PuSh festival

Thoughts on the cards

by MATTHEW FRASER

Selina Thompson’s exhibit, entitled Race Cards, will be an interactive and thought-provoking journey considering race, self-image and the way societies look at others and their ideals. The Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre’s PuSh festival will display the exhibit from Jan. 23 to Feb. 2.

Thompson intends to inspire, provoke and question with Race Cards. Focusing on a series of 1,000 questions written one by one, the artist seeks to interrogate one’s views about oneself and those they are surrounded by. The ideas displayed on the cards do not shy away from the tough conundrums that society faces in an increasingly multicultural world.

Attendees should expect to see cards like #220 that say, “Who is more problematic; the artist or myself?” Each card ushers the reader to view themselves and their surroundings and respond to questions that they may have never needed to face, both within the venue and after they return home.

While some cards are introspective and address culture broodingly from a separate position, others look directly at the wider problem and demand an answer. For example, card #307 says, “Why do people assume that racism will passively die out if we just wait long enough?” Thompson is clear that she is inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, however, she does not mean to appropriate their work.

“Like many black people of my generation, the work, courage and integrity of Black Lives Matter engendered a profound shift in how I saw myself, my country, [how I] saw international solidarity [and] saw the picture of universal unity however, she does not mean to appropriate their work. Only a few places can fuse the two, and Vancouver is one of those few.

Vancouver also has the great honour of being tied for first place with Toronto as the most diverse city in Canada (according to a 2011 study by the National Household Survey). There are only a handful of places on this earth where you took two random people off the street at any given moment that the chances are neither of them will come from the same ethnic background – it is only too easy to imagine that here in Vancouver.

Vancouver has made itself the picture of universal unity over the years, boasting proud members of many diverse religions (Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Christians and more) with ample representation of any culture’s cuisine (the real question in Vancouver’s food scene is where CAN’T you find sushi?) But, with this great pride and badge of cultural diversity comes the responsibility of maintaining freedom, respect and individual cohesiveness; this responsibility is the test that puts the fears of xenophobia and the horrors of ostracization on full display.

Many residents of other cities (and even whole countries) struggle under the fear of losing their own identity in the rush of new faces; it is a fear that has galvanized neighbourhoods the world over and
Lunar New Year

Year of the Pig and the Pig Heroes

by RAMAN KANG

“A lot of people take art too seriously, they think that it belongs to people with certain skills or status, but art is just about life,” says Taiwanese artist, Yen-Chun Lu, with the help of translator Charlie Wu.

Lu is the artistic expression behind LunarFest, a contemporary Asian arts and culture festival celebrating its 11th season.

The pig heroes

To celebrate the Year of the Pig, Lu created 12 ‘pig heroes’ that represent different nations, noting that the inspiration came to her from her childhood wonderment with wild boars – the village she grew up in was close to a mountain where many wild boars lived. Her parents warned her to stay away from the animals, saying they were aggressive.

While many people kept their distance from the animals, Lu was fascinated by them. For Lu, the wild boars were amazing creatures to be around and she wanted to showcase that to the audience in her design for LunarFest 2019. “I like to explore different cultures,” explains Lu.

She designed the 12 pig heroes as wild boars and chose 12 nations she felt had distinct styles of clothing to represent them. “I wanted to find a way to represent each culture, so I researched countries with very distinct fashions,” says Lu.

and feels her artistic nature is something no one can ever take away. Lu says in Taiwan, it’s become a tradition to be given lanterns to celebrate the Lunar New Year, but she wants the event to be more than a celebration. “Can we think about the celebration beyond just the fun? Can we connect our passion for certain causes and charitable organizations to the celebration?”

She thought if she could get these wild boars to participate in heroic feats, then people and causes can connect. The pig heroes will all have a QR code on the back, so festival goers can scan them and receive instructions on performing a random act of kindness.

Communicating through art

Lu says she’s never really defined herself as an artist. Instead, she sees herself as a creator and communicator, her work as a form of expression; a way to communicate with people.

Lu is also inspired by nature even the paper she draws on is recycled, as her desire to help with social causes ties in with her work. “If there is an organization I think I can help, I’ll use that as inspiration to create my work,” she says.

Lu was invited to share her work with LunarFest back in 2016 for the Year of Monkey when she was recommended by one of the Taiwanese paper craft masters she had the pleasure of working with for many years.

“I learned about the event and the purpose, and it worked well with my ideology and beliefs,” she says.

Lu has been working with LunarFest ever since. For more information about the event, visit www.lunarfest.org.

Years from now, this project will be a way to show that LunarFest is more than a festival to help philanthropic organizations, it is just about life,” says Taiwanese activist, RaMan KanG.
The fruit fly, those tiny winged insects that clustered and circulate over fruit bowls with ripening fruit, deserve a lot more respect. Local geneticists are using fruit flies to understand why certain genetic mutations cause tumors, helping to study therapies that might be able to counteract the cell development of cancer.

“The use of fruit flies in research was discovered over 100 years ago by scientists who were looking for an animal they could study in the lab that was cheap to reproduce, explains Dr. Esther Verheyen, professor for the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at Simon Fraser University. She is also a recent recipient of The Grant and Mozes Award for Excellence in Genetics, recognized for her contributions to genetics research in Canada.

Dr. Verheyen is holding a discussion on what fruit flies taught us about cancer at Simon Fraser University’s Café Scientifique on Friday, Jan. 25, 2019. She’s interested in sharing how genetics research can positively affect human health.

“All of us think of our genetics, the one form or another,” says Dr. Verheyen. “If people can learn more about how genetics work, and how we are similar across species, then we can all learn valuable things from something as pesky as a little fruit fly.”

Why fruit flies?
It turns out fruit flies and humans have a similar makeup in their cells and genes, which allows scientists to use these flies to study cell structure and disease. Dr. Verheyen is working with a team of researchers to understand how cells grow to form organs and tissues, and how abnormalities in cell production can cause diseases like cancer.

Dr. Verheyen explains that proteins called Wnts (pronounced Wints), are found in a range of organisms, including human body, which is even more similar across species. Abnormal levels of Wnts pathway can be altered from a fruit fly to see if the proteins are removed from a fly and circulate over fruit bowls with ripening fruit, the cell may understand why certain genetic mutations cause tumors, helping to study therapies that might be able to counteract the cell development of cancer.

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An artist in each of us

by VINH NGUYEN

When it comes to making art, each artist chooses their own styles, methods and mediums through which they can express their ideas. For Dawn Livera, a Vancouver-based artist, working with good old paper and books and other forms of media are her favorite mediums. Livera is happy to share her art-making secrets Feb. 1 at Place des Art in her upcoming art workshop pARTy@PdA: Books with Burgundy.

For her workshop, Livera is looking forward to making some artist books that could be used as journals, sketchbooks or diaries. “This is the first time I’ll be doing an adult evening event at Place des Arts,” she says. “I’m really looking forward to it.”

When it comes to her passion for making art books, Livera fondly recalls her memories in 2015 when she made a series of 52 small art books with scraps and art supplies she had in her house. Students loved her art creations, which motivated the artist. “I use many of these books as examples in my art classes, and students often ask how to make them,” she says.

Livera is an artist who mainly works with textile and mixed media. She was born in Sri Lanka and before calling Canada her home, lived in the UK for a few years.

Having been interested with art at a small age, Livera decided to pursue her dreams in an unconventional career path. “I’ve always been involved in making art,” she says. “I remember that I started drawing things when I was a young child and I never stopped. It is something that I love to do.”

During the course of hosting many different art workshops, Livera still remembers the interesting moments of her art workshop vividly. “I had one student who was very nervous on the first day of class,” she says. “I found several pieces of paper with partially drawn circles that she had thrown away because she didn’t think they were good enough.”

The art teacher soon found a way to solve the problem. “By the last day of class, she was enthusiastically throwing paint at the page and then turning her random splotches into the most wonderful images of cats and people and all sorts of things,” she says. “She was just having so much fun.”

Art is for everyone

Being both an artist and a teacher in her art workshop, Livera emphasizes her care for her students and their enjoyment for making art. “[The student’s confidence improvement] made me feel very happy. I talked to her about how different she seemed and she realized how much her perspective had changed,” she says. “I hope she was able to take that confidence into other parts of her life.”

Livera’s philosophy of teaching is that everyone is welcome to enjoy and create art. “I believe that we are all artists and that art is an important way for people to express themselves without worrying about making mistakes,” she says.

To Livera, art is a way for people to express themselves and enrich their lives with peaceful, benevolent activities. “I love to see people who don’t think that they are artists enjoying themselves and making art in a relaxed and non-intimidating environment,” she says.

During her workshop, Livera will demonstrate how to make books by upcycling common household items such as cardboard boxes, envelopes and junk mail to make two or three different styles of books. “I think it will be a very enjoyable and relaxed evening,” she says. “There will also be snacks and wine available for purchase.”

For more details, visit www.placedesarts.ca.

A book created in one of Dawn Livera’s workshops.

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**A special contribution to The Source, ahead of Black History month, Part 1**

**Slavery and slave trade: A forgotten dark history**

*by Maher Bahloul, PhD*

The more one travels, the more one learns. Museums all over the world like Paris, London, New York, Montreal and Victoria inform of previous humans’ histories. The story is quite different this time—

When you enter the rectangular canal. The guide explained that if you are wondering about who was responsible for the cleaning, the answer is mother nature. The harsh conditions were starvation and poor hygiene. Those who succumbed to suffocation, those who managed to withstand such conditions and survive proved worth keeping. Several slaves succumbed to suffocation, starvation and poor hygiene. The slaves’ cell had only two tiny window-like spaces for light, air, and oxygen. Once closed, all would be dark.

The source provided a research team to support with the interpretation of the historical nuances and complexities of the work. "We will elaborate on some of the things that people might not be aware of when they see the paintings," explains Wu. "There are hidden meanings in these paintings that people might not be aware of and we want to be able to tell people these stories."

*"This year, we have taken on the vision of inclusion, imagination, celebration and passion," says Wu. "One of the most important things is inclusion, so we want to make sure people who don’t necessarily celebrate [Lunar] New Year traditions in their cultures also find a way to celebrate with us."

One method of connecting with new audiences will be to showcase the creation of both emerging and established local and international fashion designers as part of the exhibition. "The exhibition is called The Galleria of Imperial Inspirations because we are talking about Castiglione’s influence and what he has inspired. Like the fashion designers of today," says Wu. "Chosen works were provided to the designers and they responded to their favourite pieces and went on to create fashion items from them."

Wu hopes that the fusion of history and heritage with contemporary design and technology will leave visitors fulfilled and able to start the new lunar year with a new perspective. "The reason the year of the pig is so important is because of piggy banks," says Wu. "We have created the theme of ‘saving the moment’ as when people pay into their piggy banks. They always have a dream or something they want to accomplish. This is what life is like: creating something you want to save and cherish, just like Emperor Qianlong’s memory of his late empress. He got Castiglione to do a painting to remember his wife and remember the moment and for that moment to continue on."

For more information about the exhibition, please visit www.lunarfest.org.
Echoes from Chechnya

by JakeMcGraw

If No One Asks is the first solo North American exhibition for Chechen artist Aslan Gaisumov. Though the specific history behind the work hails from across the globe, Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG) curator Kimberly Phillips feels the issues it wrestles with can resonate just as strongly in Vancouver.

On display at the CAG now until March 24, 2019, If No One Asks consists of two pieces. The first is Memories of a War, a single-channel video that Phillips believes he is able to explore the heir and continuation of that message is powerful, and the issues and ideas behind it for wanting to think about the history and concepts that Gaisumov touches on are deeply personal and complex, but Phillips believes he is able to explore them with a deft and thought-provoking touch.

“People of No Consequence,” by Aslan Gaisumov, from Memories of a War.

“I think one of Aslan’s strengths is the incredible clarity in his work,” says Phillips. “The video is very clear, very matter of fact. The camera doesn’t move, it’s not flashy. The strength of his work is the tension of this clarity along with the utter opacity and the difficulty of actually bringing into language the atrocities these people endured.”

The history and concepts that Gaisumov touches on are deeply personal and complex, but Phillips believes he is able to explore them with a deft and thought-provoking touch.

Phillips has followed Gaisumov’s work for a number of years, and last summer she saw two of his works exhibited at the Liverpool Biennial in the UK. That display to the CAG’s mandate of representing and realizing the journey that this work has traveled along an old slavers’ route in a cargo ship, making key stops in Ghana and Jamaica, hearing and realizing the journey that would ultimately end a countless number of lives. In many ways, she believes Race Cards is both the heir and continuation of that journey and the work it birthed.

Confrontation and transformation

Race Cards is an entryway – or for some, a stop – along the path of those examining themselves in Western culture today. It is bold, rare to all that come to see it to grow past lines circumscribed by their personal history and the things unseen.

“The response to this work suggests to me that many people en ter that installation compliant and leave feeling challenged. It was work made by someone who moves in those spaces, to challenge people that move in those spaces,” Thompson says.

“There are a lot of artists who work with difficult, traumatic works from the past, but it can be easy to say too much, or be overly melodramatic, and Aslan refuses to do that. His work is very measured, and quiet in a sense, but there’s so much there that is both invisible and visible at the same time.”

For more information, please visit www.contemporaryartgallery.ca.
Christopher Ho – the otherworldly musician

by Xi Chen

Some singers start early in life. Christopher Ho picked up his first guitar at age 15, managed to write a song the day after, and ever since has found his calling.

After a two-year long hiatus, and with ten albums and hundreds of songs in his repertoire, Ho is ready to get back into the limelight and perform Jan. 31 at Guilt & Co.

A touch of magic

“I was a pretty quiet kid,” says Ho. “Always kind of like a dreamer. I almost need to write music to get things out in the open. The term for me is catharsis, to release the emotions and that’s why I was so drawn to it.”

The artist started making CDs in his dorm room while doing his BA in English at the University of Victoria, and has built a faithful fan base over the years. Also dabbling in writing poems and fictions, Ho says he is mostly influenced by the genre of magical realism.

With a music style that is hard to categorise and is in between folk, pop and a bit of rock, Ho’s own creative process also seems to have a touch of magic. “It would turn off all noises, find a quiet place, usually by a window where I can look out to, and start making up a melody. It will be a flow state, for me that is the best way to write music, some of my songs are written in the flow state,” he says.

Resonating with the artist, the lyrics of ‘no connection’ express his sentiment on how modern society with all its technological advancements simultaneously connects and isolates people.

“But it’s drawn together life and the pressure of the movement that we’re muted by, we’re searching for the words as if they’re fireflies, lighting up the road ahead,” sings Ho, in ‘no connection’.

As a singer/songwriter, you are looking into the deeper layers of the shadows; I really feel the weight on my shoulder. It is like going into a well to search for this inspiration and, looking back up to give that song to other people, and getting stuck there and start ing to deal with depression,” Ho says.

After achieving some recognition in his music career as a result of winning a CBC radio/Greens Couch Production contest out of 30000 talents in 2012, the artist suffered a burnout from extended touring across the country and took a hiatus from 2013 to 2016.

“Music originally was helping me because I was feeling at home. As soon as I got out there and showed it to the world, it was the opposite of what I had in mind of it and that triggered the depression. How much courage it took to come back and make music and to realise how vulnerable it was making me feel until it all blew up in my face,” says Ho.

He said he has since learnt to go about things in a more mindful way and he’s found himself too much.

“Doing art for art’s sake is what keener poetic, and I am going to be true to myself, to write and present something as genuine as possible,” Ho says.

The hiatus resulted in a new album due this spring, released in late 2017, with a more hopeful tone.

“Sometimes you connect with people on a deeper level when it is more about quality. I might have only reached this many people but for the people I did reach, it makes an impact on them and it means the world to me,” says Ho.

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

To listen to his music, please go to www.chrihomic.com.bandcamp.com.

Derek Gripper

Music as an ongoing, collective process

By Curtis Seuert

Derek Gripper, Cape Town guitarist, will share his version of Classical and West African griot music at St. James Hall in Kitsilano on Jan. 26, 2019. Challenging the categories of homage and originality, the composer-performer interprets and transforms the works of Sebastian Bach and revered Malian kora player Toumani Diabaté, in hopes to reveal the historical and communal nature of the creative process.

‘Between the desire to improvise like [Keith] Jarrett, the desire to play this beautiful cyclical trance music of Toumani and the desire to understand Bach and what his music could have been out side of the idea of Classical music that’s what makes me myself. And that’s what’s kind of interesting about music,’ says Gripper.

The influence of music

Gripper was surrounded by music from a young age. While neither of his parents were musicians, the Cape Town guitarist recalls a house filled with music, as members of his extended family introduced him to a variety of styles and genres.

‘On the one side of the house we had this classical musician who was playing piano [and French horn] and who had a big recorded collection of classical music. And on the other side was this guy who was playing keyboards in bands who was currently working in pop music,’ says Gripper.

‘That’s the real gift and I think that’s been a little bit of my journey, to kind of move between and try to integrate the two sides of this house. ’

While Gripper feels his music is less characterized by pop, his affinity for Western Classical music remains, along with his curiosity to seek out different worlds of music.

The artists that Gripper draws from – and whose music he’s transcribed and performed – range from Sebastian Bach to jazz pianist Keith Jarrett to Malian kora player Toumani Diabaté. By re-contextualizing their pieces, one of Gripper’s goals is to problematize the notion of musical ownership.

‘It makes absolute sense if you write down a piece of music and you say it’s your composition [...] and get a certain financial reward for that,’ says Gripper. “[But] once you exit this very kind of controlled form of music and of recording music, and you enter into something like American [or Irish] folk music or West African music, you immediately run into copyright issues.”

“Generally when I say it’s your composition, you don’t really own it less you’re finding someone who’s completely off the grid,” says Gripper. While Gripper feels it’s more correct to say it’s ‘your composition on another level.’

‘When Toumani hears me playing a transcription of his music, because I play it so differently than him, he tells me “Oh that’s your composition.” And I’ve had this happen to me so many times,” says Gripper.

‘So the idea around where your lineage orate originality on the dial differs from copyright issues.’

Having even performed with Diabaté on occasion, Gripper is celebrated by the ‘music world’ whose works he has, in Western terms, covered. He continues to challenge originality and copyright issues as we understand it, seeking to open people to the idea of creativity as a communal and ongoing process, intentional or otherwise.

‘We’re all surrounded by music from all over that everybody has something else in their ears. So it’s a doctrine,’ says Gripper. “Unless you’re finding someone who’s completely off the grid.”

For more information on the show, please visit www.roguefolk.bc.ca.
Vancouver has been growing well so far! It can be hard to heat the post-holiday blues but there are plenty of events to attend. Why not take some time to check out some of the dance and music performances, film screenings and theatre showings happening around town?

** Murder on Reserve
Jan. 19-Feb. 9
Metro Theatre Centre, Vancouver
www.metrotheatre.com

Metro Theatre Centre will be debuting the Vancouver premiere of American author Thomas Hirschhorn’s comedy-mystery Murder on Reserve on their stage from Jan. 19 to Feb. 9. Crotchety old Faulkner Seaton has been strangled while the dusty old library was open. Most puzzling of all is the fact that nobody in the place saw or heard a thing. The big city cops are called in. Their investigation reveals a mishmash of oddball suspects, a very limited set of motives and little evidence. Seaton had terrorized generations of young people and was thoroughly disliked by everyone—why was he killed in such a public place? What motive could there be for such a murder? And why didn’t the town have anywhere to get a decent cup of coffee? For tickets and showtimes, please visit the theatre’s website.

** Ninth Annual Vancouver Hot Chocolate Festival
Jan. 19-Feb. 14
Various locations around Vancouver
www.hotchocolatefest.com

The Vancouver Hot Chocolate Festival was the first city-wide festival of its kind in the world when it first launched in 2011. This January, it returns for its ninth year, bigger and better than ever, with over 200 Vancouver’s best chocolatiers, pastry shops, bakeries, cafes, gelato and ice cream makers coming together to make 74 decadent hot chocolate flavours—it has never been better before. For a complete list of participants, flavours and locations, check out the festival’s website.

** Forgotten Warriors
Jan. 24-Feb. 8
Vancouver Art Gallery
www.vancouverartgallery.org

Thornton Wilder was an American novelist and playwright whose works celebrate the connection between the commonplace and the cosmic dimensions of human experience. The Arts Club Theatre company will be presenting Wilder’s dramatic play The Matchmaker from Jan. 24 to Feb. 16. At the Stanley In- dustrial Alliance Stage, Horace Vandergelder seeks a wife, and matchmaker Dolly Gallagher Levi doesn’t need to look very far to find her! With forbidden young love and mistaken identities afoot, more than one match is sure to be made. Experience the pandemonium of this classic that embraces the unexpected in a truly modern way. Check out the Arts Club Theatre website for tickets and showtimes.

** Technologies of the Self
Jan. 27, 7 p.m.
North Vancouver District Public Library
www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/events/jan20/technologies-of-the-self.html

Philosophers’ Café is a series of informal public discussions in libraries, cafés and restaurants throughout Metro Vancouver. The cafés, which are free to everyone, have brought dialogue and discussion to thousands of people who had become interested in exploring issues from the absurd to the sublime. On Jan. 28, join moderator Evelyn Faries as she lead a discussion asking the following question: what are the processes and the technologies by which we gain knowledge to determine the way we want to be in the world?

** Copper Promises
Jan. 31-Feb. 2
Scotsman Dance Centre, Vancouver
www.thedancecentre.ca

Austalian dance artist Victoria Hunt’s spellbinding solo Copper Promises embodies the cultural and physical journey of Hinemihi—a female ancestor, but also a ceremonial meeting house connected with their own Māori cultural heritage (a carved ancestral house that was “acquired” and transported to Britain after a devastating volcanic eruption in 1886). Hunt’s mesmerizing stage presence and poteny physicality, combined with stunning lighting, set design and projection, generates a work of fierce energy and emotional power. Hinemihi’s interactions with her own, tracing themes of reconciliation with this country, and learning from the land. Copper Promises creates a world of rupture, fortitude, resilience and catharsis.

** Annie
Feb. 8, 8 p.m.
Vancouver Playhouse
www.caravanbc.com

Annie is the timeless story of an orphan who abandoned her years ago is determined to find the parents who abandoned her years ago on the doorstep of a New York City orphanage that is run by the cruel, embittered Miss Hannigan. With the help of the other girls at the orphanage, Annie escapes to the wondrous world of New York City. The irreplaceable comic strip heroine takes centre stage in one of the world’s best-loved musicals.

** MACHINENOISY: Fragile Forms
Feb. 1-3
Anvil Centre, New Westminster
www.anvilcentre.com

Dance company MACHINENOISY’s most ambitious work to date is a site-specific, 360-degree contemporary dance performance tailored specifically for New Westminster’s Anvil Centre. This adventurous piece brings together architecture, sound, visual and lighting design, and a team of extraordinary dancers from both Canada and Finland, all to create an unforgettable experience that audiences members accompany the artists as the performance moves to various locations throughout the Centre. As the piece unfolds, it evokes into an interplay between the architecture and one’s embodied perception of it. The sensorial, social and political aspects of the space intermingle to redefine the performers, the audience and the place itself. This is a revelatory dance experience—immer- sive, radical and utterly unique.

Reaching the growing FILIPINO COMMUNITY in British Columbia

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