

The Source

forum of diversity

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Something on the shelf for everyone

by XI CHEN

Vancouver Writers Fest will return to Granville Island from Oct 18 to Oct 24 with a long lineup of exciting in-person, on-line and hybrid events featuring celebrated authors from all over the world.

“There is a little bit of something for everyone; there are events for kids. Our mission statement is to connect people to books, ideas and dialogues. If you are looking for that human connection, what you will get from our events are new perspectives and fascinating conversations about what it is to be human,” says Leslie Hurtig, artistic director of the festival.

Every year the festival invites a different guest curator to program a few events in their own

voice. This year’s guest curator is Laurence Hill, one of Canada’s most renowned writers and the winner of multiple awards.

A plethora of events at the festival

Hurtig says COVID-19 made it necessary to pivot to digital events but this has also been a positive change for the festival as it widens its audience reach. At this year’s festival, one can get a digital pass with access to 35 different events.

“We also have these hybrid events, where we have a moderator in theatre or on stage, and someone else will be beaming in. The author of *Fight Night*, Miriam Toews, will be joining us on screen; the same with American writer Anthony Doerr, who wrote *All the Lights We Cannot See*,” she adds.

There are also events that revolve around books but delve

much deeper into critical global issues through interesting dialogues.

Omar El Akkad, award-winning journalist and author of the acclaimed dystopian fiction *American War*, will host a discussion

in a divided country with civil unrest last year.

A writer’s mind, craft and spirit

El Akkad will also be featured in another event with Globe and

tered with the wreckage of the boat and the wreckage of its passengers... Facedown, with his arms outstretched, the child appears from a distance as though playing at flight... A wave brushes gently against

“Fiction is obviously fictional, but it is the truth about being human.”

Omar El Akkad, author

with American National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Evan Osnos about Osnos’ latest book *Wildland: The Making of America’s Fury*. Through individual stories, the book tries to illuminate the origins of America’s political turmoil that resulted

Mail editor Mark Medley to talk about his own work and his new novel *What Strange Paradise*, which sheds light on the tragedy of the refugee crisis.

The book opens beautifully: “The child lies on the shore. All around him the beach is lit-

the child’s hair. He opens his eyes.”

Alluding to the real-life tragedy where Alan Kurdi, a Syrian boy who was washed ashore dead in 2015, *What Strange Paradise* also starts with the arrival of a nine-

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Cultural Spotlight

Sonya Lalli – a writer breaks from conventions

by ISHA OHRI

Canadian-born author of Indian heritage Sonya Lalli is this year's Richmond's writer-in-residence. She writes novels aimed at diverse groups, and in her novels, she covers topics like interracial couples and the difficulties that women of colour face through adolescence.

Lalli attended university in her hometown of Saskatoon and later Columbia University in New York where she studied law. Later, she completed her MA in creative writing and publishing at City, University of London.

A need for representation

Since childhood, Lalli was enamoured with the art of storytelling and the power of novels. She related most to stories about romance, family dynamics and friendships. Although she loved the art of writing, as someone belonging to a minority culture in Canada, she was saddened by the lack of cultural representation in the novels she read.

"I grew up never seeing myself represented in the books I read and other media," she says.

When Lalli was gearing up to write her first novel, she decided that she was going to realize her unfulfilled dream of representation. She wanted to make sure that future generations of people of colour were able to find themselves in her novels and relate to the narrative. She wrote *The Matchmaker's List*, which helped fill in the hole that was in the market.

"[It is a] romantic comedy about a South Asian woman in Canada who is finding herself and falling in love," she says.

The novel also represents one of her fondest memories: seeing how proud her family was of her and how their teachings of independence and empowerment came to fruition in her published novel. She says that these teachings influence how she leads her life and how she approaches any part of her career.

When asked, Lalli has a hard time picking a favourite of her four novels. She loves each differently, but, if pressed to choose, she would pick *Serena Singh Flips the Script* because the main character is the complete opposite



Photo courtesy of Sonya Lalli

▲ Sonya Lalli is this year's Richmond's writer-in-residence.

to her own personality and anything she has ever written before.

"Serena is a bit of a rebel – confident in her choices about not getting married, having a family and choosing an ambitious career path. In a way, I think I wrote *Serena* to be my role model – and perhaps for some other women as well," says Lalli, of her main character.

Challenges

If publishing her first book was the biggest highlight, writing her second novel was the biggest challenge. Many young writers, she says, challenge themselves with writing the second one, since writing the first one takes up so much time.

"[After all the] time writing, revising and thinking, when we have to do it all over again, there is doubt about whether we can and, of course, imposter syndrome. In the end, I got there though," says Lalli.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lalli was able to find more time and space to write and reflect without the bustle of a commute.

"COVID has changed my mindset – and not just towards writing – in the same way it was for many people around the world: it made me realize what is most important in life and how precious

our health, life and our loved ones truly are," she says.

When asked if she faced discrimination when publishing, Lalli remarked "not overtly, no," noting that the industry has made great progress in terms of inclusivity, diversity and equality in recent years. However, there is still a long way to go. She acknowledges that authors who belong to minority groups should help others in marginalized communities break into the industry. She added that there are multiple ways to help: mentorship, online support, a friendly conversation and more.

Her advice to young writers is straightforward.

"Read as much as you can. The best way to become a better writer and learn how to tell authentic, engaging stories is to read often and widely across genres," says Lalli.

For more information, please visit: www.richmond.ca/newsevents/city/writer21sep2021.htm

Details about the program and the workshops being offered through November 2021 are available at www.richmond.ca/writerinresidence.

www.sonyalalli.com

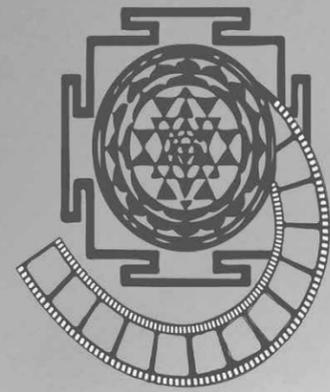
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The Bridge Program is helping newcomer youth achieve success

by GEOFF RUSS

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, Simon Fraser University's (SFU) Bridge Program, which helps newcomer youth in Canada adapt to their new surroundings and set meaningful goals for their future, took on both common and unique challenges.

Rachel Nelson, an associate director at the Office of Community Engagement (OEC) at SFU, who helps lead the program, says it exemplifies partnership and engagement with a community full of new faces.

SFU's Surrey Campus and TD Community Engagement Centre have partnered to create programs, such as the Bridge Program, for low-income families, refugees and newcomers in Canada learning English. The Bridge Program aims at supporting and mentoring high school-aged students learning English in Surrey's School District 36. Like most educational programs, the Bridge Program was moved online in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic started. That change had a major impact on its participants.

"It was hugely impacting youth in our Bridge program

who did not have the knowledge or access to a computer or a reliable way to get online," says Nelson. "As community services were shifting online, the burden fell heavily on these students who often come from large families with technological and economic barriers."

The challenges and unexpected benefits of the pandemic

"Remote learning was challenging for youth in our Bridge Program, as many came with significant education and literacy gaps, let alone not having a reliable computer to access classes at the start," says Nelson. "Not being able to receive one-on-one support made it very difficult for these youth to suddenly shift from having quality in-person academic support to attending virtual classes."

Fortunately for the Bridge Program, the CEC saw a surge of SFU students volunteer to help out during the pandemic. Many of the barriers to volunteering created by commuting were eliminated as school and work went online.

"When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many changes ensued for SFU students that likely contributed to the surge of volun-



Photo courtesy of SFU

▲ The Bridge Program helps youth newcomers and refugees acquire new skills to master their new life.

teerism," says Nelson. "All of a sudden, the things in daily life that took up time and energy such as commuting for classes or going to work were changed."

Furthermore, SFU's Surrey Campus has access to a wider pool of volunteers because physical distances were eliminated by the virtual shift.

"They came from all over Greater Vancouver. Since the commute time was no longer a factor in their decision making process to volunteer, we saw many more students from different regions engaging in SFU Surrey - TD CEC programs," says Nelson, also noting that volunteering offered an opportunity to socialize while also making a difference.

"Students no longer had to worry about squeezing in a volunteer opportunity between

their classes and work schedules," says Nelson. "They could just log in to their devices and spend an hour or two volunteering their time for initiatives they were passionate about."

"These virtual volunteer opportunities provided an opportunity for students to not only connect and engage with other people, but to use their skills and sphere of influence to make a positive difference in their communities during such a tumultuous and uncertain time," says Nelson.

Engaging with the community

Nelson says many of the Bridge Program's participants, who come from refugee backgrounds or other lived experiences, cannot always access available support programs.

"Youth and families who come with traumatic experiences often do not understand that mental health support services could be of assistance," says Nelson. "What makes it even more difficult is there is still a lack of these services available in languages other than English. Attending counselling sessions in some cultures can be problematic and families feel shame or do not understand the purpose of attending counselling."

Despite the success of the Bridge Program, Nelson sees room for improvement in the future.

"There has been enormous growth in need for the Bridge Program to continue to be embedded in the School District," she says. "In order for our refugee youths to succeed, it is essential that schools and other community service providers collaborate to manage our students from the beginning of the Bridge Program to the end of the schooling career."

The Bridge Program will be taking on new volunteers December 2021 to January 2022. For more information on the Bridge Program and how to get involved, visit: www.sfu.ca/students/get-involved/programs-and-opportunities/bridge-program.html



40th International Film Festival
Oct 01 - Oct 11



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Just A Movement
Vincent Meeseen - Belgium/France, 110min

Sat, Oct 2 6:00 pm Vancity
Sun, Oct 3 3:15 pm Cinematheque

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

Senegalese revolutionary Omar Blondin Diop was murdered in a Dakar prison in 1973, six years after his appearance in Jean-Luc Godard's new wave masterpiece La Chinoise. Belgian artist Vincent Meeseen fashions a freeform cover version of Godard's film, this time with Diop at its heart, but coursing with passionate reflections on Africa today, still shaped and scarred by colonialism, capitalism, and corruption. The imagery is rich, the ideas complex, compelling, and on point.



Bootlegger
Caroline Monnet - Canada, 81min

Tue, Oct 5 6:30 pm Cinematheque
Wed, Oct 6 4:00 pm Vancity

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

Mani, a soon to be lawyer, returns to the reserve where she grew up for research purpose. Her painful past resurfaces as she is resolved to reintegrate into the community, and gets involved in the debate around a referendum on allowing the free sale of alcohol on the reserve.



Suoad
Ayten Amin - Egypt/Tunisia/Germany, 96min

Fri, Oct 1 4:45 pm Cinematheque
Sat, Oct 9 12:30 pm Hollywood Theatre

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

This haunting drama features Bassant Ahmed in the title role; she's a beautiful, brittle young woman trapped between religious repression and the dubious freedoms of social media. Eventually, things reach the point of crisis, and it's then that director Ayten Amin changes the focus to Suoad's younger sister Rabab (Basmala Elghaiesh) and her attempt to confront a dark mystery. Amin shows a strong talent for the subtly decisive moment, and her film is finely attuned to the contradictions of online life.



Queen Of Glory
Ayten Amin - USA, 78min

Fri, Oct 1 7:15 pm Cinematheque
Sat, Oct 9 6:45 pm Rio

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

Sarah Obeng is set to move to Ohio with her boyfriend when her mother suddenly dies. She must then pick up the pieces of her mother's life and put together a traditional Ghanaian funeral in New York. In the end, Sarah uncovers more than she initially expected as she explores the world her mother left behind.



Brother's Keeper
Ferit Karahan - Turkey/Romania, 85min

Fri, Oct 8 6:00 pm Kay Meek
Mon, Oct 11 6:30 pm SFU-GCA

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

Set in a corrupt boarding school in the middle of the Eastern Anatolian mountains, Yusuf tries to save his friend Memo, who falls ill after punishment. Together, they struggle against systemic barriers in place at the school. When the staff begins to take Memo's condition seriously, secrets emerge as everyone tries to discover the root cause of his illness. Karahan explores themes of cruelty, poverty, and abuse of power.



Lamya's Poem
Alex Kronemer - USA/Canada, 88min

Sat, Oct 9 4:00 pm SFU-GCA
Sun, Oct 10 3:15 pm Kay Meek

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

In a mysterious and haunting dream world, a modern 12 year-old girl meets the 13th century young poet Rumi, as they travel through a fantastical land where luxurious airships float through the air, and unfurling, insidious black tendrils spread over a mystical city. Directed by Alex Kronemer, Lamya's Poem is a heartfelt animated tale that follows a Syrian girl as she flees her war-torn country on a perilous journey that eventually brings her to the unwelcoming shores of a European refugee camp.



The White Cube
Renzo Martens - Netherlands/Belgium, 79min

Sat, Oct 2 8:15 pm Studio Theatre
Sat, Oct 9 9:00 pm SFU-GCA

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

In his project The Repatriation of the White Cube, Dutch ironist Renzo Martens seeks out Congolese workers at two Unilever palm oil plantations and suggests a profit-share model where the workers will get paid for their art, which will be shown in galleries in the West. Martens casts himself as salesman, but also knowingly steps aside for a moving portrait of sculptor Matthieu Kasiama.



Yuni
Karnila Andini - Indonesia/Singapore/France/Australia, 95min

Sun, Oct 3 4:15 pm Vancity
Mon, Oct 11 1:30 pm Vancity

Oct 1 - Oct 11 VIFF Connect

Yuni is a typical high school girl who loves fashion makeup, the color purple, and the martial art silat. She studies hard for a coveted college scholarship. But how much longer can she turn down marriage proposals from unfamiliar men? Two of Indonesia's most brilliant feminist creators, Karnila Andini (The Seen and Unseen, VIFF 2018) and screenwriter Prima Rusdi, have teamed up for a devastating cri de coeur from women whose dreams of education and autonomy are systematically stifled.

The art of resiliency – as seen in comic books

by AMAN CHUNG

In a world of trying times, Laura Rivera inspires resiliency and hope through her beautifully drawn stories, those star heroines who do not fit in the boxes provided by society. The characters, their dynamics and the plot, cannot help but make the reader smile, as they root for the protagonists.

"It is terrible for me to always see Mexicans as thieves or illegal immigrants. I think seeing more vari[ation] of characters would have been nice to see as a kid," says Rivera, recalling her Mexican childhood.

Taking part in BC Culture Days event line-up, Rivera will be livestreaming about the process of creating comic books for all ages on Oct. 9.

When females become heroes

Born in Mexico, raised by a single mom, Rivera is no stranger to obstacles. Through her platform, she tells stories straying away from the narrative that mainstream media is always using. Breaking away from tradition, her stories focus on females that destroy the glass ceiling, who do not fit in gender norms of girls being timid and quiet;



Photo courtesy of Laura Rivera

▲ *Ninja X is about how to become a female hero.*

but rather wrote characters who know what they want and have a strong personality.

"Growing up on TV and movies in Mexico, my understanding of how other people were around the world were dependent more on what I was informed [about] through media," says Rivera.

Comic heroes are overrun by male heroes, but *Ninja X*, *Butterfly Cape* and *Project 1126* are here to shake things up, with characters that show that girls are tired of playing the damsel in distress. The characters for all her com-

ics are inspired by people in her life which gives comics another dimension altogether, preventing the reading journey from becoming stagnant.

"In high school, me and my friends were always so hyper, always doing stuff. Growing up [throughout] our childhoods we were always the shy, quiet kids and then in high school [we broke free]. We need more girls like that," Rivera explains about why her stories are female-driven and the inspiration behind *Ninja X*.

The stories and the art themselves include elements of Mexican folklore, which is best seen in *Butterfly Cape*. In a potential project, Rivera plans to have it set in the Sonoran Desert including the tribes who not just survived the desert but built a life there, a piece of Mexican history that is not as famous as its southern counterparts: the Aztecs.

Butterfly Cape is coming out on Halloween, only a couple of days before the Mexican Day of the Dead (Nov 2). This story is set in Mexico, starring Elva, a femme fatale who is learning how to use her powers to help people, as she tries to climb to the upper social class. Unlike other femme fatale stories, this includes ghosts and spirits, shining a light on Mexico's well-known violence.

Rivera writes about the things she wishes were included in literature that she read growing up.

"Seeing more adventure stories of any kind, so more adventure books with girls in them. More diverse cast of characters," says Rivera.

Ninja X is about a female ninja, who is learning what it takes to be a hero. Alongside her is Kiev, balancing her out, making this duo a fan favourite. This story is for a general audience but more so geared towards children, whereas *Butterfly Cape* is directed towards young adults. Then there is Anya in *Project 1126*, who continues to pursue her education despite the family she was staying with, and gets deported. Studying abroad, with nowhere else to go, she is stuck living in an apartment with three boys from her school. What could go wrong?

Of parents and grandparents

Growing up, Rivera contemplated becoming a doctor but her grandpa knew her, and told her and her family she is meant to be an artist. The person in her life, who made sure that this would happen is her mother, who continues to provide her support today. Her mom gave

her books to read, paid for her art lessons and sent her to college, all the while having her back and being her fighter, making sure that nothing gets in the way of her daughter's success.

Something her grandparents and mom reiterated to her is: "If you have a problem with something, you work twice as hard to solve it."

This became her mantra and drove her to where she is, ready to change the comic world and provide a diverse range of characters who will not back down, no matter what. The stories she read while growing up, she felt, lacked the diversity of real-life and kept people stuck with stereotypes, so she decided she is going to change it and this will set her apart from everyone else.

As for budding artists, Rivera has simple advice.

"Just do it. There are so many art styles, there are so many art stories. That nothing can be so bad, that nobody's going to like it because if you like it, you're not the only person who will like it," she says, encouraging other aspiring artists to try to come closer to their dreams. ✍️

For more information please visit: www.culturedays.ca

► "Writers" from page 1

year-old Syrian boy Amir on a Greek island after his perilous journey away from his war-worn home. Luckily, he meets a local teenage girl, Vanna, who tries to protect and save him.

Loosely based on the American fable *Peter Pan* and told from the perspectives of two children who don't speak the same language but are bonded together against a hostile environment, the book examines the us-against-them mentality that El Akkad feels is still all too common in today's world.

"I think the overarching thing that I write about, and I will continue to write about, is the idea that there is no such thing as them, there is no such thing as those people over there, what happens to them is exotic and different. I try my best to demolish that idea in my writing," he says.

El Akkad further explains that he tends to explore the collision between systematic injustice and individual morality in his writings, what individuals try to do when the system tries to crush them.

"Often the things I write about are the things that make me angry. A lot of times that just means

distance as much as possible and take away the privilege of assuming something is very far away.

"For example, in *American War*, I took killing drones, refugee camps and the general state of warfare, and I made it happen in Alabama and Mississippi," he says.

His award-winning debut novel, *American War*, tells of the second American civil war for the use of fossil fuels after climate change.

Born in Egypt, El Akkad grew up in Qatar and moved to Canada when he was 16. Although he had a passion for fiction since he was very young, he pursued a computer science degree at Queen's University, where he quickly found himself spending most of his time at the student newspaper. After graduation, he spent 10 years with the *Globe and Mail* and his work earned him the Canada's National Newspaper Award for Investigative Journalism and the Goff Penny Award for young journalists.

A writer's role in society

El Akkad wrote three unpublished novels during his time at the *Globe and Mail* until the success of *American War*, after which he gradually moved into writing fiction full time. He believes that a writer's role in society is to act as a barrier against fraudulence.

"Fiction is obviously fictional, but it is the truth about being human," he says.

Hurtig agrees about the important role of writers in society and feels the festival can offer much more than stories or books.

"In order to become an empathic person or empathic society, which is what leads to a peaceful existence in this world, we have to understand what it is to walk in someone else's shoes. So, to hear from different writers who come from different backgrounds is to understand the world better, to hopefully have empathy for those who are different from ourselves," she says. ✍️

For more information, please visit www.writersfest.bc.ca



Photo courtesy of Omar El Akkad

▲ Omar El Akkad.

the things that most people in this part of the world would have the privilege to ignore... I am trying to make an impact personally; if I can do that then I think I have done my job," he says.

Regarding his craft, El Akkad says the trick is to narrow the

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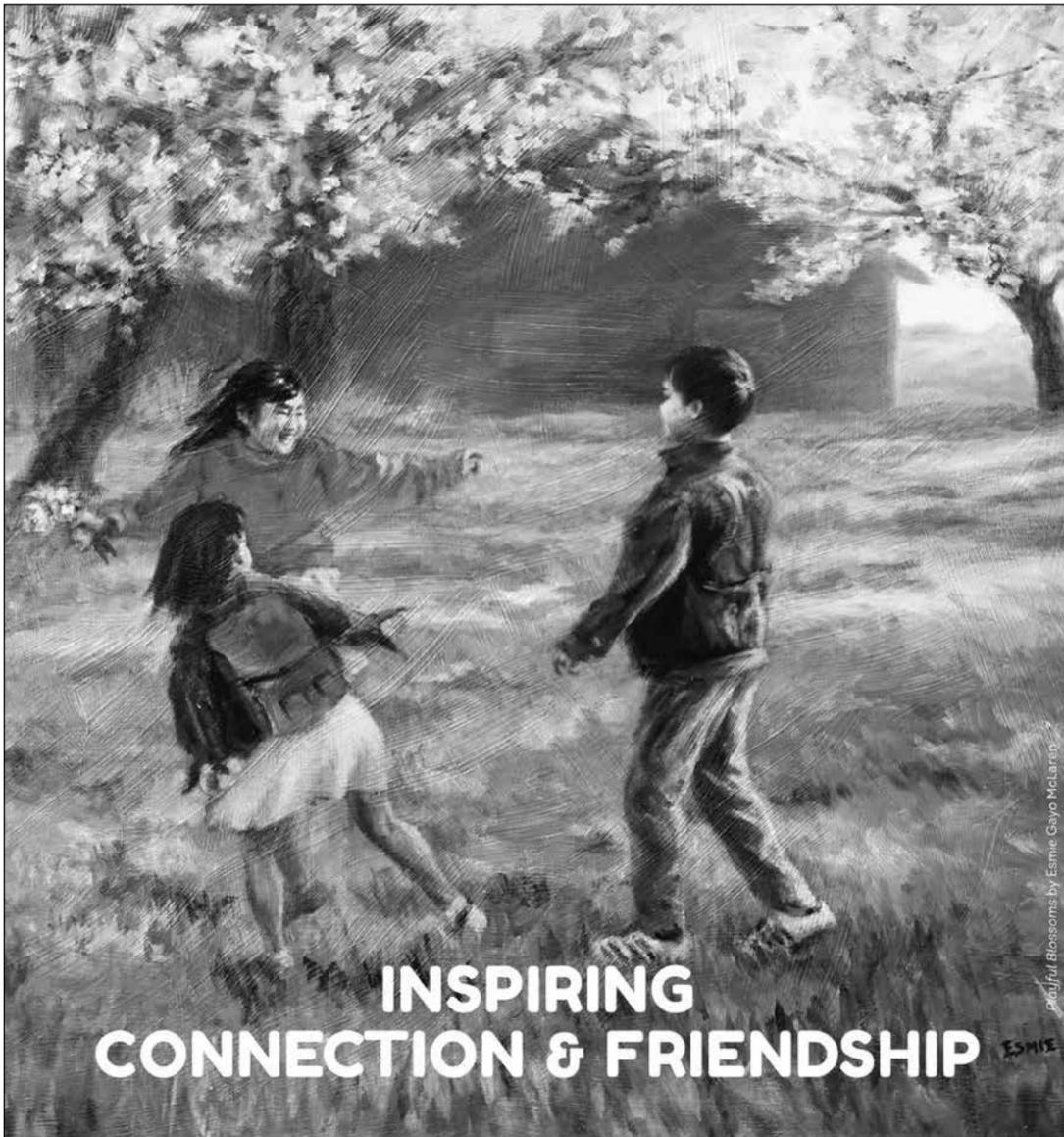
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Playful Blossoms by Esmie Gayo McLaren

"Inspired by sakura blooms and shrieks of spontaneous play, *Playful Blossoms* pays homage to children's ability to easily accept others and forge friendships. Perhaps unencumbered by discrimination and fears, they readily initiate play with newcomers. With energetic brushstrokes and soft Spring colours, I aspire to encourage connection with others and inspire new friendships."

Esmie Gayo McLaren

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stolen people on stolen land ...

in a space where our voices have long been suspiciously absent ...

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we bear the responsibility to keep fighting ...

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Echoes Through The Black Continuum

August 14, 2021 - March 1, 2022

The BC Black History Awareness Society in partnership with the Royal BC Museum presents Hope Meets Action: Echoes Through the Black Continuum, the story of Afro-diasporic 'British Columbia' history past, present and future. Black 'British Columbian' history has long been whitewashed in the annals of colonial history. Against the backdrop of white-centring walls, this exhibit daylights the living and ongoing history of Black belonging, told in this manner by the Black community for the first time.

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Issues and Ideas

Canada needs a national Youth Climate Corps – we've proven it works

Recent years have been immensely disruptive, between climate change and extreme weather, a global pandemic, systemic racism and economic turmoil. We need big, interdisciplinary solutions to address these big, interdisciplinary problems.

As we move past this uninspiring election, we need to move forward with unifying and inspiring action on the climate crisis and the many intertwined challenges we face.

Canadian policy analyst Seth Klein has written a "case for the Youth Climate Corps in Canada." South of the border, U.S. President Biden and other elected officials are pushing for the creation of a "Civilian Climate Corps" with billions of dollars in potential start-up funding. Whether it's called the YCC, the CCC, or something else, this is the big, interdisciplinary solution we need.

Young people need opportunities and Canada needs young people's energy to meet the climate change challenge. In

pare Canadian communities for climate resilient futures and stop climate change as quickly as possible. Today's young people need meaningful jobs where they can earn living wages and gain skills, connections and experience while making a difference. To bridge these needs, Canada must launch a national Youth Climate Corps.

Now that the election is over, there is a need and expectation that the minority Liberal government works with the other parties to move forward on bold climate programs.

Currently, the federal suite of programs offered through the Canada Service Corps are almost exclusively volunteer-based, which is simply not something that most youth can afford beyond the very short term. The existing wage subsidy programs for students or early career professionals are valuable. But these programs leave it up to companies and non-profits who have the capacity to navigate sometimes complex funding applications for short term piecemeal projects. They are not anywhere near the crisis level response that the climate emergency demands of us.

Imagine teams of young people based in every Canadian community completing climate positive projects grounded in the needs of local communities.

Amongst endless policy targets and vague funding alloca-



Photo courtesy of QUOI Media

▲ Ben Simoni.

southeast B.C., we've shown it works through a homegrown proof-of-concept. Now, we need the federal government – whatever political party takes the reins – to scale up.

Last summer, as the pandemic extinguished jobs, a grassroots group of community members around Nelson, B.C. envisioned a climate-focused youth employment program. In September 2020, we launched a pilot version of the Youth Climate Corps hosted by Wildsight, a local non-governmental organization with deep regional roots. Fourteen crewmembers under 30 spent four months protecting the city's water pipeline from wildfire, boosting local food security, restoring riparian ecosystems, enhancing energy efficiency and engaging community members and local leaders.

At the end of our first season, the City of Nelson awarded us its annual Sustainability Leadership Award. According to Mayor John Dooley, "the Youth Climate Corps is a promising model for empowering youth in communities to take action for our global future."

One year since our launch, we've added a second crew in the nearby Kimberley-Cranbrook area – and many other communities have expressed interest. We have a successful proof-of-concept, but our limited scale and speed of growth is far too small for the challenge we are facing.

There is a tremendous amount of work needed to pre-



Photo courtesy of QUOI Media

▲ Melissa Lavery.

tions, a national Youth Climate Corps would demonstrate that work is actually getting done. Such a corps need not displace other jobs or drive down wages through a supply of young labour. To the contrary, the YCC has helped our crewmembers identify and launch climate-relevant careers they never would have considered otherwise.

As the government moves to determine its post-election priorities, we must not lose sight that this is a "code red for humanity" moment. We stand ready to offer lessons learned from our climate corps experiment. Now is our time to empower young Canadians to build a more sustainable Canada. ✊

BEN SIMONI and MELISSA LAVERY are Masters students at Royal Roads University and coordinate the Youth Climate Corps based out of Nelson, B.C. Together, they have two decades of experience leading youth programs across Canada and internationally.

Courtesy of QUOI Media Group

Recipe by Selma Van Halder

Dublin Coddle

A Coddle is basically a leftover stew. Traditionally eaten in Ireland on Thursdays, to finish any meat left in the house, it is a hearty potato based dish best made in a Dutch oven, or any other heavy lidded pot. This version contains all the basics: potatoes, onion, sausage and bacon. While it sounds like a very cheap dish with little flavour, this dish lends itself really well for a little investment on your basics. Visit your local butcher for good in-house made pork sausages (like Cumberland sausages) with some beautiful herbs and spices, good bacon, and butcher made beef broth. The investment will show in the flavour of the end result. Since this was traditionally a dish that contained everything but the kitchen sink, feel free to change it up. Serve this warm wintery dish with a fresh tossed salad and a zingy vinaigrette.

Ingredients

- 200 g bacon
- 3 large potatoes
- 1 large onion
- 3 large fresh sausages
- 2 cups good quality beef stock
- 2/3 cup Guinness
- fresh or dried parsley

Method

1. In a bit of butter and olive oil, brown your sausages

on all sides on the stove, in a heavy lidded, oven proof pot. Slice the bacon into smaller pieces and render until slightly browned.

2. Meanwhile peel your potatoes and cut into thick slices. Peel and slice one onion into thin strips.
3. Take the sausages out of the pan and cut into thick slices. Drain most of the fat out of the pan, into a glass container. Keep by the side of your stove to cook with on another day.
4. Layer potatoes, bacon, sausages and onion in the pot. Add the beef stock, parsley and Guinness. Crack some fresh pepper over the dish and cover with a lid. There is no need to add salt to this dish, both the bacon and the sausages will provide enough flavour.
5. Cook in a 300 degree oven for 2 to 3 hours. Check every hour to see if there is still liquid in the pot. If you need to, add a bit of beef stock. Test if the potatoes are cooked by pricking them with a fork. You want them to be soft, but not falling apart.
6. Serve hot, with a side salad and some Irish soda bread to mop up the juices. Enjoy!



Erratum

In *A time for celebration and contemplation* by Xi Chen (Vol 22 No 06), the film *The Boy Mir – 10 years in Afghanistan* was mistakenly referred to simply as *10 years in Afghanistan*. The Source regrets the error.

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Issues and Ideas

Racism in Canada's health-care system was a risk to BIPOC Canadians before COVID-19

COVID-19 has brought to light some of the glaring inequalities present in Canada when it comes to accessing health care. Disparities in social determinants of health like housing, food, education, and income levels stand in the way of achieving a truly equal health-care system, and racialized Canadians – especially those who are Black or Indigenous – are among the most affected by these inequities.

But even when BIPOC Canadians are able to access the care they need, they face yet another hurdle: ingrained racism within the health-care system linked to a history of colonization that significantly impacts the diagnosis, treatment, and quality of care that they receive.

For example, there was a series of incidents in British Columbia – first reported in June – in which doctors and nurses played a “game” to guess the blood alcohol level of Indigenous patients who visited the emergency room, prompting an investigation and condemnation from Indigenous groups. The game was referred to as “The Price is Right” among staff, with participants trying to guess the exact blood alcohol level of patients.

Another example is the 2008 death of Brian Sinclair, an In-

igenous man who arrived in a Winnipeg emergency room and was ignored by staff for 34 hours until he eventually died of a bladder infection. Staff at the hospital stated that they had assumed Sinclair was intoxicated and “sleeping it off” in the waiting room. In 2017, a group of doctors and academics released a report which concluded that the cause of Sinclair’s death was the racism he experienced as an Indigenous man.

These are just two of the many instances of anti-Indigenous racism baked into our health system that prevent Indigenous people from accessing equitable health care. And because of this, some Indigenous patients may hesitate to enter medical spaces at all; a 2015 Wellesley Institute report found that racism in the health-care system “is so pervasive that people strategize around anticipated racism before visiting the emergency department or, in some cases, avoid care altogether.”

One way of addressing the issue of ingrained racism in health care is to increase the diversity of the medical profession itself, especially for Black and Indigenous doctors. Medical schools have been slow to prioritize diversity, but in 2019 Canada’s 17 medical schools implemented a plan to boost recruitment of In-



▲ It’s important to have more Black doctors because they have not been at the table in the same numbers, says Dr. Onye Nnorom.

igenous students in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action.

Black Canadians also report experiencing racism in the health-care system, and have historically not seen themselves reflected among the doctors who provide them with care. But there are signs of change: the University of Toronto reported that the highest number of Black students ever were admitted to the school’s Faculty of Medicine MD program for the school’s Fall 2020 semester.

“It’s important to have more Black doctors because we’ve not been at the table in the same numbers. We’re not represented in health care or leadership in the same proportions as we’re represented in society, largely

due to the complex social impacts of systemic anti-Black racism,” said Onye Nnorom, a family doctor and the Black Health Theme lead for the U of T Faculty of Medicine, in a recent interview. But more progress needs to be made: the number of Black doctors in Ontario would need to double to become proportionate to the province’s Black population, Nnorom said.

According to the Black Physicians of Canada, diversity in the medical profession also has the effect of better serving Black populations since “Black patients are more likely to feel comfortable with Black doctors and more likely to adhere to certain preventive measures delivered by Black doctors.” Black doctors are also more likely to

work in Black communities, where rates of certain chronic diseases tend to be higher and barriers to care are greater.

At the same time, Black and Indigenous doctors can face obstacles that other doctors do not, including bias and prejudice in the workplace, lack of mentorship opportunities, and barriers to advancement “all of which can make their path to practising medicine more difficult.

Addressing the issue of racism within the health-care system will require a multi-pronged and comprehensive approach. Other solutions could include improving race-based data collection, allowing doctors with foreign medical training to gain licensing in Canada, and educating those working in medical fields about the complex history of colonization in Canada. For a truly equitable future even beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada will need to embrace these changes and commit to anti-racism practices in health care at every level. ✉

Written by freelance writer SEJLA RIZVIC

This story was first published by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship in September 2020

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October 5–26, 2021

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

I hope everyone is enjoying the crisp autumn weather. The pandemic is still ongoing unfortunately, so many of the events below are either online, outside or have reduced in-person capacity. As always, keep safe and stay vigilant. Have a Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Surrey Art Gallery: Phyllis Atkins and Sandeep Johal
Sep. 1–Dec. 11
www.surrey.ca/artgallery

The Surrey Art Gallery is currently exhibiting two art installations until Dec. 11 – visual artist Sandeep Johal's *What If?* and Indigenous artist Phyllis Atkins' *Divine Connection*. Atkins makes paintings and sculptures that draw from both Coast Salish tradition and her own personal journey to connect with the world around her. Each work in her exhibit alludes to icons such as the moon or weaving technologies, the repeating circular shapes also evoke a handheld drum and its critical importance to Coast Salish culture and revitalization. Through textiles, paintings, drawings and animation, Johal layers her personal history with those of South Asian women she wished she knew about as a first-generation South Asian youth. These women are role models, pioneers, trailblazers, vigilantes and rebels. For more information about these artworks, check out the gallery's website.

Project Fire Flower
Oct. 2–Dec. 11
www.grunt.ca

Immersively tactile, the Fire Flower exhibition at the Grunt Gallery serves as a window into the evolving research process of clinical psychologist and fireworks enthusiast, Collin van Uchelen. He has been developing tactile methods for translating fireworks for years and the exhibition provides a fully participatory environment in which visitors may step into van Uchelen's research process, touching his reference points. Rigorous and passionate, van Uchelen's efforts in Project Fire Flower educate others about the pyrotechnic arts and share his joy for fireworks, all while fueling his continuing pursuit of refining translations of these dynamic objects. Check out the gallery's website for more information.

Spinning You Home
Oct. 8–31
www.jerichoartscentre.com



▲ Clinical psychologist Collin van Uchelen probes the inner workings of fireworks.

This month, the Jericho Arts Centre will present *Spinning You Home*, a Spinners Collective production, written by Sally Stubbs and directed by Sarah Rodgers. It is 1958. A storm rages. Trapped inside, Sarah and Grampa, a loner with a passion for history and spinning tales and a thirst for overproof rum, learn one another as they bring to life the remarkable story of legendary gold prospectors, John 'Cariboo' Cameron and his young wife, miner Sophia Cameron. *Spinning You Home* celebrates a haunting chapter in B.C. gold rush history; promises that transcend death; and the power of love and storytelling. Check out the Jericho Arts Centre's website for tickets and more information.

Speaking From the Heart: Translating Xinjiang's Diverse Voices
Oct. 9, 2:30–4:30
www.eventbrite.com/e/speaking-from-the-heart-translating-xinjiangs-diverse-voices-tickets-169526346867

Language can serve as an important tool in decolonization and in the creation of international solidarity and equity. For many, there is a language barrier when it comes to learning more about Xinjiang and its many cultures and current struggles. Many victim testimonies collected by grassroots agencies are only available online in the Uyghur and Kazakh languages. Furthermore, English-language reporting and academic research are seldom translated into the Chinese language. This event looks at creating an opportunity to include everyone in the conversation, regardless of language ability. The event will discuss the importance of empathy and cross-cultural

shops, shows and guests from near and far. For tickets, event information and the festival schedule, please check out the Improv Festival's website.

Latin American Heritage Month Festival
Oct. 14–Nov. 2
www.latincover.ca

For the third consecutive year, Latincover will celebrate Latin American Heritage Month in B.C., by bringing a series of interactive events that include a combination of artists performances, art exhibitions, online workshops, forums and events to commemorate the rich and fascinating Latin American heritage and its influence in B.C. and Canada. Latin American Heritage Month is the perfect time to join with the rest of Canada in honouring the richness and vitality of Latin American culture and heritage.

Vancouver Outsider Arts Festival
Oct. 15–17
www.cacv.ca/vancouver-outsider-arts-festival-2021

The Vancouver Outsider Arts Festival (VOAF) will take place at The Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre from Oct. 15–17, and will feature visual art, performances and workshops throughout the centre. The festival offers visual and performing artists facing social exclusion and other barriers opportunities for exhibition and sales, performance and participation, connection and learning. VOAF is Canada's first and only festival for Outsider Art, which is represented by significant fairs and museums globally. The artists may be

self-taught or trained: they are all devoted to their creative practices, and come from a point of view that is outside the mainstream art world trends.

New Westminster Cultural Crawl
Oct. 16–17
www.newwestculturalcrawl.com

The New West Cultural Crawl is an annual arts & culture festival that celebrates and exhibits the vast creative talents across New Westminster. Artist studios and venues open their doors for two days to welcome thousands of visitors from across Metro Vancouver. The 18th Annual New West Cultural Crawl will take place on October 16 and 17 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at venues across New Westminster. This family-friendly event invites audiences of young and old to explore the city at their own pace, and check out artworks by professional and emerging artists who reside in the city.

Sunshine Coast Art Crawl
Oct. 22–24
www.suncoastarts.com

The Sunshine Coast Art Crawl showcases artists on the entire Sunshine Coast from Langdale to Earls Cove and back. Over three days, the 'Coast' transforms into one large interactive art show. It is a celebration of displays and demonstrations and it provides an opportunity to meet the artists behind the amazing creations. During Art Crawl 2021, the event will present 164 venues (46 of them are new to the Crawl). This includes approximately 250+ artists. For more information, check out the Crawl's website.