

A unique take  
on mathematics  
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# The Source

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## More than words

Verbatim

Here, my idealism  
is almost realistic

by LAURA CARDIN

I left France mostly because my interactions with my compatriots no longer suited me. It was as though every conversation I engaged in was met with a narrowness of spirit, a rejection of differences and an unjustified superiority.

“How can I dream of an inclusive, pure and kind world, while remaining an observer...”

Two years later, I don't feel sorry. For the first two months of my stay, I did not really make friends. Canadians are warm and experts of small talk, and such sketchy social interactions satisfied me. That said, it soon dawned on me that I live in a cosmopolitan city. After walking downtown for a few minutes, one soon realizes that the people here come from all over the world.

When the time came to get out of my shell, I instinctively turned to the French community. It is not easy to leave one's comfort zone, and I needed that safety: to hear my native tongue, to talk about cheese and bread, to hear others confess their need to rediscover France and its history-rich landscapes.

However, I soon encountered what had impelled me to leave: sexist, racist or even homophobic remarks that are “just for laughs.” Torn between the impulse to flee from those who know better than everyone else and the feeling of being nevertheless at home, I sorted myself out and chose who would be my friends.

But above all, I have readjusted my perspective. How

See “Verbatim” page 3 >

by BETTY SHEA

**In the modern classroom, rote methods of learning have given way to more effective methods. When it comes to learning English as an Additional Language (EAL), two students at the University of British Columbia (UBC) demonstrate that, with creativity, there is more to gain than fluency in English.**

Natalia Balyasnikova and Harini Rajagopal are PhD candidates in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at UBC.

Balyasnikova's research focuses on senior EAL learners and Rajagopal studies young EAL learners. They show that learning a new language is also a way to develop one's identity, form social connections and make meaning.

“We must further our understanding that language is not simply a system of decontextualized code, but an embodied social communicative practice,” says Balyasnikova.

### Beyond vocabulary and grammar

Balyasnikova volunteers at the Seniors Thrive Drama Club in

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Organized by the UBC Learning Exchange, it helps senior EAL learners practice English through acting. For participants, being in a drama club is a fun way of learning a language and fulfills the desire to form social connections.

“Language competence is important, of course, but communication takes place across different modes,” she explains. “[What] surprised me the most was how close the group became. It is a reminder that learning methods like drama allow us to explore the power of multiple

viewpoints and bring them together through play.”

Reading and writing are traditionally considered the cornerstones of education. While these skills remain important, society's views on education have since changed. In 2011, British Columbia launched a revision of the province's education curriculum. The new B.C. curriculum emphasizes three core competencies: Communication, Creative and Critical Thinking, and Personal and Social Skills.

“[Reading and writing] are extremely productive ways in

See “ESL” page 6 >

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# Cultural Spotlight

## A Serbian welcome

by COLLEEN ADDISON

**At the upcoming Serbian Days festival, all cultural communities are welcome to come and experience Serbian culture, says Natasha Ignjatovic.**

"[Serbians are] known for our hospitality," says Ignjatovic, a long-term volunteer with Vancouver's Serbian community, who currently works as treasurer at the church where the festival will be held.

"Tourists that come to visit Serbia; they all brag about that part; they feel welcomed wherever they've been," says Ignjatovic. "It's a country that greets everyone with [an] open heart."

Ignjatovic hopes to show visitors that open heart – and aspects of Serbian culture – at the annual Serbian Days festival, taking place all day Sept. 1 and 2 in south Vancouver.

### Friendship and folk dancing

Over the years, Serbian Days has grown, welcoming more cultures, says Ignjatovic, who has

Serbia's traditional kolo circle dance, added in 2017 to the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, is a collective performance involving every member of the community.

"It's for everyone; we all dance in a big circle," says Ignjatovic.

The festival showcases different types of kolo from Serbia's five regions.

"We have a folk dance group, Vuk Karadzic Vankuver, that gathers about 150 kids and youth and about 50 adults," explains Ignjatovic. "The kids practise all different dances, in traditional costumes from back home. Some of [the costumes] are very authentic, and original from a hundred years ago. Most of the clothing was made from natural materials, heavy wool and lots of colourful embroidery, with intricate patterns and flowers. Everything was handmade back then."

Between dances, visitors can enjoy other elements of Serbian culture.

nity in Vancouver, but there are others. The St. Sava Serbian Orthodox church, at which the festival will be held, has celebrations throughout the year, including a goulash contest on Pentecost Sunday in May. Singers perform at the end of June to celebrate St. Vitus' Day and the fall of Serbian martyrs at the 14th century Battle of Kosovo.

Ignjatovic and her husband came to Canada in 1993 as a young couple from Serbia, then in the process of splitting away from former Yugoslavia.

See "Serbian Days" page 10 ➤



▲ Serbian days in Vancouver.

helped organize the festival for 15 of its 28 years.

"Our target has been to become more open to other spectators who show the interest to come and visit," says Ignjatovic. "At the beginning, it was a cultural gathering of our community; but we wanted to spread that out. I called around [to] every other cultural group I knew from their festivals, Greek and Russian, Polish and Mexican, and I invited them to come and attend our festival. We went around door to door."

Visitors and Serbians alike are all welcome to participate in the festival.

"We have Serbian food, which consists of lots of meat. There is a traditional lamb roast. Roasted lamb and pork. What we are most known for is cevapi, which is grilled meat but looks more like little sausages. We have lots of desserts. It's very traditional that in every family, they bake a lot, pastries, cakes, made of walnuts, chocolate, custard. And sweet," she adds, laughing.

Dance is not the only activity featured at Serbian Days, as there is a soccer tournament on both days, with players possibly coming from the FC Serbia United teams and the Serbia White Eagles Soccer Club. Chess and boccé will also be played at the festival.

### A Canadian adventure

Serbian Days is the biggest festival of the Serbian commu-

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# A critical conversation

by RAMAN KANG

**“When you start getting into those scary, emotional and triggering conversations, that’s where the most revolutionary education happens; that’s where you change a person’s perception,”** says Maria Ishikawa, program assistant for Friends of Simon Tutoring Program, Simon Fraser University (SFU).

Born and raised in Washington State, Ishikawa is half Japanese half Polish. Her article, *Validating Cultural Identity in the Classroom*, published in the BCTF Social Justice Newsletter addresses



Photo courtesy of Maria Ishikawa

▲ Maria Ishikawa discusses her article on *Validating Cultural Identity in the Classroom*.

issues of cultural identity, oppression and discrimination.

“It’s not something talked about, but it’s very apparent,” she says.

## Subtle discrimination

Ishikawa recalls a memory from first grade regarding subtle discrimination toward her Japanese heritage.

“I brought a bento box to school, a little Japanese lunch box with rice, soy sauce and sushi,” Ishikawa explains. “When the bento box leaked soy sauce in a bin of lunch boxes, in front of the whole class, the teacher said ‘that’s why you don’t bring that kind of food to school.’”

Ishikawa says that was one of the first times she felt that being Asian and bringing my Asian food is not accepted. So during her high school and middle school years, she recalls pushing her culture aside to fit in.

“I look half white and I remember people saying, ‘you’re cool because you act really white.’ At the time it was awesome,” she said.

She decided to keep acting this way, and pushed aside all those little things, including natural mannerisms and thoughts about her culture to be the person others would think of as cool.

“My self confidence is incredibly impacted by wanting to be white all the time. I’ve always

wished my eyes were bigger or that I was at least an average height or that my hair wasn’t so straight,” says Ishikawa.

Ishikawa says even though it may seem very surface level to some, this physical identity crisis engulfed her sense of being.

“You have to have a strong trusting relationship with the teacher to discuss cultural inequalities...”

Maria Ishikawa, program assistant for Friends of Simon Tutoring Program, SFU

“I don’t have a voice. I don’t feel like I have power or that I can change anything and that’s kind of what I wanted to bring to life,” she says.

Ishikawa says her education in her younger years was very factual, reciting teachings about Japanese internment camps.

“To that student who is learning that factual way, on a very subliminal covert consciousness, it was like a Japanese person being put into an internment camp is just normal,” she says.

## A shift in thought

It was at SFU when taking a Social Issues and Education class she read the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire.

“Reading that and learning about identity and culture, about

the oppressed and the oppressor, hegemony and ideology, is how I got my foot into these kinds of topics.”

It was then Ishikawa realized how colonial representations are influencing curriculum and how she was being subtly dis-

criminated against for being Japanese.

“That was the moment I realized, I can’t be the only person in the world who feels like they want to be the race and culture that’s most dominant and powerful,” she says. “I felt comfortable enough to say, I’m reading about this oppressed society and I want to be the oppressor even though I’m the one being oppressed.”

## The teacher-student relationship

“I’m not a teacher; I understand it’s not easy,” says Ishikawa. “You have to have a strong trusting relationship with the teacher to discuss cultural inequalities and things that are difficult to talk about.”

She wanted to open up to teachers who were sincere about these issues, not like that teacher in first grade who embarrassed her. She credits her mentor Eleanora Joensuu for pushing her to have meaningful, critical conversations. Ishikawa

says it’s important for students to feel their voices are being heard and that it directly correlates with their learning experiences.

“I bring it back to this thing of the oppressed and the oppressor and I think the reason why we have this conversation is because we have a huge systemic and societal issue at hand with inequality and these inequalities affect people at an emotional level. It affects our moral perceptions towards one another,” says Ishikawa. ✍

To read Maria Ishikawa’s article, please visit [www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SocialJustice/Publications/SJ-Newsletter/2017%20SJ%20Summer-Fall%20Newsletter-web.pdf](http://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SocialJustice/Publications/SJ-Newsletter/2017%20SJ%20Summer-Fall%20Newsletter-web.pdf)

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► “Verbatim” from page 1

can I dream of an inclusive, pure and kind world, while remaining an observer, never taking one step toward anyone else? How can building walls around me be more productive than creating non-judgemental conversations?

This is what Vancouver taught me: to take the risk of living surrounded by people from here and abroad, in order to ask questions. Forget for a while my own culture, and open up to that of another person. Accept that what seems

even if I had never had the impression of doing it before coming to Vancouver, I believe that there is a difference between keeping silent and offering an attentive ear; between staying still and lending a hand.

What I like above all in Vancouver is those inhabitants who love this city...but who also love their roots. Those who admit loudly that their country of origin is not where they would like to live, for various reasons, but who are nevertheless excited and enthusiastic about going back for a short visit.



▲ ???

sexist in my neighbour’s culture may not be so. Realize that what to me seems simple and logical is not so for the one facing me. And that it does not matter.

I don’t always understand. But I try. Just as I hate hearing someone criticize France and the French, although I am the first one to do so, I tell myself that I am nobody to pass judgment on another culture. And

These persons make me understand that I have the right not to like everything in France, while still loving her with all my strength. I have the right to feel at home in a city very different from where I grew up, while constantly missing my birth city.

Vancouver gives me hope. If I have become able to open up to others, then anyone can. Here, my idealism seems to me almost realistic. ✍

# Mathematics: beyond abstraction

by JAKE MCGRAIL

**While it is something that is essential to our everyday lives, mathematics often has negative connotations attached to it, especially among students. Math Catcher, an outreach program run out of Simon Fraser University, works with students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and aims to fight the idea that math is abstract and just boring work they're forced to do in school.**

Veselin Jungic, professor of mathematics at SFU and coordinator of the Math Catcher program, has taught mathematics for forty years and he is not surprised many students struggle to engage with math given how it is often taught.

"We make mathematics abstract," says Jungic. "We just put facts and techniques on the board, and we wonder why students don't see the relationship between the math and their lives. Why would anybody see all these numbers, x's and y's on the board, and think that's part of their life?"

## In the classroom

A major problem Jungic sees is just how early negative feelings towards mathematics can set in.

"If I go to a Grade 5 classroom, there's always a kid who says, 'I hate math,' and you really wonder what happened between Kindergarten and Grade 5 that has

them more receptive to mathematics going forwards.

"Sometimes, teachers are surprised how well students react to what we do. We bring excitement about mathematics to classrooms, and I hope that something will stay with the students in the future, some of that excitement."

## Reaching everyone

A feature of the Math Catcher program, as well as other volunteer work that Jungic does, is its strong Aboriginal component. It stems from the First Nations Math Education Workshop, a conference held in 2009 that Jungic helped organize.

"The organizers invited some elders," he says, "and also elementary and high school teachers and a group of academics. The idea was that we talk about mathematics and Indigenous people: what is it that we need to do to improve involvement of Aboriginal students in mathematics?"

The workshop's final report included the fact that only two per cent of BC's Aboriginal population completed Principles of Mathematics 12 at the time, compared to 25 per cent for the whole population.

"The conclusions were that we need to start promoting and teaching mathematics earlier," says Jungic, "and that we should teach it along with some kind of cultural component."

For that second point came Small Number, the main charac-



▲ Small Number and the Old Canoe, one of the stories that teach math.



▲ Veselin Jungic, coordinator of the Math Catcher program.

caused that dislike already," says Jungic.

Jungic and the Math Catcher program do many school visits throughout the year, and when working with students he tries to engage with them by pulling math away from being strictly on a board.

"I start my workshop by introducing myself, my work and my family, all in mathematical terms," says Jungic. "I do puzzles, and they are always stories. You give them the story, and once you get their attention and trust, then there is the chance you can work with them and create something that will benefit them mathematically."

Jungic knows that completely changing someone's outlook on the subject in just one class isn't necessarily going to happen, but what he does hope is that he can plant a seed of intrigue and curiosity in students, that might make

ter in over twenty animated short films created by the Math Catcher program and SFU. He is an Aboriginal youth who uses math to solve problems in many different situations, another way that Math Catcher aims to bring mathematics to life in the minds of students. And along with classroom visits, Math Catcher and SFU hold programs like the SFU Academic Summer Camp for Aboriginal Students, and the Aboriginal Students Math and Science Workshop.

"For the Math and Science Workshop," says Jungic, "we bring Aboriginal students from all over the Lower Mainland to the Burnaby campus. They are mostly Grade 11's, and we promote scholarships for young learners, so they see that there is support for them."

Jungic's goal is for more students to become mathematically literate, which he sees as key to life as an adult and citizen in our society.

"We cannot escape mathematics. I think the idea that you can manipulate people, starting with bills, how you vote, how you present your opinion...I think that we can be better citizens if we know mathematics is all around us. We don't need to be mathematicians, but we need to know that math is an important part of our lives." ✍

For more information on the Math Catcher program, visit [www.sfu.ca/mathcatcher](http://www.sfu.ca/mathcatcher).



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Photo courtesy of Shilpa Narayan

# Connection, conversation, change: the three C's of mental health journeys

by KATY THOMPSON

**Mental Health and Social Justice Activist Shilpa Narayan will be a workshop facilitator at the City of Surrey's annual Social Innovation Summit on Sept. 6 at Surrey City Hall.**

Narayan's workshop, entitled 'How a Struggle Became a Journey: The Importance of Connection & Conversation for Youth and Mental Wellness,' is based on her personal experiences with mental illness.

"Connections and conversations lead to change. Those are the three C's that I run on," says Narayan.

#### The workshop

Narayan's 1 1/2-hour workshop is divided into two sections: a presentation on her own mental health journey and a hands-on discussion of mental health education, which includes ways individuals can benefit their own mental wellness as well as what can be done to create inclusive environments in different workplaces, schools and organizations.

"I get participants to close their eyes and think of one person they could go to if anything were to happen to them," she says.

If they cannot think of anyone, Narayan encourages them to start thinking about people they can create a connection to.

"Even that one person can make a world of difference," she says.

Using case studies of diverse groups, including foster children, students with disabilities and LGBTQ+ youth, Narayan explores what it looks like to enhance mental health literacy and inclusivity in schools.

Narayan suggests that teachers make their classroom a safe space by having daily five to ten minute check-ins with their students and by talking with students about mental health and wellness throughout the year, not just at the beginning or end of term.

#### Connection, conversation, and overcoming stigma

Narayan says that the first

person to reach out to her regarding her mental wellness was a teacher.

"That was the first time I realized that there was a strength in vulnerability. She was the first person to make me feel like it was okay to not be okay," she explains.

The teacher told her that they would go together to the school counsellor. According to Narayan, her teacher's inclusive language gave Narayan

illness a journey instead of a struggle.

"When we put the title of struggle on it, we tend to give it a negative connotation. I turned having struggles into being a struggle: I'm struggling, therefore I'm a bad person," she says.

After that pivotal mental shift, Narayan explains she was better able to put her recovery into perspective, accepting all the twists and

“ I get participants to close their eyes and think of one person they could go to if anything were to happen to them.

*Shilpa Narayan, mental health and social justice activist*

a sense of belonging that encouraged her to continue to seek counsel.

"We often forget that it can be quite intimidating for someone to come up to you and say 'you need to go do this,' especially if you're already at a stage where the anxiety is at a level 100/10," she says.

Before seeking help, Narayan found herself feeling isolated due to the stigma associated with mental health challenges. Narayan believes the lack of mental health education at the time also hindered her understanding of her illness.

"Why can't we talk about mental health in the way that we talk about diabetes or cancer?" she says. "I look at it as a universal topic that we all hold some sort of responsibility for, in terms of holding a conversation that is trying to work against the systems that are pushing that stigma."

#### It's a journey

Narayan states that she had an epiphany during a therapy session in which the counsellor challenged her to call her

turns that come with a personal mental health journey.

"I wanted to be okay by accepting that everyday I may not be a 10/10 on the happiness scale," she says.

It was around this time that Narayan got involved in her mental health advocacy.

"I ran out of that office thinking that people really need to hear this because if I think this is moving, I'm sure someone else will think that too," she says.

At the end of her workshops, Narayan likes to challenge her participants to go out and ask one person how they are doing. As Narayan explains, this simple gesture gives that someone the opportunity to talk, and it might be the only 'how are you' they are getting all day.

"We are so busy in our lives, but we need to be able to connect with one another. That connection piece is the biggest part of mental wellness," she says. ✍

For more information about the Summit, visit [www.surrey.ca/community/19760.aspx](http://www.surrey.ca/community/19760.aspx)

# Paintings of an immigrant – Art with a big heart

by XI CHEN

**What makes a place home? Immigrants straddle the line not just between continents and oceans, but also between their past and their future, constantly reconciling their definition of home. As they look at the world through their own lens, they see and feel differently. As the proverb says, home is where the heart is.**

Chito Maravilla, an artist from the Philippines, has lived in Canada for more than 16 years. He will share his unique perspective reflecting on both homes through an upcoming illustrated art talk. The event will be hosted on September 6 by the Surrey Art Gallery.

"It sounds cliché to talk about being an immigrant but it is really relevant to who I am. I use my art to document my experience here and the social nature of Vancouver. A lot of my subjects are telling how I see the city, things that amaze me. For example, the Pride Parade, to see everyone including the RCMP joining the parade. Where do you see that? It doesn't happen in the Philippines," says Maravilla, with a chuckle. The event inspired him to make a happy painting depicting the parade.

## Through the lens of art

Maravilla seeks his inspirations from real life. When he came to Canada, the artist started drawing people he saw on the Skytrain. The drawings he made eventually became an exhibition at the Vancouver International Airport from 2012 to 2014.

"A lot of my works don't require reference, the subjects



▲ Philippine-born artist Chito Maravilla paints the world as he sees it.

are captured spontaneously. I try to keep that drive, when I see something, I do a sketch immediately, I want to put in the impulse there, that way it preserves the energy and sincerity of how I see it," he explains.

Blending surrealism and expressionism, his artworks are imaginative, dreamy and full of symbolisms of people, places and emotions such as joy and love.

In one of his award-winning pieces *The City's firework display*, Stanley Park is transformed into an elegant lady with the Science World uplifting a kid like a balloon in the sky, and a happy multicultural



▲ *DiverseCity*, a tribute to love and ethnicities.

couple on the side celebrating the fireworks with champagne.

In another one of his paintings *DiverseCity*, the word "love" is made out from different hand gestures by people from different ethnic backgrounds.

"For each of my artwork I tend to have a diversity theme through symbols. They say the place shapes the people, but I think it is vice versa, that people shape the place," says Maravilla.

## Influenced by diverse experience

Maravilla's love for art started when he was in grade school in the Philippines, fuelled by a passion to draw. He has had a diverse and successful career since, with a portfolio ranging from fashion design, play-ground design to graphic design. The diverse commercial experience has made him a versatile and thoughtful artist.

"From a young age, I have had the passion to understand the aesthetics of abstract art. I try to work on concepts, influenced also by my long term working experience in the advertising agency," he adds.

Aside from painting his new home, the artist also paints his experiences in the Philippines. He has two upcoming exhibitions, one in Ottawa in September at the Philippine Embassy and a solo exhibition in the Philippines next year in May.

"I want to uplift my fellow Filipinos through my work. I want to show the beauty of my country. In the end, as an artist, I hope to travel through my art and paint for the world," says Maravilla. ✍

For more information, please visit [chitomaravilla.com](http://chitomaravilla.com).

## ► "ESL" from page 1

which we make meaning, but we want to share that elevated space with other competencies," says Rajagopal. "Creative skills allow children to learn other types of literacies that are richer than just language."

EAL learning is an opportunity to nurture these competencies.

## Learning through multiple channels

Rajagopal and Balyasnikova are interested in multimodal learn-

ing, a process that engages the learner not only through text, but also aurally, spatially and visually.

"[The] acquisition of language unfolds very differently in older learners," says Balyasnikova. "When working with seniors who are learning an additional language, we need to create learning opportunities for them that take advantage of all the modes of communication and encourage them to be creative. This is why arts-based language learn-

ing, such as some delivered at the UBC Learning Exchange, holds so much promise in older adult language classrooms."

For example, through acting, older language learners may benefit from muscle memory connecting vocabulary to movement. This could make it easier to recall language in social situations outside of the classroom.

Multimodal learning also comes more naturally.

"As human beings, we communicate with gestures, music, images, videos," explains Rajagopal. "These different modalities are all part of our communication landscape."

Over the course of a year, Rajagopal followed of a group of second grade students where some students are EAL learners. Along with their elementary school teacher, she created exercises to develop skills emphasized in the new B.C. curriculum. One example is a photography assignment where students took photos of what they love and discussed the photos in class. As importantly, students were also responsible for negotiating the rules of the assignment. This

created a forum for them to discuss issues of respect, reciprocity, expectations and fairness.

The exercise revealed that second graders have much to say on these topics. Furthermore, many children who struggle with reading and writing contributed enthusiastically and are shown to be excellent communicators. Rajagopal prefers the multimodal approach because it motivates children to learn by building their confidence.

"It moves [learning] from the space of focusing on the parts where children may be struggling to focusing on the parts where they bring value," she says.

## Students as teachers and teachers as listeners

The photography project also demonstrated that students could be good teachers to each other. Children possess diverse experiences gained from outside of the classroom. With encouragement, they provided insightful feedback to their peers, even on seemingly advance topics such as photography framing and composition.

"It speaks to our understanding of childhood, our image of children and, in general, the value of what children bring," says Rajagopal. "They bring perception, fresh eyes, and a range of experiences and resources whether it is linguistics, cultural, or familial." She believes that these experiences should be valued in the classroom.

Balyasnikova draws similar conclusions from her research and her work at the UBC Learning Exchange.

"As teachers, we tend to set objectives and lay out procedures for the class," she says. "But at times we need to be a listener instead of trying to control the narrative of our students. To let go a little bit and to honour their search for meaning."

She believes that teachers need to listen to and embrace the life stories of their students.

"I have never considered myself a storyteller," she says. "I call myself a 'story listener.'" ✍

For more information on the UBC Learning Exchange, visit [www.learningexchange.ubc.ca](http://www.learningexchange.ubc.ca).



Photo courtesy of Harini Rajagopal



Photo courtesy of the UBC Learning Exchange

▲ Natalia Balyasnikova and Harini Rajagopal are PhD candidates in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at UBC.



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**Postcard**

## La Chanson de Tadoussac

Arriving near Tadoussac, Quebec, we were immersed in fog, which spread across the breadth of the St. Lawrence River. Crossing the Saguenay River by the free public ferry, one could see just the tops of other vessels. This cold foggy shroud enveloped the little community of Tadoussac until mid-morning. When the fog lifted, we were in one of Quebec's most beautiful villages located on the shore of the St. Lawrence where it merges with the Saguenay River. It's about a 3-hour drive north of Quebec City. The core edifice of this village of around 800 inhabitants is the charming Hotel Tadoussac, featured in the 1984 film, The Hotel New Hampshire. It's near the confluence of the two rivers and fronts on a beautiful sandy bay. The air is sweet with floral smells, and the lawn chairs beckon you to relax.

explorer Cartier arrived in 1535 to discover Iroquois hunting seals. Basques from Spain were also in the area in the mid-1500's hunting whales, fishing cod and fur trading. Pierre de Chauvin, a captain of the French Royal Navy established the first fur trading post in North America at Tadoussac in 1600. Today, an accurate replica of the trading post stands near the original site just next to the Hotel Tadoussac and serves as an informative museum of the area's history. On the opposite side of the Hotel Tadoussac another historic structure has been standing for over 250 years, the Tadoussac Chapel or the Indians' Chapel. It's the oldest wooden church in North America built by Jesuit missionaries to convert the Montagnais Aborigines to Christianity.

It's of interest to note the uniqueness of the French and



▲ A jewel on the shore of the St. Lawrence River.

The main event in town at this time (June 28–July 1, 2018) was the 35th Festival de la Chanson de Tadoussac. It consists of writers, composers, performers and musicians from Quebec, other French speaking regions of Canada and international artists. It features new performers on the scene along with better-known participants in a variety of venues. The festival has won the Félix Award for the Best Event of the Year and a gold Quebec Tourism Award. The music is eclectic and mostly in French, but can be enjoyed by anyone.

Tadoussac, although small, features several historic buildings and many delectable bistros and restaurants. One of the main attractions is whale watching since the confluence of the two rivers creates an ideal feeding ground for Beluga whales. Many other whale species, dolphins, seals, Greenland sharks and sea birds also frequent the waters. Blue whales and Belugas in this area are considered endangered species. Consequently, the waters around Tadoussac, which include part of the Saguenay Fjord and St. Lawrence River estuary, form the 20-year-old Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park created by the governments of Quebec and Canada. Its purpose is to protect the whales and marine life and regulate activities in the park to ensure sustainability of the area.

“La Chanson de Tadoussac” or “The Song of Tadoussac” has its roots much further back than the festival. “Its song has been sung” for over 8,000 years of Aboriginal habitation in the area. Its strategic location made it important for fishing as well as an important trade route via the Saguenay River for Aboriginal people. French

Aboriginal relationship. The French took full advantage of the network of Aboriginal trade routes. However, it was not simply bartering goods back and forth. In order to procure the furs, which the French were dependent on Aboriginal people for harvesting, processing and transporting, a relationship of trust had to be established. The French became deeply involved in Aboriginal society and politics. There was an interchange of technology and materials; as well, intermarriages were fostered. They treated Aborigines with respect as human beings and did not compete with them for land.

The fur trade began to decline in the early 1800's because of over hunting and fish stocks were also becoming depleted. Lumber companies came in and agriculture began. By the late 1800's logging had been exhausted. In 1864, the first Hotel Tadoussac was built, and following a fire the second was rebuilt in 1942 on the same site. Tourism thrived for nearly a hundred years until ship lines stopped serving Tadoussac in 1966. In the 1980's Chauvin's Trading Post was established as a museum. In 1998, the Hotel Tadoussac, the Trading Post and the Tadoussac Chapel were established as a protected area of monuments of national significance. All these events, including the Festival de la Chanson de Tadoussac, have contributed to Tadoussac's re-establishment as a major tourist attraction.

A visit to Tadoussac would not be wasted. ☒

Please enjoy more photos on The Source website.

TEXT DON RICHARDSON  
PHOTOS DENIS BOUVIER

# Nikkei Matsuri: A celebration of Japanese heritage

by VINH NGUYEN

**Joining in the celebration of Japanese heritage, the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre will be holding the annual Nikkei Matsuri Summer Festival from September 1–2.**

Roger Lemire, Nikkei Centre's executive director, shares his experience with various cultural aspects. He first explains what the term "matsuri" means to him.

"It basically means festival. And in Japan, [it means] the *matsuri* festival. There's one in every town in Japan and everywhere," says Lemire.

The word *matsuri* refers to culture, food and the traditions that are all celebrated in Japa-

of Japanese culture," she says. "The Mikoshi is usually carried during Matsuri by the people of the festival to carry the spirit of the Shinto god."

"Yagura" is another essential component in Japanese culture as well.

"It's basically a stage. It's like a tower and it's usually set up in the middle of Matsuri," Lemire explains.

A lot of celebration activities revolve around Yagura.

"But it's not really a stage, it has a more cultural representation to it. It has to have the colour and design as opposed to just a stage of a local event," Lemire adds.

For some people, the traditions of the "Bon-Odori" festival is a rather new concept. Nakaga-



Photo by Stephen Ho

▲ The Bon-Odori dance celebration at Nikkei Place.

nese culture. Lemire reveals that the Nikkei Matsuri Festival encompasses the meaning of the word and aims to provide an authentic experience of a Japanese festival.

Matsuri is used in a variety of contexts.

"Basically, the term is used to reference all-encompassing festivals, whether it's children activities, cultural dance, food, or an entertainment program," he says. "It is used as a kind of a blanket term that roughly translates to mean festival."

The historical origin of the word goes back hundreds of years, according to Lemire. The original "matsuri" in Japan is a ceremony when people give thanks, and pray to the ancient gods, Buddha and their ancestors.

"In Vancouver, we call it Nikkei Matsuri, [in] which Nikkei is translated to people that have connections to the Japanese community," says Lemire.

The festival welcomes anyone who is interested in learning about Japanese culture and heritage.

## Traditions celebrated at Matsuri

Another activity that Nikkei Centre provides is related to "Mikoshi."

"Mikoshi is a reference to the Shinto shrine. It's usually brought out during the time of celebration," Lemire says. "It carries the Shinto spirit [and] it's held in high regard."

Carolyn Nakagawa, education program coordinator at Nikkei Centre, elaborates more on this topic.

"Shinto [...] is indigenous to Japan. It's a really important part

wa carefully explains the traditions celebrated on this occasion to newcomers.

"Odori means Dance. Bon means the summer holiday Obon in Japan, which is a very important holiday in Japan," explains Nakagawa. "It's a holiday to honour our ancestors."

The festival happens depending on the lunar calendar new year. It usually happens around July/August in Japan, according to the education program coordinator.

"And it's a huge event because Japanese people all go back to their home villages where their families are from to greet the souls of their ancestors," she adds.

She boils down the term to basically dancing to celebrate that one is alive today because their ancestors all came together to bring them here.

Another essential item in any matsuri is the Happi coat. Nagakawa describes the robe as a jacket bearing a resemblance to the Kimono. The coat allows one to perform physical activities more easily with freedom of body movements.

"[...] They are worn in Matsuri, [...] by Taiko drummers especially as well as other kinds of groups. For example, in Japan, sometimes firefighters will wear them," she says. "And they have some kind of emblem to show you what group you're part of when you wear a Happi coat."

Nikkei Centre and Nikkei Matsuri invite everyone to learn more about the wonders of Japanese culture. ✉

For more information, visit [www.nikkeimatsuri.nikkeiplace.org](http://www.nikkeimatsuri.nikkeiplace.org).

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# All about that immigrant bass

by FERNANDA FRIEDRICH

**Desi Sub Culture performs immigrant bass music. Their South Asian fusion sound mixes Punjabi folk songs with global beats.**

The name 'Desi Sub Culture' is an homage to the Asian Underground in 1990s UK. It is also related to the fact that they are "Desi's doing stuff off the beaten path" as Sanjay Seran, the vocalist of the band, states.

Seran, electronics/tabla player Tarun Nayar and the dhol/dholak player Ravi Binning have known each other for over 13 years. Sanjay, born and raised in Richmond, is proud to lead the band on its presentation on Richmond World Festival, on August 31st.

"All three of us were born in Canada to families that emigrated here in the 1970s. We grew up in immigrant households. The biggest challenge growing up and into my early adult life was identity. Trying to find out how we fit in, not only in society but also in our own heads," says Seran.

While Binning was born in Montreal, Nayar was born in Richmond like Seran. The Canadian trio have known each other for over a decade. They decided to form Desi Sub Culture as a side project from their other band, Delhi 2 Dublin. Seran, Binning and Nayar are currently touring North America. The group will be taking a small



▲ Desi Sub Culture.

break from Delhi 2 Dublin to perform at the Richmond World Festival and other two events in Canada.

#### Owning their roots

Seran, Binning and Nayar have just visited the American Midwest on tour. As the band is fairly outspoken about immigration, they believe in creating a new narrative and representing more stories that are not frequently told.

"What is happening in the world is definitely affecting us

personally. It influences everything we do and feel, including everything we are creating," says Seran.

Understanding their roots was a big part of their breakthrough as artists. Nowadays, the Canadian trio prides itself on how they are able to celebrate their backgrounds as part of who they are and as a part of their craft.

"Getting over the embarrassment of being different was a huge challenge. I'm so happy to be past that point in my life. Be-

ing a Punjabi is so awesome. I want the world to see how awesome my culture is. It is very important for me to be able to showcase that," Seran says proudly.

Growing up between worlds inspired Desi Sub Culture to search for a unique sound, which reflected their own experience as the second generation of immigrants.

"The word immigrant alone generally has a negative connotation. Being from an immigrant family is rarely considered cool,

that's why we need a new narrative because it actually is cool," Seran explains.

#### Electronic Dance Music

The EDM movement is continuing to grow all over the globe. Desi Sub Culture decided to take on a worldwide trend and incorporate folk songs, trap beats and tabla rhythms to build their own take on EDM.

"I can imagine more integration with technology and develop this to become much more of a sensory experience as well as it continuing to be a sweaty dance release," says Seran. "It is cool that we can really be experimental with this project as it is more of an art piece for the three of us rather than the traditional band that we are trying to get off the ground so that we can hit the road and tour."

Seran believes their own take resonates a lifetime of experience as kids of immigrants. Connecting people through bass is their motto.

"We are creating the people's music. The people will relate to our sound. It will speak to them," he says.

While the trio is only two years old, Seran, Binning and Nayar hold big plans for the band in addition to the September tour.

"We are set to start releasing some singles in the near future followed by an EP," says Seran. ☞

For more information, visit [www.desisubculture.com](http://www.desisubculture.com).

THE ROGUE FOLK CLUB PRESENTS

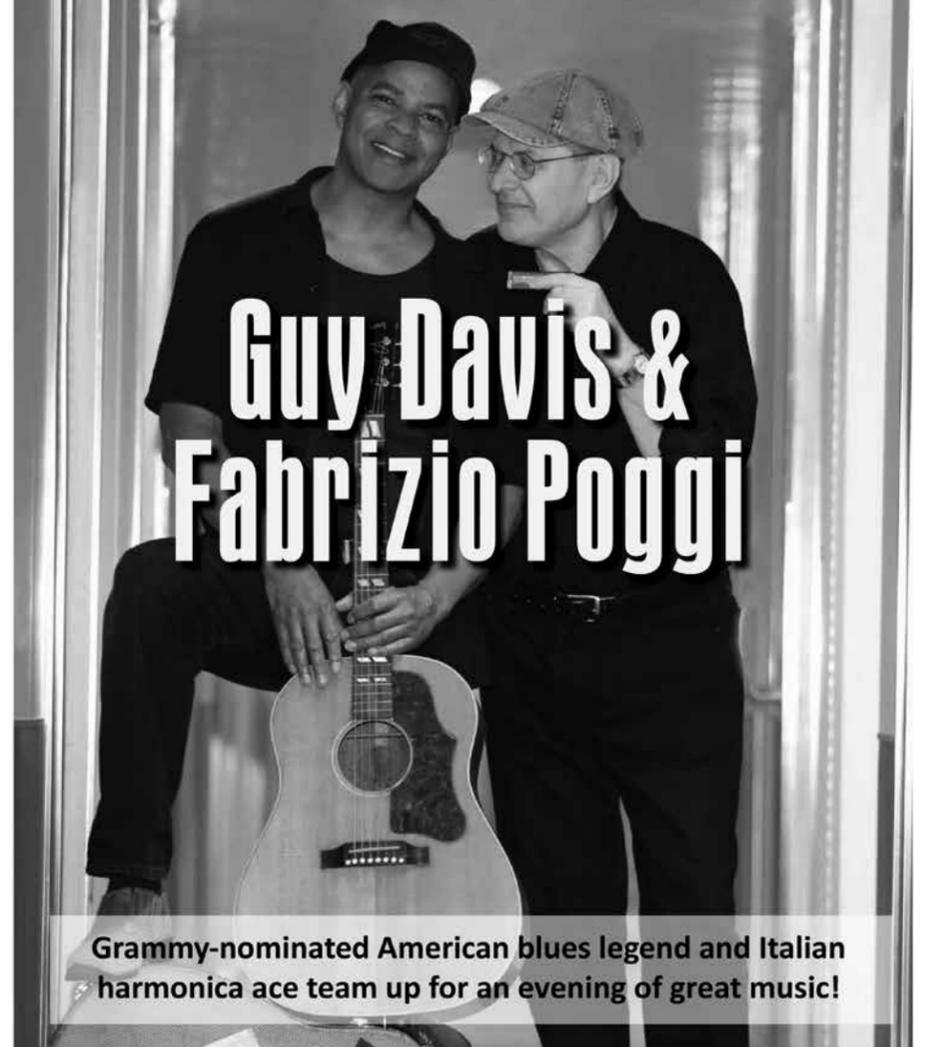


## FORTUNATE ONES

Their debut album was nominated for a Juno, garnered two #1 singles on CBC Radio 2's Top 20, won the 2016 Rising Star ECMA, the 2015 Vocal Group Canadian Folk Music Award, and four 2015 Music Newfoundland and Labrador Awards. Their second album was just released.

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# The odyssey of a djembefola

by CURTIS SEUFERT

**Master drummer Bolokada Condé will be hosting a series of djembe workshops at the Britannia Community Centre and CBC's Studio 700 from September 6–9.**

In addition to being one of the most highly-regarded djembefolas, Condé has also been celebrated as one of the most important teachers of West African drumming, having taught

me to grow up like that, so I've always loved djembe," says Condé. "My village's people told my family, "we want Bolokada to play djembe for us because he has a very special energy. We want Bolokada to be a djembefola."

Despite the encouragement, Condé notes how his father was initially concerned: although he was interested in his success, the prospect of Condé becoming a professional djembefola would mean time away from working at home.

national level for the national ballet company of Guinea – Les Percussions de Guinée – as well as teaching West African drumming at multiple universities across the United States, including teaching other djembe teachers across the country. For Condé, one of the most rewarding experiences of his career has been to share his love for djembe with others.

"So I grew up, and I know now how teaching is very important, and now I see the importance of making everybody happy," says Condé. "You make the community strong, you bring people together. It makes people smile, and brings good energy to people."

Condé says that a good teacher can introduce a number of key concepts in a beginner's djembe course – such as solo and accompaniment rhythms and phrases, and creating different tones and sounds with the drum – but notes that true mastery of the djembe can take decades. Despite appearing simple on the surface, one can spend an entire lifetime studying and performing djembe.

But the master drummer says that getting started is much simpler. For Condé, all it takes is a love for djembe, and a passion that is sure to grow as one discovers the sound and energy of the drum.

"The first important part of playing and learning djembe is that you have to love it. If you love it, that love is gonna push you along, and push you to find a teacher to teach you," says Condé. "That love is gonna push you to a workshop to learn the rhythm and to play it together with your friends. That same love is going to push you to make smiling easy." ✍

For more information on Condé and the event, visit [www.drumming.ca](http://www.drumming.ca)



▲ Master drummer Bolokada Condé.

“ You make the community strong, you bring people together. It makes people smile, and brings good energy to people.

*Bolokada Condé, djembefola*

at universities throughout the United States, as well as having led workshops for other djembe teachers.

#### Growth and passion

Bolokada Condé is one of the world's most celebrated djembefolas (djembe players). Having performed and taught internationally for decades, he's been working towards sharing his experience, knowledge, and love of West African drumming with the rest of the world.

But while Condé's expertise seems only natural now, he credits much of his opportunity to study and practise the djembe to his parents, as well as his native community of Moroya, Guinea.

"I've always loved this kind of drumming since I was a little boy. My mom would help and encourage me, because she wanted me to be a fola. She would show me other drummers and try to teach

But Condé says that his community was committed to his growth as a djembefola. Many of the people in his village stepped forward to volunteer to work for his father in his stead, so that he could focus on mastering his craft.

"My dad let me play for them, and many of my village's people, women and men, worked with my dad for five years, because I played djembe for them," says Condé.

#### Sound and energy

From then on, Condé's career as a professional djembefola began to take shape. While touring other smaller villages in Guinea, the mayor of Kissidougou – a larger city in Guinea – came across Condé and was taken aback by his talent. He enlisted him to come and perform on a larger scale in the big city.

Since his big break, Condé has gone on to perform at an inter-



Photo courtesy of Natasha Ignjatovic

► "Serbian Days" from page 2

"We were looking for adventure. But we were also looking for a country that gave us opportunity," says Ignjatovic. "We wanted to go somewhere where we could find our life."

#### Ignjatovic keeps up Serbian traditions.

"I used to dance and I still dance," she says. "I'm part of the veterans group. There's 40 members, and we practise two or three times a week. We perform at festivals. I'll be performing on Saturday." ✍

For more information, please visit [www.serbianday.com](http://www.serbianday.com).

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Pacifica Singers is a select vocal ensemble which exists as part of the Vancouver Chamber Choir organization. The ensemble performs with Jon Washburn and the Vancouver Chamber Choir each season and also presents independent concerts with its own director, Fiona Blackburn.

We are looking for experienced choral singers - tenors and basses, in particular - to join this advanced level ensemble. Prospective singers should have extensive choral experience and a high level of sight-reading ability.



Repertoire ranges from the Renaissance to 21st century works. Opportunities this season include performing Handel's *Messiah* this December, and Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, on Good Friday, with the professional musicians of the Vancouver Chamber Choir and Orchestra at the Orpheum. The 2018 - 2019 season will also celebrate Maestro Jon Washburn's final year as Artistic Director of the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

### AUDITION FOR PACIFICA SINGERS



All voices (SATB) are invited to audition  
Sunday, September 16

Please contact Fiona for an appointment  
at [fiona@fionablackburn.com](mailto:fiona@fionablackburn.com)

### ABOUT PACIFICA SINGERS

Pacifica Singers provides an ideal performance venue for experienced and motivated choral singers whose goal is to make music at a very high level. By providing direct exposure to the world of professional music making, it is an experience of great value for singers intending to make a career in music.

Current members live throughout the metro region, with many serving as conductors, music educators, and/or professional singers and players in their communities.

Weekly rehearsals are held on Thursdays from September to May, with occasional weekend events/concerts and additional dress rehearsals as required.

For more information, please email the director, Fiona Blackburn at [fiona@fionablackburn.com](mailto:fiona@fionablackburn.com). If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, please email [pacificasingers@vancouverchamberchoir.com](mailto:pacificasingers@vancouverchamberchoir.com) to ensure your message is received.

Please forward to any singers who may be interested

Pacifica Singers is an Associate Choir of the Vancouver Chamber Choir



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# Cultural Calendar

August 28–September 11, 2018

by SIMON YEE

Welcome back everyone! I hope everyone had an amazing summer break full of sunshine, good times and memories. Even though fall is around the corner, there's still plenty of summer left to enjoy. Take your friends and family to see the many cultural events and festivals in the twilight of summer. See you in Autumn!

\*\*\*

**Tom Hsu:**  
**Here, under our tongue**  
Aug. 9–Sept. 22  
Burrard Arts Foundation,  
Vancouver  
[www.burrardarts.org](http://www.burrardarts.org)

Photo artist Tom Hsu's *Here, under our tongue*, currently on display at the Burrard Arts Foundation, takes care in lingering over remnants. Taking photography's signification as an index, Hsu's exhibition tunnels recursively into the frame of the camera to carefully hold and examine that which is left over after the event. Plying gestures, situations that exceed explanation and other bizarre refuse are the subjects of his work. He will give an artist talk at 2 p.m. on Sept. 8. Check out the foundation's website for more information.

\*\*\*

**Vancouver Latin American Festival**  
Aug. 23–Sept. 2  
Various venues  
[www.vlaff.org](http://www.vlaff.org)

The Vancouver Latin American Film Festival provides a forum for the promotion and exhibition of Latin American cinema in Vancouver. This 11-day annual festival encourages dialogue among cultures and explores and celebrates the art of contemporary Latin American and Latin-Canadian filmmaking. The festival will feature films from Black, queer Latinx and Indigenous filmmakers from the Latin American region. Special attention will be paid to the Andean region, with films focusing on the Peruvian



▲ Scene of the Andes of Peru from the film *Retablo*.



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mountains, Colombian textiles and Bolivian prisons. For a complete list of shows, please visit their website.

\*\*\*

**Richmond World Festival**  
Aug. 31–Sept. 1  
Minoru Park & Richmond Cultural Centre Plaza, Richmond  
[www.richmondworldfestival.com](http://www.richmondworldfestival.com)

The Richmond World Festival returns to Minoru Park for the fourth time, showcasing the city's cultural diversity through food, music, sport and art. Featuring performances from over 90 musicians, culinary cook-offs, media film and art galas, and sporting exhibitions, there will be something for everyone of all ages. Admission is free! For a complete listing of performers and events, please check out their website.

\*\*\*

**Kerrisdale Antiques Fair**  
Sept. 1–2  
Kerrisdale Cyclone Taylor Arena, Vancouver  
[www.21cpromotions.com/kerrisdale/index.html](http://www.21cpromotions.com/kerrisdale/index.html)

Vancouver's favourite antiques fair, now in its 17th year, held in the charming and historic neighbourhood of Kerrisdale, features over 65 specialty vendors with over 250 tables of antique, vintage and retro decor and collectibles under one roof – a style for every collector, from folk to formal! Eagerly anticipated by both vendors and patrons, expect to find antique & estate jewelry, mid-century Modernist decor, French country & formal furnishings and much more at this Labour Day weekend event.

\*\*\*

**TaiwanFest 2018:**  
**Fête with the Philippines**  
Sept. 1–3  
Vancouver Art Gallery Plaza  
[www.taiwanfest.ca](http://www.taiwanfest.ca)

TAIWANfest is a family-friendly event that showcases the best of Taiwanese and Asian cultural arts, food and lifestyle and it's happening on Sept. 1–3 at the Vancouver Art Gallery Plaza. This year's theme honours the Philippines and the cultural linkages between the Indigenous peoples of the two Asian island nations. There will be plenty of performances, exhibitions and cuisine to experience at the festival. Please visit the festival's website for a complete schedule.

\*\*\*

**Vancouver Fringe Festival**  
Sept. 6–16  
Various venues  
[www.vancouverfringe.com](http://www.vancouverfringe.com)

One of Vancouver's most beloved festivals returns to Granville Island to delight, entertain and inspire independent theatre goers of all ages. Featuring 700 perfor-

mances by over 90 artists over 11 days, the festival will showcase everything from the humorous to the intellectual, the tear-jerking to the naughty – there's something for everyone. There will also be a celebratory opening party and a closing Fringe Awards Night honouring the best of the festival. For more information, please visit their website.

\*\*\*

**Skookum Festival**  
Sept. 7–9  
Stanley Park, Vancouver  
[www.skookumfestival.com](http://www.skookumfestival.com)

Framed by the shoreline forests of Stanley Park, the Skookum Festival features an eclectic mix of contemporary music, food and art. Alongside a music lineup of legends and new favourites, discover live art and multimedia installations by local artists, complemented by a taste-tripping selection of culinary experiences – from cool food trucks to remarkable dishes from some of Vancouver's most notable chefs and restaurateurs. Please check out the festival's website for more information.

\*\*\*

**Festival of Recorded Movement**  
Sept. 8–15  
SFU Woodward's, Vancouver  
[www.f-o-r-m.ca](http://www.f-o-r-m.ca)

The third Festival of Recorded Movement is happening Sept. 8 to 15 at SFU Woodward's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts and was created as a platform for movers and filmmakers to share and create short films that revolve around the body in motion. F-O-R-M presents films that deliver strong

imagery of the human body in motion, exploring the limitlessness of our physical capacity both creatively and athletically, and offering a sense of choreographic investigation between camera and movement, regardless of form. For a complete schedule of events, please check out the festival's website.

\*\*\*

**Ho Rui An:**  
**Sun, Sweat, Skirt, Fan**  
Sept. 8–29  
Centre A, Vancouver  
[www.centrea.org](http://www.centrea.org)

Ho Rui An is an artist and writer working in the intersections of contemporary art, cinema, performance and theory. He writes, talks and thinks around images, with an interest in investigating their emergence, transmission and disappearance within contexts of globalism and governance. Centre A will be hosting a curated exhibition of his work in September. An opening reception will take place at 7 p.m. on Sept. 7. Please check out Centre A's website for more details.

\*\*\*

**Women's Work: Reflections on the History of Women in Textile Exhibition**  
Sept. 12–Dec. 30  
Il Centro Italian Cultural Centre, Vancouver  
[www.italianculturalcentre.ca](http://www.italianculturalcentre.ca)

The Italian Cultural Centre Museum will be hosting the exhibition, *Women's Work: Reflections on the History of Women in Textile*, from Sept. 12 to Dec. 30. This exhibition examines the role of women throughout history. In pursuit of this concept, Curator Angela Clarke selected 16 significant Ital-



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ian works of art that either deal with themes pertaining to women or were created by women. Various works emphasize women's historic roles as mystic and spiritual teachers, their capacity to rule behind the throne and the historic institution of marriage and women's traditional role within it. Opening night will be at 7 p.m. on Sept. 12.

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