

# The Source

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# Big data and better solutions

by GEOFF RUSS

**World Science Day for Peace and Development is coming up next month. Simon Fraser University (SFU)'s Data for Good initiative is applying big data and artificial intelligence (AI) to finding solutions for societal problems like homelessness and addiction. Julian Somers, PhD, of SFU is at the forefront of the initiative.**

The United Nation (UN) celebrates the annual World Science Day for Peace and Development on Nov. 10. The day is

a celebration of both science and the role of it in society. Two goals of the World Science Day are strengthening public awareness of the role played by science in developing peaceful and sustainable societies as well as renewing national and international commitments to using science for societal benefit.

In the Lower Mainland, SFU's Data for Good initiative is working towards the goals of World Science Day for Peace and Development. Data for Good combines big data and AI to create solutions to societal problems in Canada.

Big data are data sets that are too big for typical databases to process. Big data allows for quicker and more efficient data-based decisions and predictions for the future. Big data and AI are intimately connected. Developing big data technology depends on AI's theories and methods while AI requires big data for support.

Launched in 2019, work on the Data for Good initiative is being completed with the efforts of experts from SFU and elsewhere, advocates and government partners. The goals of Data for Good are to improve government services, build

safer cities and bring positive change for peoples' health and well-being.

### The costs of care

Somers is a SFU Distinguished Professor of Health Sciences. His research covers topics from mental illness, crime and human displacement. His input is frequently sought by media organizations covering his areas of study. Somers and his team have attained new insights made possible by using big data and AI.

They were able to analyze every individual in British Columbia's criminal justice system from 1998 to 2015. What

they found from this big data analysis was a correlation existed between the B.C. system's patients taking prescription medication and drops in crimes being committed.

Somers' work used a variety of big data and AI methodologies and tests to obtain its results. Furthermore, his work created large databases that help present a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of homelessness, mental illness and addiction in B.C.

"The evidence of 'what works' includes results from randomized controlled trials and objec-

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# Cultural Spotlight

## Turkish Republic Day celebrations, Turkish-Canadian friendship and art

by JUSTIN LEE

**The Turkish-Canadian Society is releasing a video program online on Oct. 29 to celebrate the Turkish-Canadian Friendship and the Turkish Republic Day, an annual holiday that is celebrated by Turkish people around the world. The theme of this year's video is Turkish art and culture.**

Demet Edeer, the president and a long-standing volunteer for the Turkish-Canadian Society, says that the Turkish Republic Day is the most important day for the independence of modern Turkey, and they wish to share the celebrations with their Canadian friends at the Turkish-Canadian Friendship night.

### A 98-Year tradition

The Turkish Republic Day has been celebrated by Turkish people since the country's founding in 1923 to recognize the state and the creation of its new constitution, with this year marking its 98th anniversary.

According to Edeer, the holiday is usually observed with a variety of festivities, including parades, ballroom dinners and dances, performances and commemorations for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and the first president of the new state who guided the country through many progressive reforms that led to its industrialization, secularization and modernization.

The Turkish-Canadian Society, which helps Turkish immigrants become familiar with their new homelands and works on increasing public knowledge of Turkish culture, language, history and art, hosts annual events in celebration of the Turkish Republic Day and the Turkish-Canadian Friendship. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, however – as was the case in 2020 – the normally in-person celebrations hosted by the society have been moved online to a video format.

### Celebration theme and events

Edeer indicates that some members of the society were troubled by some news from Turkey about the censorship of Turkish artists and actors by the government, especially since this is contrary to the democratic val-



Photo courtesy of Demet Edeer

▲ Ballroom dancing from a past Turkish Republic Day celebration hosted by the Turkish-Canadian Society.

ues promoted by Atatürk. This, as a result, inspired the theme of this year's online celebrations.

"Our starting point this year during our event planning was the theme of art and culture; we aimed to highlight everything and anything under the topic of modern Turkey, Atatürk and art, such as the approach to art under Atatürk and how he set a good environment for art to flourish," says Edeer. "This theme guided how we worked on selecting our participants and the segments to be inserted into the video."

The video will feature a discussion from a panelist on the topic of art in the Turkish republic from several prominent Turkish artistic figures: Bedri Baykam, an internationally known artist and painter who is known as a pioneer of the New-Expressionism movement, as well as his political painting in multimedia and photo-painting mediums; Yilmaz Buyukersen, the Mayor of Eskisehir and the only wax sculptor in Turkey; and Sinan Meydan, a historian, author and journalist who writes about Atatürk's life and the history of the Republic.

Additionally, several renowned Turkish artists recorded performances for the video, including Tamar Levent, the director of the Turkish State Theatres and an actor and art director who was invited to numerous international festivals; Cihat Askin, a violin virtuoso who is considered the international

representative of the Turkish Violin School; and Nil Kocamangil, an award-winning cellist who performed with several prominent orchestras around the world. There are also two more important artists: Tomris Cetinel, a cinema, theatre, TV and voice actress) and Demet Tuncer a theatre, TV, voice actress and singer.

The video will also feature a dance performance at Olympic Village, a mini-choir ensemble, a showcase of an Atatürk art workshop for children that was held at a local art studio and photos of the Republic Parade, which is made of photos.

### Video program release

For this year's events, Edeer says she looks forward to the attendance of audience members online who can watch and comment on the video program, as well as to share the messages and themes of this year's Republic Day celebration with the society's Canadian friends. ✂

The video, releasing on Oct. 29, will be available on the Turkish-Canadian Society's Youtube channel, which can be accessed here: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCnaL9DgD0plbusTlYLSsIbg/](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnaL9DgD0plbusTlYLSsIbg/) featured.

In addition, the video will be shared on their Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/TurkishCanadianSocietyVancouver](http://www.facebook.com/TurkishCanadianSocietyVancouver), and their website, [www.turkishcanadiansociety.org](http://www.turkishcanadiansociety.org).

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**Page 5: Kiki Smith, Pee Body, 1992**  
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# Design to better authenticate citizen journalism

by XI CHEN

**Citizen journalism has become more and more prominent in the era of social media, where sometimes news is being disseminated real-time on the spot through eyewitness reports before they even reach mainstream media.**

And perhaps there is no better phrase than ‘the revolution will be tweeted’ to capture the critical role of citizen journalism in shaping up and recording history in our modern connected time.

“In 2011, I was in Egypt. I didn’t live very far from where the action was, Tahrir square.



Photo courtesy of UBC

▲ Hoda Amal Hamouda believes that the future of citizen journalism is in preservation and verification.

During the media blackout at that time, I saw how things and events that had happened weren’t reported in mainstream media. This was my first-hand experience of being an eyewitness and of seeing disparities in what each party was trying to frame the events as,” says Hoda Amal Hamouda, PhD researcher at UBC’s School of Information.

## Combining archival science with citizen journalism

The year after the Arab Spring, Hamouda moved from Egypt to Canada with her family. Trained in user experience design via her master’s degree from Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Hamouda is currently focusing on improving the process of authenticating citizen journalism videos by incorporating archival science after being inspired by citizen journalism in her home country.

An example of her work is an eyewitness visualization that offers an immersive experience to watch citizen journalists at work.

“With an eyewitness recording, there is this camera shakiness; it is very confusing if someone watches it on a static screen. So, my idea behind [this] is how do we use this special nature to make it a strength rather than a weakness?” Hamouda explains. “I thought what is missing is the bigger picture. What if we un-

fold all the locations in which the eyewitnesses move their cameras? What if I am standing in different locations from Tahrir Square; how would people experience it?”

She has also designed a related eyewitness platform, which is a proof of concept to synthe-

technological infrastructures, it will be difficult for open-source verification to take place. That is where archival science can help.

“Archival science has a very analytical approach to looking at records,” says Hamouda. “We can look at the technologi-

“I am looking to do more interviews and fieldwork to better design this verification process,” she says.

## Complementing mainstream media

Citing the history of citizen journalism that goes back to the 19th

“ I think the future of citizen journalism is in preservation and verification.

Hoda Amal Hamouda, PhD researcher at UBC’s School of Information.

size different viewpoints in the same event with the help of technology.

“I think the future of citizen journalism is in preservation and verification. The sheer amount of content will continue to evolve, so the work is really about how to preserve them,” Hamouda says. “We also need to look from the lens of archival science to understand how we make them part of what the public can access. Countering fake content will also be a major issue.”

She further explains that the traditional way of verifying citizen journalism videos revolves around the date, location, resources and originals, and there are open-source tools to achieve that. But for remote areas that have weak

cal context. For example, in a remote country, if you can’t find the location of a video, it doesn’t mean the location doesn’t exist, it just means the context is negatively impacting the geolocation. We also need to take into consideration the juridical system where the video is captured. In some countries, citizen journalism is outlawed. In locations such as those, it is unfair to treat a video in the same way as you would treat it in Canada.”

Seeing her work as redesigning the process and the experience of citizen journalism verification, Hamouda hopes she can work with interested human rights organizations, which are usually the main instigators of the verification process.

century, Hamouda believes citizen journalism acts as a complement to mainstream media and provides the public with a more holistic view of what is going on.

“Citizen journalism usually misses the narrative that mainstream journalism provides,” she says. “But I see it as an alternative, particularly where state media takes over the disseminating channels of information. It is also shedding light on things that mainstream media won’t necessarily cover. Sometimes through these snapshots, the public gets interested and then agencies will start covering the issue.”

For more information please visit: [www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/meet-our-students/amal-hamouda-hoda](http://www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/meet-our-students/amal-hamouda-hoda)

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Jane Mortifee has been active in theatre, film, and TV for over thirty years. She has noms for an Actra Award and 3 Jessie Awards in musical theatre. She was a regular singer on several TV series. She has also performed many solo concerts, as well as in various club bands over the years. A career highlight was singing background vocals for Ray Charles. She has released 3 CDs and written 2 novels. Jane was inducted into BC Entertainment Hall of Fame in 2002.

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►“Science” from page 1

itive as well as subjective sources of data,” says Somers. “These studies are highly consistent despite being performed by different investigators and using different methods.”

Somers and his team conducted a study in 2015 and 2016 that discovered 300 people on Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside were costing taxpayers almost \$27 million in healthcare and social services. Individually, the cost was up to \$247,000 per person which at the time, Somers said did not surprise him.

“A group of about 300 people are nearly continuously involved with courts & corrections,” he explains. “Close to 100 per cent had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder as well as drug dependence.”

Somers says the total financial cost for people afflicted with homelessness, mental illness or addiction across B.C. is \$55,000 per person every year. That same cost, he adds, was replicated in three analyses from 2007 and 2019 with different methods and investigators.

People affected by multiple disorders are not only on the Downtown Eastside and other urban centres in the province.

“About 2,000 who experience multiple repeated offences, mental illness, addiction and receive support are distributed around B.C.,” says Somers.

**Recovery-oriented housing**

By using AI and big data, Somers and his team were able to pinpoint recovery-oriented housing as a more effective method of providing care for persons afflicted by homelessness and mental illness and aiding their recovery compared to group-housing and usual care.

According to The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH), a non-partisan research and policy partnership between academics, policy and decision makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness, housing is the first step to recovery. Once housed, it becomes easier for people to move forward with their lives and get the support needed to tackle issues like mental health and addiction.

“In randomized controlled trials, we compared recovery-

oriented housing, group housing and usual care in Vancouver,” says Somers. “All three conditions cost about the same.”

The people Somers and his team worked with all had about nine offences in the last decade. All were homeless and suffered from addiction and mental illness.

“Reoffending in recovery-oriented housing was reduced by 75 per cent compared to usual care,” he says. “Reoffending among those in group housing was not significantly lower than usual care.”

Somers notes that recovery-oriented housing did not require any changes to fees, scheduling or compensation.

“We paid and trained our staff to practice our model, and we arranged access to existing services as appropriate under current practices,” he adds.

Somers says there are many other benefits in recovery-oriented housing for people experiencing mental illness and homelessness not observed in other care centres like group-housing. He lists a reduction in emergency department visits, improvements in the quality of life and enhanced personal identity as resulting from recovery-oriented housing.

The benefits of recovery-oriented, says Somers, housing are not limited to Vancouver and British Columbia alone.

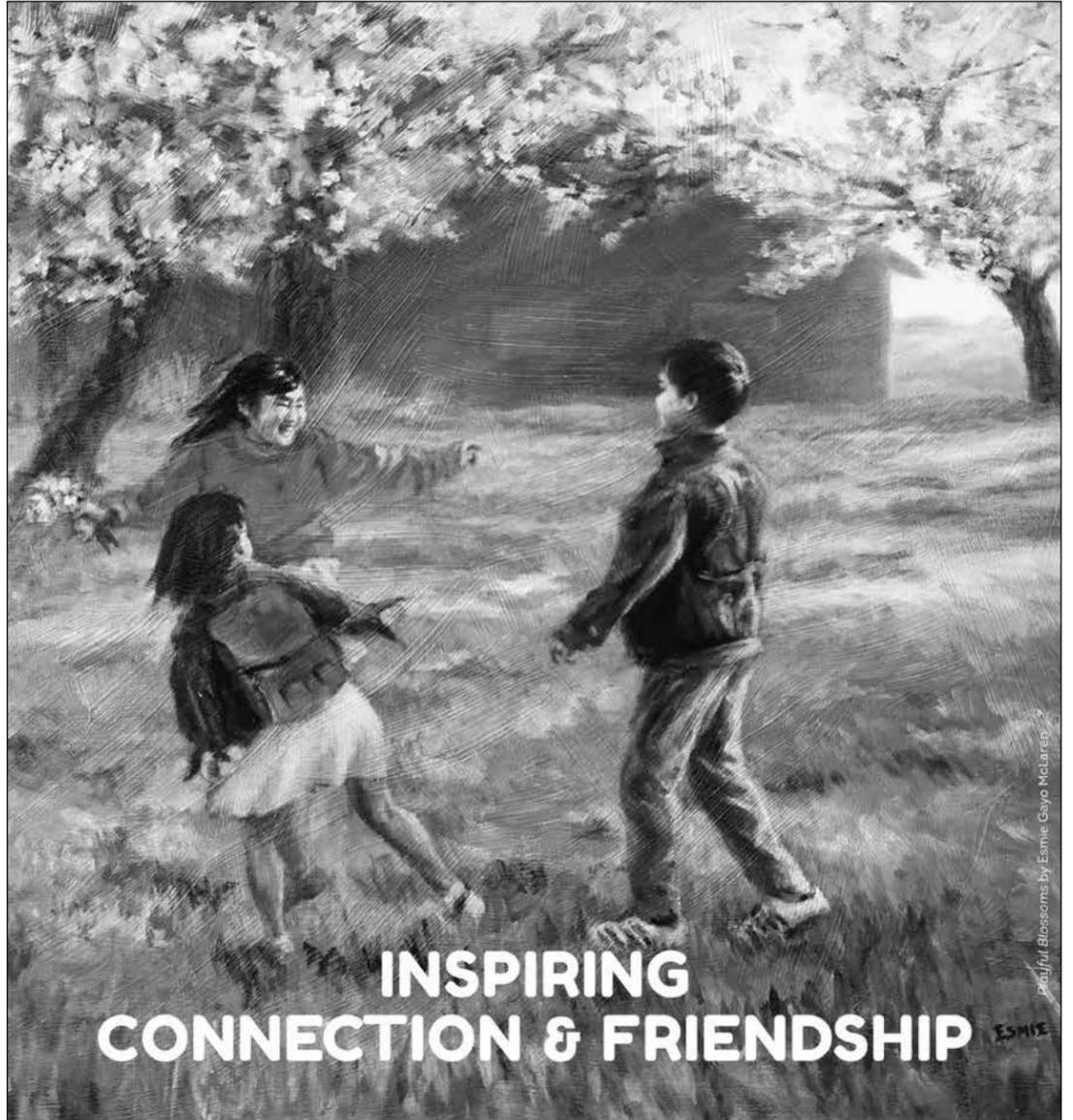
“We have observed the same benefits favouring recovery-oriented housing in Toronto, Montreal, Moncton and Winnipeg,” he adds.

Furthermore, Somers says the results of recovery-oriented housing have not differed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

“We obtained the same results in Winnipeg where the overwhelming majority of participants are Indigenous,” says Somers. “We also learned specific lessons regarding the merging of reconciliation with the design and implementation of better responses for Indigenous people.”

For more information on Julian Somers, visit [www.sfu.ca/fhs/about/people/profiles/julian-m-somers.html](http://www.sfu.ca/fhs/about/people/profiles/julian-m-somers.html)

For more information on World Science Day for Peace and Development, visit [www.un.org/en/observances/world-science-day](http://www.un.org/en/observances/world-science-day)



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ROYAL BC MUSEUM

# PIRS offers a helping hand to Afghan women and children

by EGEMEN DOĞUKAN ONGUN

**“The news coming out of Afghanistan is about how women leaders are fleeing for their lives, and girls are being denied the right to education,” says Holly Benna, Pacific Immigrant Resources Society’s (PIRS) communications and marketing associate.**

PIRS, a grassroots organization focused on local action, is one of the few organizations across Vancouver and the Lower Mainland dedicated to addressing the needs and challenges of migrant women and children. They have been delivering, for the past 45 years, accessible, inclusive, low-barrier programs – that create a sense of belonging, meaningful participation, and leadership such as trauma-informed Community English Classes, Women’s Leadership and Development, Children & Family Programs – for immigrant and refugee women and their children.

The organization works directly with women who might, among several other problems, not have access to government funded programs because of their immigration status, or lack the benefit of childcare.

and B.C.’s childcare is not affordable nor accessible. PIRS meets this need by offering trauma-informed Community English Classes, alongside culturally relevant childcare and mental health support. In addition, their Pop-Up Childcare program has supported other local organizations such as I.S.S of BC, which offers childminding at airports while parents attend orientations.

## Arrivals

Over three days in August and September, PIRS Childminders took care of 52 Afghan refugee children for ISS of BC, serving 32 per cent of the 165 children (0–18 years of age) in the Resettlement Assistance Program. PIRS’ childminding services made it possible for these Afghan women to participate in resettlement orientation activities alongside the men, rather than staying behind with their children.

“[This is to ensure] that women and men have access to the same orientation information, at the same time, is key to gender equity,” says Benna.

PIRS’s needs assessments have shown Afghan refugees who have recently arrived need the most support in securing permanent



Photo courtesy of Pacific Immigrant Resources Society

▲ According to PIRS, more than half of the refugees who arrived in the last month are children under 18.

“Because of our dedicated staff and volunteers, and donor support we are able to respond with new initiatives in a timely manner, such as our Emergency Food Hub; and most recently our Afghan Women Fund,” she adds.

## A pressing need

“The Afghan issue is about the rights of Afghan women and girls,” says Benna.

According to PIRS, more than half of the refugees who arrived in the last month are children (0–18 years old), who require childcare and/or education. Meanwhile, refugee women arrive and find themselves without local support systems and facing inaccessible and expensive childcare. In addition to this, there is a significant literacy gap: 60 per cent of spouses of principal applicants lack English language proficiency.

“Without access to childcare and resources, Afghan women will miss out on orientation services and personal and professional opportunities – that are necessary for their transition into Canadian life, and their sense of belonging and agency,” says Benna.

She adds there is currently a high demand for English classes, with full wait lists for programs,

housing at Income Assistance Rates for families of 1–9, gift cards to help offset day-to-day expenses, access to English language classes, family reunification, and welcoming communities.

Although not speaking for them, Benna has heard that the Canadian-Afghan community has been concerned about the situation and especially for women and children. Some people still had relatives back home who were directly impacted by the current situation. And society, she adds, is looking for ways to safely return them back to Canada.

“There is also anger at losing their homeland again – a feeling that the “West’s” interventions have been inappropriate and lacking a true understanding of Afghanistan’s culture and people,” she says.

PIRS invite all who are concerned with the situation facing Afghan women and children to support through donations or efforts.

“Individuals have already raised funds through their businesses, or even by asking for donations in lieu of birthday gifts, and we are so grateful for their efforts,” says Benna. ✉

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



Photo courtesy of Efrat El-Hanany

## As Many Bodies as Possible

# Radical fragmentations of the human figure throughout Art History

by RAFAEL ZEN

**Body realities that may at first appear imperfect, vulnerable and even pathetic, actually celebrate diversity and freedom of expression** says Efrat El-Hanany, PhD, a faculty member in the Art History and Women and Gender Studies departments at Capilano University. El-Hanany presents *The Body in Art*, a free online lecture (Oct. 29) addressing body portrayals mediated through artistic processes – and the political/poetical aspect of representation.

“It is interesting that in the 21st century artists often choose to represent aspects of bodily realities that have traditionally been considered inappropriate for public display or even polite discussion,” says El-Hanany.

*The Body in Art*, she says, refers to visual representations of the human form from prehistoric times to the present day – a study throughout various media, including sculpture, painting, photography and performance art.

As an art historian, El-Hanany specializes in the visual culture of the Italian Renaissance with additional interests in traditions of Jewish art, contemporary art, and, as well, Chinese art forms.

“I have been teaching and investigating the theme of the human body for many years. It’s remarkable how it continues to be such a central subject in Western art,” she points out. “Stemming

from the Western Classical tradition, idealized male and female nudes have shaped the aesthetics of artistic form right up to the present day.”

## Multiple Bodies: Defragmentations of the human figure

It is possible to look back to early modern art movements – like Expressionism and Cubism – and

negate Classical idealization, sometimes through the presentation of dismembered body parts (Gober’s *Leg*, 1990) or leaking bodily fluids (Smith’s *Pee Body*, 1992).

The historian points out that while many viewers might find the display of such bodies disturbing and provocative, this may not be the view of contemporary artists, who in fact vali-

“Stemming from the Western Classical tradition, idealized male and female nudes have shaped the aesthetics of artistic form right up to the present day.

*Efrat El-Hanany, PhD, faculty member in the Art History and Women and Gender Studies departments at Capilano University.*

notice the beginning of a radical fragmentation of the Classical ideal of the human figure, says El-Hanany.

*The Body in Art* addresses artists like Duane Hanson, Ana Mendieta, Cindy Sherman, Jenny Saville, Mark Quinn, Lucian Freud, Ron Mueck, Antony Gormley, Zhang Huan, Janine Antoni, Spencer Tunick, and others who challenged and transformed older norms of representing the body.

El-Hanany also emphasizes the sculptures of Robert Gober and Kiki Smith, for example, as pathetic, flawed subjects that

date the integrity and beauty of their subjects.

“One of my favourite works – that I will introduce in this presentation – is by the famous French-American artist Niki de Saint Phalle (1930–2002). A large public work, it’s entitled *Nana Danseuse* (Rouge d’Orient – Bloum), from 1995. There is a real sense of celebration in this voluptuous female body,” says El-Hanany. “Here the artist has transformed the sedate classical proportions of the female nude into a larger-than-life image charged with colour and energy.

Based on the artist’s firm belief that all women are goddesses, this provocative body on public display is a playful and sensuous statement about the diversity of female bodies.

At the event, those radical fragmentations of the human figure throughout art history will put the viewer’s perceptions at test – supporting El-Hanany’s point of view: working both as curating theme and platform for expression, the body and its multiple discourses represent pressing social concerns that are urgent to be debated at the borders of the poetical, and the political. ✉

For more information, please visit: [www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-body-in-art-registration-167927958043](http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-body-in-art-registration-167927958043).



Photo courtesy of Robert Gober

▲ Robert Gober, *Leg*, 1990.

# MemoryGami: unfolding barriers

by ELAHA AMANI

Keiko Honda's Vancouver Arts Colloquium Society (VACS), a non-profit organization with a passion to connect people through the means of art, invites all to enjoy the unique stories of six women through storytelling and paper-folding with *MemoryGami*, a short documentary series.

"I strongly believe in art as a means of change. Art evokes empathy, and empathy leads to action. We recognize art as not just an abstract way to pursue aesthetic pleasure, but as a way to see oneself and the world differently," Honda says.

Hosted by the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre, the event will run from Oct. 1 to Nov. 12, 2021 in the Great Hall Gallery, where spectators will be able to watch the series and see the artwork in person with no fee required. Audiences are invited to witness a beautifully crafted, unlike-any-other documentary series showcasing autobiographical tales through a hybrid digital-paper medium,



Photo courtesy of Keiko Honda

▲ *MemoryGami*, 1968.

highlighting a range of pieces from visual art to traditional Japanese origami, the art of folding.

### Paper for memory

Each speaker and artist taking part in *MemoryGami* has created a folded paper book featuring a personal story they would like to present, and within the pages lay pictures, text, drawings and, of course, origami pieces.

In addition, digital representations based on each artwork have been made with the help of VACS's summer interns, and both copies will be displayed in the Great Hall Gallery during opening hours. The artists were filmed walking through their artwork, offering further insight on their ideas, inspiration and artistic vision. This footage has come together as a half-hour documentary series available on multiple social media platforms, which will be displayed at the gallery in addition to the physical and digital models.

As alluded to in the title of the event, origami is the artistic medium predominantly integrated into *MemoryGami*. This medium allows the artists to express their ideas and stories in a more sensory-based way, which would allow them to unlock and process memories they might have believed lost through their sensory memory. Using paper folding also helps the seniors, whether they be anglophone or not, fully express themselves without the barrier of language

in their way; fluency in the English language is not required for effective communication. Ultimately, Honda's objective with this project is revealed in one of her statements.

"We hope that the project can enhance the process of identity development, redefinition and self-transcendence," she says.

### Fostering connections

VACS is determined to connect diverse people through art, and strongly believes in the importance of perspective. *MemoryGami*, along with their other programs, aims to tear down cultural, disciplinary and generational boundaries within the community, and in doing so, tear down the barriers between people. This program not only lets seniors and non-anglophone immigrants share personal experiences unique only to them, but also allows audiences and creators alike to learn from and appreciate perspectives different from their own. This in turn equips people with the ability to interpret the world and each

other in different ways, which is something Honda feels is desperately needed now more than ever.

"If the twin challenges of a pandemic and a climate emergency have brought our species anything good, it is perhaps the realization that we are all in this together," Honda reflects.

VACS has accomplished much in the past and holds many ambitions for the future. Along with their goal of reaching across barriers of all natures that separate the community, they also wish to grow public support for arts of all types and inspire the next generation of artists and leaders around Vancouver with programs such as *MemoryGami*.

"At VACS, we visualize a future where the city's inhabitants can discover and create ways to transform themselves and their city to grow new connections between people," says Honda.

For more information, please visit the following sites:  
[www.myvacs.org](http://www.myvacs.org)  
[www.roundhouse.ca/events-2021](http://www.roundhouse.ca/events-2021)



Photo courtesy of Keiko Honda

▲ Keiko Honda (second left), founder and president of VACS, with the *MemoryGami* artists.



Visit The Source online

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

Twitter/Facebook: thelasource



# Art Show

ArtSea Gallery in Tulista Park  
9565 Fifth St, Sidney BC  
Nov 12 -18, 2021 10am-4pm

Studio 30 Art Club -- supporting local artists for 40 years!

Original art, art cards, painting demonstrations



[www.studio30.ca](http://www.studio30.ca)

## When classical rigour meets improvisation

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Cellist and composer Peggy Lee will be featured in two upcoming performances this month. On Nov. 1, Coastal Jazz will be re-airing a performance by the Peggy Lee Band from this year's TD International Jazz Festival, and on Nov. 19, Handmade Blade, featuring Peggy Lee, trumpeter JP Carter and guitarist Aram Bajakian, will be performing live at The Ironworks as part of Coastal Jazz's IronFest jazz concert series.

The Peggy Lee Band performance sees the group performing many of Lee's own compositions, while the Handmade Blade show will consist of songs written by all three of its members.

"I'm very much influenced by the players that I'm working with, their sounds and their language of improvisation. I don't write freely for people that I don't know. I think I've always just really tried to hear people," says Lee.

### A winding path

For someone whose musical oeuvre is more influenced by jazz, folk and improvisation than by classical music, a cello might seem like an unlikely choice of main instrument. But it makes more sense when Lee's musical journey as cellist and composer is viewed more as a winding path than a straight and narrow line, as she has collaborated with different bands, met new artists and taken on a variety of gigs.

While Lee grew up listening to classical music, learned the cello for a middle school orchestra program and even went on to complete a degree in classical cello performance

all kinds of art installation type situations and just felt very comfortable with that.

For Lee, the opportunity to reach out, explore and collaborate was a moment of deep discovery, one that compelled her to reconsider her path as a musician and composer.

"I decided not to go back to Toronto after Banff because I knew exactly what my life would be in terms of professional practice," she says. "There were a lot of shows happening at that time: Les Misérables, The Phantom of the Opera, all those. And a lot of the people I went to school with were making good money playing in the [orchestra] pit. But I just had a feeling that I would hate that. So I was drawn to a place where I could just write my own chapter."

### Room to improvise

Lee would continue heading west instead, eventually making it to Vancouver where she continues to collaborate with both her regular bands and one-off opportunities alike, with each concert and project representing a new opportunity to explore her creativity. One thing that's nearly constant in Lee's songwriting, however, is her love of improvisation, whether that's for herself or other people she's writing for.

"Even if you have two people playing something that's written, I love having the third person as a wild card that can just play what they hear," says Lee about co-composing and performing with Handmade Blade. "It could be textural or it could be melodic, but just leaving it open. Even in a small group I think you can achieve [a layered sound] if you trust your fellow musicians."

In all, she says that it's been an amazing experience living,



▲ For Peggy Lee, it's been an amazing experience living, working, and composing in Vancouver.

at the University of Toronto, an unexpected opportunity presented itself and proved to be an important detour in her professional trajectory.

"One of the turning points was when, after I'd finished my degree, I spent a year at the Banff Centre [for Arts and Creativity] and I was working with a string quartet. There was a lot of encouragement to collaborate with other artistic practices, and I jumped on that," says Lee. "I had never really improvised, but I found myself improvising with

working and composing in Vancouver given how much opportunity there is to collaborate and explore.

"That's the beauty of Vancouver; it's this community where we all play in different configurations. There's this ever expanding pool of great, creative musicians. So I'm lucky to have been able to develop both as an improviser and as a composer," says Lee. ✎

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



Kitimat Museum & Archives  
UPSTAIRS GALLERY  
Sept 17 to Nov 20, 2021

# OUR LIVING LANGUAGES

First Peoples' Voices in British Columbia

Discover the incredible diversity of First Nations languages in BC and the groundbreaking work underway to keep them alive in this travelling exhibition from the Royal BC Museum.

Exhibition produced by  ROYAL BC MUSEUM

In partnership with  FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURAL COUNCIL

Supported by  Canada

Venue   
Kitimat Museum & Archives  
293 City Centre  
Kitimat BC V8C 1T6  
250-632-8950  
[www.kitmatmuseum.ca](http://www.kitmatmuseum.ca)

Tikuya Tours, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, North Vancouver.

October 26–November 9, 2021

## Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

We're in the throes of Autumn now, with the falling brown leaves, the shorter days and the smell of pumpkin in the air! Why not check out some of these events happening in the next several days? Stay safe and have a 'boo'-tiful Halloween everyone!

\* \* \*

**Eerie Illusions**

Oct. 22–31  
[www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca](http://www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca)

This October, visitors will see Burnaby Village Museum transformed into a magical world bathed in breathtaking colour, with talking crows, invisible bands and photo-bombing ghouls as part of Eerie Illusions, a Halloween event unlike anything else in Metro Vancouver. Utilizing state-of-the-art lighting, projections, soundscapes and special effects, Eerie Illusions will amaze and astound visitors of all ages, and showcase Burnaby Village Museum's 10 acre venue as it has never been seen before.

\* \* \*

**Heart of the City Festival**

Oct. 27–Nov. 7  
[www.heartofthecityfestival.com](http://www.heartofthecityfestival.com)

The Downtown Eastside's Heart of the City Festival returns this year, featuring 12 days of live and online events, including music, stories, poetry, theatre, ceremony, films, readings, forums, workshops, discussions, art talks, history talks and visual art exhibitions; including the Art in the Streets program with surprise pop-up music and spoken word activities on sidewalks and small plazas throughout the historic district! This year's festival theme, Stories We Need to Hear, resonates today as our community grapples with the dramatic impact of the pandemic, ongoing displacement, the fentanyl crisis, and the reality of bigotry and systemic racism.

\* \* \*

**Openings: A Cultural Sharing**

Nov. 3–6, 7:30 p.m.  
[www.firehallartscentre.ca](http://www.firehallartscentre.ca)

The Firehall Arts Centre will be producing and presenting Openings: A Cultural Sharing, a series of conversations and presentations with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Artists from many different nations about resilience, hope and humour. Filmmaker Rosemary Georgeson and artistic producer's Donna Spencer have gathered to-



Photo courtesy of Michèle Bygodt

▲ Bia Atôbe (Nya) by Michèle Bygodt (Vancouver), 2021.

gether ground-breaking women in the arts to share how they are telling their stories through film, on stage and in literature; members of the LGBTQ2+ community to share queer Indigenous stories in the arts; leaders in the resurgence of canoe culture; and artists who make us laugh.

\* \* \*

**South African Film Festival Canada**

Nov. 4–14  
[www.saffcanada.ca](http://www.saffcanada.ca)

The South African Film Festival Canada presents feature films and documentaries that entertain and inform as they explore the culture, history and politics of South Africa. SAFF Canada brings together the combined histories and volunteer efforts of two in-person festivals – the Toronto South African Film Festival (TSAFF) and the Vancouver South African Film Festival (VSAFF). When the pandemic hit in 2020, they joined forces and transitioned to one virtual, online South African Film Festival that could reach audiences across Canada. For program information, check out the festival's website.

\* \* \*

**2021 Chutzpah! Festival**  
Nov. 4–24  
[www.chutzpahfestival.com](http://www.chutzpahfestival.com)

The Chutzpah! Festival: The Lisa Nemetz Festival of International Jewish Performing Arts is an annual festival of world-renowned dance, music, theatre and comedy, through a lens of Jewish experiences, stories and values in all their richness and diversity, creating unforgettable and unique experiences for audiences throughout the Lower Mainland. The festival fosters artistic dialogue and collaboration between Jewish and non-Jewish artists and communities and offers artistic residencies, outreach programs and other professional arts programming of interest throughout the year. Check out the festival's website for more information.

\* \* \*

**Sankofa: African Routes, Canadian Roots**  
Nov. 4, 2021–March 27, 2022  
[www.moa.ubc.ca/exhibition/sankofa](http://www.moa.ubc.ca/exhibition/sankofa)

Sankofa: African Routes, Canadian Roots at the Museum of Anthropology looks at some of the divergent – and often fragmented – paths of political mobilization and cultural assertion that African and Black people in the diaspora have taken. Centered on works by contemporary artists from Lagos, Nigeria and Vancouver, in conversation with objects in MOA's permanent collection, this exhibition shares

stories, histories and projects of African and Black affirmation. In particular, it draws connections to historical contributions and the growing vitality of Black Canadians in Vancouver. Ultimately, the exhibit celebrates different ways of understanding the world through the lenses of African and Black communities, the wealth of their cultural and art practices and their inspiring legacy.

\* \* \*

**10th Modulus Festival**  
Nov. 5–10  
[www.musiconmain.ca](http://www.musiconmain.ca)

From Nov. 5–10, Music on Main will present the 10th Modulus Festival featuring moving and inspiring live performances at the Roundhouse and ANNEX in Vancouver. Music on Main challenges audiences and artists to connect with their own thoughts and feelings – and with each other – during the Modulus Festival. At the festival, discover live music, hear behind-the-scenes artist talks and experience some of today's freshest music. Limited tickets are on sale and a full festival schedule is available on the Music on Main's website.

\* \* \*

**Bear Creek Park Lights**  
Nov. 5–19  
[www.surrey.ca/news-events/events/bear-creek-park-lights](http://www.surrey.ca/news-events/events/bear-creek-park-lights)

Bear Creek Park has provided lasting memories to its attendees since the first light display in 2012. For nearly a decade, the beloved Bear Creek Park Lights event had brought joy and wonder to the community. The new 2021 Bear Creek Park Lights will be a safe, accessible and family friendly light display throughout the park's gardens, offering a series of light displays that will dazzle your senses with illuminated natural landscapes, whimsical light displays and stunning photo opportunities. Check out the website for tickets and more information.

\* \* \*

**Movie Making with the Cinematheque at the Vancouver Classical Chinese Garden**

Nov. 6, 1–3 p.m.  
[www.vancouverchinesegarden.com](http://www.vancouverchinesegarden.com)

The Cinematheque, founded in 1972, is a film institute and media education centre devoted to understanding the art and history of Canadian and international cinema and the impact of moving images and screen-based media in our lives. They will be at the Vancouver Chinese Garden on Nov. 6 for a hands-on introduction to the basics of visual storytelling. Participants will create a simple stop-motion movie project in the beautiful surroundings of the garden. Through fun, interactive activities, learn about characters, setting and story, and everyone will learn enough to continue making movie projects at home! All necessary materials and equipment will be provided. Check out the Garden's website for tickets and more information.

\* \* \*

**Masters of Illusion**  
Nov. 8, 8 p.m.  
[www.mastersofillusionlive.com](http://www.mastersofillusionlive.com)

Starring the world's greatest award-winning magicians, this 21st century magic show, showing at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre on Nov. 8, is unlike anything you have seen before - filled with modern illusions and arts of deception, performed live on stage. Watch closely as you experience things that just can't be done..... or can they? Audiences will be held at the edge of their seats by the jaw-dropping grand illusions, and laugh out loud at the hysterical comedy magic as performers from around the world combine fantasy, fervor and flair with magic created in front of their very eyes.