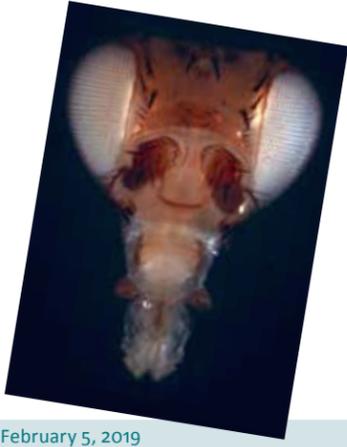


Fruit flies to
the rescue
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The Source

forum of diversity

Vol 19 No 13 | January 22–February 5, 2019

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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, "My mum does not talk about race anymore. It makes her uncomfortable, tired. Will that happen to me?" Alongside that, #660 will say, "Who is more problematic: famous racist Nigel Farage or the liberal journalist politely asking him questions?"

The choice of name for the exhibit is an additional hurdle that Thompson sees as either "literal or subtle as a brick."

"If we go with an ironic definition, then I guess it's me taking an idiom that is typically used



Photo by Manuel Vascon

to disempower people of colour and using it as a title for an artwork that ultimately stands in solidarity with them, while challenging whiteness," she says.

Still, other cards invoke a sense of contradiction and accusation by addressing the reader as the minority in question. For instance, #73 says, "I know that you are black, but why is that my fault?" Each card ushers the reader to view themselves and the wider world anew.

Cards against inner fallacies

Race Cards is an intense look at the world from a perspective

or angle that is in some manners uncommon and too often unheard. The cards seemingly invite attendees to look again at 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 our history. It is referenced by name in the show, and I owe what I have learnt from that movement a huge debt," Thompson says.

See "PuSh Festival" page 6 >

Verbatim

Every city is a world on its own

by MATTHEW FRASER

Those who travel frequently expose themselves to the nuances of each new "world" even when they exist in a shared country. From the true metropolitan cities to small, mountainside villages each place has a breath and pace independent from the rest. There is a tradeoff though, an exchange of city bustle and diversity for the countryside's ambiance and natural beauty. 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 if 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 cohesion; 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

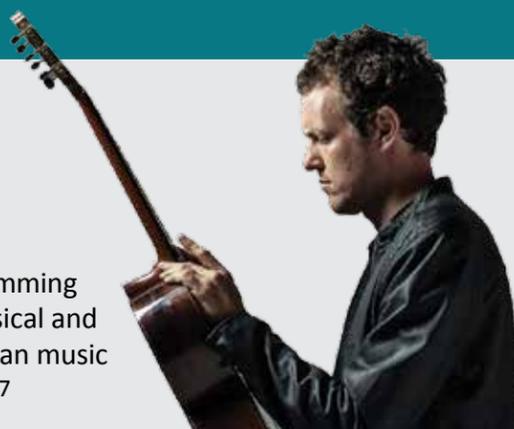
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Cultural Spotlight

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 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

The concept of ‘pig heroes’ came to her from the idea that, to her, wild boars felt like heroes.

Looking forward to the future

For Lu, the Year of the Pig isn’t about the pig at all.

“Every year, people want to know what that year means, but the process is very similar,” she says.

Every year, regardless of the zodiac sign, is a way for people

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

“If there is an organization I think I can help, I’ll use that as inspiration to create my work.”

Yen-Chun Lu, artist

to let go of negativity and bring in positivity, Lu explains.

“The essence of the new year is to give you new hope and new aspirations for the future,” she says. “People should be focused on giving themselves a new start, thinking of the positive and letting go of the negative, whatever the sign is.”

More than a celebration

Born and raised in Northern Taiwan, Lu says she took to drawing from a young age

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



▲ Yen-Chun Lu is the creative force behind the pig heroes for this year’s Lunarfest.



▲ The pig heroes, inspired by wild boars, connect celebration with social causes.

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?”

2016 for the Year of the 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 Lunar Fest ever since.

For more information about the event, visit www.lunarfest.org.

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Mailing Address
Denman Place PO Box 47020
Vancouver, BC V6G 3E1
Office
204-825 Granville St., Vancouver, BC
Telephone (604) 682-5545
Email info@thelastsource.com
www.thelastsource.com

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Mamadou Gangué
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UBC Opera presents Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*: A joyous message of love and magic set to sublime music.

Vancouver, BC - The UBC Opera Ensemble joins forces with the Vancouver Opera Orchestra under the baton of Guest Conductor Neil Varon and the stage direction of Nancy Hermiston, to present Mozart's classic *Die Zauberflöte* for four performances, January 31-February 3, 2019, onstage at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts.

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Conductor Neil Varon, who, after nearly 30 years as music director with various opera orchestras in Germany and appearances with the Tokyo and Seoul Philharmonic Orchestras (among many others), now serves as Professor of Conducting & Ensembles at the Eastman School of Music.

THE CAST: The talented singers from the UBC Opera Ensemble come from across Canada and around the world. All roles are double cast: Tamino performed by Thomas Lamont and Ian McCloy, Papageno by Brian DeLong and Rafael Laurindo, Queen of the Night by Sydney Frelick, Elizabeth Harris, and Magdalena How, Pamina by Sodam Lee and Andrea Wyllie, Monostatos by Kurt Haunsperger and Iori Lewis, Sarastro by William Constable and Liam Robertson, and Papagena by Thera Barclay and Nicole Koh.

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These opera performances are made possible through the generous assistance of the Chan Endowment Fund and The David Spencer Endowment Fund at UBC.



Pesky fruit flies save lives

by SUSAN HANCOCK

The fruit fly, those tiny winged insects that cluster and circulate over fruit bowls with ripening fruit, deserve a lot more respect. Local genetics researchers are using fruit flies to understand why certain genetic mutations cause tumors, in order 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 Moens Award for Excellence in Genetics, recognized for her contributions to genetics research in Canada.

Dr. Verheyen is hosting a discussion on what fruit flies have 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 in one form or another," says Dr. Verheyen. "If people can learn more about how genes work, and how we are quite 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 humans, mice, and fruit flies. Abnormal levels of Wnts pathways result in diseases like cancer. The gene coding for these proteins are removed from a fruit fly to see if the Wnt pathway can be altered to prevent a disorder. This knowledge may contribute to the design of future medications and therapies to prevent diseases.

"Wnts was discovered 30 years ago," says Dr. Verheyen. It's a protein in our cells that tells other cells what to do. It's able to send a message from one cell to another, telling the cell to divide and form a particular type of cell."

Dr. Verheyen uses the concept of egg fertilization to explain the cell development process. She explains how cells rapidly multiply as the fetus grows. These cells are talking to each other to build muscle, bone and brain cells among other things. When the human body is formed, the Wnts protein becomes less active, unless there is an abnormality that triggers cell divi-

sion causing tumours in the body. Having this understanding allows Dr. Verheyen and her team to explore excess cell development and how to prevent tumors.

"One cell says, I'm going to be an arm, so the next cell understands that it will become a leg," says Dr. Verheyen. "Our cells connect and send signals to one another. Wnt is one of the signals that is part of normal development, but when you're an adult and fully formed, our bodies aren't doing a lot of cell division."

Using flies to understand tumors

Fruit flies are also helping Dr. Verheyen explore the development of three-dimensional organs. Her research team is using the fruit fly eye to inves-



Photo courtesy of Dr. Esther Verheyen

▲ The abstract photo shows fly tissue with a tumor growing in it. The normal cells are stained purple and the green cells have too much Hipk and are growing like crazy.

tigate many aspects of cell signaling that initiates tissue formation and the specifications of an organ. Through their research, they understand that the Hipk protein, (pronounced Hip-kay), is required for the regulation and growth of organs, yet too much Hipk can contribute to the growth of a tumor.

"We stumbled across Hipk twelve years ago," says Dr. Verheyen. "Hipk helps the Wnt protein do its job. If you have an abnormal amount of Hipk, then when the Wnt is active, and you have excessive amounts of Hipk in your body, tumors can grow. If you combine these cell activities with other proteins acting abnormally in the body, the cell may signal further cell division and moving to other places in the body, which is even more severe."

The similarities in cell structure between fruit flies and humans allows researchers to do genetic interaction studies more rapidly than other test species.

"It just takes two weeks for us to grow a fly with a tumor," says Dr. Verheyen. "This allows us to try and reverse the formation of cells within the life cycle of the fly, which is about 10 days. That's really rapid! However, as a researcher, we also know that there are all sorts of experiments to check what you think is happening, is actually happening."

For more information, please visit www.sfu.ca/sfu-community/events.html#view/event/event_id/4078

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 art 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.



Photo courtesy of Dawn Livera

▲ A book created in one of Dawn Livera's workshops.

"[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." &

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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 BAHOUL, 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...



It was only when we reached Zanzibar, a small island off the Indian Ocean, part of the state of Tanzania, that we came across a unique monument: Slaves Monument. Unlike other simple monuments in other parts of the world like Europe, the United States, Canada, and the Middle East and North Africa regions, this one stood out for its simplicity, expressivity and its surroundings. The monument is shown in the picture to the left.

The monument was built in 1997 in the exact same place where slaves were auctioned and sold. As seen through the zoomed-in picture below, the monument reproduces a scene where 5 slaves were standing, chained to each other from around the neck, waiting to be called and auctioned.

The monument shows male and female slaves of all ages, which highlights the fact that no one got spared. Slavery reached every black person that the machine industry of the time could get hold of.

The monument was designed by Clara Sörnäs, a Swedish stone artist, during the years 1997–98.



The moment is located near the slaves' chamber, which has a den-like entrance with a small corridor leading to two spaces: one branching to the right where male slaves were kept and a second branching to the left where female and child slaves were kept. It is quite low in height and signs reading 'watch your head' were placed at each entrance as a caution. When you enter the rectangular space, you see an elevated seating space split by a small canal. The guide explained that the central canal served as the slaves' toilet. Thus, the slaves had just one space in which they would eat, sleep and eliminate. If you are wondering about who was responsible for the cleaning, the answer is mother nature. When the tide is high, the sea waves flow in and wash away the waste.

The harsh conditions were quite deliberate. The slaves' merchants are not keen on

keeping weak slaves. Only those who manage 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 following plaque stood at the entrance to the chamber:



A church and a mosque were built at the vicinity of the slave auctioning location. Our guide then showed us the place inside the church where the slaves used to exhibit their strength by standing and receiving lashes. Those who managed to withhold their pain and not show weakness were systematically sold at a high price. Those who moaned or cried were dismissed for weakness, and either sold for a cheap price or returned to the chamber. At the same location inside the church, there was a well where the infant children of slaves would be thrown in alive. Ironically, it is now used to baptize children.



Photo by Huan-Chi Hsu

LunarFest 2019

The Galleria of Imperial Inspirations

by PETRA GIFFARD

To mark the Chinese New Year, LunarFest will be holding several special events in various locations across Vancouver. The celebrations will include an exhibition showcasing Giuseppe Castiglione's impact on Chinese art.

"LunarFest is a legacy event from the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. That was the first year we collaborated with the Cultural Olympiad to showcase the Asian cultures in Vancouver and we have continued with the Lunar New Year celebrations year after year," explains Charlie Wu, Managing Director and co-curator of LunarFest 2019.

Amongst an array of installations, activities, theatre and musical performances sits *The Galleria of Imperial Inspirations* exhibition featuring reproductions of Giuseppe Castiglione's paintings. These works will feature alongside contemporary responses to his paintings that have been created by eight local and international fashion designers.

"Giuseppe Castiglione was an Italian missionary who went to China. He actually served three emperors during the Qing dynasty [1644 to 1912], the last dynasty before the current government," says Wu. "Many people do not know that some of the famous paintings that they see by Castiglione were done by an Italian, not a Chinese painter."

Wu hopes that the fusion of Italian and Chinese artistic techniques demonstrated in Castiglione's work will resonate with multicultural audiences in Metro Vancouver by appealing to those who have also moved to live and work in new surroundings.

"[Because I am] a first generation Canadian from Taiwan, Giuseppe Castiglione gives me a bit of inspiration that you can do what you do best and do it in a different culture and still have your impact," says Wu.

Collaboration and education

The curators have worked closely with National Palace Museum in Taiwan who own the original paintings that have formed the basis of the exhibition. The mu-

seum 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

“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.

Charlie Wu, managing director and co-curator of LunarFest 2019.

The show will also include an immersive virtual reality presentation in collaboration with Telus that is designed to take the viewer into a Castiglione painting to learn about life inside the Imperial Palace.

"This exhibition really gives people a different way of celebrating the new year by bringing in history and heritage to enlighten you on how an Italian painter has had such a profound impact on Chinese painting," says Wu.

Inclusive celebrations

Wu notes that in the five years of holding events at Oakridge, there have been a wide variety of visitors from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

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 it."

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."



Photo by Huan-Chi Hsu

▲ *Male couture by Taiwanese designer Ai-Ting Ko inspired by One Hundred Horses by Giuseppe Castiglione.*

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

Echoes from Chechnya

by JAKE MCGRAIL

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 War*, a single page from a found book to which Gaisumov applied black ink to redact most of the page's words. The second is *People of No Consequence*, a single-channel video that shows the gathering of 119 Chechen elders, all survivors of the 1944 Chechen and Ingush deportation forced by the Soviets. These two works were both created in 2016, but have never been shown together until now.

cemented her desire to bring his art to Vancouver.

"I felt that Aslan's work came from a different place," says Phillips, "but would resonate in very powerful ways in the set of conditions we ourselves are grappling with."

Phillips says Gaisumov fits with the CAG's mandate of bringing in work from artists all around the globe, but far from simply being a window into Chechnya and the Chechen people. The issues and ideas behind his pieces are far from foreign.

"The concerns of Aslan's work, of history and silence and the body as a witness to history, I felt like that would resonate very potently in Vancouver," says Phillips.

Measured and powerful

While some art exhibitions fill galleries with a high number of individual pieces, *If No One Asks* looks to have the same effect with just two. For Phillips, this type of presentation works just as well – if not better – than any

sit with and think about, so you don't need 25 other works to say similar things."

Phillips feels that Gaisumov's message is powerful, and doesn't need to be conveyed through words. *For People of No Consequence*, he contacted hundreds of Chechen survivors, inviting them to come to Grozny, Chechnya, to gather together. Those who appear in the video don't say anything, but they don't need to.

"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.



▲ A still of the *People of No Consequence* video, Aslan Gaisumov, 2016.

"We wanted to create an exhibition that would bring [Gaisumov's] work together in a new way," says Phillips. "To prompt a new set of questions – a new way of looking at the work – in front of a brand-new audience."

Foreign yet resonant

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 U.K. That display

larger-scale works they could have brought to the CAG.

"I'm a fan of very edited exhibitions," she says. "Instead of trying to say more with more things, you can often say a lot more with less. Work like this is very potent: it's work that deals with witnessing very difficult events in history, and brings up questions around war and displacement and trauma. I think there is so much that's already in the work that requires time to

"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 become 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.

► "PuSh Festival" from page 1

Books like *A Map to the Door of No Return* by Dionne Brand and *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* by Beverley Bryce, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe have also lent themselves to the creation of this artist as a whole and provided major impetus to one of her previous works, *Salt*.

From the UK to traversing the world

Regarding her upbringing in the UK and how it influenced her, Thompson is both candid and playful.

"That's a bit like asking me to describe what air looks like – I've always been immersed in it, so I have no idea what it's like to not be surrounded by it. I'm a fan of tea, there's that. I have the accent I have. In a thousand tiny ways, and not at all, I suppose that I think my perspective is unique

and individual because of all the things that shape me, stacked on top of each other," she says. "It's what's so exciting about art right? A thousand people could have made the works I've made and each one would be preciously unique, like a Fabergé egg. It makes me very happy."

She is also unhesitant in acknowledging her fortune and the way that has sharpened her perspective.

"To be able to travel, to have access to discourse with multiple people in multiple contexts experiencing oppression in so many different ways is a massive privilege that I, for one, am lucky enough to have. But I do not want to judge those that do not have it for wanting to think about the immediate issues of their lives before they consider the whole globe," she says.

In preparation for *Salt*, Thompson 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

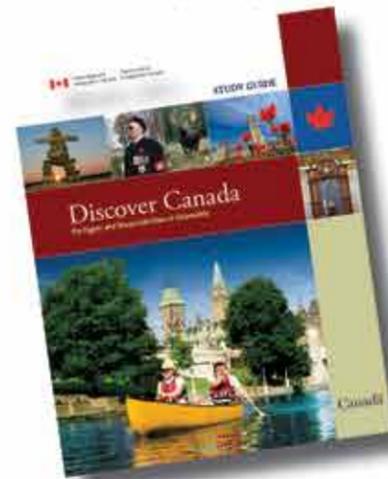
Race Cards is an entryway – or for some, a stop – along the path of those examining themselves in Western culture today. It is a bold dare to all that come to see it to grow past lines circumscribed by their personal history and the things unseen.

"The response to this work suggests to me that many people enter that installation complacent, 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. ✍

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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 performing Jan. 31 at Guilt & Co.

A touch of magic

“I was a pretty quiet kid,” says Ho. “Always kind of like a dreamer. For me, 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 is 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



▲ Christopher Ho, musician.

seems to have a touch of magic.

“I 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 best 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 the drawn together life and the pressure of the movement that we’re muted by, so we’re searching for the words as if they’re fireflies, lighting up

the road ahead,” sings Ho, in ‘no connection’.

An avid reader, Ho also finds inspiration in poems and books for his music. His album “city of dust”, full of imageries and metaphors, is an allegory to T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*.

“I like to have obscure imagery. It opens the door to different interpretations. It becomes a living work of art. You put it out there and it grows like a tree,” Ho explains with poetic flair.

The inner struggle

Sensitive by nature, the artist says he has suffered from depression most of his life and uses music as a tool to heal and connect with people.

“As a singer/songwriter, you are looking into the deeper layers of the human condition. When I write songs, I find myself going so far into the darkness or into 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 starting to deal with depression,” Ho says.

After achieving some momentum in his music career as a result of winning a CBC radio/Green Couch Production contest out of 200 some talents in 2012, the artist suffered a burnout from extended touring across the country and took a hiatus from 2014 to 2016.

“Music originally was helping me because I was recording at home. As soon as I got out there and showed it to the world, it was the lifestyle and the grind of it and that triggered the depression. How much courage it took to reveal oneself. I didn’t realise how vulnerable it was making me feel until it all blew up in my face,” Ho says.

He said he has since learnt to go about things in a more mindful way and not overextend himself too much.

“Doing art for art’s sake is what keeps me authentic. 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 *Places you’ve been*, 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.chrishomusic.bandcamp.com.

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Derek Gripper

Music as an ongoing, collective process

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Derek Gripper, Cape Town guitarist, will share his version of Western 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 community 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 outside 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 record 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. “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



▲ Derek Gripper finds inspiration in Classical and West African music.

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 something like American [or British] folk music or West African music, you immediately run into massive problems, and you realize that there’s just a massive problem with the idea of ownership.”

Originality and community

Though Gripper feels his musical message in beneficial, he

challenges audiences, especially Western audiences, to rethink music as a more collective, ongoing process rather than the ‘musical genius’ of certain individuals.

Perhaps the best example of this was when, in 2012, Gripper had finally completed a decade-long transcription and performance project of Diabaté’s kora performances. Upon learning that Gripper had successfully transformed the music to be playable on guitar, Diabaté was in disbelief: not only did he have to confirm that it was in fact just one guitar that was playing, but he also felt the music was transformed into something totally different, all the while remaining true to the original.

“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 of where you locate originality on the dial differs from culture to culture.”

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

“We’re so bombarded by music from all over that everybody has something else in their ears,” says Gripper. “Unless you’re finding someone who’s completely off the grid, everybody’s influenced.” ✂

For more information on the show, please visit www.roguefolk.bc.ca.

Cultural Calendar

January 22–February 5, 2019

by SIMON YEE

Hopefully your 2019 has been going well so far! It can be hard to beat 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 Hischak'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 investigations reveal a motley crew 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 – but why was he killed in such a public place? What motive could possibly justify such a risk? 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 29 of Vancouver's best chocolatiers, pastry shops, bakeries, cafes, gelato and ice cream makers coming together to make 74 decadent hot chocolate flavours – hotter than it has ever been before. For

a complete list of participants, flavours and locations, check out the festival's website.

Forgotten Warriors

Jan. 24, 6–8 p.m.

Surrey Public Library,
City Centre Branch
www.surreylibraries.ca/events/lets-talk-about-reconciliation

On Jan. 24, Surrey Library will screen the Indigenous-created film, *Forgotten Warriors*. The film introduces us to thousands of enlisted Indigenous Canadians who fought during the Second World War. While they fought for the freedom of others, they were denied equality in their own country. The film is a part of the *Let's Talk About Reconciliation* project aiming to strengthen relations between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities by creating a space where the two communities can interact with each other in a spirit of openness and mutual discovery. A community dialogue and light refreshments will follow the screening.

International Guitar Night

Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m.

Massey Theatre,
New Westminster
www.masseytheatre.com

Each year, International Guitar Night's founder Brian Gore invites a new cast of guitar luminaries from around the world for special concert tours of North America highlighting the diversity of the acoustic guitar. For the night's 19th year of touring, Gore has assembled another incredible, dynamic quartet: guest host Luca Stricagnoli, Italy's explosive contemporary showman, returns by popular demand, joined by two of France's acclaimed young prodigies, Swing guitarist Antoine Boyer and Flamenco guitarist Samuelito and the ground-breaking Turkish fretless guitarist Cenk Erdogan. Please visit the Massey Theatre's website for tickets and more information.

Thornton Wilder's The Matchmaker

Jan. 24–Feb. 24

Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage,
Vancouver
www.artclub.com

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. 24 at the Stanley Industrial 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.



▲ *The Matchmaker*.

Technologies of the Self

Jan. 28, 7 p.m.

North Vancouver District Public Library, Lynn Valley Branch
www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/events/2019/01/technologies-of-self.html

Philosophers' Café is a series of informal public discussions in libraries, cafés and restaurants throughout Metro Vancouver. The cafés, which are open to everyone, have brought dialogue

and discussion to thousands of people who are interested in exploring issues from the absurd to the sublime. On Jan. 28, join moderator Reena Faris as they 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: Hinemihi Haka

Jan. 31–Feb. 2

Scotiabank Dance Centre,
Vancouver
www.thedancecentre.ca

Australian 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 potent physicality, combined with stunning lighting, sound and visual effects, generates a work of fierce energy and emotional power. Hinemihi's story is interwoven with their own, tracing themes of reconnecting with family and culture, and learning from the land. *Copper Promises* creates a world of rupture, foreboding, resilience and catharsis.

Moody Amiri

Feb. 1, 8 p.m.

Western Front, Vancouver
www.caravanbc.com

There are no borders between east and west in the eclectic music of Moody Amiri, a duo comprised of Amir Amiri (santur) and Richard Moody (viola). Inspired by the diversity and fluidity between their respective Persian and Western classical and jazz training, Amiri and Moody have created an engaging and distinctive sound fusing elements of traditional Persian music with jazz, classical, Indian and modern spiritual styles. They will be per-

forming at the Western Front on Feb. 1. Please visit Caravan BC's website for tickets and more information.

Annie

Feb. 1–16

Michael J. Fox Theatre, Burnaby
www.alignmententertainment.ca/tickets/annie-the-musical

Align Entertainment will present the family favourite musical, *Annie*, at the Michael J. Fox Theatre this February. With equal measures of pluck and positivity, little orphan Annie charms everyone's hearts despite a next-to-nothing start in 1930s New York City. She 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 irrepressible comic strip heroine takes centre stage in one of the world's best-loved musicals.

MACHiNENoiSY: Fragile Forms

Feb. 2–7

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 stunning effect. Audience members accompany the artists as the performance moves to various locations throughout the Centre. As the piece unfolds, it evolves 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. The result is a revelatory dance experience – immersive, radical and utterly unique.

► "Verbatim" from page 1

led to headlines with an equally alarming frequency.

All too often people scream "assimilation" as if homogeneity is the end to our fears and diversity the cloud that rains on us. It is a fear that exposes the worst of human habits. It is a fear that does not exist in Vancouver. It is a fear that has no meaning in a city where your boss could be white from France, a coworker Chinese born in Richmond, your

bus driver Pakistani by way of Toronto and the person standing next to you Songhees First Nations. What place does xenophobia have where immigrants work hard to meet new friends, enjoy the pleasures of city life and share their stories openly and freely? Where can ignorance hide when street signs break language barriers, and every summer is filled with cultural festivals as diverse as the countries represented in each neighborhood.

Vancouver has made itself a home for many; intolerance is not one.

I was born in Victoria BC, not far from Vancouver, a scenic drive and picturesque ferry ride away. Like Vancouver, Victoria has been blessed with mountains, greenery, the ocean and a relaxed spirit. But Victoria lacks a certain flavour, a type of character that oozes up from the streets or a style illuminated by store windows. Victoria, though close in

proximity, is far behind in diversity. It has attained both a peaceful quiet and an odd but subtle monochrome; it has earned its moniker as the "home for the newly wed and the nearly dead." The jubilant faces that don't quite blend and the cacophony of distinct languages sets Vancouver at arm's length from almost any other place on earth and with the mountains, oceans and its pocket-sized techno metropolis vibe Vancouver stands further away.

But this is not a city that sees itself as the center of the world or even the world encapsulated. Vancouver is a city that welcomes the world and offers all sorts of things to bring the world in closer. The ugliness that mars many cities cannot be seen in Vancouver, and its of use to no one that anyone is exactly the same. Freedom isn't free, but here, diversity is on the receipt. ✍



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