because everyone fits into it in some way.”

A space of expression

Latisha Wadhams is one of the youth in the *Home* ensemble.



▲ Valerie Methot, executive director of Some Assembly Arts Society.

simple and complex: what does a healthy society, and a healthy self, mean?

“That was the question we were all looking at,” says Valerie Methot, executive director



▲ Latisha Wadhams, First Nations actress performing in *Home*.



▲ The full cast of *Home*.

A high school student in her first-ever production, she plays Nimpkish, a young First Nations woman who is one of the managers of the diner. As the show was created completely by the ensemble, the process began with reflection and workshoping.

“We did individual work at the start,” says Wadhams, “I thought about what my passions are, what I think a healthy self and society is, what I want to bring to the project. As a First Nations woman there was a lot I wanted to bring.”

From there everyone came together and shared their work, finding the connections between certain people as well as where the opposing ideas were.

“It’s a very collaborative process,” says Methot, “everyone shares feedback, everyone has a hand. There’s a lot of peer to

peer: I believe in the power of that.”

For Wadhams, the process was a way to not only share and talk about things that are close to her, but also to bring it out onto the stage and share it with many more people.

“The topics I discuss are very personal to me,” says Wadhams. “In my everyday life you can’t bring it all into conversation. *Nimpkish* is a vehicle to discuss these things.”

Methot and all of the other adults at Some Assembly don’t only provide a space to create theatre, but also make sure that there’s support for those that need it, as the issues addressed in the making of the show can be difficult for some.

“At RHYTAG [the Roundhouse Youth Theatre Action Group] we go to the core of issues,” says Wadhams, “but I feel comfort-

able because I feel the support of Valerie and everyone in the company. Even though we all have our own issues, we all come back together. I love this program because I can bring what *Nimpkish* brings and not be judged.”

Created sixteen years ago by Methot, the Roundhouse Youth Theatre Action Group Project has provided a space of support, expression and dialogue to a diverse group of youth from throughout the Lower Mainland.

“I wanted to work with youth because I have a strong belief that they deserve a forum to be heard,” says Methot, “and I feel that theatre is an excellent way to express what’s important to them.”

For more information on *Home* and RHYTAG, visit www.someassembly.ca.

The sound of artists

by EIJA JIMENEZ

Gabi Dao is a Vancouver-based artist whose work in installations and sound has earned her a media residency at the Western Front. Over the next several months, Dao will produce a series of podcasts, which will culminate in a live public event in the fall of 2017.

Dao is a second generation Chinese-Vietnamese woman whose artistic passion was initially met with opposition. Growing up in a culture where art took a back seat to traditional studies like maths and sciences, Dao pursued other creative outlets such as classical piano before eventually dedicating herself to her art. With her parents’ support, she studied contemporary art during her undergrad at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. From there, her interests grew.

“I wanted to do something that frightened me,” Dao explains. “I started to hit up sculpting classes, and after that, I wanted to do something even more challenging. I started taking sound classes as a way to revisit experiences I had playing classical music, but thinking about it in a way that wasn’t following constructs.”

Much of Dao’s art has cultural motifs behind it, such as a prior project done at Artspeak where she created a shell sculpture and radio to represent the pirate radio broadcast she had done that was influenced by her mother’s foreign accent improvement tapes. Despite being grounded in her culture, she’s very careful with how she represents it.

“There’s a conversation around ethical implication when using one’s identity to make artwork,” says Dao. “I’m



▲ Gabi Dao, artist.

very careful not to fetishize materials or history. I don’t ever want to feel like I’m exploiting a familial history in order to produce content.”

For Dao, her installations and sound experiences appear in a more general capacity so that there’s a level of access that can be reached by all. She explains that with generality, viewers can tap into their own subjective musings and find their own particular meaning.

Residency

Dao’s residency at the Western Front will be from the spring and summer of 2017 and will culminate in a live public event of her project in the fall. Stepping away from creation and sculptures, Dao is planning a series of podcasts that she refers to as a sonic space. The sonic space will highlight emerging artists, cultural producers, and other community members within Vancouver who will share talents and respond to the precarious nature of affordable housing and affordable studio spaces in downtown Vancouver.

“It’s a space to promote conversation or discourse around emerging artists and producers,” Dao says. “Conceptually, it’s this idea of having a pro-

gram as a space where people can talk about what they do and how their conditions and their surroundings in their cities affect their lives.”

Currently, Dao has eight people lined up to speak on her podcast. The first in the lineup is Yu Su, an electronic music artist who immigrated to Canada from China only four years ago. Part of the podcast program will have Dao and Yu Su speaking about art spaces within the city, Yu Su’s cultural transition from China to Vancouver, as well as doing a calisthenic workshop for invited guests. Like Dao’s own work that incorporates both structure and sound, her podcasts will invite guests whose unique sounds are a contributing factor to their identity.

“I would definitely like to continue my podcast [after residency]. I’m trying to apply for funding to make a documentary on emerging music and cultural scenes in Southeast Asia, which stems from the podcast series,” says Dao. “Second generation kids are doing things that wouldn’t be a traditional part of their culture: like trying to be an artist.”

For more information, please visit www.front.bc.ca.

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Lori Roggman



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This program accepts refugee families with young children who may not be eligible for IRCC funded programs.

For more information and to register, please contact Ana at 604-298-5888
amachado@pirs.bc.ca

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Paradise or illusion? – Searching for a new life

by MASHA RADEMAKERS

Big cash and a lavish lifestyle don't always buy you happiness, as shown in Julia Ivanova's new documentary *Limit is the Sky*. The Russian-Canadian filmmaker follows six young people in their search of a new life in Fort McMurray, the North Canadian oil-city of extreme richness and ruthless weather.

The documentary shows us the dreams and emotions of the fortune seekers, who one by one try to discover if they fit into the rough environment of Fort McMurray. Ivanova, who has a soft spot for people's ordinary lives, decided together with pro-

painful to see the disrespectful attitude of some strangers, who live a very self-centered life until they have enough money to leave again.

Demise

Ivanova and her team followed the immigrants from 2012 to 2016, which were turbulent years for the city. "In the first years, the city was booming," she explains. "But suddenly, the oil prices dropped and a crisis loomed. No one was prepared and thousands of workers lost their jobs. People were asking 'will I be next'? As if this was not enough, the big fire came. In 2016, a lot of people moved out, and Fort McMurray became an empty city."

“When the economy or nature turns against us, the sky puts the limit on our dreams.

Julia Ivanova, documentary filmmaker

ducer Bonnie Thompson of the National Film Board (NFB) of Canada not to focus on the political aspects of the oil-city that is one of the most environmentally challenged areas of the world. "I want to show that some people have little choice but to work in this controversial place. I follow young and able Canadians, who fight very hard to find a place in the Canadian economy and are attracted to the fast cash that Fort McMurray promises," says Ivanova.

The film starts with Max, a young Lebanese refugee who works as a barber. Raised with the idea that he should succeed on a material level, he optimistically starts looking for a job in the oil-business. While struggling to find a job, he slowly falls into a state of hopelessness as he discovers that his talent for art makes him a stranger among the 'natural' oil-workers. We see

"It makes me think of the book *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Márquez, where, after a period of incredible boom, the decline comes to the imaginary town of Macondo and eventually nature takes back the land while erasing all signs of presence of man. We, people, are usually preoccupied with our self-centered desires, but when the economy or nature turns against us, the sky puts the limit on our dreams." Ivanova lets an imaginary raven fly through the documentary, entering and disappearing during the various scenes. Raven is the cultural symbol of the northern Athabaskan tribes, who lived where the actual oil sands are located. In their mythology, Raven stands for the unknown and the complexity of nature. "I never saw so many ravens in one place as in Fort McMurray," adds Ivanova. "Despite all the changes, Raven is



▲ Still from *Limit is the Sky*.

him in moments of loneliness and bitterness, dreaming of a better life. Mucharata, an ambitious Filipina, has more luck. She entered Canada as a nanny, but is now known around town for being 'that short Filipina woman' who drives one of the biggest trucks in the world. It seems that the town breaks you, or makes you, and there is no option in between.

"Fort McMurray has no pretence. People are very direct and admit they come there for the money. It is a place where people who don't fit the mainstream, go," says Ivanova. For people who are born in the city it is

always there and lives way longer than humans. For me he symbolizes nature's force throughout the documentary."

Nowadays, most of the immigrants followed in the film left Fort McMurray's testing grounds. Amid plummeting oil prices and destroying wild fires, they discovered that money should never stop you from pursuing happiness. ✂

Limit is the Sky will be screened at Vancouver's DOXA Festival on May 5th, 6.15 pm at Vancity Theatrend will be released online by the National Film Board (NFB) later in the spring.



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Photo courtesy of Adanu Habobo

Artists' community contribution

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Adanu Habobo performs a blend of traditional African music and dances at the Roundhouse Theatre on May 11 and 12. The group, headed by co-directors Curtis Andrews and Kofi Gbolonyo PhD., will feature a variety of dance styles and music from Ghana, Zimbabwe and be joined by Cote d'Ivoire native Kesseke Yeo.

"For me, dance is like a medicine. When you're having a bad day and you see an artist doing something good in the street, and you watch them for maybe 10 minutes, that helps you. You forget what problems you have like, that helps you already. So we can try to help the artists, the artists are very important in society," says Yeo.

Following in the footsteps

Born and raised in Cote d'Ivoire, Yeo decided from a young age he wanted to become a great dancer. His father and uncle were both renowned dancers in his country, so following in their

footsteps wasn't going to be easy. But Yeo recounts the day this was pointed out to him, and how it inspired him to try even harder.

"One day when I was little, someone made fun of my dancing and said, 'Your dad was a good acrobat, but you can't do what your dad was doing,' and I was very mad about that," says Yeo. "So from there, whenever I went in the farm, I'd start training myself, doing the acrobatics and jumping. Some days I'd go out in the farm, and I wouldn't do the job, I'd just do dancing."

Despite his uncle's ire at him not doing his job on the farm, he couldn't deny Yeo's ability and drive, and so he gave him the chance to participate in competitions. Yeo's efforts were met with considerable success.

"I was one of the best in the north of Ivory Coast," says Yeo. "Everywhere we'd go for competitions, me and my group were always number one."

After winning one of the bigger competitions in the country, at the 13-year-old, with his group, he would go on to travel with the state-sponsored Ivory Coast's National Ballet. "Ballet" in this case, Yeo says, isn't so much the traditional European ballet as it is an adopted name for similarly strong and often acrobatic dances.

Yeo went on to perform throughout Europe, but as political corruption led to less funding of the arts, Yeo went on to perform with other groups, eventually being offered in 2001 to come to Canada, where he's remained since.

Appreciating talent

Yeo enjoys living in Vancouver, but it was better when there were more opportunities for artists and performers like him. Now, he says, it's simply not viable to work on his craft full-time, even when he has di-

versified his skill-set to playing drums, percussion, and playing kora (a West African string instrument) and teaching dance as well.

"When I perform, people say 'Oh Kesseke, the way you dance!' and appreciate me, that helps me for weeks, and I feel very happy," says Yeo. "But when I go to work at 5 o'clock in the morning and the supervisor comes and yells at you, even when you do your best to make him happy, he's never happy. They just give you a cheque, never a 'Thank you for doing this job'."

Originally, the company that had contracted him to come to Canada to dance had taken care of promotion, but Yeo says there have been more challenges since leaving the company than just getting his name out.

"Everybody wants artists to volunteer," says Yeo. "They don't think like 'This guy's an immigrant here, when he's sick he'll still want to pay rent.' They don't think about that when they call you asking you to come do things for free for the community."

When it comes to keeping arts and culture in Vancouver, the efforts being taken must reflect the importance of keeping it alive, says Yeo, and more than just for his own sake.

"I hope the new generation can encourage artists, African artists, Canadian musicians, any colour that is trying to make music here, this next generation needs to wake up to support these people," says Yeo.

Yeo is more than ready to work with Andrews again, and hopes to see more shows bring together the talent offered up by many Afro-Canadian artists and performers in Vancouver. ✉

For more information on the show, visit www.adanuhabobo.com

For more on Yeo, visit www.kissof africa.ca.



Photo courtesy of Kesseke Yeo

▲ Kesseke Yeo: dancer and multi-instrumentalist from Cote d'Ivoire.

► "Verbatim" from page 1

I did my best to become friends with my peers, and I succeeded. I was fascinated by the idea of multiculturalism and the beauty of this diversity all around me. In every difference I observed, I saw a lesson to learn. However, I was limited by some obstacles other than language. Ways of thinking differ, values that are dear to us are not all the same and our paths diverge.

My world was turned upside down when I finally met some "Egyptians!" For our first Christmas, my family decided to go to the Coptic Church in Vancouver (Coptic: Christian of ancient Egypt). I immediately felt that I was at home. The young people welcomed me with lively smiles. So I became similar to those I criticized before. It is comforting to understand each other from the first meeting, to share the

same tastes in music and to love the same cuisine. And at a deeper level, my Canadian-Egyptian friends share with me what interests me most in life: my faith and my principles. I do not support either the separation of cultures or their assimilation. In my opinion, a balance must be struck between maintaining one's roots and being open to others. That is a very Canadian way of life. ✉



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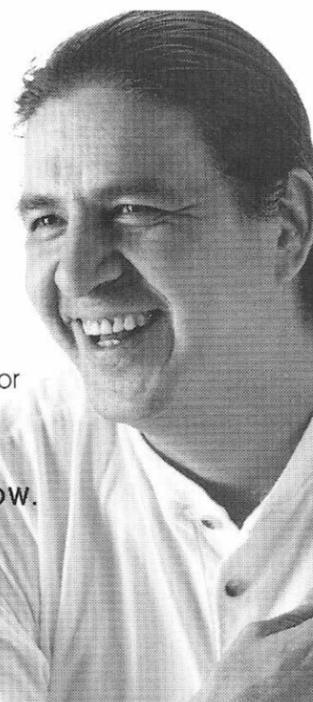
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Cultural Calendar

April 25–May 9, 2017

by SIMON YEE

Spring is in full bloom, and there is no excuse not to go out, enjoy the weather and check out the many events and festivals happening in Vancouver. From art installations, theatrical plays, musicals and dancing to roundtables, workshops and holiday festivals, there's something for everyone.

Carol Sawyer's "I attempt from love's sickness to fly, in vain"

April 22–May 20
Republic Gallery, Vancouver
www.republicgallery.com

The Republic Gallery is hosting artist Carol Sawyer's work, "I attempt from love's sickness to fly, in vain," until May 20. The exhibition consists of video and photographs based on a performance of an aria written by the English baroque composer Henry Purcell. The work explores a number of seemingly opposite concepts: theatricality/realism, period/contemporary, fragment/whole, youth/age, health/sickness, etc.

Long Division

April 26–30
Pi Theatre, Vancouver
www.pitheatre.com

Pi Theatre will present playwright Peter Dickinson's otherworldly and resonant multimedia experience *Long Division* at the Annex Theatre (823 Seymour Street). Directed by Richard Wolfe, the story revolves around seven characters representing a diverse and discordant group, whose lives overlap in a singular, unresolved traumatic event that binds their pasts together. This bold and innovative work demonstrates how the sev-

en characters need each other, the audience, and a healthy dose of mathematical history and theory to find the answer to the question they all share.

Revelation: Bearing Witness to Residential School Survivors

April 27, 6:30 p.m.
SFU Segal Building, Vancouver
www.sfu.ca/history

SFU will be hosting the highly acclaimed CBC radio personality and honorary Truth and Reconciliation Commission witness Shelagh Rogers at the Segal Building on April 27. The real history of Canada was not taught to generations of Canadian school children, but Indigenous Peoples lived it. What does reconciliation mean now that Canada knows the truth of their experience? Rogers will address this question and discuss the impact of hearing hundreds of residential school survivors speak at national and regional events of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. To reserve a seat for this free and open to the public talk, please visit the SFU website.

International Dance Day

April 29, 12–7 p.m.
Various venues in Vancouver
www.thedancecentre.ca

The Dance Centre will be hosting a day of performances and events celebrating the vitality and diversity of dance on April 29 throughout the city. Some of the performances include Project Soul's high-energy, dynamic street dance, Windermere Secondary students' exuberant bhangra routine, Tricoter's yarn choreography, Polymer Dance Contemporary's site-specific improvisation, among others.

Dead Man Walking

April 29, May 2, 5, 7
Queen Elizabeth Theatre
www.vancouveropera.ca

Queen Elizabeth Theatre will be presenting *Dead Man Walking*, a play based on the bestselling memoir by Sister Helen Prejean. Featuring a dramatic and incredibly lyric musical setting, a story with moral complexity and emotional depth, this operatic play chronicles the story of a convicted Louisiana murderer who is befriended by a Catholic nun seeking to understand the nature of divine forgiveness.

Circle Game

April 29–May 20
Firehall Arts Centre, Vancouver
www.firehallartscentre.ca

The enduring music of the Canadian singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell is re-imagined in this energetic musical experience, directed by Andrew Cohen and Anna Kuman and hosted by the Firehall Arts Centre from April 29 to May 20. Circle Game reinterprets Mitchell's iconic songs, reflecting on social and environmental ideals, such as "Big Yellow Taxi," "River," "California" and "A Case of You" through the ears and eyes of a new generation, connecting them to the politics and world we know today. Please visit the Firehall Arts Centre website for tickets and showtimes.

Kassandra Flamenco's La Tarara

May 4–5, 8 p.m.
Norman Rothstein Theatre, Vancouver
www.kassandraflamenco.com

Kassandra Flamenco will present *La Tarara*, an adrenalin-infused dance spectacular on May 4 and 5 at the Norman Rothstein Theatre in Vancouver. *La Tarara* is a fiery encounter between flamenco dancers of very different backgrounds and a meeting between the raw intensity of flamenco dance and the refined elegance of Spanish dance. Highlights of the performance include fiery flamenco dancers, alluring dance imagery of the seductive Spanish Bata de Cola and a rich musical score by international composer Gaspar Rodriguez.

DOXA Film Festival

May 4–14
Various theatres around Vancouver
www.doxafestival.ca

The DOXA Documentary Film Festival returns to Vancouver for the 16th time, screening many innovative, inspiring, comedic and thought-provoking documentaries from around the world. Some of the films include a French film about students at the prestigious La Fémis school; an Iranian film about Zainab, an indomitable young woman farmer; a Chinese film about the workers in the global electronic manufacturing industry; and an Italian film about Middle Eastern falconry.

Cinco de Mayo en la Casa de Amigos

May 5–6, for 19 years and older
Robson Square, Vancouver
www.casadeamigos.ca

Cinco de Mayo is on May 5, and for two days, May 5 and 6 at Robson Square, Vancouver gets to partake in the celebration of

all things Mexican. For the 19+ crowd, there will be delicious gourmet tacos and ceviches, Mariachi bands and Luchador wrestlers, and, naturally, plenty of tequila and margaritas.

Ancient Approaches to Perception

May 5–6
SFU Harbour Centre, Vancouver
www.sfu.ca/philosophy

Ancient theories of perception have been discussed and debated ever since they were formulated and continue to be fruitfully studied. SFU will bring together five prominent figures to present their latest research, with a focus on Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. Differing theories of perception reflect and reinforce differing philosophical commitments, and accompany differing conceptions of the search for wisdom, which provides a key to understanding not just the history of philosophy in ancient Greece, but also to our understanding of philosophy itself.

Rhodofest 2017

May 7, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Deer Lake Park, Burnaby
www.burnaby.ca/rhodofest

The City of Burnaby will be hosting Rhodofest on May 7 at Deer Lake Park, a festival promoting the long-term sustainable, ecological health of communities and providing a venue for art and horticultural groups. There will be a ceremonial tree planting event, tours of the Burnaby Art Gallery, a variety of entertainment, rovers, mini-workshops, plant sales, a silent auction and interactive arts activities.

► "Virtual Reality" from page 1

Riecke will be part of Emily Carr Design Panel for the Consumer Virtual Reality conference. He also agrees there are more uses for VR for hypothetical scenarios. He will be showcasing his Virtual Earth gazing project.

"Anything that virtual reality allows you do, something that you could not do otherwise, I think that's where it is really powerful. If we're investigating how we can fly into space, it gives you really an embodied sensation or illusion that you're really flying through space," says Riecke. "Another project we're starting now, we try to give people the jest of the experience that astronauts had when they were out in space. They came back changed. One of the early astronauts Edgar Mitchell stated we went to the moon as technicians. We returned as

humanitarians. That's just one example that his medium can be really powerful."

Yet he doesn't think that it should be a goal for VR to be used in everyday situations.

"For some things they would be useful, for others not. For example, I much prefer not to fly to Toronto or anywhere – even an hour on the Skytrain or a drive through Vancouver. If I could have a good enough video conference or teleconference or telepresence where this would be good enough in terms of us having a good conversation," says Riecke.

Rethinking VR and technology

However, Riecke says VR has come a long way.

"Back in the olden days, we often asked [ourselves] to adapt to the computer so you use punch

cards or type code. The idea of virtual reality is to better understand how humans perceive, how we think, how we behave, how we move, what cues are really important to us, the more we can design the technology to support us at what we're good at," he explains.

Hsu, who is the Faculty in Residence at the UBC Emerging Media Lab, Chair of the Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality Working Group, notes there was no cross-campus discussions about this topic.

"To be sure, there were individual labs or researchers who were devoted to exploring the role that technology could play in furthering learning outcomes, but given academic silos, it required a lot of work to find them," says Hsu.

Hsu first became involved with VR/AR Working Group at UBC so faculty, students, industry, cam-



▲ Ray Hsu, specialist in virtual reality and augmented reality.

pus IT staff and others who were invested in these ideas and products could share them.

"When the dust settles among competitors to provide a solid baseline experience that is affordable, then the work of reimagining daily life under a new

computing paradigm – one without screens as we know it – can begin," says Hsu.

Hsu has led hundreds of people through demos of these technologies. He's seen many try VR for the first time and, when they lift the headset, they ask, "Why would you ever want to leave?"

"This seems a common enough pattern from the surprise and 'wow-factor' of a new kind of experience. I believe that as these kinds of experiences become more commonplace, many people will consume them the way that they consume other kinds of media, like video," says Hsu. 

For more information, visit www.consumer-vr.com

And to check out Riecke's Virtual Earth gazing project, visit www.ispace.iat.sfu.ca/project/earthgazing.

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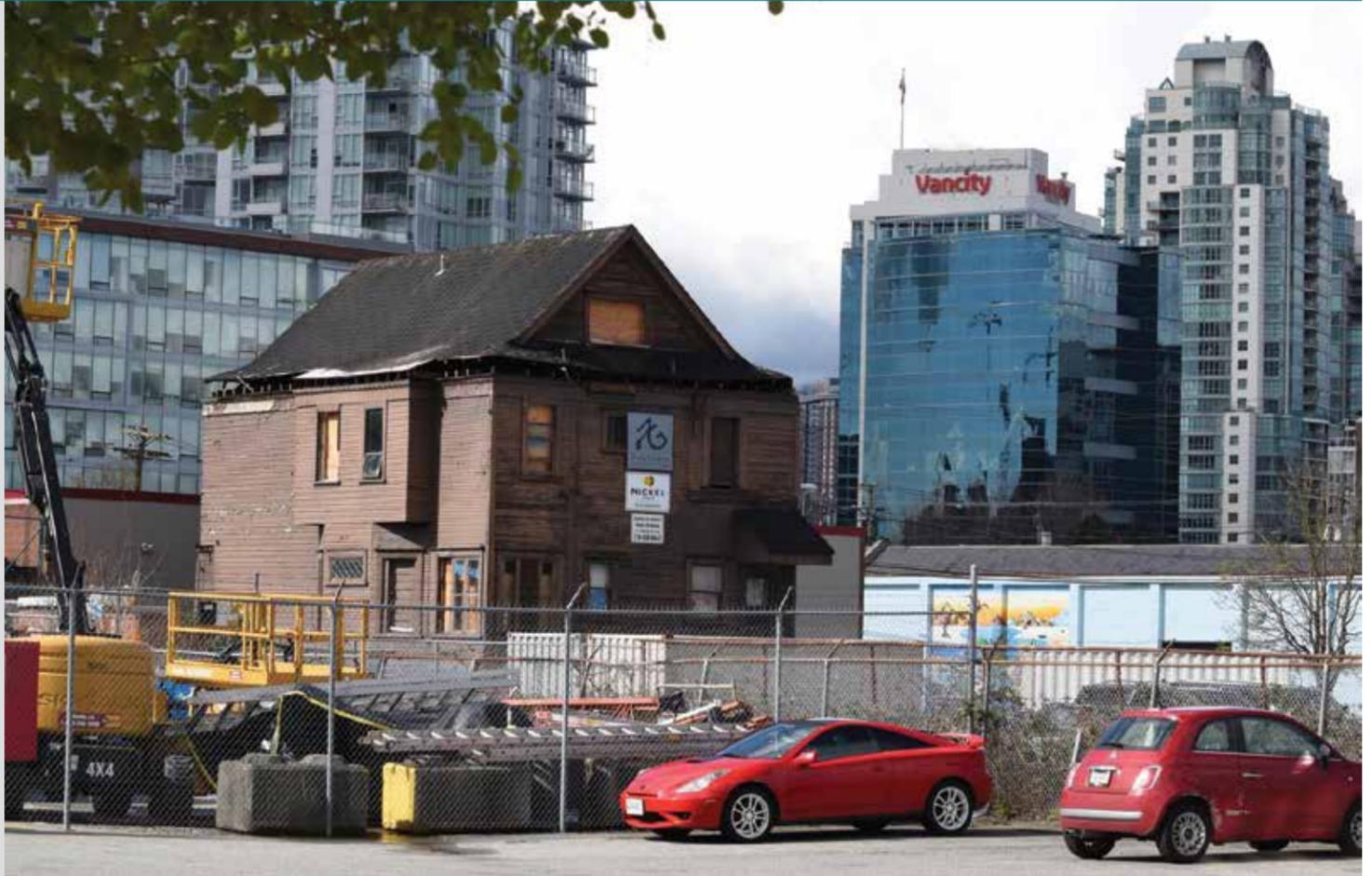
It's lonely being heritage!

And dangerous! Not only are you becoming more surrounded by towers than by other older houses – eventually you are demolished to make room for new towers, or in a more single home neighbourhood, torn down to be replaced by a modern “monster house.”

The house pictured here, was originally located at 1754 Pendrell St. near Denman St. in Vancouver’s West End. It’s a solid structure built in 1905 with leaded glass windows, classical molding, and a large porch. Although it’s not classified as a heritage building, it’s certainly part of Vancouver’s heritage and dates back to the city’s early days. This Edwardian home eventually became a rooming house during World War II.

1754 to 1772 Pendrell St. provided 26 low cost rental units contained in two houses and an apartment block. It will now be redeveloped by Westbank into a 21-storey tower with 173 rental units. 26 of these units will be below market rate to replace those lost, but, in all likelihood, the remainder of the units will be undersized and overpriced.

In any case, 1754 Pendrell, looking a little dismal and disoriented at the moment, is beginning a new life with a new owner, Sanjiv Sandhu, a small developer. He has moved this house temporarily to its present location on Main St. between East 1st Ave. and Industrial Ave. Its permanent location will be in the 400 block of East 5th Ave. in East Vancouver. Restoring his-



torical houses is Sandhu’s passion and once this one is done, he will use it as a rental property.

Both the City of Vancouver and Westbank cooperated with the salvation of the house. One of the biggest factors was safely moving it, and the masters of this art are Nickel Bros. Hydro, Telus and other city services have to be closely coordinated since power lines are disrupted. In addition, the house had to be floated across False Creek initially to a location near Olympic Village for several months and then trucked to Main St. Some of Nickel Bros. incredible

house moves have been featured on the TV series: *Massive Moves*.

To move this approximately 40 metric tonne house cost Sandhu around \$175,000.

This admirable labour of love may eventually pay off, but it still leaves the dilemma of so much of Vancouver’s heritage being destroyed for towers and bigger homes. And moving homes is clearly not an option. Older homes with good construction and old growth timber can last for hundreds of years with proper maintenance. New construction with inferior materials often

has a much-limited life span. We in essence are sacrificing our heritage for quick profits in a booming housing market. I live in a West End condo built in the early 90’s housing boom. There were a lot of corners cut and perhaps inspections were less than thorough. Around 18 years later this leaky condo building had to be virtually rebuilt.

Recently I visited an older character home at 4255 West 12th Ave. that is slated for immediate demolition. It will be replaced by a “monster home” built by a foreign buyer who has no interest

in preserving the character of the neighbourhood. Although I enjoy living in the West End, what you immediately notice in this area is a softness you don’t readily see in the midst of high-rise buildings. There is a sense of peacefulness and community. Everything is human scale. Vancouver by necessity has to have variable housing accommodation but tearing down everything that’s affordable, or contains a sense of the past does not make for a livable city.

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