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Photo courtesy of Tiger Tiger Pictures

An inclusive Vancouver International Women in Film Festival

by XI CHEN

“I might not have been born a woman but my life as a woman is real,” Quen Wong narrates poetically in her debut feature-length documentary *Some Women*.

The film will be screened soon at VIFF Centre as part of the 18th annual Vancouver International Women in Film Festival (VIWFF) that runs from Mar. 7 to Mar. 25.

VIWFF is one of the three international film festivals for women and gender-diverse people in Canada and the only one

dedicated to the same community in Western Canada.

A journey of self-exploration

Wong’s story is an intimate and personal account of her journey as a trans woman in Singapore. It also draws references to the older and younger generation of other members in the community, showing a side of Singaporean history and social fabric that very few know.

Wong says the stars were aligned for her to make this documentary when she was approached to make a film about Bugis Street in Singapore, a heritage neighbourhood that

used to be an enclave for trans women but is now erasing its queer history.

“When I was first making the film, I didn’t plan to be in the film. But I didn’t think as a trans person myself, it would be fair for me to make a film and not be open about my own status,” says Wong. “As we workshoped my concept and writing, I was highly encouraged to be more visible so I began this journey of self-exploration as well.”

The journey shows many of Wong’s intimate and vulnerable moments with her family, with her partner and with her own inner struggles, narrated by a

poetic and meditative voiceover from Wong herself.

“I marvel at some of the risks I took,” she says. “The whole story with Francis, for example. The photograph reveal was completely organic. It was just something I thought I had to do because we were learning about each other. What if he couldn’t accept it, what if he thought I wasn’t the person he thought I was? Luckily it went well. I think as a result that scene is very powerful. People have come up to me and said, wow, you know, I really could put myself in your partner’s position. It is difficult to answer those questions and to

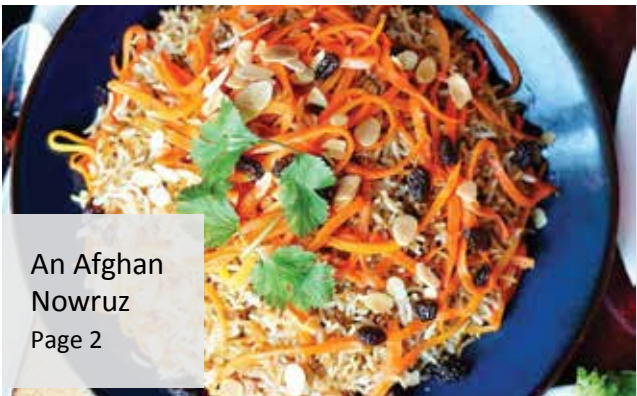
accept you, but, because he can, I can entertain the idea as well.”

Wong was referring to the scene where she showed her partner Francis her old photos before the gender transition for the very first time.

Supported and loved by her family and partner, Wong’s story is a happy one and so are the other characters in her documentary – larger than life and full of spirit.

“I really wanted to turn everything on its head and show people that our lives might not necessarily be terrible, and, with more liberation and more rights recog-

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An Afghan Nowruz
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International prize awarded
to two local scientists
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Mark the International
Trans Day of Visibility
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Food, family, friends – Customs and traditions for Nowruz

by ALISON MACDONALD

Turning the corner into March and the promise of spring, with the flowers coming up, warmer temperatures and more hours of daylight, another holiday approaches. March 21 is the Afghan New Year, or Nowruz, a holiday celebrated in countries across the Middle East and all the way to India.

The holiday has a theme of re-birth and renewal – a new year as the change in season inspires greater productivity and prosperity for farmers who have survived another cold, harsh winter. Nowruz is the commencement of the Afghan calendar, *Hejri Shamsi*, and this holiday is widely celebrated through feasting, dancing and outdoor events and sharing festivities with family, friends and neighbours.

Keeping kinship with the past

Zabi Sarwari, general manager of the Afghan Kitchen, a restaurant in South Surrey shares his views on the holiday.

about Nowruz, make *samanak*, a sweet dish made from wheat grass,” he says. “It is about being happy, staying up all night with friends, families and neighbours, sharing the *samanak* pot.”

He explains several festivals, like Farmer’s Day and Festival

“ It is about being happy, staying up all night with friends, families and neighbours, sharing the *samanak* pot.

Zabi Sarwari, general manager, Afghan Kitchen

of the Red Flowers as part of the connection to nature and the renewal spring brings. There is also *buzkaghi*, Afghan’s national sport which is a contest of strength and endurance with men on horseback dragging a deceased goat, demonstrating the rugged, rough and toughness – the persistence of the people.

In describing Nowruz as renewal, a new day, a new year, Sarwari likens it to a blessing,

member of the Afghan community. Samim, a settlement worker with the Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (IS-SofBC), has had years of experience helping new immigrants connect to their culture from their home country and uses the lessons of the people that have

gone before in helping them adapt to Canada and a new way of life while keeping their home country culture alive within.

“In my family, we celebrate [Nowruz] each year, like we did back in the home country. We decorate our home, cook traditional food and share this with family and friends. Not only enjoying food, music, song and dance, but promoting peace and solidarity – solidarity with friends, families and communities,” he says.

Samim also underlines the importance of the holiday in which most everyone can understand and relate to. Resolutions are also part of the traditional New Year in Canada.

“In our culture, Nowruz is the first day of the New Year, so I am celebrating two new years, the Canadian new year, where I am setting the resolution and then repeating at the second new year – to make it stronger,” he says.

In his work, working with newcomers and having his family life, Samim underlines the importance of managing time – whether coffee time, break time, work time or personal time – and this is certainly understood why this is an important resolution for all in keeping balanced.

As food is so central to culture, Sarwari points out the importance of the holiday as the changing of the season for farmers and moving out of the harsh winter into the first day of spring, a new day of greater productivity and prosperity. People would bring out their traditional clothes or be given new clothes and bring the family together and make many different dishes for feasting with family and neighbours. He describes one of the special dishes as *haft mewa* or ‘seven fruits,’ a dish of almonds, walnuts, pistachios, raisins and several others like *sinjed*, similar to dried cherries.

“Every day is a new day, and let the new day be a successful, prosperous, happy, a joyful year,” he says. ✍

as part of the belief that we are never tested for something more than we can handle or a burden more than we can carry. There are certainly spiritual or religious ties to Nowruz, he says, speaking of the many people making a trip to Mazar Al Sharif to visit the Blue Mosque.

Resolutions – goals for the year ahead

Similar perspectives of Nowruz are shared by Abdul Samim, a



▲ Zabi Sarwari, general manager of the Afghan Kitchen restaurant.

“In the Afghan Community, mehla is a festival, and it is all about the Afghan culture and bringing it alive, a memory of what they do back home: kite flying, music, folk music, songs



Introducing The British Columbia International Symphony Society

A new local organization The British Columbia International Symphony Society (BCIS) has emerged to introduce a new symphonic opportunity for the region’s music lovers, musicians, and composers.

Although symphonic music has been adopted, hailed, and performed around the world, most of the compositions have been developed from the classical European canon. The BCIS and its namesake orchestra have been formed specifically to present programs with music audiences rarely hear in Metropolitan Vancouver’s concert halls – the works of indigenous composers as well as those from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania, Latin America, and other diverse regions.

The BCIS is collaborating with the Surrey City Orchestra to launch a concert series this fall featuring music from the noted under-represented cultures. The series will give the region’s diverse composers and musicians performance opportunities that were previously unavailable to them, and to help promote understanding among the communities.

While the series is in development, the BCIS invites the ethnic communities of British Columbia to join in the organization’s efforts. Representatives of British Columbia’s communities are urged to contact BCIS to ensure their recognition and contribution.

For more information about the BCIS, how to register your interest, and how to participate, call (604) 628-5255 or email info@thebcis.org.

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Exploring the challenges experienced by professional female immigrants

by MARTINA PETKOV

People often study for years to achieve the degree of professional experience they need to excel in their careers. However, all this effort can seem wasted when a person immigrates to a new country, only to find their credentials and experience are not recognized or not enough for the host country.

Even in a place as open as Canada, some immigrants have described encountering ongoing barriers.

Deemed skilled from afar

Originally from Romania, Laura Brass came to Canada in 2008 and holds an MEd in Teaching English as a Second Language in Local and Global Contexts from the University of Calgary, Alberta. While working on her master's degree, she became increasingly familiar with the struggles and successes of female immigrant teachers in Canada.

Brass received the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) doctoral fellowship which supported her in fulfilling her dream of completing a PhD at the University of British Columbia (UBC).

"Feminism and new materialism are the theoretical frame-



▲ Laura Brass.

works informing my research," she explains. "My interest in new materialism was also inspired by my rescue dog Max and my love for animals – big and small."

Currently in the data collection stage, Brass is interviewing female language teachers across Canada. Observations made at this early stage indicate that although these women came to Canada as skilled immigrants, they are struggling to find employment in their field and are having to work menial jobs, which they are overqualified for, in order to support themselves.

Language, country of origin, age and even on occasion religion, were reported as some of the grounds on which these



▲ Jennifer Jensen.

skilled female immigrants have felt discriminated against.

"During the pandemic, the unemployment rate of immigrant female language teachers was double that of their Canadian-born counterparts," explains Brass.

Despite having a PhD in English, these women are still struggling to secure a job, which they were deemed qualified for by the skilled immigrant program. A barrier, often reported by many, is lack of 'Canadian experience,' but, as a newcomer, their experience is global, not local.

Language literacy and education crossing paths with technology

Professor Jennifer Jensen has considerable experience work-

ing with teachers in relation to technology, pedagogy and curriculum. Jensen has identified a lot of gatekeeping behaviours around technology, especially in relation to women, who, she says, are often actively kept out of technological sectors and STEM related professions.

"Games are the creative medium of the 21st century," she says.

Jensen believes people are understanding and experiencing things through this creative medium which is having a profound effect on other industries such as movies, publishing, pedagogy and many more.

"The dangers of being socially and culturally excluded from this medium, as many women and girls are, have an impact on societal development," she reflects.

There are changes to technology policies that can be implemented to allow for more equitable opportunities in education across all schools, be they in more rural or city central locations.

The overlap between the areas of interest the two scholars hold, comes from the intersection between Jensen's focus on women and technology, and Brass's female immigrant language teachers who are also overlooked and underpaid. Both

scholars share the goal of supporting women through affordable dissemination avenues.

A more linguistically versatile future

"Being a public scholar can also afford me the opportunity to make my voice heard in various public contexts," Brass reflects.

She hopes to give back to the local and larger community of immigrant women and language teachers. Her work may even have the potential to suggest guidelines for Canadian citizenship and immigration agencies and integration service providers to help address the challenges faced by skilled immigrants as they arrive in Canada.

"It's not easy, but, if you work hard and persevere, you can really make it happen," she says.

Brass also hopes to help motivate other immigrant women to pursue their dreams.

In addition to her PhD, Brass was also awarded the Public Scholars Initiative fellowship which is an additional project she hopes to run over the summer months, in her home country of Romania.

For more information visit: www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/meet-our-students/brass-laura



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Local scientists win the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement

by STAFF WRITER

Rashid Sumaila, PhD, and Daniel Pauly, PhD, both of the University of British Columbia (UBC)'s Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, have been named 50th laureates of the Tyler Prize, an international award that recognizes individuals who have made inspiring and notable contributions to the environmental science, health and energy domains.

The award, established in 1973, urges key environmental concerns to the forefront by recognizing those whose work and passions are devoted to areas of environmental need.

Sumaila is the Canadian Research Chair (CRC) in Interdisciplinary Ocean and Fisheries

Economics. His research specializes in bioeconomics, marine ecosystem valuation and global analyses of fisheries. Sumaila is a figurehead in marine research, with various publications in worldwide environmental journals.

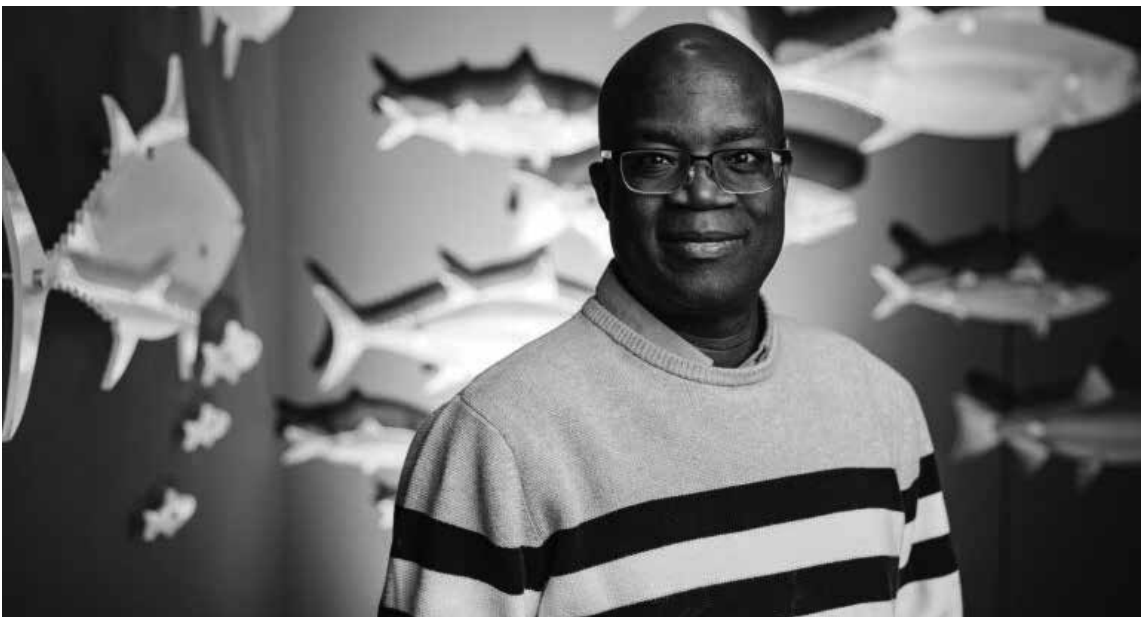
Both scientists have been recognized for their ongoing research and policy work to ban overfishing, an increasing environmental concern that threatens ocean health, food security and global warming.

“[We] must move faster. Overfishing increases global emergencies such as climate change, biodiversity loss and food insecurity – particularly for already vulnerable communities, such as Indigenous Peoples and populations in the Global South,” Sumaila says in a Tyler Prize interview.

Fish are an integral part of the world's oceans, which in turn produces 50 per cent of the Earth's oxygen. This year, the Tyler Prize honours the work of two scientists protecting the ‘lungs of the planet.’

Both Laureates, long-time colleagues at UBC, stated their intention to use their Tyler Prize to spread an urgent and evidence-based message: all fishing on the high seas should be banned.

“Creating no-take marine reserves is something we must



▲ Rashid Sumaila.

do. Banning fishing in the high seas, which is the area outside the 200-nautical-mile zones of maritime countries, will create a critically-needed ‘fish bank’ for the world,” says Sumaila.

“If we don’t stop overfishing, we will lose marine stocks essential for food security and biodiversity, and the ocean’s ability to effectively regulate global temperatures,” added Pauly.

Pauly is the founder and principal investigator of the UBC research initiative Sea Around Us and notes that the carbon value of the fish in the high seas is 10 times the value of fish taken

each year and sold for human consumption.

“A high seas fishing ban is one of the most effective ways to reverse the damage inflicted on the ocean through decades of unsustainable overfishing, mostly at the hands of wealthy Western countries,” says Pauly.

Sumaila added that support for a high seas fishing ban continues to grow – and that the closing of Antarctica’s Ross Sea in 2016, which created the world’s largest marine protected area – serves as a valuable model.

“More than 190 countries committed to the 30×30 agree-

ment at the Convention of Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COP15) in December [2022] to protect 30 per cent of their land and waters by 2030, so there are good signs of progress,” he says.

But Sumaila also underlines the urgency in taking action.

“Banning fishing on the high seas – it’s good for biodiversity, it’s good economically, it’s good for global food security,” he says. ✍

For more information visit: www.tylerprize.org/laureates



▲ Daniel Pauly.

► “Women in Film” from page 1 nized, we can live as full a life as anyone else,” she points out.

Everyone’s journey, Wong adds, is individual and coming out entails a significant amount of risk because there is still a lot of discrimination at the institutional level.

“I also know that there are many trans people who are living double lives. They still face a lot of opposition from conservative and religious families, from schools and workplaces because a lot of employers just don’t understand,” she says.

But Wong herself recognizes the value of being visible.

“Society reacts to what they see,” she says. “The more we are willing to express ourselves freely, the more society will be able to change for the better. We are not one thing. There are many different people and many different expressions, and we are all human.”

The documentary won the Audience Choice Award at the 2021

Singapore International Film Festival and this screening at the VIWFF will be its Western Canada premiere.

Films to watch

In all, the festival will showcase 37 films from 14 countries, including 19 Canadian films, nine of which are from B.C. filmmakers. Aside from in-person and online screenings, there will also be panel discussions, workshops, a screenplay competition and an awards ceremony.

“Outside of the festival, there are also monthly coffee chats for the filmmakers in the community to come together. It is a good way to connect and learn from other people,” says Tristin Greyeyes, lead programmer at the festival.

As part of the film selection committee, she also recommends a few shorts from the festival that caught her attention, namely *Shallots and Garlic*, *Bertie Wrote me a Poem* and *The Retrieval*.

“*Shallots and Garlic* is an Indonesian-Canadian film. It started going in this commercial food direction, then it had a twist that I wasn’t expecting,” says Greyeyes. “You are getting an understanding from an outsider’s perspective of this culture in such a short film. It’s powerfully written. *Bertie Wrote me a Poem* also floored me. I was not ex-



▲ IWFF director Quen Wong.

pecting the conclusion, and it’s heartbreaking. *The Retrieval* is a Maori film. It is made by youth. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, they support and uplift their youth by



▲ Tristin Greyeyes, IWFF lead programmer.

giving them the tools to tell their own stories.”

As a young filmmaker herself with an Indigenous background, Greyeyes is in the process of making her first feature docu-

mentary. She says as an Indigenous person, she never saw herself working behind the camera because there was no one she could aspire to. Now she has several Indigenous filmmaking role models and works hard to be one herself. She believes that the film industry is changing to be more accountable and inclusive, and she continues to advocate for Indigenous filmmakers.

“There’s still so much more work that needs to be done, and we got to be careful not to be pacified with the bare minimum. We could do more, and we could do better,” she says.

She adds that there is also a lot of unlearning of old ways that need to be done when it comes to gender inclusivity. Just like the theme in the film *Some Women*, there is still very little gender inclusivity when it comes to non-binary people or trans people in the film industry. ✍

For more information visit: www.womeninfil.ca/viwwf



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Photo courtesy of Krow's TRANSformation

Krow's Transformation to screen for government to celebrate international transgender day of visibility

by STAFF WRITER

The relatable struggles of youth, to discover one's true authentic self in order to gain confidence for adulthood, are heightened by gender identity conflict. To mark the International Trans Day of Visibility (Mar 31), the award-winning documentary *Krow's TRANSformation* will have its theatrical premiere at Vancouver's Cineworks Mar 24.

"We made this film as a learning tool for Questioning & Trans kids that are scared. What we did not see coming was the huge impact it is making on the Heterosexual/Cisgender community, educating and even evoking empathy," says Gina Hole Lazarowich, Vancouver-based writer/producer of *Krow's TRANSformation*. *Krow's TRANSformation* documents the lives and experiences of three trans subjects: internationally recognized Canadian fashion model Krow Kian, his friends Kas and Ashton, and their families.

Crossroads of life

At the age of 12 Krow started a career as a fashion model, but struggled deeply with his gender identity throughout his youth. Despite the attention and praise, he never felt fully comfortable. He knew from childhood he was meant to be a boy.

At 18, Krow embarked on the journey towards physically becoming a man: cutting off his ponytail and pausing his career as a model in order to begin the process of transitioning.

Shot over three years of honest interviews and life transitions, we witness the continual challenges faced by Krow, including hormones and surgeries.

As he grew in confidence in his new body, he returned to his career in the fashion industry, taking his first ever job as a male model along with an epic journey to the runway of Paris Fashion Week.

Raising awareness

The project began as an educational tool for schools, but its reach has extended across the world.

More than one in four trans people have faced a bias-driven assault and death.

"I have been involved in politics for a long time, and I feel, as do the subjects of the film, that it is best to 'start at the top' in government and with the prime minister," says Lazarowich, "in hopes that it will spark some empathy that flows down to

constituents and into their policies. With what is happening in the US with Transgender rights, there is NO better time than now to get our Canadian government on board!"

Trans people face extraordinary levels of verbal, physical and sexual violence. This important film screening and conversation takes place on the eve of International Trans Day of Visibility, a day dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments of transgender and gender non-conforming people, while raising awareness of the work we all need to do for trans justice.

First stop: Ottawa

The documentary will have a special private event screening, coordinated by Lazarowich, in

“ We come with hope that Parliament will raise the Trans flag in support of International Trans Day of Visibility...

Gina Hole Lazarowich, produce, *Know's TRANSformation*

Ottawa (Mar 30) before members of parliament, senators, and with an invitation out to the prime minister.

"We come with hope that Parliament will raise the Trans flag in support of International Trans Day of Visibility on the 31st, and that the *Krow's TRANSformation* screening on the 30th will be an enlightening way to educate and celebrate this important day around the world," says Lazarowich. "Having the film screen in Parliament, and be available to audiences in Vancouver and globally means more people will have the tools necessary to understand the LGBTQ2IA+ communities."

Krow's TRANSformation was filmed in Vancouver and Victoria, BC and Paris, France. The film was also executive produced by OUTtv's Brad Danks, Philip Webb and Tony Lazarowich.

The film had its world premiere as the opening night film for the Raindance Film Festival in London.✂

For more information visit: www.krowstransformation.com

Wild in the city: an artistic spotlight on urban scenes of nature

by ELAHA AMANI

In times of hardship, it is crucial to simply exist in the beautiful world we live in. Maxine Wolodko illuminates the unnoticed beauty found in nature all around us in her vividly illustrated painting exhibition *Maxine Wolodko: Wild in the City*.

“These creatures offer us the opportunity to slow down and see their magic – to appreciate nature in the midst of our everyday

between her work and their personal experiences.

“So many times, when someone chooses to purchase a painting, they tell me a story about why they chose it and how it fits into their life or relates to an experience they’ve had,” she recounts. “It adds meaning to the work that I didn’t know was there.”

To paint is to fully appreciate

Born in Edmonton, Wolodko has been involved in the arts for as long as she can remember. Her

“These creatures offer us the opportunity to slow down and see their magic...”

Maxine Wolodko, artist

busy lives. They encourage us to be still and observe, listen and look,” she says.

Hosted by North Van Arts, *Maxine Wolodko: Wild in the City* will run Jan. 18 to Apr. 18 in the District Foyer Gallery located at North Vancouver District Hall.

Painting the unobserved

Wolodko paints ordinary scenes of nature – insects, plants and birds – that are abundant in Greater Vancouver, yet overlooked and greatly under appreciated.

With her exhibition, Wolodko aims to draw attention to creatures that live in our background. She paints evocative scenes of birds, bees and even pets she has observed living in Vancouver, as nature and animals have always

paintings of farms and fields reflect her upbringing in rural Alberta, along with paintings of the communities she knew.

Wolodko eventually went on to study fine arts at the University of Alberta. She currently divides her time between painting and graphic design projects, and enjoys the balance between the two. She is an active member of the Federation of Canadian Artists whose artwork can be found not only at galleries, but at various shops and restaurants scattered throughout Vancouver as well.

Her main objective with her work remains clear, and is evident in her pieces. Not only does painting allow her to encapsulate small moments that bring her and others much happiness, they also serve as keepsakes for memories, thoughts and emotions.

“Painting is my way of fully appreciating ordinary moments before they can slip away and be forgotten. By recording the way things look, I also strive to capture the feeling of the moment,” Wolodko says.

Wolodko has been having a great deal of fun with her current exhibition, and is recently also enjoying working on larger landscapes.

She finds it’s when she’s painting that her thoughts flow, where she’ll discover a path or direction she would want to follow and explore. In turn, her main goal right now is to keep something on the easel.

All who appreciate the profound loveliness in mundane moments are welcome to attend this exhibition, and those who are curious about or wanting to learn from this concept are encouraged to attend as well.

For more information, please visit: <https://northvanarts.ca/events-exhibitions/maxine-wolodko-wild-in-the-city/>

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▲ Maxine Wolodko paints ordinary scenes of nature found around the Greater Vancouver area.

been a great source of inspiration for her. What can be seen in Vancouver’s parks, streets and backyards can be found painted on one of Wolodko’s canvases.

Wolodko invites her wide audience to take a moment in the hustle bustle of their lives to simply take in what is happening all around us. Be it a bumblebee pollinating a flower in the balmy spring air or a cat lazily grooming its fur, Wolodko asserts the bliss and serenity in these moments. Her work has helped her realize this, and she hopes it can do the same for others.

Additionally, Wolodko loves when people make connections

BC Black History Awareness Society

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French Enough

A look at the struggle and triumph of francophone identity on the prairies

by ALEXANDRA
BRADFORD-PATTERSON

As *Rendez-vous de la Francophonie* (RVF) dedicates their 25th annual, March month-long ceremony edition to celebrating diverse Francophone culture across Canada, singer-songwriter Alexis Normand brings us the vulnerability of the bilingual household.

“For a long time, I felt like an impostor to my francophone identity, and because as I was growing up people believed that non-exogamous families were somehow diluting the francophone community and francophone culture in Saskatchewan. I tried to be involved and be the best francophone I could, but I never felt like I measured up,” says Normand.

Alongside comedian Eddy King, Normand will appear as a spokesperson for RVF, and present her debut documentary, *French Enough*, which explores francophone belonging in Saskatchewan through the lens of her family’s story.

Family and the film

French Enough transports the audience to the Normand family lake Cabin at Wakaw Lake, Saskatchewan, where the family engage in candid conversations about francophone belonging on the Prairies.

The film examines the challenges and triumphs of being bilingual in a minority-language community, and how language and identity are transferred intergenerationally. Throughout

the course of the short film, the ups and downs of reclaiming francophone Canadian identity are illuminated, as each member of the family shares their story about the expectations of the francophones around them and the reality of their bilingualism.

Saskatchewan is a minority French speaking province – according to the Canadian Commission of Official Languages – with only five per cent of the population speaking both English and French, and only 1.5 per cent of the population having French as a first language.

Inspired by the lack of Fransaskois identity and representation seen from the prairies and her desire to share her experiences, Normand focused on her own personal story, which she infused with authenticity and honesty.

Growing up within an exogamous family, made up of an anglophone mother and assimilated francophone father, meant that Normand lived in an English-speaking household but was educated in French. This rupture and difference in language made it difficult for Normand to see herself as part of the ‘ideal’ Fransaskoise that she and her peers were taught about.

“There’s this sort of golden standard with two French speaking parents, and French spoken at home, and that really wasn’t my reality at all. I compared myself to that example, and I knew that it wasn’t us, but in my heart, I felt francophone and I could feel the tension the two opposing forces created,” Normand explains.



▲ Alexis Normand grew within an exogamous family, made up of an anglophone mother and assimilated francophone father.

The unspoken tension and ease Normand found within her family and their relationships with bilingualism is what drew her to having a conversation about language, identity, and belonging. As well as the prompt addition of new children to her family, which brought with it an increase in the amount of French spoken in the Norman household, which was surprising considering Normand’s brother’s lack of cultivation of the language previously.

“I wanted to see where everyone stood, and I wanted to have a conversation that we’d all been having separately or individually,” she says. “I felt like there was something powerful about having an exchange with the family that could be enlightening and could have the power to foster better understanding within our family dynamic.”

French Enough weaves back and forward through time, winding through conversations of the past and footage of the youngest

members of the Normand family playing, to old home videos and very current conversations. The film captures children, parents, and grandparents singing, playing, and celebrating both of the languages they speak – demonstrating how the act of carrying a language forward can become a thing of freedom and joy after multiple generations of hardship.

Coming together

The film has found its audience amongst those who do not feel as though they fit with either culture or language group, and has amplified the voices of those who face similar challenges. Its embrace of cultural diversity has empowered those often overlooked.

It is vital for the French speaking community to come together to ensure the language thrives and continues to grow in the province. Through her creation of French music, she creates ‘safe spaces’ for the francophone community.

“We need those places to be able to laugh together, to be engaged, and to share moments together and do them all in the same language,” she says. “As an artist, I find that it’s a privilege to be able to create these opportunities. I see it as community building through the arts. That through the arts, those three things – culture and language, and community – can be merged together.”

For more information and to watch the film visit: <https://www.nfb.ca/film/french-enough>

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Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Even though it just snowed recently, winter really is almost over, and spring is just around the corner! With the arrival of spring, we can look forward to longer days, warmer weather and the beauty of nature coming back to life. The trees and flowers will begin to bloom, turning the landscape into a sea of colour. It's a perfect time to take a stroll through the park, breathe in the fresh air and appreciate the beauty of the season. Spring is also a time for renewal and growth, making it the perfect time to start new projects, take up new hobbies, or simply try something new. Whether it's exploring a new part of the city or trying a new recipe, spring is the perfect season to embrace change and growth. So, let's get ready to welcome spring with open arms and enjoy all the wonderful things this season has to offer!

Amy Rice: Oh Canada
March 1–25
www.outsidersandothers.com/amy-rice-oh-canada

A new solo exhibition by self-taught Minnesota artist Amy Rice will be on display at Outsiders and Others on East Hastings this month. Rice uses nontraditional print-making methods as a starting point for original mixed media pieces, such as spray paint, acrylics, gouache and inks, printed on a variety of surfaces including wood, fabric and antique papers. This exhibition will feature 30 new original artworks all created on vintage envelopes that were mailed to Canada. For more information, check out the Outsiders and Others website.

The Wrong Bashir
March 2–12
www.firehallartscentre.ca

Zahida Rahemtulla's *The Wrong Bashir*, produced by Touchstone Theatre's Flying Start program in association with The Firehall and vAct. Bashir Ladha – wayward philosophy major leaning towards nihilism – has accidentally been



▲ Bboyizm: In My Body at the Vancouver Playhouse.

selected to assume an important religious position, and his parents have dutifully accepted on his behalf. Conflict ensues over Bashir's reaction to his appointment and the family is taken on a comedic intergenerational ride that forces them to grapple with long-avoided questions of identity and family.

Driving Me Crazy
March 7–11
www.evergreenculturalcentre.ca/2022-23-theatre-series

Inspired by stories from three generations, *Driving Me Crazy*, being performed at the Evergreen Cultural Centre, follows Liz, a grandmother fighting to keep her driver's license, her independence and her voice in society. Liz is surrounded by her family: a son and daughter-in-law who are addicted to their cars, a granddaughter who is passionate about the environmental fight against oil guzzling vehicles and a grandson on his way to learn hard lessons about drinking and driving. Anyone who has driven a car, been driven in a car or been driven mad by their own family will laugh, cry and gasp.

Women's Art on Women's Day
March 8, 6–9 p.m.
www.eventbrite.ca/e/celebrating-100-years-of-the-turkish-republic-womens-arts-on-womens-day-tickets-555954895057

The Turkish-Canadian Society (TCS) is a non-profit charitable organization, focusing on arts and culture and they will be hosting an art exhibition titled *Women's Art on Women's Day* on International Women's Day as part of the celebrations around the 100th Anniversary of the Turkish Republic. A line of artwork by Turkish and Canadian artists focusing on women, including inspirations from the recent earthquake scenes from Türkiye and Syria, will be displayed. For more information check out their Eventbrite link.

Prophecy Fog
March 9–18
www.gatewaytheatre.com

From award-winning Indigenous artist Jani Lauzon, *Prophecy Fog* takes the audience on a beautiful and intimate journey about relationships with land, family and sacred spaces. The journey begins in the Mojave Desert in search of Giant Rock, armed with the question: can a site still be sacred if it has been desecrated? Performed in the round, *Prophecy Fog* weaves together the captivating performance skills of veteran storyteller Jani Lauzon with evocative environmental design and projections by Melissa Joakim, along with director Franco Boni that will forever change how you appreciate the sky, the stars and even a rock. Check out the Gate-

way Theatre's website for tickets and showtimes.

34th Annual Vancouver Jewish Film Festival
March 9–26
www.vjff.org

The Vancouver Jewish Film Centre (VJFC) will be hosting the longest-running Jewish Film Festival in Canada, showcasing the diversity of Jewish culture, heritage and identity through film. Since 1988, with the help of generous community sponsors, the Centre has presented high quality comedies, dramas, thrillers, hot and timely documentaries and whimsical shorts. The festival is a community-building initiative intended to connect audiences through film and storytelling. This year the festival is back in-person. Please visit their website for a complete list of showings.

JUBILEE
March 11, 7:30 p.m.
www.vancouverchamberchoir.com

JUBILEE is a celebration of Afrocentric choral classics and contemporary works, including music by Canadian composer Nathaniel Dett as well as arrangements by guest conductor Rollo Dilworth. Dr. Dilworth is an internationally renowned choral conductor, clinician and composer with more than 150 original com-

positions and arrangements to his name. The Vancouver Chamber Choir will also be joined on stage by students from our Focus choir, adding to the jubilant atmosphere of this unique event.

CelticFest Vancouver
March 11–18
www.celticfestvancouver.com

CelticFest Vancouver is Western Canada's biggest annual Celtic festival. CelticFest is a rich cultural celebration of the seven Celtic nations' kinship and community. The festival showcases the best of Celtic music, dance, spoken word as well as film, food and fare and the much-anticipated St. Patrick's Day Parade. Founded in 2004, the cornerstones of CelticFest Vancouver are community, diversity, family and civic pride. CelticFest draws its artistic direction from some 5,000 years of Celtic history and culture. This young, vibrant event has quickly, and firmly, established itself as an annual springtime tradition in downtown Vancouver. Check out their website for this year's events.

Bboyizm: In My Body
March 17–18, 8 p.m.
www.dancehouse.ca

On stage at the Vancouver Playhouse, presented by DanceHouse, *Bboyizm* will battle hip-hop culture taboos in this award-winning, multigenerational exploration of aging and vulnerability in dance. In *My Body* is a profound examination of the effects of aging in a dance genre known for intense athleticism, bravado and the show of invincibility. Three generations of Canada's top b-boys and b-girls will share the stage to embody the dancers' evolution. Choreographed by Yvon "Crazy Smooth" Soglo, multiple knee surgeries and his own shifting stamina inspired him to examine what it means to be a "b-boy forever" in his own aging body and soul. With dancers ages 20–50, this work sheds light on how street dancers withstand the test of time and move together as one.

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