

Senate: A project to honour Black Canadian artists  
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# The Source

forum of diversity

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## Building worlds through interdisciplinary stories

by DANIELA COHEN

The upcoming *Narrative Architecture: How Storytelling Builds Worlds* event hosted by the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Green College on Oct. 22 aims to facilitate an interdisciplinary conversation on how narratives create our world in different contexts.

Julen Etxabe, Canada Research Chair in Jurisprudence and Human Rights and an assistant professor at the Peter A. Allard School of Law at UBC, and Patrick Rizzotti, an assistant professor of Design and Production in Theatre and Film at UBC, are two of four panelists speaking on this topic.

The event aims to create dialogue through highlighting the perspectives of the different panelists on the importance of world building in diverse realms. "We share that passion for those possibilities that building worlds bring. Hopefully to construct better worlds – something in which we can believe, a fiction that is more real than the world that we live in," Etxabe explains.

### Space, an integral part of world building

For Rizzotti, narrative architecture means creating a space where both the content and tone of a story can be expressed. Rizzotti highlights that rather than describing his work as set design, he uses the language of 'building worlds.'

"I'm trying to actually build out the whole world for this to take place," he emphasizes.



▲ Patrick Rizzotti wants to create a space where content and tone meet.

Moreover, the space itself becomes part of the story.

"It's not just a capsule for a play or film to take place in, but one that adds to the story in a tangible way," says Rizzotti.

He also intentionally designs worlds that leave room for the audience to create their own connections.

"They then become part of that world. They're adding their own history into that world in an intimate way that I could never have planned for," he explains.

Rizzotti is also thoughtful about which stories he engages

with. He prefers to focus on new plays written by playwrights with underrepresented voices. For example, *Skeleton Crew* is a play that highlights the impact of the failing auto industry on people in an auto plant in Detroit.

"It was a powerful play for me to learn about these people and this situation with the playwright, Dominique Morisseau, the actors and the director. And it was a story that I felt had a message," he says. "It wasn't escapist. It was definitely a 'leave you thinking' kind of story."

Rizzotti has also become more mindful of the waste of materials that often occurs in the theatre industry and is working towards more sustainability when building the physical worlds in his work.

### Judges as ethical storytellers

In his role as a law and humanities scholar, Etxabe focuses on the ethical and political components of storytelling. He conceives of judges as storytellers.

"I try to understand what they do in terms of the stories they

See "Narrative Architecture" page 7 ►

## Verbatim

### A little bit of positivity

by TINA QU

I remember the joy I felt when my teachers first announced the extension of spring break due to COVID-19. As a high school junior, my days were filled almost entirely with school and extracurricular activities, and I was grateful that I would get this much-needed rest period.

As it turned out, that spring break was one of the most stressful I've experienced. It soon became clear that the virus was a severe problem, and I was scared of contracting it, or even worse, one of my loved ones contracting it. As my friends and I began to quarantine, feelings of loneliness and isolation set in as I struggled to transition from seeing them daily to only being able to talk online. My school soon announced that they were implementing a new e-learning program, and the vagueness of the description left many students, including myself, feeling confused and concerned about what to expect.

Although the school worked hard to transition to online learning as smoothly as possible, students and teachers alike ran into challenges. The biggest problem was that everyone seemed to lack motivation. Students came to the Zoom classes with their cameras off and microphones muted. In the videos of those who did turn their cameras on, I saw people driving, still in bed, or getting coffee. The teachers seemed to lose their ability to regulate the classroom in the way that they did before.

However, as we watched the number of cases rise, it became clear that the pandemic was not going to end any time soon. We all had to get used to life as it was. COVID-19 put everyone to the test, and it was a test of adaptability. Slowly,

See "Verbatim" page 3 ►

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# Cultural Spotlight



## Funny? What's funny?

by SIMRYN ATWAL

**Online dating may give us the ability to connect with people across the world, but it can also present barriers. One University of British Columbia's (UBC) study found that understanding Canadian humour is one of the major obstacles immigrants face when using dating websites.**

Siqi Xiao, an international UBC Masters sociology student, was primarily focused on studying how education level and immigrant status shape intimate relationships when she decided to view them through the lens of online dating. Her research led to some surprising results: that humour plays a pivotal role in the landscape of Canadian dating.

### Online dating and the immigrant experience

Xiao decided that a digital platform was a great medium for her sociological research.

"In the past people tend to meet in school, in the workplace, through friends," she says. "Studies have shown that traditional ways of meeting partners tend to facilitate similarity-based matching."

Xiao hoped that by examining a modern platform she could determine if online dating, which offers the opportunity to transcend differences, would change or adhere to this previous research.

"We wanted to see if online dating could alleviate those barriers between visual, or cultural boundaries," she explains. "Some scholars think online dating is the new way to meet people, you can meet people outside your geographic region, outside of your race and eth-

nicity who are totally different from you."

So Xiao and her supervisor, UBC assistant professor Yue Qian, embarked on a study to explore these ideas. After recruiting and interviewing 63 Chinese immigrant and Canadian-born participants and asking about potential partner criteria and experiences, they found that humour presented a different type of cultural inequality.

"We wanted to know [participants'] experience of online dating, how they decide who to meet, what is their preference for their ideal partner, what is their past experience of romantic relationships. Humour was something unexpected that came out while I was doing interviews," notes Xiao.

### The cultural capital of humor

At face value, humor seems like a subjective taste, but according to Xiao it is much more complex



Photo courtesy of UBC

▲ Siqi Xiao, UBC Masters sociology student.

than that. "Humour is inherently a social phenomenon; interactions and the ability to tell or appreciate jokes requires cultural and language experiences that many new immigrants do not have."

"It requires a certain taste, but also requires a different way of thinking and a grasp of

coded language. When you look at those components, they are not entirely individualized, our cultural experiences cultivate those ways of thinking," she adds.

While 81 per cent of Canadian-born respondents chose humour as a screening criterion for dating, 81 per cent of the Chinese born participants did not. According to Xiao, this is the largest obstacle immigrants face when dating online.

"People that don't have the shared experience or cultural knowledge, for example watching the same tv shows or growing up in the same kindergarten or high school, wouldn't know why some jokes are funny, and in turn get left out."

The findings show that humor is important in the initial stages of dating, but even when the relationship progressed to meeting online or in person, humor still mattered.

"Online dating gives that opportunity to screen candidates based on their sense of humour in addition to other things. It already makes an impact before they go offline or meet in person," adds Xiao.

### Transcending the boundaries

Xiao suggests a number of ways for Canadians to address the inaccessibility that humor has for potential partners: "Encouraging people in their workplace or dating situations when evaluating whether this person's humour fits or not. Breaking down what you think you require for something to be funny and reflect if those things are shareable. Pausing and reflecting on what we are really asking gives us the opportunity to share our cultural learning in multicultural spaces, where we can exchange ideas and share different kinds of humour." ✉

For more information, please visit: <https://news.ubc.ca/2020/09/03/importance-of-humour-in-online-dating-could-exclude-new-canadians>



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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](mailto:info@thelastsource.com)

[www.thelastsource.com](http://www.thelastsource.com)

*Founding Publisher and Editor-in-Chief*  
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*Associate Publisher* **Monique Kroeger (Print)**

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*Layout Artist* **Yvonne Kwok**

*Illustrator* **Joseph Laquerre**

*Writers* **Nathalie Astruc, Simryn Atwal, Xi Chen, Daniela Cohen, Gratianna Daum, Anindita Gupta, Michael Huenefeld, Laury-Ann Mahieu, Karin Payany, Tina Qu, Émeline Riffenach, Andreina Romero, Curtis Seufert, Liam Sfaxi, Lin Weaver, Simon Yee, Robert Zajtmann, Rafael Zen**

*Translation* **Barry Brisebois, Louise Dawson, Monique Kroeger**

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## Women of Vancouver

## Taylor Hui and the BeaYOUtiful initiative

by ANINDITA GUPTA

**Taylor Hui, creator of The BeaYOUtiful Foundation, has been nominated for the Young Woman of Distinction Award 2020 by YWCA Metro Vancouver for encouraging self-esteem, self-love and empowerment.**

"I remember being 16-years-old and thinking, there *needs* to be a space for young girls to understand their self-love journey and have a safe dialogue about their mental health," says Hui, recalling her first thoughts of founding BeaYOUtiful.

#### The BeaYOUtiful Foundation today

The foundation started as a passion project for Hui after she encountered several peers being bullied and criticized about their insecurities. It began with a single six week program for girls aged 10-13. The agenda was for these young girls to feel empowered, respected, loved and safe.

In the beginning, the girls were mentored by Hui and others who were her peers; their attempt was to build a sisterly relationship rather than a student-teacher relationship. They hosted after-school programs in classrooms.

In the following seven years, Hui managed to turn The BeaYOUtiful Foundation to a Canadian charity. Today, it has over 100 volunteers and has worked alongside more than 1500 girls between the ages of 8–14.

Now, the foundation conducts six-week self-esteem programs, confidence workshops, and the annual Inspired by HER conference.

**“I remember being 16-years-old and thinking, there needs to be a space for young girls to understand their self-love journey and have a safe dialogue about their mental health.”**

*Taylor Hui, creator of The BeaYOUtiful Foundation*

ence. In this conference, guest speakers are brought in to talk to the young girls about a variety of topics including body positivity, artistic therapy, diversity and inclusion, nutrition, leadership and goal-setting.

As they have grown, they have held classes in community centres, yoga and dance studios, garden centres and office spaces all over the city. Since COVID-19 hit, they have begun online classes.

#### Linking themselves with schools in B.C.

Not only was the process of proving themselves a legitimate organization to schools and the school boards challenging, they also had to prove that a program such as this was needed.

Even though Hui launched the foundation as a one-and-a-half-year pilot program as a student

herself, once she graduated and had to reapply as an outsider to the Surrey school board, she faced rejection for an entire year.

Even though this was upsetting for her at times, she had to remind herself why she had started the foundation in the first place. This gave her the motivation to continue.

In high school, Hui was extremely active.

"I think at one point, I had joined every club and sports team possible!" expresses Hui.

Being active through the many clubs, teams and societies, she was able to build strong relationships with the administration and many teachers.

When the BeaYOUtiful Foundation started, her teachers helped her by putting her in contact with students they thought would benefit from such a program. Her high school principal introduced her to the right school board and gave her project the push it needed.

"I am so grateful that I had a community behind me...if not for

them, I don't think I would have gotten in front of the right people so quickly to hear my vision and give back to the community

ly had a full-circle moment when one of her mentees applied to be a mentor for the Foundation.

in such an impactful way," recalls Hui.

#### BeaYOUtiful in the future years

Satisfied at the rate her foundation is growing, Hui recent-

She explains how she always hoped, in order to reach more girls nation-wide, for the BeaYOUtiful Foundation to move to an online platform. In a serendipitous way, COVID-19 has made sure that they are moving closer to this goal.

In the last few months, the BeaYOUtiful Foundation was able to reach over 80 girls in BC and Alberta through online classes. And in the coming months, they hope to include youth from Ontario to their team.

A more long-term goal for the Foundation?

"This hints to my main goal for BeaYOUtiful: a national, self-love conference tour!" says Hui. ✍

For more information, please visit:  
[www.foreverbeayoutiful.com](http://www.foreverbeayoutiful.com)  
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Photo courtesy of Taylor Hui

▲ Taylor Hui, creator of The BeaYOUtiful Foundation.



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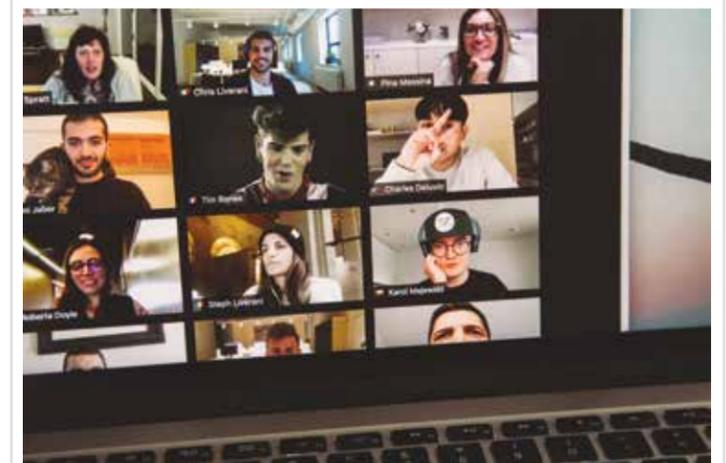
#### “Verbatim” from page 1

things became less chaotic as life resumed a new type of normalcy. Teachers adjusted the curriculum to the best of their abilities so students could keep up, and my friends and I started having regular Facetime calls and Netflix party nights. Although it wasn't ideal, we did manage to stay connected.

I think that, despite all the things that COVID-19 has taken away, the one thing that the pandemic gave me is a stronger connection to those around me. Albeit clichéd, we are all in this together, and naturally, I think that we depend on each other. My family and I went from see-

tions about the pandemic and how we have been dealing with it. I would have never known that my brother was wickedly skilled at billiard sports, that one of my friends' dream is to open a café, or that my math teacher was welcoming a newborn daughter, had these conversations not happened. Going into my senior year of high school, I've realized that I only have a year left to spend with my friends and family. COVID-19 has pushed me to appreciate them fully and make the most of my final year.

Perhaps, as a naturally optimistic person, I am trying to search for the bright sides of



▲ Life, school...on-line.

ing each other once or twice a day during meals to having cooking contests and game nights. My friends and I, despite the distance, have gotten closer than ever through mutual feelings of boredom and excitement to see each other again. Even my teachers and I have bonded over conversa-

the situation to hold on to. I am not saying that this pandemic, which has caused so much pain and suffering to many, is anything but devastating. I am merely hoping that my story, which holds true for others I know as well, provides a little bit of positivity during these dark times. ✍

## Contribution

# The Senate honours Canadian Black artists

Two works by internationally acclaimed Black Canadian artists were installed outside the Red Chamber on September 18, 2020 – the first art display in the Senate arranged specifically to honour Canada's Black artists. *Stolen Identities*, by Winnipeg painter Yisa Akinbolaji, and *Who's Who in Canada 1927* – a mixed-media piece by Vancouver-based artist Chantal Gibson – will be on display for the next nine months.

"One of these artists is looking at the complexity of cultural identities now and one is addressing our systemic writing of Canadian history," said Senator Patricia Bovey, an art historian and former gallery director who is chair of the Senate's Artwork and Heritage Advisory Working Group.

The Senate represents Canada's different regions and culturally diverse communities – representation that should extend to the artwork displayed in its buildings, Senator Bovey said.

"We at the Senate are looking at how we represent Canadians, and this is a positive step. If we're going to have proper reconciliation, there has to be reconciliation by everybody."

The Manitoba senator consulted with and received support from a number of her Black colleagues in launching this project. *Stolen Identities* and *Who's Who?* are on loan until the end of June 2021.

*Stolen Identities* shows Louis Riel within a Métis dream catcher hanging from Winnipeg trees. The acrylic and oil on canvas fuses the traditional colours and



▲ *Stolen Identities* – a painting by Nigerian-Canadian artist Yisa Akinbolaji – was installed in the Senate of Canada Building on Friday, September 18, 2020.

patterns of Mr. Akinbolaji's native Nigeria with motifs of Indigenous history and reality.

"*Stolen Identities* is to bring attention to the plight of the Indigenous people of Canada," Mr. Akinbolaji said. "Their cultural artifacts and historical heroes – like you have on that painting – are celebrated, yet their women and girls have been regularly missing or murdered."

*Who's Who?* is part of Ms. Gibson's mixed-media series *Historical In(ter)ventions*, in which she explores the omission of Black voices in Canadian historical texts by altering books with braided and twisted black thread.

Ms. Gibson sculpted *Who's Who?* from a 1927 edition of

*Who's Who in Canada*. A 2020 e-reader is part of the installation and plays a recording of Ms. Gibson flipping through the book's pages and pictures as they were originally printed.

"Artwork allows us to question power and authority, and it asks the viewer to think about whose voices are included in national narratives and whose are omitted or erased," Ms. Gibson said.

Senate Curator Tamara Dolan noted the two works have been installed in a "significant space" that otherwise contains only a bust of Queen Elizabeth II and the doors from the original Senate antechamber in Centre Block.

Senator Bovey said she tried to select works that had "tangible hooks" to senators' and Sen-

ate committees' work. She was a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade when it urged the federal government to increase the use of arts and culture in international diplomacy in a 2019 report.

She hopes the project to honour Black Canadian artists will continue beyond June 2021. ✉

SENATOR BOVEY oversaw the installation of two works by Black Canadian artists in the Senate of Canada Building as part of a new initiative to honour the country's Black artists.

<https://sencanada.ca/en/sencaplus/how-why/the-senate-is-honouring-canadas-black-artists>



▲ Vancouver-based artist Chantal Gibson's altered text *Who's Who in Canada 1927*. An e-reader displaying a recording of the book's original pages is part of the installation.

## VIFF

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September 24–October 7, 2020

Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) announces its 39th edition, on screens September 24–October 7, 2020. Showcasing more than 100 feature films and events, including boundary-pushing Canadian work, adventurous East Asian cinema, inspiring documentaries, elevated genre cinema, and festival favourites, the online-primary festival is available throughout the province of British Columbia on the new VIFF Connect streaming platform. VIFF 2020 will also feature a select number of in-cinema presentations, including the opening film and world premiere of Loretta Sarah Todd's *Monkey Beach*. The adaptation of Eden Robinson's beloved novel will be screened at several independent cinemas throughout the province in compliance with COVID-19 capacity restrictions and the latest provincial health and safety regulations. To explore VIFF's 2020 programming, and to purchase Single Tickets and Subscriptions, visit: [viff.org](http://viff.org)

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Sources: BCCDC, Government of Canada (March 27, 2020); Fraser Health Authority (March 27, 2020)

Nilofar Shidmehr

## A poetic and unflinching voice illuminating Iranian women's stories

by ANDRIENA ROMERO

**A girl torn between her curiosity for a young maid and her need to maintain her higher social class; a sister torn between her love for her brother and her duty to herself and to a country that asks too much; a daughter pulled between the love of her quarreling and separated parents.**

These are some of the dualities and contradictory loyalties that bilingual writer, poet, and scholar Nilofar Shidmehr explores in her 2019 collection of short stories *Divided Loyalties*, a powerful portrayal of the Iranian female experience in post-revolutionary Iran and the Iranian Canadian diaspora.

### Iran through a female lens

The stories, set in Iran and Canada starting in 1978 and moving through the 1980s, the 1990s, and early 2000s, are unflinching in their study of the sacrifices Iranian women must make to remain loyal to their families, their history, and their culture, many times to the detriment of their values and desires.

"The main loyalty in the book is about family loyalty. That's very important in Iranian culture," Shidmehr explains.

She further defines the concept of family, illustrating some of the situations her characters find themselves in the stories of *Divided Loyalties*.

"But, you know, family can mean many different things: your family defines your social class, your status in society, the kind of role you need to play, your education, how you are brought up, what kind of values the family instills in you. So you

great deal of cultural translation" but also a constant breaking of expectations.

"If you are a second language [speaker], the general assumption is that I translate into English – it's the biggest credit they can give you. And even if you tell them, 'no', in their mind, I think mostly the audience thinks 'no, this woman is lying' or 'that's not true, she writes in Farsi first and then translates into English,'" she explains.

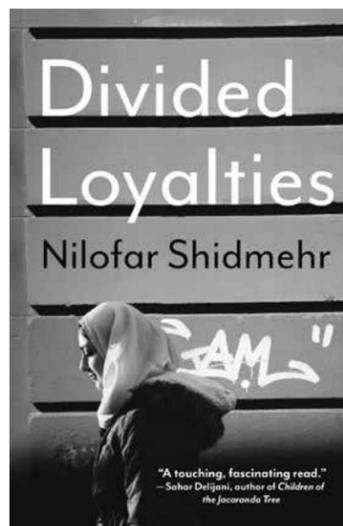
But the implications of this type of questioning extend beyond innocent audience disbelief. It has meant that Shidmehr, a writer who has received widespread praise both for her English and Farsi literary work, still needs to continuously prove herself in certain writing circles.

"If people think that you translate, they don't take you as seriously," she says, adding that another layer of discrimination often comes from her unexpected accent: "When they see you, they see the book is great and you have a good publisher, but the moment you open your mouth and the accent comes out, the way that people treat you is different, even at literary festivals—it's very difficult."

If navigating the world as an exophonic writer is difficult, what North American readers gain are entire worlds previously unknown to them beautifully rendered to them in English. "I think that I offer some kind of



▲ Nilofar Shidmehr, author.



▲ *Divided Loyalties*.

are expected to conform and produce those kinds of values," she adds.

### Writing your culture in English

Exophonic writers are defined as those who write creatively in a language other than their mother tongue. Though the practice is ancient, the term was only coined in the field of literary and cultural studies in 2007.

Shidmehr, who moved to Canada from Iran when she was 28, sees herself as an exophonic writer. This status involves not only what Shidmehr calls "a

authenticity and that's very important about exophonic writers," Shidmehr affirms about her writing about Iranian women. "Because I write about my own experiences, I have an insider's knowledge of those lives and that culture and that language," she concludes, with passion.

That cultural sensibility and insight are clear in *Divided Loyalties*, from which Shidmehr will be reading during North Vancouver City Library's upcoming virtual event *An Evening with the Persian Author and Poet Nilofar Shidmehr*, Oct. 21, 2020.

Attendants can also expect readings in Farsi, and for Shidmehr to share more candid stories about her life as a bilingual writer in Canada. ✍️

For more information and to register visit <https://www.nvcl.ca/calendar?trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D147676024>.

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Photo courtesy of Marlene Yuen

## Preserving Chinese immigrant memories with art

by XI CHEN

**Most Canadians are somewhat familiar with the history and the plight of the Indigenous people, however, few knew of the struggles of other ethnic groups who had to overcome significant obstacles in a hostile environment in order to make this land their home.**

An upcoming exhibition *Cheap! Diligent! Faithful!* at grunt gallery from Sept. 25–Dec. 12 hopes to shed light on the history and experience of Chinese labour immigrants in Canada since the 1800s through a series of artworks by local artist Marlene Yuen.

Yuen creates comics, prints and book works to convey stories, usually based on well-researched historical facts and biographies. This exhibition will include Yuen's previous artworks from a solo exhibition in Ontario as well as the launch of Yuen's new artistic book on the cultural history of Ho Sun Hing Printers in Chinatown, which closed a few years ago after being in business for 106 years.

### Art inspired by real history

Yuen says her interest in Chinese labour history was inspired by her own family history and the difficulties they faced when they first moved to Canada.

"When I first submitted this proposal to a labour museum in Ontario, I was really thinking about my own family, about my dad, who had to work as a teenager and did whatever job he could. I just heard how hard it was," says Yuen. This sparked her research into Chinese labour history. She found that a big wave of Chinese workers came to British Columbia in the 1800s to build the railroads and endured dangerous work conditions. Many perished during the process. After the railroads, many could not afford the journey back to China though the government promised that it would pay to send them home. They ended up settling in Canada despite facing ongoing discrimination.

"For those who couldn't afford to go back to China, they just had to find work anywhere in anything," Yuen adds. "Many stories don't have happy endings. I did a lot of research and I would sketch out storyboards, for people to realize these are real people that existed."

As a female artist, Yuen says she also tries to find strong Chinese female personalities in history to tell their inspirational stories.

One such historical figure honoured by Yuen's work is Mary Ko Bong, an independent and spirited woman ahead of her time. She had to attend a segre-

gated school in her youth but enlisted in the Canadian army during World War II to serve the country. After her military service, she decided to be trained in horology (watchmaking) and became the first Chinese woman to graduate from such a program in Canada.

Yuen's latest art book on the history of Ho Sun Hing Printers in Chinatown is also based on her personal experience after she visited the print shop and acquired some letterpress equipment. "I want to retell their story, so last year I made contacts with the family and they said yes, so I made a book about a printshop using their own equipment," says Yuen.

### The artist and her own story

Growing up as a second-generation Chinese immigrant, Yuen says she experienced bullying and discrimination herself.

Her family also did not approve of her choice of an artistic career. "It is a journey that I basically have to push myself, I cannot worry about what my parents think. I can tell when I went to study fine arts at UBC, they were not happy about it," Yuen recalls. But she persisted.

She has made a number of artistic storybooks over the years using various techniques from



▲ Marlene Yuen, artist.

screen printing, risograph (a stencil duplicator) to letterpress based on her own comics and illustrations. She also displayed in a public art project in 2018 as part of Chinatown's revitalization program.

She is also considering making an artistic book of a Chinatown guide, to showcase what used to be in this historical neighbourhood.

"There is a lot of history disappearing. We are lucky to have rights and freedom now, but it wasn't always the case. My artwork is to preserve history and to honour the resilience of Chinese Canadians," says Yuen. ✍

For more information, please visit [www.grunt.ca](http://www.grunt.ca).

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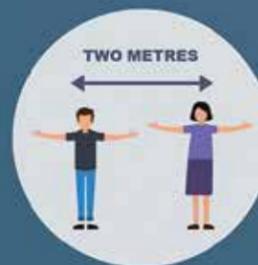
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For general information from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), call 1-888-COVID-19, text 604-630-0300 or visit [www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca)

# Alisa Blanc: raising the musical bar

by CURTIS SEUFERT

**B.C.-based francophone singer-songwriter Alisa Blanc performed her brand of moody smooth guitar pop for the Surrey Fusion Festival on Sept. 28, 2020. While she is currently writing music and studying in Japan, Blanc was raised in France before moving to B.C. During that time she has made the most of B.C.'s francophone singer-songwriter opportunities, all while embracing her language and heritage as a French-speaking minority in the province.**

"I find it so important for me to grow and embody that French heritage because we're a minority in B.C.," says Blanc. "I feel like there was the responsibility to keep writing in French and support the community in that way. But there's no pressure. It's not in a way where I feel I have to do it. I want to do it."

## Finding her voice

For 19-year-old Blanc, the last three years have been a whirlwind of musical opportunities, the first of which came with B.C.'s Jeu Francophone showcase, organized by B.C.'s Conseil Jeunesse Francophone, or Francophone Youth Council.

Blanc remembers the French songwriting showcase as her first chance at writing original music in French, as well as the chance to meet her current producer, with whom she would record her debut EP: *Chapitre Un* (Chapter One).

"That was my first professional experience. He guided me through the whole process, put a lot of trust in me and my music, especially in the first few years," says Blanc. "After that I kept writing and performed in a few festivals. The summer of 2018 was a big one, because I was able to participate in a lot of big events. And I think that kind of started everything."

Blanc says that finding an identity as a singer can be quite the challenge, and no less so when you're singing in a minority language. But it's a challenge well met by Blanc, as the solution so far has been to embrace her vocal identity and both her francophone and anglophone influences, employing her vocal style more typical of English-speaking singers while singing in her native language of French.

"I was told that French singers have a softer voice, a bit of a breathier way of singing. And I never fit into that box. So, I would sing in French, but I would be told that I have a more American or Canadian way of singing, which is a more powerful or more full sound," says Blanc. "So, I think my music was a way for me to kind of bring both Canadian or like American style of music and French lyrics together."

## Growth as an artist

The past couple of years have come with another set of challenges, however. In addition to her attention being somewhat divided – Blanc continues to



▲ Alisa Blanc, B.C.-based francophone singer-songwriter.

pursue her studies at university in Japan – she says it has proved somewhat challenging to pursue her love of sharing her music live, as the coronavirus continues to limit performance opportunities to artists like herself.

"Moving all of that online [and focusing on recording music] has been very different. When you're playing in person it has to sound nice too, but it's also just a moment for me to hang out with friends, talk about music, and that has been taken away," says Blanc. "But it has been alright. I invested in recording equipment for myself so that I could try to make demo tapes or to, you know, work a bit more on my music. I think this has given me more opportunities at home."

Indeed, for Blanc the shift in priorities has also presented a chance to reflect on her music, her goals and her growth as an artist. While a few years ago songwriting and performing was simply a chance to have fun, Blanc says that as she continues her music, honing her craft and raising the bar are now the focus, as she aims to record her debut album next summer.

"I wouldn't say it has made it more difficult, but it has been challenging with regards to my music because I'm more strict with myself. It has to have some kind of meaning, some kind of substance behind, so that's what I'm aiming towards."

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

Mission Arts Council's 39th Annual

# CHRISTMAS CRAFT MARKET

In an effort to help slow the spread of COVID-19 the Mission Arts Council has decided to move our 39th annual Christmas Craft Market online. This virtual market will run: November 12 - 16 and December 4 - 7

Details at: [www.missionartscouncil.ca/CCM.html](http://www.missionartscouncil.ca/CCM.html)

► "Narrative Architecture" from page 1 are telling us about ourselves, about the parties, about the democratic societies in which we belong, about the democratic society itself," he explains.

Etxabe believes that to effectively uphold the values of a free and democratic society, judges require not only technical and legal expertise but also creative imagination. He rejects the metaphor used by John Roberts, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, during his confirmation hearing, which likened judges to umpires in a baseball game.

"Judges need to have imagination to see how their judgement fits within a broader societal context. And they need to think of themselves as part of that society," Etxabe emphasizes. "They need to think about where we're coming from, where we are and where we're headed."

Etxabe shares a new model of dialogical judgement he has observed and aspires to further develop. This reflects a more inclusive process of decision making that allows for the contribution of non-governmental actors and includes judges citing each others' work.

"I noticed how this process of incorporating different voices and increasing voices of comparative law made the process of reading a bit more complicated for my jurisprudence students. And the temptation for some scholars is to say that this is irrelevant, that we only care about the final outcome of the case. I was resisting that type of reductionism," Etxabe says. "I think that this ability for judges to open themselves up to engage in that type of dialogue serves a

value, not only in terms of making the law better, but it also serves a political value. It has a tendency to democratize the judgement."

## Narrative, a connector across disciplines

For both Rizzotti and Etxabe, the dialogue between the panelists leading up to the event has fostered a deeper appreciation of diverse perspectives around the theme of narrative.

"It's fantastic to be paired with a lawyer, someone trained in interpreting things and re-imagining it for a jury, which is an audience in a way," Rizzotti says. "It was wild to have discussions about what do we tell, how do we tell it, how do we frame things, and find some common ground that I just didn't think of until we were put together on this panel."

Etxabe reiterates the value of this process.

"It forces you to reassess your assumptions, sometimes even to change your vocabulary and to ask yourself why you are using this term or another," he shares.

Similarly, the upcoming event is intended to foster new ways of thinking about the disciplines represented while providing an opportunity for connection during the pandemic.

"We all have stories to tell. We all engage with the world in a narrative way whether we realize it or not," Rizzotti highlights. "And there are many ways to appreciate having a well-crafted world built as part of understanding our existence in the bigger world."

For more information, visit [www.greencollege.ubc.ca](http://www.greencollege.ubc.ca)

# Cultural Calendar

October 6–20, 2020

by SIMON YEE  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Canada's second wave of coronavirus is here and we definitely need to buckle down and stay the course with social distancing, just as we did in the spring. Check out the many events and festivals hosting activities online or adhering to current COVID-19 health and safety protocols. We're in this together – let's get through this! Have a safe Thanksgiving holiday everyone!

\* \* \*

**Fall at the Farm at Maan Farms**  
Sept. 25–Nov. 2  
[www.maanfarms.com](http://www.maanfarms.com)

The Maan Farms in Abbotsford is hosting two events this month, Fall at the Farm and the Scariest Cornmaze in Canada. The former activity features family friendly activities such as a pumpkin patch, petting zoo, kart track and a play fort. The latter activity features a Halloween-themed corn maze featuring terrifying creatures and frightening monsters. Because of the pandemic, both events are on a reduced capacity and registration is required. Check out the farm's website for more information.



Photo courtesy of Maan Farms

▲ Nothing but pumpkins and scary creatures await.

\* \* \*

**The Doll's House Project**  
Oct. 10–17  
[www.langara.ca/studio-58](http://www.langara.ca/studio-58)

The first Studio 58 production this season is The Doll's House Project, a reimagined, ensemble production based on Ingmar Bergman's adaptation of Ibsen's A Doll's House. The project examines a classic play – written by a privileged white man about a woman's self-emancipation from

oppression – as told by a troupe of young actors, in the midst of a global pandemic and massive social upheaval. Safely apart, but together, the members of the diverse ensemble take turns stepping into multiple roles and each contributes to the unfolding of Nora's journey as she breaks free from a restrictive marriage. This stripped down staging focuses on voices, bodies in motion and live music, and asks the question, "How did we get here?"

\* \* \*

**The Remains of Artistic Praxis: the posters, programs and scripts of Kishida Rio**  
Oct. 15, 4–5 p.m.  
[www.moa.ubc.ca](http://www.moa.ubc.ca)

A theatre performance is transitory and experiential for performer and spectator, yet traces linger once the time-based act is complete. How does a researcher dig through these remnants to understand or analyze an artist's praxis? UBC doctoral candidate Colleen Lanki will attempt to shed light on this subject with reference to the Japanese playwright and theatre artist Kishida Rio (1946–2003), who wrote several plays about women and the problems they faced in a patriarchal society. This event will be held over Zoom; for more information, check out the museum's website.

\* \* \*

**2020 Whistler Writers Festival**  
Oct. 15–18  
[www.whistlerwritersfest.com](http://www.whistlerwritersfest.com)

The annual Whistler Writers Festival, like many other events and festivals, is going online this year, providing workshops for emerging writers, readings that encourage and engage healthy, provocative, and thoughtful debate, and an intimacy and vibrant connection with as broad and inclusive an audience as possible. There will be discussions on alternative publishing, challenges to the writing industry, as well as book launches, literary salons and cabarets, and reading events. For a complete list of guests and events, check out their program guide on the festival website.

\* \* \*



Photo courtesy of the Anvil Centre

▲ Hey Viola! explores the life of a Canadian civil rights hero.

**23rd Annual International Mars Society Convention**  
Oct. 15–18  
[www.marssociety.org](http://www.marssociety.org)

The Colorado-based Mars Society will be hosting the 23rd Annual International Mars Society Convention all over the world via the Internet! Through the use of unique technology, it will be possible to not only hold presentations, panel discussions and debates, but also to allow people from around the world to participate, posing questions and interacting with one another, creating a virtual global convention of a type never seen before. The Mars Society's four-day international conference will bring together leading scientists, government policymakers, commercial space executives, science journalists, and space advocates to discuss the latest scientific and technological developments and challenges related to the human and robotic exploration of Mars and the eventual human settlement of the Red Planet.

\* \* \*

**Hey Viola!**  
Oct. 15–25  
[www.anvilcentre.com/our-events/hey-viola](http://www.anvilcentre.com/our-events/hey-viola)

The Anvil Centre will present the premiere of Hey Viola!, a musical exploration of Canadian civil rights hero, Viola Desmond, performed from Oct. 15–25. Viola Desmond is best known for her courage in refusing to leave the whites-only section of Nova Scotia's Roseland cinema in 1946.

Vancouver songstress and performer Krystle Dos Santos, with the support of local musicians Chris Davis, Steven Charles and Mary Ancheta, brings the life of Desmond to the stage using the dynamic and inspirational music that filled the home of this trailblazer of the civil rights movement. Using the cabaret style musical format enriches the telling of her amazing and powerful story, ultimately an important Canadian story.

\* \* \*

**Uprooted**  
Playing now;  
Q&A: Oct. 17, 3:30 p.m.  
[www.someassembly.ca](http://www.someassembly.ca)

Uprooted is a digitally-adapted theatre production that stems from conversations with diverse youth who are anxious about climate change. Formerly intended to be presented live in May 2020, this production has been re-staged and filmed at the York Theatre. Written by youth with help from professional playwright Valerie Methot, and produced by a team of youth and theatre professionals across Canada, Uprooted hopes to strengthen the response to climate change and promote mental health management. Three friends on an annual camping trip must suddenly face a threat to the B.C. forest they love. Will they take a stand for future generations and protect what they view as sacred?

\* \* \*

**Op Art: Victor Vasarely**  
Oct. 17, 2020–April 5, 2021  
[www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca)

Celebrated as the father of Op Art (Optical Art), the Hungarian-French artist Victor Vasarely (1906–1997) is internationally renowned for his colourful abstract patterns and playful Pop aesthetic. Stimulating the eye, his vibrant paintings, prints and sculptures produce the optical illusion of dynamic movement: they appear to pulse, shimmer and vibrate. This exhibition, being hosted by the Vancouver Art Gallery, showcases Vasarely's artistic production primarily from the 1960s and '70s, at the peak of his popularity.

\* \* \*

**Halloween Mystery Nights**  
Every October Night  
[www.vancouvermysteries.com](http://www.vancouvermysteries.com)

Looking for something to do for the Halloween season? The Downtown Vancouver Mystery Nights returns this year with games every night in October. Hosted by Canada's first mystery game company, their outdoor mystery games are unique outdoor gaming experiences, built in Vancouver for Vancouver, based on real-life adventures set specifically in Vancouver. For the month of October, there are two games to choose from: an outdoor murder mystery challenge or an outdoor spy game. For more information on their games, check out their website.

\* \* \*

**Hallows' Eve**  
Available while supplies last  
[www.gatewaytheatre.com](http://www.gatewaytheatre.com)

In lieu of hosting theatre performances this season, Gateway Theatre will be offering *Hallows' Eve*, a miniature 3-D theatre and a play that they can stage in the comfort and safety of their own home. Illustrated by local interdisciplinary artist Keely O'Brien, each paper theatre kit features a ready to assemble theatre with whimsical paper characters and enchanting set pieces. To inspire creativity and storytelling, the paper theatre also comes with a fun Halloween-themed play, *Hallows' Eve*, written by Jasmine Chen, Gateway's artistic and community Producer.



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