

Exhibition hopes to start
the process of restitution
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The Source

forum of diversity

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Verbatim

Time for radical equality

by RAFAEL ZEN

Having just arrived from Brazil in December 2019, my experience has been mostly related to minimum wage jobs and customer service. Isolated from friends, my face-to-face interactions involve employers, managers, co-workers and fellow essential workers.

If anything, a lesson has been learned after working for ten years at universities and art schools – something I now consider some kind of dysfunctional utopic bubble in the middle of a world that is set to turn people into buyers & payers, not thinkers. This ethical crisis is just as scary as the COVID pandemic.

Last week, back in a pub, a friend asked what I thought of this city so far.

When we, the immigrants, arrive in Canada, after months or maybe years of bureaucratic and emotional processes, we tend to believe the slogans: Canadian politeness, respect for diversity, very little violence, political engagement, slow living, equality. I can't anymore.

I answered, yes, BC is safer than most communities I know. People are polite (kind of). Diversity is respected (in most cases and for certain intersectionalities, at least). People try to be politically engaged (mostly online, but that also counts). There is a sense of slow living (that seems more like a lifestyle rather than a political practice, but still). There is some equality (not racial, nor gender or salary, but people are polite so they for sure try). But we are still oh-so-colonial.

My friend was confused. He believed Vancouver had reached a political, social and cultural standard that set it apart from the rest. He kept asking: "What do you mean?"

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Mental health issues

COVID-19's hidden wave

by XI CHEN

Some of B.C.'s psychotherapists and counsellors are reporting an uptick in client requests in the last two months as prolonged COVID-19 outbreaks and the lockdown are taking a toll on people's mental health.

who already have some symptoms, COVID exacerbated the issues," says Tajinder Sangara, a registered clinical counsellor in Vancouver.

Ed Ng, a psychologist whose clients are mainly immigrants and minorities, concurs. He says he's noticed a similar pattern in his practice with a significant increase in younger clients, such as university students, recently.

"I see more and more anxiety issues now and COVID definitely contributed to that. I am finding that the root for anxiety is that people's prior meaning for life

is no longer what they can rely on, they have to reimagine how life looks like when there is a constant threat of a disease, an unreliable economy and the social distancing from family and friends," says Ng.

Vulnerable demographics

It is common knowledge that the elderly are facing more health threats from COVID, but for those on the cusp of adulthood and careers, collateral damage from social distancing, such as vanished opportunities and dwindling social relationships,

are clearly impacting young adults' psychology in a severe way.

Based on findings by Class of COVID Canada from SFU, a project where students submitted their personal stories during the pandemic, two-thirds (67 per cent) of respondents have felt anxious and close to half (46 per cent) have felt a deep sense of loneliness. The youth indicated in their stories that the primary causes for their anxiety were the troubling state of affairs in the world, personal finances and

See "Mental Health" page 8

"Initially people were cutting down on therapy by focusing on their primary needs. However, as time went on, anxiety about COVID started to get more prevalent, particularly for people

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Cultural Spotlight



Photo by Dan Walton

Serbian culture stays strong despite cancellation of Serbian Days Vancouver

by DAN WALTON

Even though Serbian Days takes a break this summer due to COVID-19, members of the local Serbian community and everyone else are still able to experience flavours from the old country.

“Hospitality is a big part of our culture,” said Natsa Lazic of the Balkin Bakery. “Food is a big part of the festival but there is also dance, and presentations from the little children’s school, where they learn poems or songs that originated in Serbian language, all during the day. Then dinner and dancing always follows in the evening.”

Serbian Days are hosted by the Saint Sava Church. Every year since 1971, the two-day celebration has been held during the Labour Day long weekend.

“And it’s not just Serbians – other communities are also invited. Those from Greek, Italy, or

neighbouring countries always come to share their own dances or presentations,” says Lazic.

During presentations from each cultural community, Lazic points out music is one of the easiest ways to recognize artists’ origins.

“Without looking at anything, you can always recognize what region the songs came from,” she adds.

While it can be difficult to describe the nuances of a particular genre, she said trumpets and accordions are used to produce much of the music she is familiar with from the old country.

No major festivals in the year of COVID

With large gatherings off limits this summer, it is presenting a challenge for most people to express their culture through hospitality. But despite the social distancing measures in place, Lazic says business has remained steady at the Balkin Bakery.

Their family business, for the past 10 years, has been supplying the Lower Mainland with authentic southeastern European food, year-round.

“We import that flavour that makes people think of home or different lands, or place where they grew up,” she says, adding that kajmak, burek, and pitas are among the popular items. “We try to make them fresh, bake and deliver daily so that we create the most authentic flavour that we can.”

The menu at the Balkin Bakery was inspired by the recipes from Lazic’s mother, Lidija Nikolov.

Upon arriving in the Lower Mainland, they began connecting with other Serbian Canadians through the St. Sava Church and the community centre.

“We felt a need to be a part of the community and share the culture and see where the cul-

ture fits in,” says Lazic. “It was a nice feeling to feel more comfortable.”

Familiar tastes from the Balkans

Despite connecting with other Serbian immigrants in Vancouver, it felt like some of the authentic tastes of Serbian cuisine were missing in the area; but it wasn’t before Nikolov recognized the need for the Balkan Bakery.

“When my mother knew she wanted to make a business out of baking, she perfected her recipes, and made sure that portions were standardized so that the product is consistent and unique,” says Lazic.

“Cooking, trying out new recipes, it was something that came very natural to her: the food we make is very typical and common in Serbia.”

Pastries from the Balkan Bakery mostly stay true to Serbian traditions, and they make use of imported ingredients to authentically capture the tastes of home. However, their food does come with a hint of Canadian influence.

“We like to use a lot of cheese,” says Lazic. “I won’t give out the secret but my mom made sure she picks a couple of different local cheeses and mixes them into a perfect fill for her pastries.”

While many Canadians enjoy the tastes of Serbia, Lazic says their business is primarily supported by immigrants from the Balkans.

Despite the unfortunate circumstances preventing Serbian Days from happening this summer, members of the local Serbian community are still able to connect in person through St. Sava Church, which has been holding regular services since the end of June, and is open daily. ✉

For a taste of the Balkans, please visit www.nikolovbalkanbakery.wixsite.com.



Photo by Dan Walton

▲ Lidija Nikolov, owner of Balkin Bakery.



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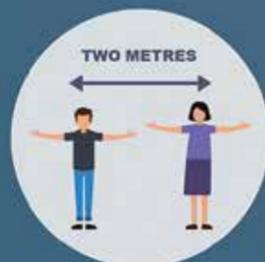
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Diversity on the decline in social circles of immigrant youth

by HARRY JING

New research shows social circles of visible minority youth grow less diverse over time. Sean Lauer of the UBC Department of Sociology and Miu Chung Yan of the UBC School of Social Work published their findings on the social circles of minority youth in the Ethnic and Racial Studies journal.

The study analyzed data from second-generation immigrant youth under the age of 24, aiming to discover trends in the ethnic composition of their social circles over time.

Results show that the social circles of visible minority youth,

mainstream and you have a community that has these valuable resources that can help you search for work, you'd turn to your community more, and become more embedded in your community," says Lauer.

This study was borne out of another project interviewing immigrant youth about their transition from education to employment. Lauer noted that Chinese, Filipino, and other South Asian youth were aware of and concerned that their social circles were becoming more co-ethnic. Youth graduating high school and university use a variety of strategies to find work. One of the most effective channels of finding employment

“... if you're feeling a bit excluded from the mainstream and you have a community that has these valuable resources that can help you search for work, you'd turn to your community more, and become more embedded in your community.

Sean Lauer, UBC Department of Sociology and Miu Chung Yan of the UBC School of Social Work

particularly those of Chinese or South Asian descent, are more 'co-ethnic' with their friends of the same ethnicity. Their social circles grow even more co-ethnic over time. These results contrast with findings from second-generation immigrants of European descent, who reported their social circles becoming more 'cross-ethnic' over time, with friends coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Why are friendships becoming more co-ethnic?

Due to the informal and unstructured nature of friendships, any number of factors could affect social circles. Lauer offers several factors that promote co-ethnic social circles. These factors include not only the values and

is through friends and connections. Youth often find that their co-ethnic communities offer more opportunities for work. As friendships are vital sources of opportunities, differing levels of diversity could result in different opportunities. Thus, Professor Lauer encourages consideration of the real implications of our social circles and their compositions.

Besides the instrumental value of friendships in finding opportunities, Lauer emphasizes how diverse groups of friends allow for deeper empathy towards different communities.

“There is real value in having a diverse group of friends as an end itself,” he says. “When we have friends who are different from us, it opens up new possibilities and understandings of the world, allowing for deeper empathy and understanding for differences.”

What can be done?

Lauer invites everyone to reach out and make others feel welcome, and to move past any prejudices to make new friends. He also emphasizes the importance of diversity in places where people make friends such as work, schools, and especially community organizations. Community organizations encourage regular interaction between people of different ethnicities, ages, and cultures. Participating in shared activities like soccer leagues, drop-in programs, and cooking classes is one of the best ways to make a diverse group of friends.

“I encourage everyone to seek out places that lend themselves to the formation of diverse friendships and get involved,” says Lauer.

For more information, please visit www.news.ubc.ca/2020/06/26/social-circles-of-visible-minority-youth-become-less-diverse-as-they-get-older



▲ Sean Lauer.

prejudices of Canadians in their approaches to newcomers but also the characteristics of co-ethnic communities themselves. He posits that subtle prejudices of exclusion and inclusion from wider society may discourage diverse friendships and encourage more contact with people from their co-ethnic community. The co-ethnic communities might exacerbate this by offering resources and support, encouraging people to increasingly turn toward their co-ethnic communities.

“If you're in a community that's rich in resources and if you're feeling a bit excluded from the

Exploring art in times of crisis: a mirror to the past

by SIMRYN ATWAL

Jairo Salazar, art historian and instructor for Coquitlam College and Mobil Art School, will be delivering a digital seminar on Art in Times of Crisis in partnership with the Richmond Art Gallery on Aug. 25.

The webinar will explore viruses, plagues, illnesses, and pandemics in art, and is the second in a series of talks which, he says, “engages topics to audiences who are not necessarily familiarized with the world of art in a non-traditional venue.”

A gateway to the past

The catalyst for the webinar was the idea that viewing creative output in times of crisis can help us better understand the current pandemic. “It is looking at the way artists cope with challenging situations and back at the history of art as a way to understand our current times,” explains Salazar. “The idea is to focus on specific visualizations of plagues or pandemics either in art or in popular culture. I want to make a correlation to the past on how we dealt with things beyond our control.”

Reflections on various art pieces will explore mortality and fear of the unknown. One piece that will be examined, entitled *A Cluster of 17 Cases* (2018) by Blast Theory, is based on the SARS pandemic. It depicts an entire row of rooms in a hotel that had to be quarantined, and is an investigation of how a small cluster can get out of control – a message that is profoundly relevant to the present.

“Something that is overwhelming about this current situation is the possibility of facing the virus, when the virus has no face,” says Salazar. “So, we imagine ways of understanding what this invisible enemy is. [The exhibit aims to] find the way artists make visible the invisible.”

Coping through creativity

Artwork, says Alazar, is like an extension of therapy, and an expression of comfort or relief for many people. During the uncertainty currently blanketing the world, art is an experience intended to be conserved and lasting. He believes that part of the respite art offers is the ability to recognize recurring themes, emotions, and fears, and find our experiences reflected in them.

There is also a lesson to be

learned from discussing the history of art in relation to pandemics, plagues and illnesses, since viewing the past can provide a scaffold for how to feel and what to do when we cannot make sense of the things around us.

“When we ignore the past, we end up making the same mistakes over and over again,” notes Salazar. “It is poignant to know about history with images, objects and visual culture. These are critical times to consider history again, we move so fast now, and things are so impermanent that we tend to forget very quickly, and it is important to learn how to conserve memories for future generations,” he adds.

Transcending borders

A benefit that has come out of the pandemic is the ability for a global community to find comfort together. Instead of geographic barriers restricting participation, Salazar has had people join in from over five different countries for the series so far. He believes that this has allowed a greater conversation to be held around the response to crisis and art, one which transcends borders.

Salazar hopes that audiences come away from the webinar



Photo courtesy of Jairo Salazar

▲ Jairo Salazar hopes that reflections on various art pieces will lend to the overall exploration of mortality and fear of the unknown.

with the notion that inspiration can come from the most difficult of times. “By looking back in time and at the material and the visual ways we have represented the world around us, we can leave traces for future generations on the ways we managed and the ways we expressed our feelings on a challenging situation” he says. “My purpose with

the webinar is to show people that in any time of crisis be it social, political or health, creativity flourishes. No matter how challenging times are, we think of expressing our innermost human emotions, feelings, anxieties and fears.”

For more information, please visit www.richmondartgallery.org/toc2

COVID-19

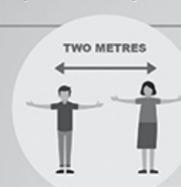
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Grass Drama

Entering expanded states of consciousness

by RAFAEL ZEN

Vancouver-based visual artist Julian Yi-Jong Hou's first solo exhibition, a multi-sensorial experience bridging Pagan traditions from Europe and Zen Buddhist practices, is featured at the Contemporary Art Gallery of Vancouver until January 2021.

With every rush of wind every cell returns to Home-e-o-stasis & from the ground we pick up a piece every piece we pick up is put back

Julian Yi-Jong Hou, Grass Drama, 2020, vinyl recording

Grass Drama draws from a rich field of pagan, psychedelic, magic, and Orientalist influences to make a work that is Chinese Canadian without pandering to a white colonial audience.

In Hou's multi-media installation, a vinyl record, a one-night performance, and an accompanying suite of printed patterns hung in the street-level windows wrapping the gallery's façade are used as platforms.

Hou uses these spaces (sound, presence, sight, intuition) to share his vision about the complex colonial history between England and China, the history of the injustices of the Opium war, as well as the unjust histories that faced Chinese immigrants to Canada.

Developed over a two-year period, and guided by a process of sensitivity training involving divination, hypnagogic practices, and expanded states of consciousness, *Grass Drama* also explores practices of anti-oppressive spiritualism as a way to transcend mechanisms of systemic oppression – which, to Hou, prevents individuals from achieving self-possession.

Alternate realms

In *Pandemic is a Portal* (2020), his previous exhibition at the SFU Audain Gallery, Hou claimed that to clear the mind, one must be willing to let the mind be cleared.

"My journey using Ketamine helped me to clarify how my own mind had been oppressed by several subconscious falsehoods," he says.

Pandemic is a Portal was an invitation to understand how hallucinogens can help some-

one commit to the act of clearance and have faith in achieving self-possession. In Hou's words, the mind is beyond the brain, yet it is colonized by spirituality, science, and culture.

However, what happens when an artist crosses the hallucinatory limits of memory, culture, language, and symbolism, experiments with processes of sensitivity training, and realizes how vast and continuous the well of creativity truly is?

Sound as art, vinyl as platform

every piece we pick up we mark as we put it back

every piece we pick up we mark with our name

every piece we pick up is put back with our name and the time

what is the time again?

remind me of the time again?

Julian Yi-Jong Hou, Grass Drama, 2020, vinyl recording

At the *Grass Drama* exhibit, a speculative and cyclical record's narrative structure experiments with the recorded album as an art form, accompanied by a suite of digitally rendered patterns in the gallery's windows.

"Vinyl pressing is a really sophisticated and technically complex craft that's actually relatively affordable to produce, and I've started becoming interested in collecting objects myself after many years of feeling detached from objects," says Hou.

"Lyric writing, for me, is a kind of channeling process of singing sounds that sound like words, and then trying to find words in the sounds that make sense. The rest of the text is divination which has been a writing process of using Tarot readings to produce text."

Visiting Grass Drama at the Contemporary Art Gallery

Due to COVID-19, CAG is welcoming on-site visitors on a timed-entry basis, with visits scheduled each hour on the hour. Space is limited and advanced booking is highly encouraged through the gallery's website. Although donations are welcome, admission to the gallery is free of charge. ✍

Hou's exhibition on the façade of the Contemporary Art Gallery is available to view at all hours without an appointment at 555 Nelson Street in downtown Vancouver.

Seeking justice through fiction: Carol Rose Goldeneagle's Bone Black

by KYLIE LUNG

Carol Rose Goldeneagle is a woman of many talents. The award-winning author, artist and musician published *Bone Black* in 2019. This novel offers the reader a much-needed view into the reality of living as a young Indigenous woman in Canada as well as its possible dangers.

From the moment she was born, Goldeneagle had to face the harsh realities of living as an Indigenous person in northern Saskatchewan. She was a product of the 'Sixties Scoop,' a practice that involved taking Indigenous children from their parents and placing them in foster families. These foster families were typically middle-class white families. In one fell swoop, any connection to her Aboriginal roots was eliminated. It took decades for Goldeneagle to reconnect with her Cree/Dene heritage, and it has since shaped her artistic career.

"I want to continue to tell stories from an Indigenous perspective, particularly highlighting the strengths of our women," says Goldeneagle. "For the longest time, our stories were not being told. It gives me encouragement that Canadian readers have indicated an interest in reading works that come from our perspective. Although it may seem that much of



▲ Carol Rose Goldeneagle had to face the harsh realities of living as an Indigenous person in northern Saskatchewan.

my fiction is on the dark side, it always champions my culture."

Goldeneagle found her own voice through the help of other Indigenous authors and one serendipitous meeting with the famous Cree painter Allen Sapp. A journal-

ist for 30 years, she had the opportunity to interview Sapp who bestowed upon her the importance of learning about her own lineage. After this fortuitous encounter, she quickly sought out Cree language programs and attended her very first powwow.

A multi-genre artist

Goldeneagle has explored just about every art form out there. She has had art exhibits in Saskatchewan and northern Canada, written plays, music, as well as poetry and novels. *Bearskin Diary* was

express myself in any which way [my creativity] wants to present itself. Everyone should do the same. We are never too old to learn."

Justice for the voiceless

Goldeneagle's novel, *Bone Black*, is a social commentary on the disappearances of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Indigenous women and girls represent ten percent of the homicides in Canada, but Aboriginal women only make up three percent of the female population. The numbers are staggering, and Goldeneagle wants to bring more

“I want to continue to tell stories from an Indigenous perspective, particularly highlighting the strengths of our women.

Carol Rose Goldeneagle, award-winning author, artist and musician

the author's first book and was published in 2015. This semi-autobiographical fiction novel follows a journalist's journey in discovering her Indigenous heritage. In 2019, Goldeneagle published a volume of poetry, *Hiraeth*, which was short-listed for a Saskatchewan Book Award.

"For an artist, creating is creating," says Goldeneagle. "I feel blessed to not see any difference between writing words on a blank page or putting paint on a blank canvas or creating melodies and lyrics with my drum (and now my fiddle – I'm just learning this). I have given myself permission to

attention to these cases in hopes that these women and their families can find peace.

Bone Black follows Indigenous twin sisters Wren and Raven. One night after a visit to a local pub, Raven disappears and Wren is left to convince the police and the courts that her sister, or any person for that matter, should not be considered 'the less-dead.'

"My heart broke each time I would read a story about a family trying to cope after their daughter/niece/grandchild had disappeared," says Goldeneagle. "And they were without hope because no authorities would really help them. It's how I decided, in a fictional sense, to turn the tables. Why not create a character who does the same, but for a different reason? She will avenge the crimes done by others, and will she get caught? In real life, how many of those who've caused harm been caught? Too few. That's why the statistics remain alarming for MMIWG (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls). Enough is enough. We as Indigenous women are not victims, and we will stand up." ✍

To learn more about *Bone Black*, visit www.harbourpublishing.com/collections/carol-rose-goldeneagle/products/9-78089e-12



► "Verbatim" from page 1

Well, I said, take the COVID-clapping for example. People seemed really proud to clap from their balconies, confident they are putting effort into maintaining the health workers' mojo. But why were we only clapping for the medical teams? My friend was shocked.

Did we really not notice that while people were praising doctors (a white coat helps to establish respect as a priority), other essential workers were being put at risk so couples could buy high protein gourmet kibble, French vanilla bean latte and booze (because it takes a lot of booze not to lose it)?

There is another side to every story – and what I have lived and heard is an upsetting scenario: the politest city in the world treated their essentials very badly. Spoiled, moody

children, I believe is the term I most often use. Instead of equality, neglect. I asked: have we become so blind that we really think this is a polite community? Polite to whom? He choked.

Everywhere there are abusive power structures that represent the way our world is told and lived. Yes, this is a beautiful city – but a colonial-capitalist one. Beautiful and safe for some, diverse in bubbles. Yet the same colonized version of land, income and rights distribution makes it so similar to any other city. My "meh" attitude confronted his tendency to settle.

Believing the monuments of a heteropatriarchal, colonial and neo-nationalist vision of the world is simply not acceptable (or doable) anymore. Later, I remembered a quote by the French philosopher and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari: "Breath-

ing has become as difficult as conspiring."

If, as a truly multicultural society, we burn the bridges that divide our privileges, maybe then we will start creating new political ways of living. If our respect for diversity and mission of tolerance resides in accepting underpaid communities solely to have open stores, we won't be doing anything different than any other city that tells the white, wealthy, heterosexual and anti-democratic story that has been told since old times. This is an invitation to radical equality.

Decolonizing has become more necessary than ever in a world that is always on the brink of collapse. We won't all wake up to a new ethical revolution at the same time. Who's awake already? My friend wasn't – and he lives in Vancouver. ✍

Art for change

by TINA QU

***Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* is Kent Monkman's solo exhibition at the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology (MOA) that highlights the Indigenous perspective on Canada's founding history. It contains roughly 80 works and provides both a searing critique of Canada's colonial policies over the past 150 years and a way to create empathy today for Indigenous peoples' experiences in the past and in the present.**

"Creating this exhibition was an opportunity to educate people and create art that could move people, create awareness, and inform. It means I am entering the dialogue to encourage people to think differently about Canada," says Monkman, a Canadian artist of Cree, English, and Irish descent. He is known for his classic representational Romantic landscape and history

dian residential schools, and prisons; *Sickness and Healing*; *Christianity and Indigenous Spirituality*; *Indigenous Hope and Resilience*," says Kramer.

To create this exhibition, Monkman searched Canadian art galleries and museum collections to show artifacts of the colonial encounter. The objects include Chief Poundmaker's moccasins, beaded leatherwork made by children at an Indian residential school in Saskatchewan, and a British officer's silver military gorget bearing a beaver. He combined these artifacts with historical Euro-Canadian paintings and his own paintings and installations.

"These works make visible what has been excluded in Canadian history paintings that celebrate Canada's creation," explains Kramer. For example, the *Starvation Table* is a three-dimensional installation that moves from a time of abundance with Euro-Canadian china and silver filled with food



▲ These works make visible what has been excluded in Canadian History, says Kent Monkman.

paintings, films, installations, and performance works, and is lauded for his fearless commentary on issues related to Indigenous people in Canada.

An important narrative

"Monkman created this exhibition to show that Indigenous people in Canada are still experiencing intergenerational trauma from the ongoing effects of colonialism: removal from lands, confinement to reserves, and a loss of access to natural resources causing lasting structural inequalities such as poverty, ill-health, poor housing, unclean drinking water; the death of children, Indigenous languages, and cultures due to Indian residential schools, theft of children due to the 60s scoop; over-representation in Canadian prisons; violence against Indigenous women girls," says Jennifer Kramer, MOA Curatorial Liaison.

According to Kramer, the exhibition is narrated by Monkman's alter ego, gender-bending, time-travelling, trickster Miss Chief Eagle Testickle. Museum visitors walk through the nine themed chapters excerpted from Miss Chief's memoirs to tell a narrative of Indigenous-Colonial relations over 300 years. They begin in the 18th-century with "New France: Reign of the Beaver" and end in the 21st century with "Urban Rez," life in Winnipeg's North End.

"Themes covered include Abundance and Poverty; Incarceration on reserves, in In-

and wine to a time of poverty and forced treaty-making represented by simple plates with only buffalo bones.

Through his pieces, "Monkman exposes the trauma imposed by colonial settlers and the Canadian government on Indigenous people," says Kramer. "The exhibition corrects the Canadian romantic landscape painting a tradition displaying wildlands open for wealth extraction alongside the trope of the 'Disappearing Indian' narrative that has been promoted by nationalist history and re-inserts Indigenous lives and truths into the art historical canon."

Looking toward the future

"The exhibition offers a rich and multi-layered reading of history that hopes for a future of not only reconciliation but also restitution for Indigenous people in Canada," says Kramer.

According to Monkman, "reconciliation doesn't mean anything until it comes with restitution...for words are empty and meaningless. Reconciliation will start when there is restitution – real acts towards Indigenous sovereignty, towards Indigenous people not being wards of the Canadian state."

The exhibition will run from Aug. 6, 2020–Jan. 3, 2021, at the Museum of Anthropology. For more information, please visit: www.mpmgarts.com/media/campaigns/moa-shame-and-prejudice



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Healing through dance

by RAMAN KANG

“Until Canada actually cares about this issue, our women are still going to go missing and be murdered at a high rate in this country,” says Lorelei Williams.

Williams, an activist from the Skatin Nations on her mom’s side and Sts’ailes (Chehalis) on her dad’s side, is raising awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women through her dance group Butterflies in Spirit. They will be performing Aug. 15, with the Vines Art Festival through online platforms.

Getting people’s attention

“We have so many things working against us with the government, police and the media, they label us in their stories,” says Williams. “Until all of those things stop, we’re still going to go missing and be murdered.”

On October 4, 2011, Williams went to a National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls vigil and listened to a mother recall stories of her missing daughter.

Williams continued attending protests and vigils for missing and murdered Indigenous women: her own aunt, Belinda Williams, went missing in 1978; her cousin, Tanya Holyk, was

murdered by Robert Pickton in 1996; another aunt survived being pushed out of a window; and another cousin survived being taken by a different serial killer and raped.

For a long time, Williams heard their heart wrenching stories, cried for them and then when it was over, would leave and go home; but this time was different.

This time, when she and others from the vigil marched along the street, she noticed something.

“I could see people looking from their cars to see what my sign said. I thought, they’re not going to see this, they’re not going to know what the protest is about by looking at our signs,” she says.

She realized she needed a way to get the attention of people. Then for some reason, she says she thought of dance.

The healing power of dance

“We became this dance group of family members, representing our missing and murdered loved ones, but I also didn’t realize how healing dance would be,” says Williams.

The name Butterflies in Spirit came from Williams thinking about transformation, healing and beauty. She thought about her cousin, her aunt, and other Indigenous women who are targeted.



▲ When Lorelei Williams began using dance as a form of demonstration, she didn’t realize how healing it would be.

“There’s so much trauma and when we can fight through these things, we’re like butterflies. So I thought of butterflies here and in the spirit world, too,” she says.

The group was originally only supposed to have one performance and five days before that, Williams’ mother passed away.

“I knew this was something my mom would want me to do and it was hard, but it was also healing,” she says.

After the performance, some of the dancers sat down on the ground to direct attention to their t-shirts which had the faces of their missing loved ones on them. Others lay down on the ground and were covered with a white sheet to represent those who had been murdered.

“Our dance wasn’t just your regular dance, we sent a message,” says Williams.

The support from the community is what led Butterflies in Spirit to keep dancing.

That performance is also what connected Williams with Vines Art Festival’s Artistic Director Heather Lamoureux.

The Vines art festival

The Festival, in its sixth year, gives diverse and talented artists – working toward land, water, and relational justice – a platform.

The festival features over 80 artists, including Butterflies in Spirit, and fuses the arts with activism to bring unique and powerful performances from across creative disciplines.

For their piece, Butterflies in Spirit are performing contemporary hip hop and traditional dance.

“I actually didn’t know any of my traditional dances because it was taken away from my mom in residential school,” says Williams.

For some of the Butterflies, including Williams, this was the first time they were learning their traditional dances.

“That’s the amazing thing with the Vines Festival. They asked me who I wanted to mentor me, and now I’m partnered up with my aunt,” says Williams, “and she’s going to teach me my traditional dances.”

Learn more about the festival here: www.vinesartfestival.com

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Celeigh Cardinal: singer, songwriter, storyteller, artist

By CURTIS SEUFERT

Drawing from rock, blues, soul and folk influences, Celeigh Cardinal’s commanding voice and detailed personal lyricism centre her varied – and often arduous – experiences in her music. Cardinal champions Indigenous musical representation by way of her own presence and by uplifting fellow Indigenous artists. The Edmonton-based singer-songwriter has been awarded the 2020 Juno for Indigenous Artist or Group of the Year.

Cardinal has loved to sing for as long as she can remember. Growing up in Grand Prairie, Alberta, she would sing every

week at church service, and ended up performing her first solo there at the age of four. And for the past six years, after putting music on hold to focus on working and raising her son, Cardinal has continued to grow as a singer, storyteller and artist.

Music continues to speak to Cardinal’s soul like nothing else. In fact, she says it has always been that way for her.

“I think what probably drew me to it was as I performed, I could see that I was having an effect on the people who are watching me,” she says. “I don’t think I knew then what it meant to me, but as I’ve gotten older what I’ve really recognized is that I am somebody who’s a very much a feeling person. It’s

really important for me to connect with people on an emotional level and to help people to express [themselves].”

Another important part of becoming an artist for Cardinal was Indigenous representation. Because she wanted to be a singer growing up, she followed artists, celebrities and awards shows, but didn’t see many people that looked like her. For her, winning a major Canadian music award herself marks a huge step in becoming the very representation she had sought out.

“I always felt like my nose was too big or my hair was too dark or my eyes were too small. And I don’t want people to have to live through that,” says Cardinal. “I want to be that representation on stage in music that people can see themselves and feel like they can do this too. I want to be this version of myself that’s very ‘me’ and that allows people to feel okay with being themselves. That was really important to me.”

Cathartic connection

Her role as an Indigenous artist, and as someone who makes space for those whose stories are outside of the spotlight, has extended into her own music as well. Cardinal feels it’s important to speak truthfully and earnestly about her life experiences, and for others to feel seen and know they are not alone.

“One of my songs has a line that mentions a miscarriage that I had. It’s very subtle and you wouldn’t know unless you

were really hearing it. And I think that that’s touched a lot of people, but only people who are in the know. I think that kind of stuff is important to continue to do because it makes people feel seen. It may be a little tricky for me, but I feel like I need to keep doing it,” says Cardinal.

Cardinal says her relationship with her music must always be meaningful and personal, whether it’s complicated or cathartic.

“I’m not necessarily sure that’s the healthiest way to do it, but at the same time, as time is passing, I certainly feel like these things are healing. And so, talking about these things becomes a little bit easier,” says Cardinal. “My music is always gonna come in a very authentic way as an experience that I’m living, as opposed to me trying to tell someone else’s story.”

Moving forward, she hopes to get back into performing live when possible. After all, it’s sharing her music and connecting with others that makes it all worthwhile.

“I’m hoping to do more than just live streaming performances or pre-recorded videos and get back to my favourite thing about performing, which is, you know, having an audience in front of me and making them laugh, seeing them cry and sharing this experience,” says Cardinal. “That’s the thing that I just can’t wait to do again.”

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



▲ Celeigh Cardinal champions Indigenous musical representation.

Cultural Calendar

August 18–September 1, 2020

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

I hope everyone has been staying safe and healthy over the summer break. Despite the ongoing global pandemic and the threat of a COVID spike, many places around the city have been endeavouring to strike a balance between re-opening parts of the arts and culture industry to guests and maintaining physical distance as much as possible. As a result, many of the events below are hosted online with some low capacity in-person events being offered. I'll see all of you in September!

Monsoon Festival of Performing Arts

Aug. 1–29
www.monsoonartsfest.ca

The Fifth Monsoon Festival of Performing Arts, a multidisciplinary arts festival by the South Asian Arts Society, will be hosting an entirely online edition of the festival for the month of August. The festival features an entire month of Canadian and international dance, music, theatre, comedy, talks, visual art and a myriad of development workshops and classes. There are comedy nights, podcast storytelling, staged readings and more. For more information, check out the festival website.

Historic Powell Street Walking Tours

Aug. 6–Sept. 17
www.eventbrite.com/e/historic-powell-street-walking-tours-tickets-114978656256

The Vancouver Japanese Language School is presenting the Historic Powell Street Walking Tours, showcasing the hidden

history of the thriving Japanese-Canadian historic neighbourhood community prior to World War II, the strength displayed by Japanese Canadians during internment, and the resilient Downtown Eastside community of today. The tour will be practicing social distancing and limiting registration to a maximum of eight people per tour.

Chilliwack Sunflower Festival

Aug. 12–Sept. 7
www.chilliwacksunflowerfest.com

The Chilliwack Sunflower Festival is an ode to one of the best seasons of the year – summer! With acres of beautiful blooming sunflowers in many different varieties, and an additional 50+ varieties of Dahlias, it's the only festival of its kind in B.C. and surely a sight to see! Hosted by the same group that runs the tulip festival in spring, their goal has always been to create a space where families and friends can come together to celebrate nature, farming and the beauty of the seasons.



▲ There is nothing like a bunch of sunflowers to mark the peak of summertime.

Photo courtesy of Chilliwack Sunflower Festival

South Asians for Black Lives: Caste & Anti-Blackness

Aug. 18, 4–7 p.m.
www.eventbrite.ca/e/south-asians-for-black-lives-caste-anti-blackness-registration-114193848876

Join the South Asian progressive organization Equality Labs for a session on the connections between anti-Blackness and caste apartheid in the South Asian diaspora. As progressive South Asians move towards ending white supremacy and anti-Blackness, individuals must also undo internal hegemonies of caste, language, geography, gender, sexuality and religion. Check out their Eventbrite information page for registration and further details.

Got Craft? Virtual Market – Food Edition

Aug. 20–23
www.gotcraft.com

The Got Craft? Virtual Market is an online event started to support and engage the creative community from the comfort and safety of our homes. The Virtual Market – Food Edition will focus on small-batch, locally made food and drink by some of your favourite makers. Shop from a curated selection of sauces and dips, jams and marmalades, drinks, dumplings, caramels and chocolates, zero waste products, home goods and more!

Summer at Nikkei Garden

Aug. 21–22
www.nikkeimatsuri.nikkeiplace.org

Due to the pandemic, the Nikkei Matsuri experience looks a little different this year! The Summer

at Nikkei Garden is a Japanese cultural marketplace happening Aug. 21–22 to enjoy Japanese arts and culture. Browse a selection of Matsuri vendors and Museum pop-up shops in the beautiful outdoor garden, along with small-scale entertainment. Head inside for access to the Japanese Bookshop and Mikoshi display. You can also join Matsuri Share virtually for themed challenges and fun activities. Share your Nikkei Matsuri memories with #nikkeimatsuri from home or while you visit.

18th Vancouver Latin American Film Festival

Aug. 18–Sept. 6
www.vlaff.org

The Vancouver Latin American Film Festival is a charitable organization with the mission to provide 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. You will be able to watch all films online for the duration of the festival, and there will be seven in-person events at The Cinematheque on select dates. Check out the festival's website for showtimes.

Vancouver International Tap Dance Festival

Aug. 24–30
www.vantapfest.com

The Vancouver International Tap Dance Festival is an annual festival dedicated to spreading the joy of tap dance and providing dancers with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from many internationally-renowned guest

artists, and presenting audiences with premiere performances. This year, because of the global pandemic, the festival is going digital, featuring seven days of residencies, workshops, summit talks and special events. Check out the festival's website for registration information and guest artists.

31st Annual Vancouver Festival d'été francophone

Aug. 26–30
www.lecentreculturel.com

The 31st edition of the Vancouver Festival d'été francophone has been launched! Due to the pandemic, the festival will be offering both in-person and online events featuring many francophone musicians and performers. In-person events will be held at Studio 16 and online concerts will be live-streamed. Opening night of the festival will feature Canadian indie pop act Les Louanges with artist Vincent Roberge. For more information, check out the festival website.

Event & Tech Show Asia Pacific 2020

Sept. 1, 7 p.m.–Sept. 3, 3 a.m.
www.eventtechshow.com

The Event & Tech Show 2020 is the first virtual live event and technology exhibition held in the Asia Pacific region (Singapore). The exhibition presents content from across the technology spectrum, covering but not limited to emerging event technologies, event data and insights, the evolution of event solutions and workflow post-outbreak and the future of event venues and more. Be sure to check out The Virtual Living Lab Concept, an interactive setting for deep engagement with exhibitors, live product demonstrations and tryouts.

►“Mental Health” from page 1
spending too much time either alone or among negative family dynamics.

“For young people, this is the time they are supposed to be meeting and mating. If that part is being cut out because of COVID, how are they going to develop intimate relationships?” says Isabella Jiang, a counsellor with a cross-cultural focus in her practice. “And if you habitually have no in-person contact, your ability to mingle with people is going to diminish and later it will be a huge adjustment when you are thrown back into society.”

Another group that is also significantly stressed out from COVID are parents with young children, according to both Jiang and Sangara.

“Some of the issues that are emerging from COVID are added stress and burden within a family. For many of these families, there was an increasing level of stress for parents who have to work from home but also have to homeschool their children,” says Sangara.

Jiang adds that while parents already have a lot of emotions to process during this crisis, they also have to deal with their children's emotions. She says parents are half happy, half worried about the September school re-opening as they can be relieved of some childcare stress, but at the same time they know it is difficult to ensure young chil-

dren maintain social distance and not touch anything outside.

Both Jiang and Sangara mention that tensions have also increased between spouses when it comes to sharing responsibilities and dealing with stressful situations and, as a result, domestic violence has gone up.

Ng says incidences of racism against Asians have also increased since the pandemic, which has been causing more mental anguish and anxiety for those who encounter them.

“80 per cent of my clients are of Asian descent. Most of these people are of middle-class background who genuinely want to integrate into this country, except now they are feeling they are being pushed back as the foreigners somehow; it brings up issues of identity all over again,” says Ng.

Ng explains that in psychology we tend to see an ‘in group’ vs ‘out group’ dynamic based on whether someone is like us or not and ethnicity can be one thing to form such a group. Despite the ideal of the Canadian mosaic, he says COVID-19 has made some people redraw the line and reveal their underlying psychological biases toward other people.

“Whenever we come to a crisis, and we are in a crisis right now, people can easily go for fight or flight. COVID has divided the world, it has divided communities and it has divided couples. If there is something triggering

inside you and you don't feel safe, you tend to let out your frustrations,” Jiang adds.

Coping mechanisms and helpful advice

Alcohol and drug use have both increased since the start of COVID according to results from a Statistics Canada survey, which puts people at risk of more problems with unhealthy addictions.

“People are looking for a sense of meaning in all of this. The substances usually don't matter as much as the underlying emotions that people are trying to run away from or are trying to



▲ Tajinder Sangara.

dull down, they are just using the wrong means to cope,” Ng says.

He explains that people are trying to find a way to frame how life is supposed to go when

the pandemic throws everything off-kilter.

“It is causing a lot of people to reevaluate.”

As a Christian who uses faith in understanding psychology, Ng says that he also sees that some people who used to see faith as utilitarian and something they do on a Sunday morning are now seeing it as something more vital.

As social isolation has made the world less filled with human touch, Ng recommends everyone stay connected with their bodies as much as possible.

“Every opportunity we can feel the body again we should take the advantage, to get good food, to sleep well, to exercise properly, to pay attention to our physicality and not to treat it like a machine.”



▲ Ed Ng.



▲ Isabella Jiang.

“You need to let your hair down sometimes, whatever circumstance we are in, we need to try to make the best out of it.”

Support resources recommended by psychologists:
www.anxietycanada.com
BC Mental Health Support Line:
604-310-6789
The Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service:
1-800-663-1441