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Beauty, innovation, and fun at the Eastside Culture Crawl

by LILLIAN LIAO

From chainsaw sculpting to mural colouring, Vancouver's celebrated Eastside Culture Crawl returns Nov. 16–19, featuring art making events and over 500 artists, including Sandeep Johal, Roman KOKO Kuzmichev, and Serena Chu, in its staple open studio walk.

Johal fondly remembers the celebratory atmosphere of last year's Crawl – her first as an

do-folk aesthetics with feminine artistry in honour of her family's Punjabi heritage.

"When South Asian folks see it, they know it's made by a South Asian hand, and they feel seen, heard, and represented, and they know these spaces are for them too," says Johal, who grew up in Kelowna without easy access to artistic mentors.

Expressing her cultural pride, Johal draws inspiration from the colours, floral patterns, and figurative designs commonly used

niscent of her signature mural work, those visiting her studio will also see a workspace that includes walls up to a height of six feet. For emerging artists, Johal advises that they work to identify their own artistic voice.

"You make the work that you want to make, and people will feel the authenticity and you'll find your audience," says Johal.

Modernizing wood artistry

KOKO, a wood sculptor and first time Crawl artist, looks forward



▲ Serena Chu.

“People start chatting with each other, ask why you picked one image to colour over the other, it is collaborative.”

—Serena Chu, artist

artist – inside her studio at 281 Industrial Avenue. Preparing a variety of artwork, including drawing studies and embroidery, Johal looks forward to a similar camaraderie at this year's event while showcasing her distinct visual style, which combines In-

do-aesthetics. Johal's work also addresses gender violence, a topic she has been exploring since her art school days at Langara College where she addressed honour killings in British Columbia through the creation of three prints. When portraying these stories, Johal steers away from shock value with an approach that de-centers the artist and honours these women.

"My instructor said I took a really ugly topic and presented it in this really aesthetically beautiful [and] digestible way," says Johal. "I thought if I ever do this type of work again, I have to do it through a lens of beauty."

Johal wants viewers to remain with their discomfort, research these stories, and create conversations about them. Remi-

to exhibiting art from his two collections, the WINDOWWINDOW and Animalistic series, at the MakerLabs on 780 East Cordova Street. Inspired by a friend who taught him chainsaw carving, KOKO's Animalistic pieces are an interpretation of inter-design sculptures. His WINDOWWINDOW collection, first developed in July 2021, was also inspired by those around him.

"Everybody who starts looking at these windows, they always ask why the window is here," says KOKO.

According to KOKO, this theme originated when his family and friends commented on his sculpture that had a square hole. Their different suggestions, such as turning it into a



Photo by Rachel Pick

▲ Sandeep Johal.

Spreading Prince George positivity online
Page 5

Women's stories shine at Vancouver Turkish Film Festival
Page 6

A Beautiful Beautiful story
Page 7

The Cinematheque

2023 NOV. 16–30

European Union ★ FILM FESTIVAL
FESTIVAL DU FILM DE L'Union européenne



Art by Isa Rodrigues

Listen, learn and connect at Zee Zee Theatre's Queer Asian Stories Collection at Vancouver Public Library

by BONNIE GILL

Zee Zee Theatre offers an intimate story-telling experience in its latest project Queer Asian Stories Collection. On Nov. 18, 19, 25 and 26 in the Vancouver Public Library, participants will be given the opportunity to 'check out' a human book for a personal, 20-minute conversation about their life, beliefs and struggles. The project will run from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the specified dates and welcomes all those interested in participating at no cost.

For the 13th time, Zee Zee Theatre brings the Copenhagen-originating concept of the human library to Vancouver, this year with queer Asian voices at the centre. The focus of this year's project was chosen following the rise of anti-Asian hate crimes that occurred during the pandemic. The project seeks to platform unique and important perspectives through intimate conversation, offering their storytellers or 'books,' a safe environment to talk about their experiences.

"Because Asia is still comparatively conservative on that side of sex and gender expression or identity, people are not very open. So even in Vancouver, Asian queer [people] are not as visible as compared to other ethnic groups," says one of the project's co-curators, Yanting Qui.

Storytelling as a tool of community building

This is not Qui's first experience using storytelling as a tool to support those in marginalized groups. With the hope of giving power and voice to first and second-generation immigrants, they co-founded the Zee Zee Theatre as a Second Language Society with another of the project's curators, Jaylen Han. Qui recognizes the power of art as a way of community building.

"For immigrants who use English as their second language, we

want theatre to also be the second language, which we use to connect with the rest of the community. To be part of Canada," says Qui.

The Queer Asian Stories Collection is brought together by Qui, Han and Shay Dior, mother of the acclaimed all-Asian drag family, House of Rice. Through previous projects and workshops, the curators have assembled a team of storytellers with a diverse range of back-

'books' with a range of thought-provoking titles such as My Children of the Revolution, Maroon Mountain, Content Warning: Real Hot Girl S---, and The Boy's Department.

The books will be available in the afternoon for three hours with six shifts in every day. If readers are keen, they can read six books in one day. Qui encourages participants to be open, curious and ready to enjoy these wonderful stories.

"I would say that we have a very good collection of all unique but universal stories of self-finding."

Yanting Qui, co-curator of the Queer Asian Stories Collection project

grounds and stories to tell. Though most of the project's voices will be those of queer-identifying individuals, participants can expect to hear the perspectives of allies and family members too.

Audience members will have the opportunity to hear from



▲ Yanting Qui.

"I would say that we have a very good collection of all unique but universal stories of self-finding," says Qui. "It's not just something that uniquely happened to only queer or Asian people. It's a journey that every one of us as human beings on this planet are going through in a way."

For Qui, building community is at the heart of this project, with listening and understanding being the key to connecting to one another. Though the concept of the human library brings people together who may have never otherwise crossed paths, finding common ground through conversation is often the result.

"We are trying to find a story that could be relevant to everyone. So, [that includes] the storytellers, their cultural background and their queerness, but also their personal journey, how they find themselves, how they find peace and how they get support from the community," says Qui.

For more info about the event, visit www.zeezeetheatre.ca

Le plaisir of the words by Le Stylo à mots

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
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Horizontally

- 1- teaching system – common preposition
- 2- divisions – small difference
- 3- not friends – away
- 4- personal – gets in – for example
- 5- cooperation – employ
- 6- negation – worry
- 7- article – not exactly the North – number
- 8- in the middle of – to make certain
- 9- when someone is angry – took food
- 10- round object – mathematic operation
- 11- mistake – greeting – expressing a choice
- 12- large areas of land – exist

verticalement

- A) premier niveau d'institution scolaire
- B) mange à midi – unité de résistance électrique – longue période de temps
- C) première page d'un journal – canards
- D) produit naturel qui recouvre les dents – trou dans un navire
- E) relatif à l'âne – élément radioactif
- F) surprenant
- G) contraires au bon sens – baie nipponne
- H) permet de choisir – utile en jardinage
- I) loge d'une divinité – défenseur de la paix mondiale – terminaison d'infinitif
- J) dévêtu – lieras
- K) actions – précis – metal précieux
- J) personnel – a froid – verbe prisé par Shakespeare

For answers, see page 8

SKEENA WILD

FILM & PHOTO FESTIVAL

Saturday, November 18

SKEENAWILD FILM & PHOTO FESTIVAL 2023 – EVENING

SWFF is our cornerstone community outreach event where we showcase our local homegrown talent!

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 Page 5: Photo courtesy of Hell Yeah Prince George
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Let the European Films... CharmEU!

The European Film Festival returns in a new hybrid edition! Experience the richness of Europe through 27 unique films from 27 countries.

Join the 2023 edition and embark on a cinematic journey across the European continent. Experience exceptional stories from prestigious competitions, including heartwarming friendships and strong women journeys. Get ready for an unforgettable experience, navigating narratives across all genres, documentaries, captivating drama, and delightful comedies! This year also features a special fundraiser screening for Ukraine adding an extra film to the lineup.

To add a special touch to the big-screen celebration of great storytelling, special guests honour us by joining for Q&A sessions—talented directors Maria Douza ('LISTEN', Greece) and Martin Bonnici ('A VIPER'S PIT', Malta), alongside promising actor Miklos H. Vecsei, the lead in 'SEMMELEWEIS' (Hungary).

As introduced since 2020, the EUFF offers a selection of online screenings. These films will be available online across Canada. While not every film will be online, a substantial part of the Festival line-up is, giving anyone anywhere in Canada the chance to see the best of contemporary filmmaking in the European Union. So, if you see a film you like during the Festival in person, you can watch it again online and, better still, you can tell your friends about it – wherever they live – and they'll be able to watch it, too. The cross-Canada online EUFF will take place after the in-person Festival concludes, from December 1 to 17, with all films available during that entire period. Grab your tickets at www.euffto.com!

In-person or online, the goals have remained the same:

- Reflect the excellence and innovation of European independent cinema
- Give award-winning films their Canadian premieres
- Give voice to relevant European filmmakers in Canada
- Foster collaboration and engage in cultural dialogues between Canadian and EU communities
- Promote diversity

Participating EU countries include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Not to be missed: "The Charming Taste of Europe wine tasting event at Spadina Theatre, on November 19th, just before (7:45pm - 8:15pm) the screening of the Italian film "The Spring of my life".

See you at the movies!

About the Charming Taste of Europe

The Charming Taste of Europe is a special project that introduces exquisite items to the United States and Canada, such as Italian and French wine and fresh fruit from Greece, that showcase all of Europe's charm, beauty, culture, history, art, heritage, and unmistakable tastes.

The mission of The Charming taste of Europe, co-funded by the European Union, is to increase awareness of the merits and quality standards of select European wines and fresh fruits with promotional activities in the competitive markets of the United States of America and Canada.

The Charming Taste of Europe project is promoted by the Consortium for the Protection of Wines of Abruzzo, the Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Kavala (Kavala COOP), Agricultural Cooperative of Rachi Pieria "AGIOS LOUKAS," and the Union of Sweet Bordeaux Wines. These European agricultural products, famous around the world for their outstanding properties, will continue to promote with initiatives and events dedicated to consumers, journalists and professionals. Through the superb high quality Italian wines, the juicy kiwis and cherries from Greece, and the melodious French golden wines produced with the artistry of agricultural traditions, this campaign will awaken the senses and a new culinary consciousness by connecting food, cultures, and territories and will undoubtedly bring European charm into the lives of many.



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



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Why artificial intelligence needs to consider the unique needs of older women

Artificial intelligence (AI) is making headlines everywhere. Yet AI applications and implications for older adults, particularly older women, have not been adequately contemplated.

It's no longer a moonshot idea from a science fiction movie. AI is already part of our daily lives – Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, self-driving cars. And now ChatGPT, an AI chatbot that has human-like conversations, composes music, creates art and writes essays. It has disrupted the world as we know it. Pundits who are not easily impressed often describe these advancements as "scary good."

Many leaders have asked for a pause on AI development until we gain a better understanding of its impact. This is a good idea – but for reasons well beyond those often identified.

Institute of Health (NIH) funded studies. And up until 2019, older adults were not required to be included in NIH funded studies leaving a gap in our understanding of the health needs of older women in particular.

Excluding older women from drug data collection has been specifically detrimental because they are more likely to have chronic conditions, conditions that may require drugs, and are more likely to experience harmful side effects from medications.

Also, AI powered systems are often designed based on ageist assumptions. Stereotypes such as older adults being technophobes result their exclusion from their participation in the design of advanced technologies.

For example, women make up majority of the residents in long-term care homes. A study found



Photo courtesy of QUOI Media

▲ As we discuss how AI biases affect women, age must also be included in the conversation.

We need to ask: How can we ensure that AI's reach is considering the unique needs of different populations? For example, many countries are becoming super-aged societies where women make up the majority of the older population. Is AI taking the needs of older adults into account?

Without thinking through these questions, we may leave older adults, particularly women, and other marginalized populations, open to discriminatory outcomes.

The needs of older women are often invisible to decision-makers. Older women are a unique population and often gendered ageism – discrimination based on their age and sex – causes their needs to be neglected. Research has already demonstrated that older women are more likely to experience adverse health outcomes and face poverty and discrimination based on age and sex.

AI perpetuates this discrimination in the virtual world by replicating discriminatory practices in the real world. What's worse is that AI automates this discrimination – speeds it up and makes the impact more widely felt.

AI models use historical data. In healthcare, large data sets composed of personal and biomedical information are currently being used to train AI, but these data have, in many cases, excluded older adults and women, making technologies exclusionary by design.

For example, AI has a valuable use in drug research and development, which uses massive data sets or "big data." But AI is only as good as the data it gets and much of the world has not collected drug data properly. In the United States, until the 1990s, women and minorities were not required to be included in National

that biases held by technology developers towards older adults hindered the appropriate utilization of AI in long-term care.

There also needs to be further thought given to loss of autonomy and privacy, and the effects of limiting human companionship because of AI. Older women are more likely to experience loneliness, yet AI is already being used in the form of companion robots. Their impact on older women's wellbeing, especially loss of human contact, is not well studied.

This is how older women get left out from properly benefiting from advancements in technology.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) timely policy brief addresses Ageism in Artificial Intelligence for Health and outlines eight important considerations to ensure that AI technologies for health address ageism. These include participatory design of AI technology with older people and age-inclusive data.

We would add the need to consider the differences between women and men throughout. All levels of government also need to think about how AI is impacting our lives and get innovative with policy and legal frameworks to prevent systemic discrimination.

Ethical guidelines and the ongoing evaluation of AI systems can help prevent the perpetuation of gendered ageism and promote fair and equitable outcomes.

It's time we rethink our approach and reimagine our practices, so that everyone can participate and take advantage of what AI has to offer. ✍️

SURBHI KALIA is the Strategy Consultant at Women's Age Lab.

DR. PAULA ROCHON is a geriatrician and the founding director of the Women's Age Lab at Women's College Hospital.



November 16–30, 2023

European Union Film Festival 2023

Europe without the jet lag!

Our perennial showcase of contemporary European cinema returns this fall for another best-of-both-worlds hybrid edition! Proudly presented in partnership with the Canadian Film Institute (Ottawa) and the European Union Film Festival – Toronto, along with the member states of the European Union and the Delegation of the European Union to Canada, this 26th installment of the festival in Vancouver features in-theatre offerings from all 27 EU members. A selection of films will also be available to rent online at euffonline.ca following the conclusion of our in-person festival.

Like last year's edition, EUFF 2023 will include a fundraiser screening for Ukraine, organized in partnership with the Embassy of Ukraine to Canada. Proceeds from our presentation of Antonio Lukich's celebrated comedy *Luxembourg*, *Luxembourg* will benefit the Maple Hope Foundation, a Canadian not-for-profit organization committed to helping people suffering from the war in Ukraine.

Whether on our screen or yours, we hope you enjoy this year's survey of recent cinema from across Europe.

Film notes written by Tom McSorley

Additional notes by The Cinematheque

Acknowledgments

For assistance in making Vancouver's European Union Film Festival possible, The Cinematheque is grateful to Diodora Bucur, Press Officer, Delegation of the European Union to Canada (Ottawa); Tom McSorley, Executive Director, Canadian Film Institute (Ottawa); Jérémie Abessira, Executive Director, European Union Film Festival – Toronto; and the Embassies and Consulates of all European Union member states. Program subject to change.

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Upcoming Screenings



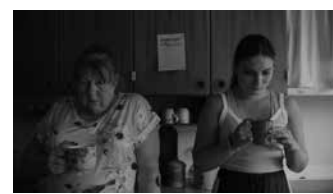
Till the End of the Night



Carbide



Riders



Miss Viborg



Double Blind



Freestyle



Man with the Answers



Soviet Milk



Remains of the Wind

Hell Yeah Prince George! Facebook group fosters positivity and charity within the community

by **CHERIE TAY**

For many Prince George community members, the Hell Yeah Prince George! (or HYPG!) Facebook group serves as a beacon of positivity amidst the onslaught of negative news online. What started as a conversation between two friends living in Prince George on the underappreciated nature of Prince George, led to the group's creation in 2014 and its huge outreach since, with a current count of 48,000 members.

David Mothus, admin of the Facebook group, recounts how his friend Scott McWalter came up with the idea for the group during a trip to a skating rink in Prince George. Mothus says that McWalter mentioned how “Down in Van-

cover, there would have been a thousand people on this ice oval and we would have been crowded out, and we come up here and there's two of us on this amazing ice oval ... we're so lucky to live in Prince George, there's always these fantastic things [to do] and we are so underappreciated.”

They could only find another online group with a strong focus on Prince George titled WTF Prince George; Mothus candidly says, “all people do is go on there and [b****] about the mayor, about the city, about crime...”. This realization led to their new venture to spread positive news about Prince George online.

After McWalter returned home from the skating rink that day, he created the Hell Yeah Prince George group, and it quickly gained popularity. Mothus said, “Within a week, it caught fire, everybody wanted to join this page... in a month, we had about 20,000 people on it, Huffington Post contacted us, CBC, CPV, everybody.” Currently, the group boasts nearly ~700 new posts monthly and features an eight-member moderating team.

Fundraisers and community events spread generosity

Hell Yeah Prince George's overarching theme is one of positivity. A quick scroll on the group's feed expresses a clear intention to uplift. Community members use the platform to praise businesses or individuals that offer good customer service, discuss



▲ Hell Yeah Prince George!'s group members sometimes share beautiful sights and scenes of the Prince George area.

community events (to save advertising costs for companies) and highlight charities' philanthropic ventures. Since the group's inception, they have raised a combined \$10 million for charity.

One notable fundraiser two years ago involved them forming a team of 15 business and philanthropic leaders to raise \$100,000 for the BC Cancer Foundation. Within an hour, they had received \$150,000, constituting the

largest fundraiser in BC Cancer Foundation history.

“That honestly made me bawl. It was so overwhelming. That's the level of support that this page has generated in this community,” says Mothus.

In another instance, Mothus issued a call for donations to help a Salvation Army employee fix his car. The \$11,000 raised from the open call eventually went towards reimbursing a woman for donating her deceased mother's car. “There's hundreds of stories like that... too many to remember all the things we've done now,” says Mothus.

Lastly, Mothus notes the group's overwhelming positive slant. He cites recorded statistics that 0.5 per cent of comments in 10 years had to be removed due to racism, homophobia, etc., which he considers a tiny fraction of the total number of comments compared to other online groups.

And while this emphasis on positivity might put a limit on challenging yet important discussions, Mothus says that other online groups already bring awareness to events that stir up negative feelings in members like political events. For Mothus, HYPG!'s concerted focus and theme creates its own value.

“We've created a distorted fake sense of the world that's purely positive,” says Mothus. “But there's a lot more space for everyone to just get stuff done.”



▲ An art piece carved into a tree, shared to the Hell Yeah Prince George! Facebook group.

Photo courtesy of Jennifer Hahn

Photo courtesy of Andrea Sport



IndieFest Vancouver 2023

Produced by re: Naissance Opera, IndieFest is happening November 17-26, 2023 and is spread across five unique Vancouver venues.

When: November 17 to 26, 2023

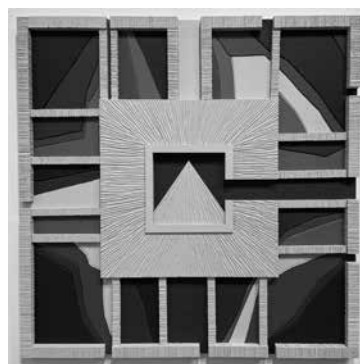
Where: Various venues throughout Vancouver

Admission: Tickets for events are available for purchase online from \$15-\$35. Sanctuary & Storm Tickets are available for purchase on the Vancouver Opera website.

► “Eastside Cultural Crawl” from page 1 light switch, sparked his desire to experiment with motifs of seeing through the window. KOKO's artistic career has indeed been marked by experimentation – with ideas, materials, and techniques – an approach he encourages when exploring wood artistry.

“Don't try to make everything perfect because it's not necessary,” says KOKO while asserting that woodworking is a fairly accessible skill. “I really want to inspire more people to work with wood.”

KOKO first learned wood working in community workshop classes focused on items of utility, such as cutting boards.



▲ An art piece by Roman Kuzmichev.

When the artistic need to learn traditional wood carving arose, he started experimenting with power carving, a technique more accessible while allowing for his desired results. For KOKO, whose move from Russia to Canada in April 2022 led to new experimentations with Canadian wood, sculpting requires introspective, bravery, and openness. “It's important to understand yourself, your soul, and your

heart, and be brave to be open to create with it,” says KOKO.

KOKO will be demonstrating his power carving techniques on Nov. 18 in a special Crawl event. While he's still sketching the creation, he notes it'll probably be an addition to one of his two collections. For KOKO, exhibiting his freestanding sculptures



▲ Roman Kuzmichev.

and wall hanging murals is both a milestone in his family's settlement in Canada and his own artistic career.

For the love of colour

Chu, a mural and ceramics artist, will be showcasing her studio at 1630 Pandora Street with a variety of artwork, including pottery and watercolour paintings for sale as well as a life-size mural for colouring. Well-known for her large murals that foster community, Chu started creating them while attending art school at York University.

“One professor just told me to keep going bigger and bigger –

your personality is too big, you need to go bigger,” says Chu.

For this year's Crawl, Chu has designed a seasons-themed mural with four quadrants, one for each of the four seasons, that visitors are encouraged to colour. Participants are also welcomed to sign their name or draw their own images in the center of the mural. Chu notes the design of seasons was chosen for its power as a conversation starter, which is a crucial aspect of her accessible approach to art.

“It's an outlet to release stress, to have fun, to connect with other people,” says Chu. “We need to strip away [the idea] that art is only for the refined – so many artists just do it for themselves or for their families.”

Visitors may also see Chu's kiln and wheels, highlighting her ceramics work which started in 2016 and involves incorporating contrasting principles, such as smooth versus texture. As an art teacher, Chu encourages students to use colour, similar to how her murals foster community through shared fun – an experience she has been able to witness at her previous mural events. For Chu, seeing introverts participate on their own terms and seniors exploring their child-like qualities have been highly memorable.

“People start chatting with each other, ask why you picked one image to colour over the other, it is collaborative,” says Chu. “I love that it reaches a community that is not always reached.”

For more information, please see www.culturecrawl.ca.

Photo by Ekaterina Menshikova

Photo courtesy of Roman Kuzmichev

The Vancouver Turkish Film Festival brings women's voices and stories front and centre

by ABBEY BILOTTA

The Vancouver Turkish Film Festival (VTFF) returns for its 10th anniversary, and will be showing 10 award-winning films from Nov. 24 to 26 at the Goldcorp Centre for the Arts.

Co-presented by the Turkish Canadian Society and SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs, the festival looks to allow Vancouver cinephiles to connect with contemporary Turkish cinema and culture.



▲ Eylem Kaftan.

This year's lineup will consist of eight feature films – *Almost Entirely a Slight Disaster*, *Black Night*, *Glass Curtain*, *Guilt*, *Hesitation Wound*, *In the Blind Spot*, *Lost in the Darkness* and *Suddenly* – and two documentaries – *A Day, 365 Hours* and *Drifting*.

In addition to this being the 10th year of the event, another notable aspect of the festival is the various female directors involved. This year's festival will see five female directors: Eylem Kaftan, Melisa Önel, Ayşe Polat, Ümran Safer and Somnur Vardar. Films such as *A Day, 365 Hours*; *Glass Curtain*; *Guilt* and *Suddenly* also dive deep into female stories, highlighting a focus on strong female figures.

A Day, 365 Hours: finding community while overcoming trauma

This year's guest of honour is Eylem Kaftan, director of *A Day, 365 Hours*.

Kaftan, an award-winning director and writer born and raised in Istanbul, gained wide recognition after her documentary *Vendetta Song*, in which the director completed a road trip to investigate her aunt's murder. Her newest film, *A Day, 365 Hours*, tells the story of three young girls affected by domestic and family violence and how the trio formed a sisterhood to overcome their traumas and take their abusers to court.

"They were quite interested in being part of a documentary and were extremely involved in the creative process," says Kaftan. "In a way, we wrote the story together. Being involved creatively helped their healing process."

During the filming process, Kaftan debated putting masks on the young women's faces to protect their identities. However the women eventually refused the masks, wanting the world to see them for who they are.

"They saw great potential to get rid of the fear, take action and bring justice," says Kaftan. "They thought they would be a source of inspiration for other women who were too afraid to ask for justice or free themselves of guilt. And so far, in our impact campaign, their presence is bringing a new layer of inspiration to the audience."

Kaftan also noted how she had not come across many documentaries about abuse, as abuse stories are often heavy, with victims not sharing their stories due to feelings of extreme shame or guilt. Despite the documentary's heaviness, Kaftan noted the touch of lightness the young women bring to it as well.

"I think my film reflects the moments of lightness and joy these girls share. Their moments of compassion, empathy and tenderness towards others is what



▲ Melisa Önel.

makes the film a bit different from many abuse stories."

Following the screening of her film on Nov. 25, Kaftan will be holding a Q&A session with assistant director Nural Sümbültepe.

Suddenly: a story of female self-discovery

Also included in this year's list of female directors is Melisa Önel, director of *Suddenly*.

Önel is a director, photographer and writer based in Istanbul who has produced two shorts, one documentary and two feature films, with *Suddenly*

being her second feature. While the film had its Asian premiere at the Tokyo International Film Festival, the VTFF will be its North American premiere.

The screenplay, which was co-written by Feride Çiçekoglu and Önel, tells the story of a woman named Reyhan who, upon realizing she has lost her sense of smell, decides to leave everything behind and begin an adventure of self-discovery.

For Önel and Çiçekoglu, telling a story of self-discovery was extremely important, as these stories are often explored through a male character's perspective.

"In our case, Reyhan is the one that decides to walk away and allows herself to drift, to become a Flâneuse in the city, trying to trace her memories in Istanbul while hoping the experience will reconnect her with her sense of smell" says Önel.

While *Suddenly* is about Reyhan's experiences throughout her journey, Önel says the film is meant to convey something more about Istanbul itself, as well as broader themes about women's agency and exploration.

"[It's about] the way we experience the city and how this female character explores it at her whim which can be a contested issue for female characters." ✍️

For more information about the festival visit www.vtff.ca



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Mad Pudding

A Canadian cross-cultural twist on Celtic music

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Mad Pudding brings their unique Celtic Funk sound to the Mel Lehan hall at St. James Community Square, on Nov. 26. For guitarist, vocalist and founding member Andy Hillhouse, Mad Pudding is all about bringing a unique sound that's both true to the band members and totally danceable.

"I think folks are in for... a unique experience. We're kind of doing our own thing and so hopefully you feel like it's something special," says Hillhouse.

Celebrating and appreciating Celtic music

Hillhouse says the history of Mad Pudding goes back to the late 80's or early 90's when Celtic music was seeing a revival through bands like The Pogues, as well as Canadian groups like Great Big Sea and Spirit of the West. Hillhouse says that Mad Pudding came about through an appreciation and celebration of that music. Band members were inspired by the exciting sound and characteristic qualities of the genre.

The band originally started as more folk-focussed but grew to take on an even groovier, danceable feel and focus, incorporating a bit of funk as its characteristic twist on Celtic music.

"We wanted to sort of play dances and make people dance, so we added bass and drums. It kind of came about fairly organically that the groove we kind of put on there [was] more kind of funk, and then that just became part of what we do," says Hillhouse.

Indeed, Folk and regional music has come to take on a more complicated character in an increasingly globalized world. Hillhouse even obtained a PhD in ethnomusicology focussing on that very topic. Based on his own experiences with cross-cultural collaborations at music festivals, his dissertation examined the nuanced cross-pollination of

rating some elements of Canadian fiddling music that band members have ties to and covering Canadian folk songs in their own unique style.

"A lot of our existence was figuring out what the heck we were, because we didn't fit into any easily definable category," says Hillhouse. "I've gone out to learn more about Irish tra-

“Folk music has often historically been very much about place and about local groups of people. But with [globalization], it's a different take on that.

Andy Hillhouse, guitarist and vocalist in Mad Pudding

ditional music and the very specific sort of aspects of style and the tradition... And what we played, we're very careful to not give any kind of sense that we think that we're pretending to be totally traditional Irish."

In all, it's led to an exciting formula ripe for frequent reunions to this day. Hillhouse hopes it's just as fun for the audience as it is for the band members.

"It's quite amazing. You get that, that connection where, even if you don't do it for a while and you get back together, you feel this sort of almost intuitive connection musically with each other," says Hillhouse. "For us to get together like this is really fun, that way, and we hope that that translates to the audience too." ✍

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For more information, visit www.roguefolk.bc.ca

A Vancouver author using words in a "Beautiful Beautiful" way

by KATRIANNA DESANTE

Brandon Reid's new novel *Beautiful Beautiful* is a coming-of-age story that follows the journey of Derik Mormon, a twelve-year-old boy who is confronted by topics of Indigeneity, culture, and masculinity when travelling to Bella Bella for his grandfather's funeral.

"Derik Mormon was my alias when I was really young," says Reid. "And so when writing about a twelve-year-old, I went back to when I was Derik Mormon."

Exploring identity and experience

Before commencing his journalism studies at Langara College, Reid began gravitating towards writing while working as a cook at a restaurant in downtown Vancouver. He found writing stories by hand while seated at a bus stop a relaxing interlude between catching the bus home at night.

"I was sort of trying to return to nature, I guess, to how things work. I didn't want to be on my device the whole time", Reid says. "I was inspired by Jim Morrison and Anthony Bourdain."

Growing up in Richmond, British Columbia, Reid had ambivalent feelings about Western culture, and he strove to articulate that through the lens of his pubescent identity of Derik Mormon. Reid recollects how his Indigenous identity had often been magnified by the school system.

"I didn't like being pulled out of class for being Indigenous and being singled out for being Indigenous," says Reid. "I felt that I didn't deserve to have special treatment for being Indigenous, which is still something that I do deal with nowadays."

As an avid consumer of music and comedy, Reid's novel incorporates lyricism and dark humour into the character of Redbird, the book's narrator. Through Redbird, readers are invited to journey with Derik Mormon into new territory, cry with him as he experiences the immediacy of loss, and smile as he reconnects with his ancestry.

"I was using Redbird as an alias because I was scared to get persecuted," says Reid. "But, then I started reading Jonny Appleseed and Five Little Indians, and I felt liberated in that sense to talk about those issues and even more so with Redbird."

Merging perspectives

By writing through multiple perspectives, Reid merges Indigenous storytelling traditions through bird relatives with modernist techniques. Reid believes that by telling the

story from different perspectives, readers can better apprehend its truth.

"I tried to convey a greater sense of the truth," Reid says. "Rather than staying with one character who has one sense of the truth, it acts as a mosaic of perspectives, almost like a collage."

Reid says the book's title was inspired by the story's setting in the home of the Heiltsuk First Nation of Bella Bella, meaning "beautiful beautiful." While travelling to Bella Bella for the first time, Reid felt guided towards equanimity and closure.

"Vancouver is one thing, but going up to Bella Bella, the first thing I remember is the smell of the fresh air and the water," says Reid. "There's a desolation to it, and it's a beautiful thing."



▲ Brandon Reid.

At the same time as the novel reflects parts of Reid and the culture of Bella Bella, Reid explains that it does not intend to accurately depict a specific place or person in time. Instead, it pulls on the experiences of Reid, who once identified with the lost, sensitive, and beautiful soul of twelve-year-old Derik Mormon.

"He's a tough kid, you know. He's in karate. He has a good education, which is something that his ancestors didn't really have," says Reid. "It was definitely me mending my traumas and forgiving myself and my family."

While Reid celebrates the fruition of his novel *Beautiful Beautiful*, which releases on Nov. 18, he is also deep into writing his next of hopefully many beautiful works of literature. ✍

For information about the *Beautiful Beautiful*, visit www.nightwoodeditions.com/collections/Brandon-Reid



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November 14–28, 2023

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The latter half of November is a time to embrace the spirit of togetherness and the magic of the upcoming holiday season. It's a time when the city's events and festivals offer a warm and vibrant escape from the encroaching winter chill, inviting residents and visitors alike to partake in the rich cultural offerings that make this city truly exceptional. Whether a film festival, musical performance or theatre play, there is something for everyone!

* * *

Paper Play
Nov. 4–25
www.outsidersandothers.com

Collage is often thought of as a modern artistic technique. The word collage – from the French verb coller, meaning “to stick” – was first used to describe the Cubist innovations of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, who began to stick newspaper cuttings and other materials onto their canvases in 1912. *The Paper Play* exhibition features artists from both Canada and the United States, bringing some new artists to the gallery and to share the perspective of these artists in our city. And even though we live in an age of advanced technology and AI, all the artists featured in this exhibition cut paper and use glue to make their artwork. There will be an artist talk on Nov. 18 at 2 p.m. which is free and open to the public.

* * *

Billy Bishop Goes to War
Nov. 14–18
www.evergreenculturalcentre.ca

From feats of daring down into the trenches to flying up to the skies, through the halls of Buckingham Palace, to inside the human spirit, *Billy Bishop Goes to War* follows the incredible adventures of Canada's greatest World War 1 flying ace. ACE Productions has brought a fresh interpretation to one of Canada's most enduring plays, making this musical so full of humour, hellfire and the boldness of an extraordinary career of this military hero. Join Billy Bishop as he reconciles the ecstasy of flying with the horrors of war, in this captivating show.

* * *

Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival
Nov. 14–19
www.vimff.org

The VIMFF connects the global outdoor community with international filmmakers, creators and speakers, so that they can inspire, entertain and bring mountain adventure into the homes of viewers. The festival offers mountain film screenings, live multimedia presentations, photography exhibitions, workshops, seminars & other special events. Get inspired for your next adventure with 25 of the best mountain films of the

year. For tickets and showtimes, check out the festival's website.

* * *

Neurodivergent Artist Collective Exhibition
Nov. 15–26
www.cacv.ca/nac

The Neurodivergent Artist Collective is a new collaborative effort by neurodivergent artists in Vancouver to take space in a neurotypical world and works to dismantle invisible inequities in contemporary art spaces. Members of the collective self-identify as neurodivergent and have felt alienated from engaging in the arts due to barriers such as a lack of access. The collective aims to be a safe space for folks facing socio-economic barriers, from differing cultural backgrounds, and of all sexual orientations and gender identities. There will be an opening reception on Nov. 17. Check out the collective's website for more information.

* * *

The Spinsters
Nov. 16–18
www.shadboltcentre.com

The Ugly Stepsisters cordially invite you back to the Palace, just like the good old days. Doesn't everyone love a ball? The pageantry, the elegance, the romance... but their ball, their rules and the world's most infamous step-siblings are ready to dish the dirt. What scandals hide within the glittering facade? What was Cinderella really like? Are the step-sisters really vapid? Vindictive?... Victims? *The Spinsters* is a seductive feast featuring mesmerizing movement, magical dresses, and stunning shadow puppetry. It's a deliciously disruptive dark comedy for adults brought to life by some of the most innovative designers and creators from across Western Canada. For more information, check out the Shadbolt Theatre website.

* * *

Louis Armstrong & Friends
Nov. 17–18, 8 p.m.
www.vancouverSymphony.ca

The great Louis Armstrong collaborated with virtually every major musical star of the 20th century including Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington and so many others. With that endearing Louis Armstrong spirit and one of a kind charisma, Byron Stripling and vocalist Carmen Bradford perform famous classics from the Great American Songbook and recreate the magical moments of the greatest legend of jazz! Check out the symphony's website for more info.

* * *

Weasel
Nov. 17–25
www.capilanou.ca/blueshorefinancialcentre

What do you do when you're terrified of what you love to do?

Charlie is a talented young actor but can no longer act. To figure out why, she must navigate through a dreamscape of clashing voices and fractured memories – all while a pack of weasels haunts her steps. *Weasel* is about finding the courage to face your fears and is described by Broadway World - Edmonton as a play that “conveys powerful messages of strength and resilience.” For more information about the play, check out the CapU website.

* * *

Positively Petite: Annual Miniature Exhibition
Nov. 17–Dec. 21
www.placedesarts.ca/events/positively-petite-annual-miniature-exhibition

Positively Petite is an annual exhibition unique to Place des Arts that showcases small artwork created by local artists. All two-dimensional artwork on exhibit is 30 square inches or smaller and all three-dimensional artwork is 60 cubic inches or smaller. This year's show features artworks in various mediums including painting, ceramics, fibre arts, sculpture, photography, printmaking, etching and mixed media from 38 local artists. The pieces in this exhibition make unique gifts for the art lover on your list or those you want to introduce to the beautiful world of art. All purchases directly support cultural programming at Place des Arts and the exhibiting artists.

* * *

Taraf Syriana-Sergiu Popa & Friends
Nov. 21, 8 p.m.
www.caravanbc.com

This masterful lineup of artists from around the world features music from Sephardic Jewish, Syrian and Roma / Eastern European traditions. The group includes legendary Romani accordionist Sergiu Popa, acclaimed Sephardic cellist Noémy Braun, Nizar Tabcharani on qanun, tombek player Bijan Rahmani, and vocalist Parisa Karimi Molan. Described as “Expressive and emotional... played with absolute brilliance by a group of amazingly talented musicians” the band is especially relevant “in a world that unfortunately seems to be becoming more and more divisive, this beautiful work of art that celebrates people coming together is definitely a must hear.” For Taraf Syriana's debut in Vancouver, they will be premiering a new program that will also showcase rarely heard Sephardic songs from Syria.

* * *

Blood Wedding
Nov. 23–Dec. 3
www.langara.ca/studio-58

Recognized for his surreal and socialist works, Lorca's *Blood Wedding* is a tragedy of love, repression and duty. Set in rural Spain, a bride is torn between her fiancé and her former lover, and must balance feuds between the families. *Blood Wedding* is a deeply poetic play that explores the isolation of loyalty versus personal freedom. For tickets and

more information, please check out the Studio 58 website.

* * *

Deafy
Nov. 24–26
www.pitheatre.com

Pi Theatre, as part of its Provocateurs Series, will be presenting *Deafy* from Friday, Nov. 24 to Sunday, Nov. 26 at the VIFF Studio Theatre in Vancouver. Deaf public speaker, ‘Nathan Jesper,’ has arrived at his venue desperately late. As he launches into his speech, he soon realizes that things are not what they seem. A new play by Deaf artist Chris Dodd, *Deafy* skillfully combines ASL, subtitles and the spoken word to weave together a tragicomedy that takes the audience on an unexpected journey of discovering what it really means to belong.

* * *

Festa D'Autunno
Nov. 25, 6 p.m.
www.circoloabruzzese.ca

Join the Circolo Abruzzese of Vancouver for a vibrant and joyous autumn celebration – the “Festa d'Autunno”! Immerse yourself in the beauty of the autumn season, as they come together to honour the rich Abruzzese heritage, delicious cuisine and the changing colours of the fall. Indulge in a feast of authentic Abruzzese dishes prepared by the talented chefs at the Italian Centre. From savoury pasta dishes to delectable desserts, the menu is a journey through the flavours of Italy.

Witches, Bitches, and Canny Women
An Exhibition of Artworks by
Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk and Melissa Mary Duncan
November 14 - December 2, 2023

Opening Reception: November 18 - 1:00 - 4:00
Rock Family Gallery, Mission Arts Centre
33529 1 Ave, Mission, BC V2V 1H1

Answers:

HORIZONTAL

- 1) EDUCATION – AS
- 2) LINES – NUANCE
- 3) ENEMIES – OUT
- 4) ME – ENTERS – EG
- 5) UNION – USE
- 6) NO – TENSION
- 7) THE – NNE -NINE
- 8) AMID – ASSURE
- 9) DAMN – ATE
- 10) REEL – TIMES
- 11) ERROR – SIR – OR
- 12) ESTATES – ARE

VERTICAL

- A) ÉLÉMENTAIRE
- B) DÎNE – OHM – ÈRE
- C) UNE – EIDERS
- D) CÉMENT – DALOT
- E) ASINIEN – RA
- F) ÉTONNANT
- G) INSENSÉS – ISE
- H) OU – SEMIS
- I) NAOS – ONU – ER
- J) NU UNIRAS
- K) ACTES – NET – OR
- L) SE – GÈLE – ÈTRE