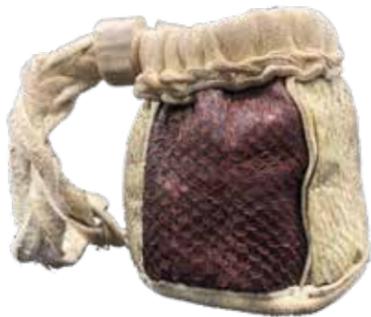


From fish skins to practical objects – an almost forgotten craft
Page 4



The Source

forum of diversity

Vol 21 No 24 | February 9–23, 2021

www.thelasource.com



Photo by Pete Hoang

Verbatim

Back in BC after 7 years

by LIANGMEI LI

It felt reassuring to see the “two-metre” marks on the ground at the London Heathrow Airport. In late October, I was travelling from Paris to Vancouver with a layover in London. Back then, France had consistently more than 50,000 new cases daily and was on the brink of announcing a second lock-down. In Paris, I was so used to seeing “one-metre” marks everywhere. I was lucky to escape Paris.

I left BC at the age of 17 to explore the world. First, I went to Montréal for university. Like many Asian kids who moved to Canada as a teenager, I took mostly science classes in high school because it was easier to get good grades when English wasn't my first language. To fill the knowledge gap, I studied western literature and civilizations at university to my heart's content. A resident on the plateau, I discovered popular brunch spots, bars, boutiques, events and festivals the city has to offer. Life was great. I didn't miss Vancouver at all.

After two or three years and a few summer classes in Europe, I felt an urge to live there and experience another culture in depth. Obsessed with the ideal Parisian life portrayed in movies – the Seine River, vintage book dealers, baguettes and wine, I devoured French test prep books. I ended up moving there to pursue a master's degree three years ago. I hopped into every museum and gallery, danced on cobblestone streets, and had drinks on outdoor terraces. Gradually, I started to live like a local and developed a routine. I got myself a movie card that granted me unlimited access to selected cinemas, a Philharmonie subscription for cheap concert tickets, and an Opera forfait for young people. Notre Dame, Shakespeare & Co

See “Verbatim” page 4

Will Power starts with a cliff-hanger

by VICTOR VAN DER MERWE

Vancouver filmmaker Calixte Leblanc's 40-minute film *Will Power* is showing at this year's Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival (VIMFF) from February 19 to 28. Part of VIMFF's Climbing Show, it follows Red Bull athlete and ice climber Will Gadd as he travels to China

in search of new ice routes in the Taihang Mountains. The range runs for 400 kilometers along the eastern edge of the Loess Plateau in the central provinces of Shanxi, Henan and Hebei.

Leblanc explains that China is not the first country that comes to mind when people think about ice climbing. “I wanted

to make something about ice climbing but go visit an area in the world that is very difficult for most people to commit to go to,” admits Leblanc.

“*Will Power* was a project that I had wanted to do for a long time,” he says.

A slippery start

Leblanc pitched the idea to a producer and to Will Gadd who

had been to China the previous year to go ice climbing. Gadd was excited to go back and do it with a film crew because he knew of the country's potential for new ice climbing routes.

But even getting into the country really helped cement the idea that this was going to be an adventure. The challenges of planning how to film in China

See “*Will Power*” page 7

Also in this issue



Wanted:
pollinators
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Soul and hope
feed dreamers
Page 6

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Cultural Spotlight

Families prepare for Lunar New Year celebrations

by KATE KOVALEVA

Although widely used throughout the world, the Gregorian calendar is not the only one around and not the only one with New Year's celebrations in January.

The Lunisolar calendar, which tracks both solar years and lunar months, is responsible for the festivities falling on different days each year. In China, the largest country celebrating the Lunar New Year, the Lunisolar and Gregorian calendars are used concurrently.

Asian and non-Asian communities are gearing up for Lunar New Year celebrations of their own this year, the year of the Ox, come Feb.12.

Tết: Vietnamese New Year and the first day of spring

Chi Bui, originally from Vietnam, speaks about the holidays with fondness.

"People say 'Happy New Year!' [at midnight on New Year's Eve]," says Bui, "and family and friends come and celebrate together in the house."

Bui says that on the first day of the year, her mother turns on the gas stove and all the lights in the house.

"We open the stove and we put it on and we boil water ... it's for good luck."

She says that the flames from the gas stove are kept on for a few hours to symbolize the warmth, happiness and brightness which is hoped for in the new year. There is a lot of preparation before the festivities and the house is thoroughly cleaned.

"That's what my mom and dad are doing right now, making [the house] very neat – and buying new clothes," says Bui.

Different types of foods, like rice cakes, are prepared in advance and the house is decorated with colourful flowers. Yellow and red are considered particularly festive.

Everyone is involved in the preparation, including children, who often help with cooking and cleaning. However, the children enjoy themselves in spite of these responsibilities.

"[Children] get lucky money from older people, they have



▲ Lunar New Year Parade or not, the Ox will bring the energy necessary to face hardships.

fun, and eat all they want; there is no school," Bui says.

When asked about special traditions that take place, Bui recalls that the first person to visit a family's home on the first day of the year is often carefully chosen. This is because the first guest inadvertently decides the family's fortune for the whole year.

Other traditions include being careful not to break things, as it bodes poorly for the new year, and not throwing garbage out, which can symbolize throwing luck away.

At midnight on the first day, in accordance with Buddhist tradition, Bui's family makes rice and other foods and brings them outside.

"We place all the food on a small table or chair and pray to the sky," she says. It is the time when the guardians of each house return to heaven and the offerings are meant to assist them on their journey.

Gung Hay Fat Choy: prosperity and happiness for the Chinese

"I'm not sure what it would be like in China, because it's a bigger deal there ... but we only [celebrate with] immediate family," says Jessica, who prefers not to reveal her real name.

In their East Vancouver home, siblings and parents are preparing for the holiday, though Jessica's mom is the main organizer.

She does the grocery shopping and cooks all the meals for

the family during the New Year celebration. Aromas of cooking rice, a variety of delicacies and mandarin oranges permeate their home.

Jessica says that on the night before Chinese New Year, her mom puts little mandarin oranges around the house.

"She also gets red money envelopes for us," says Jessica, "and she likes the new bills that haven't been used yet, so she goes to the bank [to get them]."

Although every family celebrates differently, some traditions live on. Jessica's family, for instance, always shares the first and last meal of the year together.

Nian Gao, the traditional Chinese New Year cake is prepared for her parents' friends. Jessica amusingly describes it as a "really sticky pie that you bake."

"Mom [used to] say, don't cut your hair on New Year's, because cutting it off is like shortening your life, and wear something red for good luck," says Jessica. "But as the years go on people are less traditional about it, and not as strict as before."

With the help of the Ox, 2021 promises to promote stability, balance, and prosperity. The Ox being a reliable, dependable, and resilient animal, this year is synonymous with hard work, determination, strength, resilience, and never demanding praise. A nod indeed to all healthcare professionals, here, and across the world.

Xīnnián kuàilè! 🐮



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Empowerment and hope at GenOne

by GEOFF RUSS

In a series of talks and workshops, the University of British Columbia (UBC) First Generation Student Union (FGSU) and guest speakers will inform and empower their audience for the pandemic and beyond. People of all ages and backgrounds can attend the GenOne Conference.

Co-presidents Zahra Fazal, age 23, and Jaskirat Malhi, age 21, share their thoughts about the GenOne Conference on Feb. 21 titled *First Generation Low Income Students and the Future*.

Founder and president of the FGSU, Fazal is a student at UBC and volunteers on the UBC First Aid Student Team. Malhi is a Microbiology major in his fourth year at the UBC Faculty of Science. As heads of the FGSU, the two lead a union dedicated to empowering students who are the first in their families to attend university. The FGSU's goals include permanently breaking barriers to inclusion and accessibility for first generation and low income (FGLI) students.

The GenOne Conference is a groundbreaking new event organized to provide a platform for those objectives that both Fazal and Malhi have worked tirelessly to organize. Conducted remotely, the GenOne Conference is an important piece for achieving the FGSU's goals.

"This national program conference, being the first of its kind in Canada, is hopefully a testament to the power of equity-seeking groups coming together unitedly to share the platform of change with others," says Fazal.

COVID-19 and FGLI students

"This distinction between access and inclusion is jarring during the pandemic, often leaving FGLI students feeling fatigued from battling everything alone," says Fazal.

Breaking down barriers to accessing university resources and support systems is another topic the GenOne Conference will cover. The pandemic made lives harder for FGLI students, so the FGSU took action. They forged partnerships with UBC campus resource centres to help the most affected FGLI students.

"We have partnered with the Food Security Initiative at UBC to advise on matters of food insecurity that have been heightened on campus during the pandemic," says Fazal, who studies Global Health & Nutrition.

topics the GenOne Conference will also cover.

Empowering FGLI voices at GenOne

Founded only in 2019, the FGSU put together the GenOne Conference in 2021 to give FGLI students

another, bigger conference next year. To make that happen, GenOne's co-presidents have a particular goal.

"[We hope] to extend our impact beyond UBC and to other Canadian institutions," says Fazal.

“Getting your voice heard is the first step in establishing a movement and change.”

Zahra Fazal, co-president of UBC's First Generation Student Union



Photo courtesy of UBCFGSU

▲ Getting your voice heard is the first step in establishing a movement and change says Zahra Fazal.

GenOne's previews detail how FGLI students were hit hard both systemically and financially by the pandemic. Food security and financial stability for FGLI students are

a powerful platform backed by nine sponsorships. Keynote speakers include MLA Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Carolyn Roberts, a prolific speaker and educator of over 20 years at Simon Fraser University.

Discourses on systemic inequity across society have grown in recent times, and this large conference serves as proof of that. Fazal and Malhi see the opportunity to build on GenOne and take it even further in the future.

"We definitely see room for growth within university discourses on equity and inclusion. Destigmatizing the FGLI identity and advocating for marginalized students will raise awareness and support for the underrepresented FGLI students," says Fazal.

Hopes for the future

GenOne is the start of what the FGSU plans to build upon to hold

Students and other people of all backgrounds are encouraged to attend GenOne alongside their FGLI counterparts.

"There is a need to bring more awareness to the FGLI identity in general. GenOne is hoping to achieve that by inviting both FGLI and non-FGLI students," says Fazal.

The co-presidents believe GenOne will generate momentum for the FGSU. After GenOne, the FGSU envisions future conferences with greater attendance and interest.

"Getting your voice heard is the first step in establishing a movement and change," says Fazal, regarding the future of the FGSU and its goals. ✉

For more information please visit:
www.ubcfgsu.org/genone
<https://open.spotify.com/show/4gaxM2omYAz8S5ySZTr6qT>

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The art of tanning

Turning fish skin to leather

by XI CHEN

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) is offering a two-part online workshop by local artist, maker and educator Janey Chang about fish skin tanning on Feb. 20 and Feb. 27.

Fish skin tanning is a process of turning raw fish skins into beautiful and durable textiles that can be used to make anything one would use leather for, such as clothing, footwear, wallets, pouches and even jewelry.

"Tanning is the process of adding substances, tanning acids specifically, to the fish skin; it is actually a way to preserve the skin. The tanning acid binds to the threads of what make up the skin, making it thicker, bulkier, stronger and



Photo by Janey Chang

▲ A bag made of tanned fish skin.

long-lasting," Chang explains.

Chang first learned the craft years ago at an ancestral skills gathering in the United States and gradually developed her own techniques through continuous learning and experimenting over the years. Her workshop will mainly focus on tea tanning techniques, but she says one can also use bark or oil to tan the fish skin.

The origin of fish tanning can be traced back to many different parts of the world: Japan, China, Scandinavian countries, Indigenous people of Alaska and Canada. However, wherever it is practiced around the world, Chang says it is an almost forgotten skill.

"In my work, I have been contacted by a lot of Indigenous groups asking me to teach them, because they have some memories but they don't know how to do it," says Chang. "There aren't a lot of teachers of this skill. For me, I feel really strongly about helping to revive the skill. I have taken my tanning knowledge, trying to expand that and give it back to other communities."

Chang says many types of fish – salmon, black cod, trout – can be tanned. She usually gets her fish skins from the restaurant industry, which would normally discard them.

"This is also something that I love because I am taking a waste product and making something beautiful, use-



Photo by Guider Cheverie

▲ Janey Chang revives an ancient tradition practiced around the world.

ful and proactive out of it," she says.

A sense of connection

Chang has lived many lives before she became an artist and educator. She worked in the cor-

porate world as a legal secretary for a number of years in Toronto before moving back to Vancouver to be more connected to nature. She then worked in the Department of Psychiatry at UBC for a while before going back to

school to pursue her passion in outdoor education, where eventually she stumbled upon fish tanning as a calling.

"I really want something that connects on a deeper level, that would also help me to answer the question who am I on this land, when not coming from this land, where is my place in the world and how can I belong here," she says.

Chang, the first in her Chinese immigrant family to be born in Canada, says she felt a sense of grief growing up not connected to her ancestral culture.

"The work I do is all about transformation; I really struggle as I wasn't connected to my Chinese culture. I am looking at ways to express myself that I really connect to. It is taking me a long time; fish tanning is a door opener for me. I realize I can feel at home where I am but I can also be connected to old ancestral skills by doing this work. It is something that connects me to both here and there," Chang says.

She believes tanning is not only a practical skill but a healing skill from the land that deepens one's relationship with nature.

"The land has power, it has energy – it is so healing. When I can grow deep roots here and know the land around me, then I can reach back to my Chinese ancestry," shares Chang. ✨

For more information please visit www.museumofvancouver.ca

► "Verbatim" from page 1

and the Seine were just an eight-minute scenic walk away. I was at a sweet spot in my relationship with Paris: between the initial excitement and eventual boredom.

Sometimes when I got absorbed into work, I wasn't aware of the beautiful things Paris had to offer: I despised tourists who took pictures of the Eiffel Tower from Trocadero. I complained about the crowded metro, pickpockets, strikes, long working hours and complicated paperwork.

Then the pandemic happened. It deprived me of the things I

love most about Paris and amplified its imperfections. I was finishing up my degree with an internship during the first lockdown. I did remote work in my tiny apartment when most of my colleagues retreated to their houses elsewhere in France.

I started to cook more, but never mastered the art of picking fresh vegetables. "It's not good," the grocer down the street said as I picked up a garlic. "Take this one instead". Thanks to him, I always took the freshest vegetables home.

In May, as the situation got better, I was able to go outside again. The grocer told me that he was going to Tunisia for a

vacation in July. "What are you going to do after you graduate this summer?" he asked. "I'm going to look for a full-time job in Paris," I answered cheerfully, looking forward to tasting my Gariguettes strawberries.

I started looking for jobs while taking online classes in September. Unfortunately, the virus was circulating again, faster than the first wave. Sitting on my foldable bed and staring at my foldable table, I couldn't see any light at the end of the tunnel. Looking for a job in a tiny place felt excruciating. Right there and then I missed Canada profoundly, its vast territory, large living space, significantly

faster paperwork, laid-back working hours, and kind smiles.

I seized that opportunity to book a one-way ticket to Canada



▲ Vancouver-Paris-Vancouver, a whirlwind romance.

to take a break from Paris. I felt an immediate relief. It turned out that Paris clung tightly to me. I had to power through at least ten registered letters plus phone calls, and in-person visits to cancel services like gym, cinema and banking.

I can always go back to Paris when the world wakes up from the pandemic, and when I'm recharged with energy. I'm enjoying nature walks, and catching up over Asian food with family. Cities never stop evolving and growing while we are away. There's still so much to discover in Vancouver! ✨



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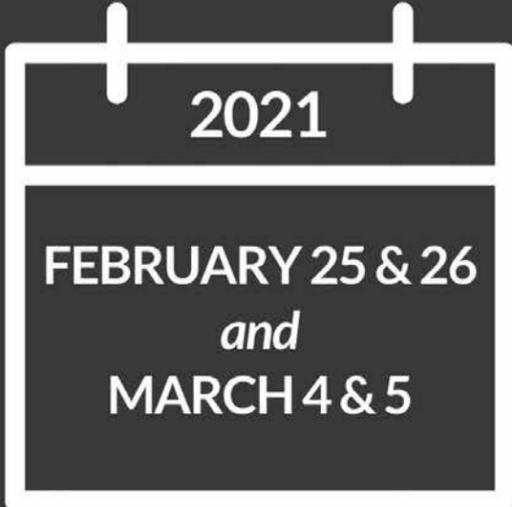
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Finding flowers

by TINA QU

The late Mi'kmaq artist Mike MacDonald (1941–2006) planted a number of butterfly gardens across Canada to bring awareness to people about habitat destruction and the impacts on wildlife and medicinal plants. Many of his pieces focused on his surroundings, especially nature, and one of his main projects was the series *Butterfly Gardens*. He drew inspiration for his work from his aboriginal background as well as Western sources and science.

Finding Flowers: Examining Intersections of Art, Ecology, and Pedagogy, inspired by MacDonald's vision, is an online seminar aimed to bridge art and science in order to promote conserva-

tion and include the Colla's and co-PI Lisa Myers' research findings.

An admirable dedication

As an ecologist and assistant professor, Colla has been studying pollinator decline for over a decade and was one of the first to document the decline of native bees in North America.

"I am a conservation scientist and have worked on a variety of government documents and politics around pollinators in addition to publishing scientific research on the subject," adds Colla. "My Native Pollinator Research Lab also focuses on the conservation management of at-risk species and bringing the research to the policy-science interface."

Colla is eager to bring her experiences to *Finding Flowers*. In her studies, she found that the

“We incorporate scientific study, like understanding pollination systems, community service, and art to deepen the conversation and facilitate knowledge-sharing.

Sheila Colla, ecologist

tion and a better understanding of human connection to the natural world. The seminar will be held on Feb. 11.

Sheila Colla, a trained ecologist and co-leader of *Finding Flowers*, says MacDonald created the pollinator gardens as spaces for contemplation. These spaces were also a form of resistance in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Given how mainstream they are today, Colla thinks how interesting it is to see the effects of MacDonald's work. He also created a video installation called *Touched by the Tears of a Butterfly* in 1994. As someone with a deep connection to nature, MacDonald remains a significant contemporary artist to this day.

loss of pollinators and native landscapes threaten natural ecosystems' sustainability and the people connected to these biological processes. The *Finding Flowers* project includes various activities such as the replanting of MacDonald's Butterfly Gardens across Canada, pollination studies of medicinal plants, and knowledge-sharing events like the upcoming seminar.

Raising awareness through conversations

"Our disciplinary work values diverse knowledge systems to connect people to the environment they live in," says Colla. "These



Photo courtesy of Pixabay

▲ Sheila Colla says that the late Mi'kmaq artist Mike MacDonald created pollinator gardens as spaces for contemplation.

"Our project builds on his work to further the conversation around relations between people, pollinators, plants, and land," says Colla. "We incorporate scientific study, like understanding pollination systems, community service, and art to deepen the conversation and facilitate knowledge-sharing." *Finding Flowers* is a two-year project funded by the federal tri-council New Frontiers grant, which supports interdisciplinary research.

The seminar will go into detail about the *Finding Flowers*

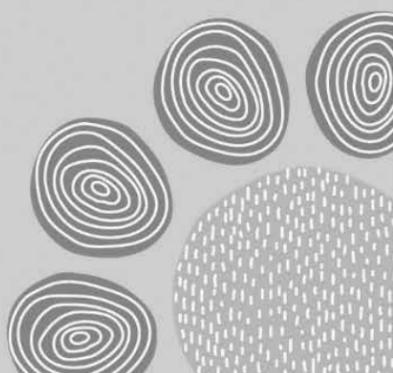
kinds of conversations are important to have so that people can see that there are multiple issues and perspectives."

Colla argues that solving environmental challenges requires a holistic understanding that can only be reached through these types of discussions. For now, she remains hopeful to see even more progress on conservatism in the future. ✍

For more information, please visit www.ubcfarm.ubc.ca/finding-flowers-art-ecology-pedagogy.

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Catalogue Baby: a memoir of infertility

by LIN WEAVER

A book is only words. There are so many emotions that cannot be described with words, says Myriam Steinberg, author of *Catalogue Baby*, a graphic novel, that tells the story of an indomitable young woman's ordeal to get pregnant.

"One would need too many words to really explain the range of thoughts and feelings going through one's mind!" says Steinberg.

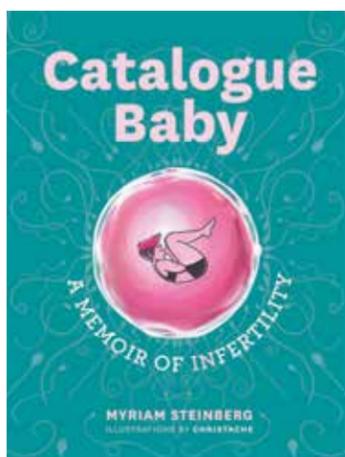
Steinberg is among the featured authors at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Vancouver Festival which opens on Feb. 20.

An honest approach

Despite the emotional and physical scars endured, Steinberg wants others who struggle with infertility and are trying to conceive to remain hopeful and to persevere.

"With images, you are confronted with emotions at a much deeper level," she says. "You can really play with imagery to convey what it's really going on."

Catalogue Baby has become a resource for all women and couples facing such challenges; and



▲ With images, readers are confronted with emotions at a much deeper level says Myriam Steinberg.

a reference for the medical professionals and fertility clinics to share with their patients.

The experiences described in the book will be just another way to break down the barriers and the taboos, says Steinberg. She wants to make the patient feel less lonely and strange.

The graphic format of the book makes for a very easy read. The images not only give an overview of the story but also an immediate visual sense of what

is happening. The illustrations convey joy, hope, heartbreak, laughter; and with their bitter-sweet, humorous realism they spell out life itself.

Steinberg's five year struggles to bring a baby into the world fortunately had a happy ending, as she is now the proud mom of beautiful twins: a boy, Isaak, and a girl, Abigail.

Why a graphic novel?

Steinberg chose a graphic novel format as her first creative endeavor because the fertility journey has highs and lows.

"Yes, there are the miscarriages and losses, but there are also the hilarious things that are going on, so many funny things, as well as the devastating heartbreaks," she says. "At first, I thought the book should be like a play, or a one-person show. But when you combine the two, the images support the words, and there is interplay that is really powerful; and the humorous moments make the ordeal more bearable, like life itself."

The title, *Catalogue Baby*, comes from the sperm donors catalogue at the sperm bank, where the author chose the donor through photos, descriptions, medical history, and even essays as to why they donated.

The choice was difficult and resulted in many spreadsheets to eventually settle on the right person's sperm.

"I wanted to have a baby in my thirties, and I never wanted to be a single mom," remembers Steinberg. "I was always hoping to meet a guy I could have children with, then five years ago, the man I had been dating wasn't ready to have children, so we broke up. And I decided to have a baby on my own. The trying part turned out to be more difficult than I had ever imagined."

However, after multiple failed UI and IVF, several miscarriages, the donor eggs implant was successful, and Steinberg is already planning a sequel to *Catalogue Baby*.

Steinberg will talk about the difficulties of her pregnancy with the twins, and her determination not to terminate one of the twin's gestations despite the odds. The birth of two healthy babies not only proved her right, but the journey was well worth it. ✍

For more information visit:
www.cataloguebabynovel.com
www.jccgv.com/jewish-book-festival/featured-authors

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Adia Benton

Spy, Patrol, Police: Black Life and the Production of Epidemiological Knowledge from Atlanta, Georgia to Freetown, Sierra Leone

FEBRUARY 25

Darcy Matthews

Relatives of the Deep: The Ethnoecology of a Lekwungen Archipelago in the Salish Sea

MARCH 11

Hannah McElgun

The Politics of Hopi Language Circulation: How to make a sign point back

APRIL 1

Liz Chin

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Do you find it in the buildings that make your community unique or do you hear it in the special stories your family tells? Perhaps you experience it at cultural festivals and in the taste of many cuisines. Or maybe you find it on your favourite hikes and when you stop to admire scenes of rivers, fields and hills. Or you think of the generations of people who came before you or the newcomers to your community.

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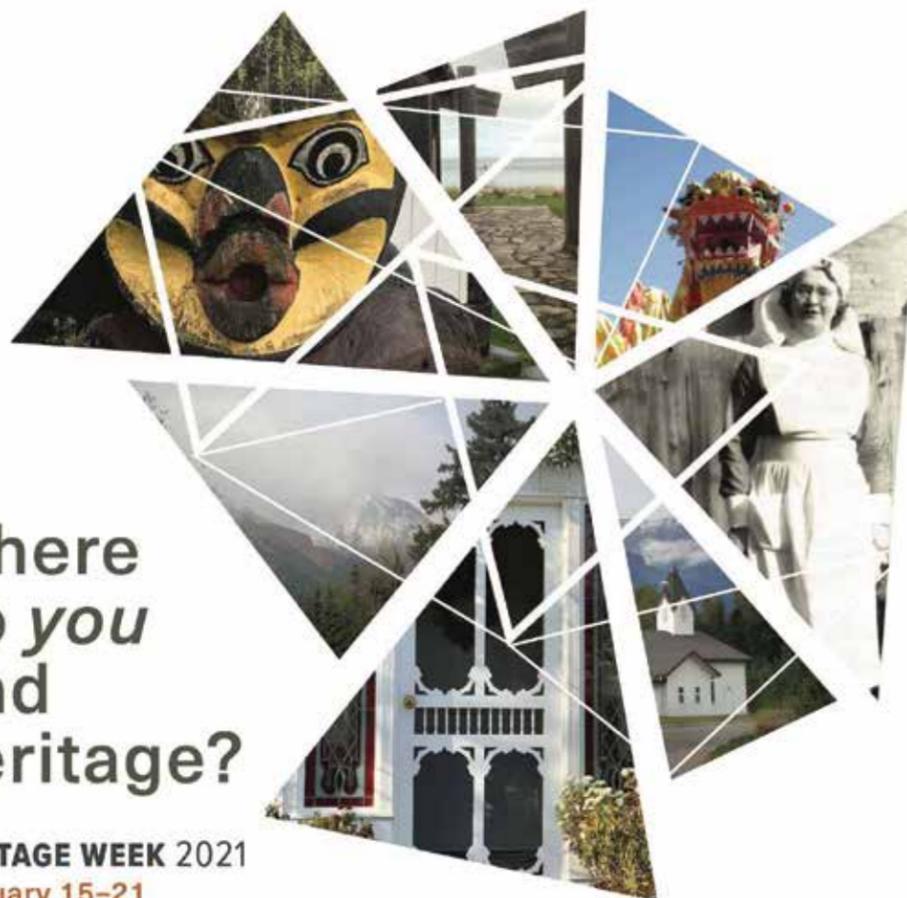
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Soul and Dreamers: digital jazz performance

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Jazz singer Magos Herrera will reunite her smooth and soulful voice with Brooklyn Rider string quartet for an online performance on Feb.12, presented by the Chan Centre. The show sees Herrera and Brooklyn Rider revisit their 2018 collaboration, *Dreamers*, an album which brings a jazzy and *cámara* (chamber music) twist to Ibero-American classics.

"I think one of my survival instincts as an artist is that it's human nature to keep evolving, to keep moving..." says Herrera. "So, I have that very clear in my head, the idea to keep inspiring yourself and exposing yourself to innovation and new ideas."

A diversity of influence

Having grown up listening to Duke Ellington albums, orchestral records and what she deems very traditional Cuban music, Herrera says her musical palette has been diverse from the start. So, when it comes to writing and performing her own compositions and arrangements, it's no surprise that the New York-based, Mexican-born singer has embraced a diversity of styles and influences across her career, all while remaining grounded in her musical roots.

Herrera feels each album has a narrative and must decide how to use instrumentation to provide the emotional drive.

"It will have some jazz harmony somewhere there, even if it's chamber music. And the kinds of collaborators I work with will understand that I'll need that frame of harmonic sophistication and freedom. The way I improvise I need some space to do my thing," says Herrera.



▲ Magos Herrera and Brooklyn Rider bring *Dreamers* to Vancouver audiences.

The process has proved essential in staying true to the story she wants to tell in her music. While in pursuit of branching out and trying to keep things fresh, Herrera says it's important to find collaborators on the same page. Doubly so, she adds, when working together on an entire album, as was the case with the eponymous Brooklyn Rider string quartet.

"I wanted to record and to collaborate with musicians like Brooklyn Rider, not only because they're incredible musicians, but because they understand philosophically and emotionally what I wanted to say, and they have the openness and the flexibility to ex-

plore this repertoire," says Herrera.

Hopes and dreams

Musically, *Dreamers* is a jazzy chamber celebration of the Great Latin-American Songbook. Throughout the album, Herrera and Brooklyn Rider bring their own American twist to Argentinian zamba, Brazilian bossa nova and Mexican folk song and in doing so, give praise to the Latin American cultural diversity that exists in the United States.

"We know what Trump's policy and perspective was on immigrants. And I took it really personally because I think it was ignorant... in the sense that, we all know immigrants are a vast palette of possibilities and back-

grounds. So, my response was to create an album and I wanted to portray the grandness and beauty and deepness and grace of the Latin American song book."

Indeed, the album's title is a nod to the DREAM Act in the United States, a highly politicized and as-of-yet unpassed bill which would, if passed, grant official residency and the right to work to unauthorized immigrants who entered the U.S. below the age of majority, who are often referred to as 'Dreamers.'

But as Herrera explains, the album, much like the title, is full of hope and celebration, making it more than just a political statement.

"I mean, [the title] has a double lecture, definitely. But it also has to do with what the *Dreamers* represent... As a society, if we don't keep dreaming and envisioning all these things that we want for all of us as a planet, as humanity, then things just happen because someone has ramped up them," says Herrera.

Soul and hope are what the signer intends to bring to the Vancouver audience.

"I can't wait to go on the road with this group that I absolutely love. You will see that the *Dreamer's* journey is a very soulful one," she says. ✍

For more information visit the following sites:
www.chancentre.com
www.magosherrera.com

► "Will Power" from page 1

started before a single ice pick struck the side of the Taihang Mountains. "Just getting the logistics of what we need to know when we get to the border, or if we need passports for our camera equipment, or do we need to put a deposit down, and all these things are very challenging," says Leblanc.

Gadd and the crew left for China in January 2019. A month earlier on December 1, 2018, Canada had agreed to a U.S. extradition request to detain Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer (CFO) of Chinese telecom giant Huawei for fraud and conspiracy to circumvent U.S. sanctions against Iran. Nine days later China arrested Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, on suspicion of espionage.

The political tension between China and Canada at the time of filming made it the perfect setting for his new project but also added more challenges. Both Canada and China changed their travel advisories cautioning potential travelers. "All of a sudden, we are sitting here, plane tickets booked, crew put together and we have journalist visas, we have all this equipment, and China arrests two Canadians," says Leblanc.

The uncertainty was a bit too much for the family members of some of the crew and Leblanc

had to adapt very quickly. "I had to find another photographer, and I just took over a DP. When we were there, I pulled my sound guy aside and said, okay you are now the DP and I will direct. We just kind of had to improvise," says Leblanc.

And then, one of the nice surprises along the way was how easy it actually was to get into the country.

"We thought that they were going to give us trouble at the border once we arrived in Beijing. That never happened; it was smooth sailing," says Leblanc.

With the help of the local contact, River, a Chinese ice climber that accompanies Gadd on his adventure, the film maker easily navigated the challenges of speaking the language and reading road signs. All the pieces were in place,

A long fascination with ice climbing

Leblanc's fascination with ice climbing began 20 years ago when moved to Jasper and discovered a love for the sport. As a fan of the ice climbing, he also became a fan of Will Gadd.

"Will Gadd was the king of ice climbing, and I started following him before social media. I would see him in magazines and stuff like that," says Leblanc.

Soon, Leblanc picked up a camcorder and started making



▲ Will Gadd and "River" (He Chuan).

home movies. As he got better, he knew what his ideal subject for an ice climbing project would be, if this new hobby of film making would ever blossom into a business.

"I felt that one day – if I ever turn this into a business – I want to film Will Gadd ice climbing."

Over the years, Leblanc kept developing his career in sports journalism. He was Outdoor Adventure columnist for the CBC and did plenty of film work for Wild-TV. With that background experience, he could start putting together a project for Gadd.

Leblanc saw Gadd as a great host and wanted the project to be about more than just the sport of ice climbing. *Will Power* took on the structure of a docuseries feel where Gadd was the host. "Will is a pretty decent guy on camera. He's got a lot of strong beliefs and he is very good at articulating. He is a public speaker that does TED talks," says Leblanc.

Will Power takes on a familiar format, but with a bit of a twist. It is structured like this in hopes that this could lead to Leblanc filming Gadd on more ice climbing adventures around the world in parts where the sport is not that well known. ✍

For more information visit:
www.vimff.org

February 9–23, 2021

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Family Day, Valentine's Day and the Lunar New Year all happen this month, which would normally mean there'd be lots of events and festivals happening. But, since this is 2021 and the world is still in a pandemic... well, let's just say there are still a lot of online events and activities to check out. Stay warm and stay safe everyone!

* * *

Powell River Online Film Festival
Feb. 5–16
www.prfilmfestival.ca

This year is the 20th Anniversary of the Powell River Film Festival and the first festival online, continuing to bring the best of international, Canadian and locally produced films to Powell River and British Columbia. Check out a documentary about plastic pollution, a drama about living under a repressive governmental regime and the sequel to the award-winning documentary, *The Corporation*. For more details about these and other films playing at the festival, check out their website.

* * *

Un/settled: Reading Black Women, Art, Poetry and Place
Feb. 10, 7–8 p.m.
www.wordvancouver.ca

Join artist-writer Chantal Gibson, poet Otoniya J. Okot Bitek, and SFU librarian Ebony Magnus for a night of readings and reflection, as they discuss *un/settled*, the towering, photo-poetic art installation at the corner of Hastings and Richards that drapes Black womanhood over 240 square feet of SFU Belzberg Library's street-front windows. In conversation, the panelists will consider what it means to centre Black bodies in the downtown landscape, and to reimagine how spaces closed by the pandemic can open dialogues about justice, solidarity and the beauty of Black lives.

* * *

Shadow Buffet at Museum of Vancouver
Opening Feb. 12
www.museumofvancouver.ca

The Museum of Vancouver will be unveiling *Shadow Buffet* in Gallery 11 on Feb. 12. The installation features a series of round, plate-shaped paper food suspended from the ceiling just above eye level, hovering over a long white table. Each piece is top-lit so that its shadow – a collection of food items – is cast onto the tabletop below. These paper cut-outs not only reference food, they connect to moments and places associated with the experience of eating. By inviting audiences to take on an active role in creating their own cut-outs and animating the work, these immersive environments explore audience/performer relationships and the opportunity for interplay between the two. By combining multiple hand-held light sources, the artists and their public audiences animate the artwork, playing with the size, scale and intensity of the layered shadows.

* * *

Chinese Shadow Puppetry Workshops
Feb. 15 & 21, 1–3 p.m.
www.gatewaytheatre.com

Did you know Chinese shadow puppetry dates back more than a thousand years? Through a trick of the light, this ancient practice can pique your curiosity, promote cultural values and entertain whole communities. Embrace a time-honoured artform this Lunar New Year – join theatre and puppetry artist Annie Katsura Rollins at the Gateway Theatre's online workshop to discover magic in the shadows. Uncover the mysteries of this ancient artform. With Rollins as your guide, you'll learn about the origins of Chinese shadow puppetry, discover how these extraordinary puppets are made and catch a glimpse of their intricate details up-close.

* * *

Body and Soul
Feb. 17–23
www.dancehouse.ca

DanceHouse will present the online Canadian premiere of *Body and Soul*, choreographed by Vancouver's Crystal Pite and performed by the Paris Opera Ballet. A work in three distinct parts, the show articulates Pite's ongoing fascination with conflict, connectedness and the embodiment of the human spirit. The performance begins with voice-over text that describes, in purely physical terms, a scene of conflict between two individuals. As the performance progresses, the script's meaning morphs and deepens with each iteration: conflict creates a vital, compelling tension between individuals,

between groups, between species. The company's mastery as an ensemble is evident in Pite's complex choreographic swarms; individual dancers are virtuosic in breathtaking solos and duets. The dancers evoke scenes of epic protest, profound personal struggle and collective survival.

* * *

NASA Perseverance Rover Landing on Mars
Feb. 18
<https://mars.nasa.gov/mars2020>

The Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover will search for signs of ancient microbial life, which will advance NASA's quest to explore the past habitability of Mars. The rover has a drill to collect core samples of Martian rock and soil, then store them in sealed tubes for



Photo courtesy of NASA/JPL-Caltech

▲ Perseverance will land at the Jezero Crater on Mars on Feb. 18.

* * *

Mx
Feb. 18–24
www.thecultch.com

Beneath layers of identity, can blood equal belonging? What of our culture lives within us, and how much is determined by our upbringing? If a part of your identity has never been nurtured, do attempts to rekindle it amount to appropriation? Seeking answers to these questions, our gender-questioning and mixed-race protagonist, Max, meets the famed Mz Nancy, our host for the night. Witty and glamorous, Nancy seems to have an answer for everything... but, as Max discovers, things are never black and white. This boundary-pushing, bouffon-inspired work explores what it means to be mixed-race and Black in the world today. Using bold risks, sharp comedy and African mythology, *Mx* cracks open struggles of identity and belonging through the lens of a character stuck in the in-between. Streaming online from The Cultch from Feb. 18–24.

* * *

Winter Jazz
Live Streaming Feb. 19–21
www.coastaljazz.ca

The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society will be hosting Winter Jazz, the annual free celebration at Performance Works on Granville Island. This year's edition takes place Feb. 19, 20 and 21, as live-streamed, on-line performances. In the tradition of Winter Jazz festivals past, events will be available free of charge. The schedule of performances includes two evening concerts and four daytime presentations. Check out the Coastal Jazz's website for more times and more information.

* * *

L'Amant
Feb. 20, 8 p.m.
www.lecentreculturel.com

L'Amant (The Lover) by French author Marguerite Duras was published in 1984 and won the Prix Goncourt that same year, and the Ritz-Paris-Hemingway award in 1986. This autobiographical fiction tells the story in the form of a voyage into the author's memory, her adolescence in French Indochina. The decline of the French Empire is the backdrop to this tale of passion between a 15-year old girl and a man from north China. Actress Anaïs Pellin brings us fragments of the novel by Duras, the story of an ambiguous passion and a wrenching family destiny. Le Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver will be hosting a live-streamed on Feb. 20. Check out the website for tickets and more information.



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