

The Source

forum of diversity

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A YEAR IN REVIEW

Chinatown stories, urban design innovations and other highlights

by SIMON YEE

The year 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of *The Source* newspaper, our community's own "beacon," as our very first issue called it – a paper dedicated to reflecting, anchoring and connecting the myriad cultures of Vancouver. From the beginning, the paper has embraced the diversity that defines our city and proudly serves as a platform for stories that resonate across languages and cultures.

In that spirit, we look back on some of this past year's interesting stories, capturing moments that echo the paper's vision of building bridges between communities. From covering stories of underrepresented peoples to examining personal, societal or environmental challenges that bring us together, this retrospective reflects our enduring commitment to documenting Vancouver's cultural mosaic and

inviting you, our readers, to be a part of that story.

Winter: From Chinatown to the beach

Back in January, in the first issue of the year, reporter Prisca Tang went to the Chinatown Storytelling Centre, whose mission is to highlight the often overlooked history of Chinese Canadians. She

"Chinatown used to be like a mini-Hong Kong. It was bustling. You couldn't find parking and you had to jostle your way through. It was exciting. You cannot picture it now, but in the '50s, it was super exciting," Mar said.

In February, reporter Bonnie Gill showcased the Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS) and its efforts to empower art-

trated VAMS' dedication to placing music at the forefront and creating a nurturing atmosphere.

In March, reporter Cherie Tay spoke with environmental student Helen Wong and her efforts to merge community advocacy with environmental science through her thesis on microplastics. Wong successfully enlisted over 20 volunteers to gather

but literally anyone who cares about the environment," Wong said. "Events like this not only expose people to what fieldwork is like, but they get to do something cool outside."

Theatres and museums in springtime

In April, reporter Elaha Amani spoke with the team behind *I*

“ We hope our stories inspire in you the values of diversity, community and love of culture, as much as it does in us.

captured the voices of community members, particularly content producer Ramona Mar, emphasizing the significance of personal narratives in understanding identity and heritage. Mar illustrated how these evolving stories contributed to a broader understanding of the community's struggles and hopes for the revival of Chinatown as a vibrant cultural hub.

ists of all abilities to create, record and perform music using adaptive technology. Gill spoke with program manager Graeme Wyman who emphasized their role in facilitating musical creativity rather than providing music therapy, supporting artists through lessons, recording sessions and live performances. By sharing client stories, Gill illus-

sand samples from Vancouver's beaches, spotlighting the significance of community involvement in environmental research and to further understand how microplastics appear on our beaches. Wong's hopeful outlook on climate action illustrated her dedication to fostering change.

"[Climate anxiety] is not something that only young people feel

Know Your Secret, a play exploring the dangers of social media and the loss of privacy. Director Valerie Methot championed positive social change through free, collaborative theatre projects that connect youth with professional mentors. She told Amani that working with youth writers, such as Ciara Wilkinson, helped

See "2024 in Review" page 6 ►



A timeless Finnish settlement
Page 4



Exploring fire in art
Page 6



An innovative artist collective
Page 7



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Photo courtesy of Archdiocese of Vancouver

▲ Filipino Ministry celebrations.

Connecting with Filipino culture through Simbang Gabi

by LILLIAN LIAO

As the year winds down, people look for signs of divine intervention to give them inner strength. Simbang Gabi, a nine-day (novena) series of Masses in honour of Mother Mary, is a cornerstone of the Filipino community's celebration of Christmas.

"[Simbang Gabi] encompasses everything the traditional Filipino [culture] is: religious, fun, community," says Mike Guia, a leader of the Archdiocese of Vancouver's Filipino Ministry; and coordinator of this year's celebrations across the Lower Mainland.

According to Guia, a novena, meaning nine, is a prayer for divine intervention. The goal of the devotee is to complete all nine days of the Simbang Gabi. The Archdiocese of Vancouver will begin this year's celebrations with a Commissioning Mass, featuring representatives from its participating parishes, Dec. 13, at the Holy Rosary Cathedral.

A growing celebration

Guia was an early member of the Filipino ministry established under the leadership of Archbishop Miller around six years ago. One of the first projects of this Ministry was planning a Simbang Gabi celebration, which was new to Canada at the time. The celebrations have since grown to include over 30 of their parishes – a trend Guia hopes will continue.

"Of all the projects of the Filipino ministry, this is the most attended," he adds. "It's the highlight of the year, and it's good it comes at the end of the year. It closes out the year and starts the new year."

Guia notes that while celebrations for Simbang Gabi have traditionally begun on Dec. 14, this year's opening mass will be held on Dec. 13 (because the 14th falls on a Saturday). Led by The Most

Reverend J. Michael Miller, CSB, the event begins with a procession of parish banners and parols, followed by a Mass.

"It's a beautiful tradition, it's a novena, and that's actually what attracts some non-Filipino cultures and ethnicities: because they want to pray to the novena as well," adds Guia.

Simbang Gabi is a prayer for the blessed Mary. While "Simbang" means "to worship" and "Gabi" means night, Guia notes there is no official translation for the term. The emphasis on "night," however, is rooted in the celebration's history of becoming a novena.

ishes even encouraging cross-cultural attendance and cross-generational contact.

"Catholic celebrations are dominated by young kids, seniors, or young adults, but this one is cross-generational," he adds. "More and more I see Filipinos born here that are curious about their culture, and they attend this event."

For Guia, Simbang Gabi provides the Filipino community with a chance to reconnect with their culture. He points out that many Filipinos miss their social culture when living in a more work-focused society like Canada. Aside from

“More and more I see Filipinos born here that are curious about their culture, and they attend this event.”

Mike Guia, a leader of the Archdiocese of Vancouver's Filipino Ministry

"Simbang Gabi is a night mass, but it is held in the morning," he says. "In Mexico, where it originated as a novena, it was a nine-day evening mass."

Guia states that as the tradition reached the Philippines, it adapted to the Filipino agricultural society by becoming a morning mass. This adaptation provided worshippers a chance to practice their faith before work. While Simbang Gabi masses are still held early in the morning in the Philippines, the timing of the masses is more flexible in the Canadian context.

Bonding through traditions

In Canada, the Filipino Ministry has also adapted to including bilingual (English and Tagalog) elements, due to the shortage of Filipino priests. For Guia, Simbang Gabi is notable for its diverse appeal, with some par-

its religious function, Simbang Gabi also provides connections to Filipino culture through the sharing of food, as Guia notes that his parish sponsors breakfast for the nine days of the Masses.

"In the Philippines, it has evolved into a social event as well," he explains. "After the Mass, there is a tradition of street food in the church plaza, along the streets."

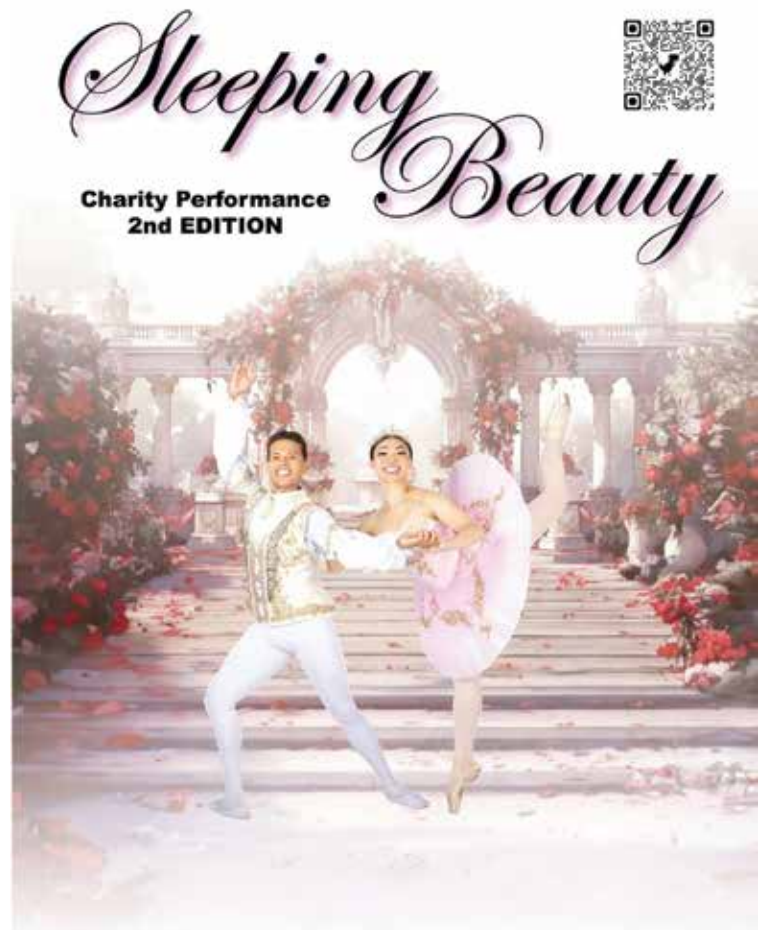
He adds that the event, being a common place where people meet their future partners, is highly appealing for teenagers in the Philippines. For Guia, these celebrations are becoming even more of an international phenomenon, having been recognized by Pope Francis as a valuable event for the church. ✂

For more information, see <https://rcav.org/filipino-ministry/programs#simbang-gabi>

Illustrator Joseph Laquerre
Writers Jeanne Baillaut, Marc Béliveau, Marie-Paule Berthiaume, Apsara Cordonnier, Alois Gallet, Ashley Kim, Amélie Lebrun, Suzanne Leenhardt, Alison MacDonald, Guy Rodrigue, Kylie Xi, Simon Yee, Robert Zajtmann

Translation Barry Brisebois, Louise Dawson
Distribution Joseph Laquerre, Kevin Paré

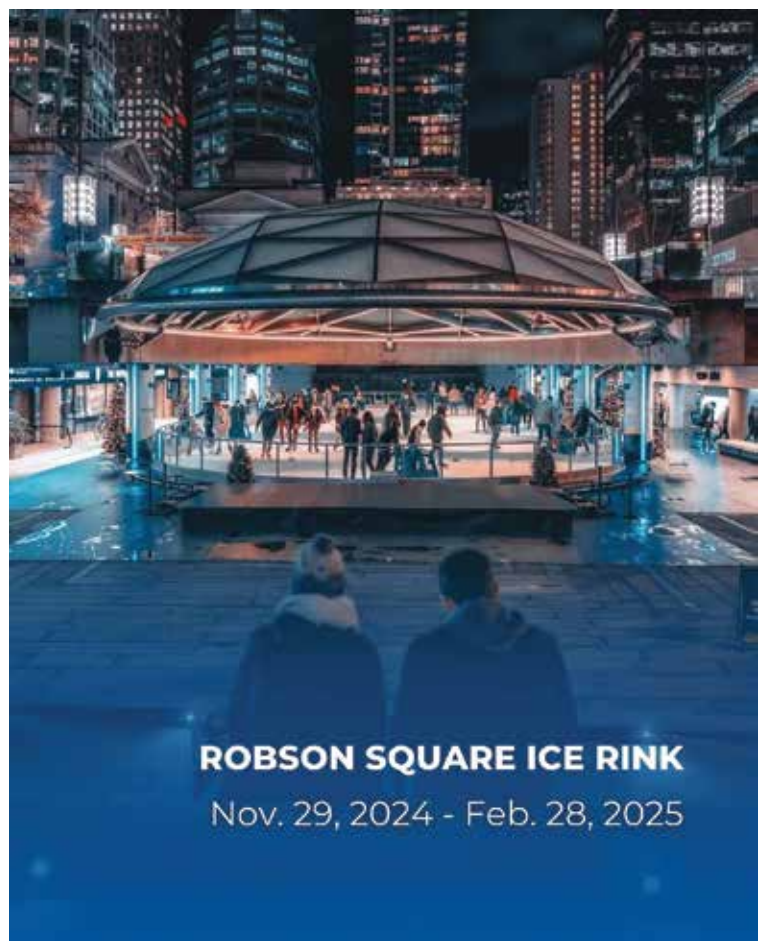
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Page 4: Guy Taylor
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THE SOURCE NEWSPAPER
Mailing Address
Denman Place PO Box 47020
Vancouver, BC V6G 3E1
Office
204-825 Granville St., Vancouver, BC
Telephone (604) 682-5545
Email info@thelastsource.com
www.thelastsource.com

Founding Publisher and Editor-in-Chief **Mamadou Gangué**
Deputy Editor (English section) **Lillian Liao**
French Local Journalism Initiative Coordinator **Paul T. Tshilolo**
Art Director **Laura R. Copes**
Copy Editors (English) **Frank Abbott, Deanna Choi, Melodie Wendel-Cook**
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Celebrating World Arabic Language Day

Arabic: An evolving language

by ALISON MACDONALD

World Arabic Language Day returns on Dec. 18, commemorating the 1973 decision to make Arabic one of the official languages of the United Nations. For Nesrine Basheer, assistant professor of teaching at the University of British Columbia (UBC), the language is an incredibly diverse one, particularly within its dialects.

"The dialect is the language people love in, the language that they fight in, the language that you hear in the café, songs, soap operas, films," Basheer says, noting how the richness of the dialect contributes to cultural production.

A diglossic language

In its winter 2022/2023 session, UBC launched four new courses in modern Arabic language and culture – all of which are taught by Basheer. She notes that this modernized Arabic is different from the classical Arabic found in The Quran.

"In terms of structure [and] grammar, it is the same grammar that we use now, but the

vocabulary – many of the words are no longer used," she says. "Or the same word has evolved in meaning as two languages, as languages do."

According to Basheer, modern standard Arabic is the official language taught in schools and used in formal contexts, including politics, law, academia and journalism. However, it is not native to Arabic speakers due to the various dialects that exists across the Arabic-speaking world.

"Let's say a child is born in Jordan. They speak Jordanian Arabic at home," she explains. "[T]hey go to school, then they start reading and writing in standard Arabic."

She further emphasizes that there is a huge diversity in the dialects both across Arab speaking nations and even within countries themselves. In comparing geographies and the languages spoken, she finds that similarities can be found amongst dialects within geographical proximity of each other.

"It's almost like groups of languages," she says. "For example, the dialect in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan are very close because of the geography."



▲ Nesrine Basheer at Imagine UBC.

Basheer notes that the opposite is true as well: speakers who are farther apart geographically experience more differences in their dialect. In these situations, she says that "language accommodation" is used. This is a skill in which speakers come together, finding ways to communicate despite the differences.

The next steps

Besides working to establish the program as well as focusing

on her teaching and research, Basheer has several objectives for what is next. One of them is teaching Arabic courses at UBC Extended Learning, which is open to the public. Recognizing many families' desire for their children to learn Arabic, she is also interested in a secular model for teaching the language.

"There is a need for the Islamic route and the Christian route," she says. "But what about those that want Arabic without the religious aspect?"

Basheer will also be reaching out to the Arabic teaching communities to learn of their challenges and the required resources. She shares that what most attracted her to this role was the opportunity itself and the ability to start something from scratch.

"I felt like I had grown enough as a teacher and practitioner, and I wanted the leadership position," she says. "To make decisions and to start something. And, of course, UBC is one of the top universities."

She shares that, after the interview, her decision was even further solidified. When asked directly in the interview process as to how much freedom she would have in her work, the head of the department's immediate response was "full freedom."

"The impression was that it was a strong well-established program. They had already introduced Farsi before I arrived, going further to include Arabic," she says. "I had their full trust, and I couldn't resist coming and joining." ✍

For more information, please see: <https://asia.ubc.ca/profile/nesine-basheer>

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Fishing into the past: The local history of Finn Slough

by LILLIAN LIAO

The impressions of a community frozen in time is what inspired Guy Taylor to research the historical Finnish Settlement in Richmond known as Finn Slough. Winner of Vancouver Heritage Foundation's 2023/2024 Robert Lemon Heritage Studies Prize, Taylor's report showcases how the community's development is intertwined with major aspects of B.C.'s history – immigration, labour rights, the fishing industry and, most importantly, the question of what defines a legitimate settlement.

"I personally find it a very beautiful, a very unique space," says Taylor. "Culturally, in Vancouver, we have a real reputation of not thinking too much about the value of our history."

Returning to the past

Taylor first came across the stilted houses of Finn Slough during long weekend walks with his family. Curious to discover its backstory, he embarked on a year-long research project, digging up newspaper and city archives as well as blogs and books on B.C.'s history. According to his research, Finn Slough's inhabitants were part of the late 19th century and early 20th century trend of Finnish migration to North America following the Russification of Finland.

"There were a lot of really severe domestic policies that were imposed on Finland which made it very difficult to live and work there," he explains.

contact were unanswered. For Taylor, the community's self-sufficiency and isolation from the broader society is evident throughout its history.

Understanding land ownership

"There's a real sense in slough of inclusion and trying to protect from attacks from the outside," he says.

He notes that this 'us versus the world' narrative came about through the communities' historic and modern challenges with land expropriation, real estate development and even language exclusion – the Canadian government labelled Finnish as an "enemy language" in 1918. Taylor also points to a 1912 court case actioned by one of Finn Slough's residents against the government's expropriation of his land to build city roads.

"The city was very much 'this is an immigrant, he doesn't know what he's doing,'" he adds. "It speaks to a more general mentality that new immigrants would have found themselves subjected to if they weren't English."

Using translators, the Finn Slough resident eventually won the case and was awarded fair compensation for the land. Taylor notes that the community's complex relationship with different levels of the government can be traced to the settlement's architectural development. Because purchasing land from local surveyors was expensive and structures that were half on land and half on water may be recognized as being on Crown land, the settlers' stilted houses evoke interesting questions about



▲ Finn Slough.



▲ Guy Taylor.

According to Taylor, these immigrants were predominantly single men with fishing, forestry or mining experience. Because American working conditions were harsh, many decided to move up North. They first settled in Woodward's Slough, along the Fraser River, before relocating to Finn Slough on the Fraser River's south arm in Richmond.

"[There was] this understanding that, with the money you could make in America, you could come to Canada and get land and live a more agrarian approach – similar to what they had in Finland," Taylor says.

While he intended to speak with the community's members, his attempts to make

ownership. The story of Finn Slough embodies a broader discussion of what defines a settlement or a squatter community in B.C.'s history.

"Do you view landownership as I paid x amount of money and I hold a piece of paper that says this point to this point belongs to me," he explains, noting the imperialist and colonial implications. "Or do you view landownership as I am on this land, I am using this land and I'm raising a family here?"

Taylor notes that the Finn Slough community is also vulnerable to climate change and aging demographics. He shares how recent reports have noted the local government's refusal to provide the community with climate change protections – due to their status on Crown land.

"There is an understanding in the city's eyes that this is a special area that has a lot of historical weight," he says. "But at the same time, there is a reluctance to bring this site into the folds of the city of Richmond's official heritage register." ✍️

For more information, see www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/grants/robert-lemon-heritage-studies-prize

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Lucia and other Swedish Christmas traditions

A light in the dark

by LILLIAN LIAO

No chimneys here, but plenty of glögg, lussekatter, smorgasbord – and Disney. The Scandinavian Community Centre Society (SCCS) will host a diverse line-up of holiday events this month, including the long-standing Swedish tradition of Lucia (Dec. 14): which brings light, hope, and warmth to dark winter months.

“It’s supposed to be a totally positive thing and brings people’s spirits up,” says Carina Spencer, vice-president of the Sweden House Society and the honorary consul of Sweden for British Columbia and Yukon.

Lucia, traditionally celebrated on Dec. 13, is one of the most beloved Swedish traditions.

The festivities of food

Holiday celebrations, points out Spencer, in the Swedish culture begins early with Advent: four Sundays before Christmas. An advent candleholder is placed



▲ Carina Spencer.

on the windowsill in their house, marking the countdown and bringing warmth to the dark season.

“You light one, then you blow it out – because you don’t want to totally make it disappear,” she explains, of the custom originating from the Lutheran church. “Then, the next [Sunday], you light both of them.”

Food, particularly the *smorgasbord* (the “Sandwich board”), is central to Swedish celebrations. The *smorgasbord* is the traditional Christmas meal: families prepare the food ahead of time – with some boards lasting over the course of three or four days.

“Early December, the restaurants [in Sweden] start having them, and they are big *smorgasbords* with Christmas things,” she says, noting that herring, ham, meatballs, sausages, and ribs are included.

As for beverages, the popular Swedish drink, *glögg*, is often heated on the stove. While *glögg* is traditionally recognized as a mulled wine, Spencer notes that it doesn’t have to contain alcohol.

“It has cloves and cinnamons... we pour them into very special little cups, and we usually put raisins and almonds in it,” she adds. “That’s one of the smells of Christmas that I remember.”

A curious tradition

During the Lucia festivities, girls, as the Lucias, wear candles in their hair; and boys, as star boys, carry a star in their hands. Both dressed in white gowns, the Lucias and star boys sing traditional songs.

“You can sit in a house or in a church that is pitch black, and all of a sudden you hear this singing,” she adds. “So, they come, bringing light in the darkness.”

During Lucia, Swedes eat gingerbread cookies and *lussekatter*, or Lucia bread, made from saffron and shaped like a cat.

According to Spencer, Swedes would traditionally put food, such as oranges or chocolates, in their Christmas tree. This meant that they would only set up their tree either on the day of Christmas or the day before Christmas.

For the Swedes, the big celebration happens on Christmas eve – including the family meal, the arrival of Santa – who knocks on people’s doors and eats porridge with cinnamon and sugar – and a curious Disney tradition that begins at 3 o’clock in Sweden.

“I would say probably 60-70 per cent of the families in Sweden sit down to watch Disney for an hour,” she says, noting the programming includes a mix of old Disney and Christmas themed Disney. “We all ask each other all the time, ‘Why do we do this?’”

At the Scandinavian Community Centre, there will be an afternoon and evening Lucia celebration on Dec. 14. The afternoon event includes a *fika*, or coffee break, an important part of socialization in Swedish culture. The lights will be dimmed as the children from the Swedish school in Burnaby enter and perform traditional Lucia songs in Swedish.

“They sing different songs, and have little speeches,” she says. “The evening one also has a *smorgasbord*.”

Spencer emphasizes that events at the Scandinavian Culture Centre, including the Scandinavian Seniors Christmas Lunch (Dec. 13) and Christmas by the Fireside (Dec. 13) are open to anyone who wishes to attend, regardless of their ethnic heritage. ✉

For more information, please see www.scancentre.org

A Kazakh (Qazaq) Community Sharing their culture and uniting their community

by ASHLEY KIM

Recently appointed honorary consul for Kazakhstan in B.C., Darren Klinck, says that in addition to assisting Kazakh citizens and strengthening economic ties between Kazakhstan and B.C., part of his role is highlighting the rich culture of Kazakhstan and promoting cultural ties between the nations. Only the third of its kind in Canada, Kazakhstan opened the Honorary Consulate in Vancouver just this past January.

Even though he is not Kazakh, Klinck who is also president of Arras Minerals Corporation, has maintained close connections with the country and was appointed as honorary consul through the recommendation of the former Kazakhstan Ambassador to Canada, Akyzbek Kamaldinov.

“Our company is focused on exploring critical minerals in Kazakhstan...I got to know Ambassador Kamaldinov very well, and [the Embassy] had been very supportive of our company,” says Klinck, noting his goal of finding future opportunities to engage with the culture.

Similarities and synergies

Klinck says there are many similarities between Canada and Kazakhstan, including their small populations, economic drivers and cold winters. He also points to the long history of Kazakh international students in Canada which contributes to beneficial synergies between the nations. The Consulate seeks to promote these connections on various levels.

“[The Consulate] has helped with meetings between B.C. government officials and the Ottawa Embassy, as well as promoting trade at the governmental level, investment in cultural opportunities and from a cultural perspective,” Klinck adds. “I think it’s something that is evolving.”



▲ Darren Klinck.

Klinck also points to his experience at the 2024 Turkic Festival in North Vancouver, where the B.C. Qazaq Community, an organization focused on promoting Central Asian culture, participated alongside other countries.

“I had an opportunity to attend that and represent the Kazakh government and spend some time with the Consul Gen-

eral of Turkey,” he says. “I think it’s kind of a mix of business and trade, cultural government ties and just trying to help wherever possible.”

In addition to aiding Kazakh nationals get in touch with the Embassy, providing help in emergencies and promoting economic ties between B.C. and

She cites homesickness and culture shock as common challenges that international students and newcomers face coming into Canada. In addition, she feels that the biggest challenge that the Kazakh community in Vancouver faces is distance.

“Not many people can handle the long flight and tickets might be

“It’s a very rich and engaging and welcoming culture...”

Darren Klinck, honorary consul for Kazakhstan in British Columbia

Kazakhstan, Klinck looks forward to engaging more with the Kazakh community and their culture.

“It’s a very rich and engaging and welcoming culture, and I’m sure that in the future years there will be more culture and engagement opportunities to experience and learn

expensive, so there is no opportunity to travel back home to reconnect with family,” she explains.

She hopes for the Kazakh community in Vancouver to be united, and for their members to feel welcome and safe. Currently with around 900 members, the community has been steadily growing over the last 15 years. As of



▲ Kauken at the Turkic Festival 2024.

more about the Kazakh culture,” he adds.

Uniting the community

Ajara Kauken, a member of the organizing committee for the B.C. Qazaq Community, first came to Vancouver in 2009 as an international student. Having lived in B.C. for 16 years, she shares her knowledge and experience with international students from all over the world.

“I’ve been working with students from different countries such as Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and along the way, I started helping students from other countries as well,” Kauken says.

this past November, they are also registered as an official non-profit organization. The community is currently working on their official website and preparing to organize larger events for next year.

“We can help and support all the people from Kazakhstan who live in British Columbia, doing various events...so that everyone can attend and find a group according to their interests,” she adds. “Our main goal is to help and to combine because it’s very important to feel connected with the community.” ✉

For more information, visit: www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-ottawa?lang=en or www.bcqazaq.org

Fire: Creation and Destruction

Exploring nature and Indigenous culture through art

by KYLIE XI

Fire: Creation and Destruction, an evocative exhibition at the Italian Cultural Centre's Il Museo Gallery, brings together the Sculptors' Society of B.C. (SSBC) and six Indigenous artists to offer visitors a chance to reflect on fire's significance in shaping landscapes, communities and traditions.

It is a thought-provoking collaboration that casts an introspective look at the profound impact of B.C.'s wildfire season through diverse artistic interpretations. It also marks SSBC's 50th anniversary and examines fire as both a destructive force and a cultural symbol.

"It's this idea of how we deal with the threat of fire and the fear based on their cultural backgrounds," says Angela Clarke, the Italian Cultural Centre's museum director and curator.

Facing fear and embracing diversity

Inspired by the devastating 2021 wildfires in Lytton, B.C., Clarke envisioned the exhibition sparking conversations about living with the fear and reality of wildfires while providing an inclusive space for artists to exchange cultural insights. In their understandings of fire, Clarke says artists are encouraged to follow any direction they prefer.

"The notion is to represent that as Canadians, we all have a mixture of identities, and that's how we negotiate our place in the world," Clarke explains. "It's this idea of how we deal with the threat of fire and the fear based on their cultural backgrounds."



▲ Fire: Creation and Destruction at the Italian Cultural Centre's Il Museo Gallery.

Clarke points out that Indigenous communities have fascinating cultural ways of relating to fire. Fire is not only a destructive force but also a vital element that must be balanced with its counterpart – water. Indigenous artist Aaron Rice has chosen to project images of fire and water onto Indigenous drums, highlighting the interplay between these natural forces.

"If you have ways of dealing with it and understanding the elements, then you can harness it for something that is deeply meaningful," Clarke says.

Indigenous communities are now adapting their ancestral knowledge of harnessing fire for modern use. They are actively sharing their prescribed methods of fire management with wildfire

specialists, offering valuable insights into sustainable ways to deal with B.C. wildfires.

Gratitude, fire, and environmental warnings

"If you want to call it science or nature or Mother Earth...we have to take care of it; it's part of a reciprocal relationship," says Indigenous artist annie ross who infuses her connection to nature into her artistic interpretation of fire.

Having grown up in an Indigenous community in California and learned from plants, animals, and Indigenous culture, ross is both grateful to and fascinated by nature. Currently teaching at Simon Fraser University, this gratitude underpins ross's exploration of fire as both a destructive force and a symbolic warning of environmental

degradation caused by human indifference.

"The way we live our daily lives is burning everything up and it won't come back," she explains. "It has to quit. It has to stop."

In her sculptural work, she creates protective ponchos with found materials for animal figures such as bears that represent a spiritual being within Indigenous community. These pieces symbolize the need to safeguard wildlife displaced by wildfires while reminding us of humanity's role in environmental crises.

"It's our responsibility to take care of every life more. It's our responsibility to love one another," she argues.

She also reimagines discarded figurines by dressing them in ceremonial attire, challenging conventional ideas of value

and waste. These sculptures urge viewers to reconsider what society discards.

"I want people to think about what's precious and why," adds ross.

The exhibition also features a partnership with the Vancouver Historical Society, which hosted a series of fire-themed lectures on Oct. 24 to deepen public understanding of fire's impact across cultures and landscapes.

"I hope [our work] is to have the conversation about why these things matter and consider for ourselves our own individual and collective part in how to fix it," ross says. ✍

The exhibition runs until December 31. For more information, go to www.italianculturalcentre.ca/current-exhibition.

► "2024 in Review" from page 1

her understand the darker side of the Internet. Wilkinson, who played the complex antagonist Angelique, credits the company's supportive community with helping her grow as an artist and hopes initiatives like these theatre projects grow alongside Vancouver's broader arts scene.

Reporter Drew Stewart highlighted the Burnaby Village Museum's efforts to share underrepresented stories about B.C.'s South Asian community through its May exhibits. One of the exhibits explored the lives of South Asian families in early 1900s Burnaby through photographs, documents and possessions, while another addressed caste discrimination in Canada through first-hand accounts. These exhibits used interactive and visual elements to engage audiences, but, despite their impact, the exhibits are temporary, prompting calls for a permanent space to preserve and share these important histories for future generations.

In June, reporter Alison MacDonald went to the Museum of Vancouver to explore how thoughtful urban design could address social inequities within communities. One of the people she spoke with was UBC School of Architecture interdisciplinary fellow Young-Tack Oh, whose work focuses on the concept of "repair." His work emphasizes

rethinking what it means for spaces to be "broken" and how repair can evolve beyond the status quo to create meaningful change. By engaging communities, building trust and fostering spatial literacy – particularly among youth – Oh aims to inspire hope and reimagine how spaces can serve everyone equitably, emphasizing accessibility, diversity and inclusion.

"[We often do not] use space as designed, we personalize it, make it our own," Oh said. "Everyone is their own architect with their own individual level of understanding based on personal lived experience that is nevertheless crucial to a broader understanding of space."

Chess, math and Ukraine in the summer

In July, reporter Sava Rozsnyai examined the post-pandemic resurgence of chess among youth, highlighting its appeal as both a mental challenge and a social activity. Rozsnyai explored how online platforms and renewed interest in classic games contributed to the chess boom, particularly during periods of isolation. Rozsnyai spoke with educators and players who emphasized the game's cognitive and emotional benefits, including improved focus, critical thinking and resilience, and showcased how the game evolved into a vibrant and accessible pastime for a new generation.



▲ The Source explored the historical significance of the abacus.

In August, reporter Curtis Seufert spoke with the Ukrainian diaspora in Vancouver on the occasion of the Ukrainian Independence Day, which is celebrated on Aug. 24. Seufert spoke with the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress' Vancouver Branch, Elvira Mruchkovska, who spent many years advocating for Ukrainian human rights. Since the Russian invasion in 2022, she described how she and her fellow community members assisted refugees with their settlement in Canada, fleeing the war. She hoped that Canadians can celebrate together with their Ukrainian newcomers on that day to spotlight the best of both cultures.

In September, reporter Katrianna Desante explored the enduring legacy of the abacus, highlighting its relevance as both a cultural artifact and a practical tool for learning. Desante spoke with Nikkei Museum

workshop leader Norie Ikoma, who noted the abacus' historical significance in Japanese culture and its ability to develop mental math skills and foster concentration, especially with those who are neurodivergent. By showcasing its adaptability and timeless appeal, Ikoma underscored the abacus' unique and lasting place in a rapidly evolving technological world.

"A student once told me that the abacus shows you the beauty of precision," Ikoma said. "It does; it embodies the beauty of math."

Autumn: Literacy and sustainability

For UNESCO's 2024 Global Media and Information Literacy Week in October, reporter Sandrine Jacquot spoke with Ori Tenenboim, an assistant professor at UBC's School of Journalism, on the role of digital technologies in fostering critical thinking and combating misinformation. With

news information being blended in with other content on social media, it is harder than ever for people to gain the skills to develop news literacy and navigate today's complex media landscape responsibly. Tenenboim said it is incumbent on news organizations to be transparent of the sources they use and the process which they use to produce the news in order to foster trust between producer and consumer.

In November, reporter Amélie Lebrun explored the Eastside Culture Crawl's focus on sustainability, looking at artists who repurpose and upcycle old materials to create innovative works. Lebrun showcased how artists like Corinne Leroux, Sei Campbell and Arnt Arntzen combine creativity with environmental awareness, transforming discarded items – used clothing, stained glass and reclaimed wood – into meaningful art, inspiring others to see the potential in reused materials.

"One of the most sustainable things you can do is to design and build objects that will last many generations and not become dated," Arntzen said.

We hope our stories inspire in you the values of diversity, community and love of culture, as much as it does in us. On behalf of everyone at *The Source* newspaper, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season and an amazing new year – we will see you in 2025! ✍

VANCOUVER CHRISTMAS MARKET
NOV 13 - DEC 24 | JACK POOLE PLAZA

A World of Twinkling Lights & European Delights

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GET YOUR TICKETS

Solstice Neighbourhoods

GRANVILLE ISLAND

Location: Granville Island
False Creek Community Centre

Dec 7th -21st
★ Pre-Festival Workshops ★

Saturday, Dec 21, 2024
★ 3 lantern processions! ★
★ Solstice Night Events ★

Performance Works
Labyrinth of Light

Tickets for Labyrinth of Light can be purchased online

POLAR BEAR SWIM

VANCOUVER 2025

January 1, 2025, 12 noon–4 p.m. at English Bay Beach
Register at <https://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/polar-bear-swim.aspx>

Growing (b)old: A lasting passion

by AMÉLIE LEBRUN

As the saying goes, time flies when you're having fun! The BOLDERartists collective presents the exhibition *It's About Time* – exploring the concept of aging and how time affects us – at the Silk Purse Gallery (Nov. 27–Dec. 21), in collaboration with the West Vancouver Community Arts Council.

“An hour in a child’s life is not the same as it is for a sixty year old,” says Joyce Ozier, artist and BOLDERartists collective organizer.

A diverse group of artists, now all based in Vancouver, chose to be bolder with time and find a silver lining in their artistic exploration.

Discovering boldness

When it seemed, for some, like time froze during the first Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown,

ver area as a group each year” for the last three years, according to Ozier.

Each piece– interacting with each other as the visual artists develop common themes and de-brief after each show – is a testament to the artist’s unique and bold work as the BOLDERartists collective value each artist’s individuality and personal expression. For this year’s theme and show, the Collective went back to the universal yet very personal experience of time.

“Time is relevant and irreversible. As the saying goes, time flies when you’re having fun!” explains Ozier.

Making time to find beauty

For *It's About Time*, each artist uses their total artistic freedom to explore this theme based on their individual perceptions and experiences. Breutigam’s work explores the effects of

“ Time moves much more quickly as one ages and memories overlap.

Joyce Ozier, artist

Ozier felt like everything was at a stand-still – and noticed a growing interest in “anti-ageism”. As a local visual artist, Ozier looked for “local artists over 65 that were doing interesting and bold works of various mediums”; and started an online print gallery with this eclectic group to share her joy and colourful work with others.

She also showed the world that a silver lining comes with age. The original project was called the “B/Older Gallery.” The project allowed Ozier to find four other artists – two photographers and two other painters – working in Vancouver, and excited about the idea of growing bold together.

“As we age, our sense of time changes. And it is very personal – being affected by mood and stimulation,” she says.

the passage of time, its concrete repercussions. Fleischer’s work shows the wild melange of memories and images that passing time pulls together, and how our memories evolve and transform over time to shape each one of us.

“Axel Breutigam’s black and white waning daisy is as different from Melenie Fleischer’s rich, wild cacophony of colour and surreal images as can be,” says Ozier.

Making space for the individual expressions of the artists’ understanding of time and aging can help us appreciate it more, make it more interesting and approachable. By sharing their joy, colours and creativity, the BOLDERartists collective encourages the public to be less fearful



▲ Axel Breutigam.

With a very international collective of artists – hailing from New York, Boston, but also the United Kingdom, Germany, and one “small town in Alberta” – those fabulous five – Axel Breutigam, Melenie Fleischer, Annette Nieuwerk, Joyce Ozier and Richard Wilson – use different styles and mediums to interpret their notion of time passing, the perception of old age and their artistic universes.

Finding individuality

The Collective can now show their work in person and had “one major show in the Vancou-

and more bold when facing the very idea of the irrepressible passing of time, making time to find beauty and weave new friendships.

“Time moves much more quickly as one ages and memories overlap. Time fades and associations spread in all directions,” says Ozier. ✍

The Silk Purse Gallery is part of the West Vancouver Community Arts Council and located at 1570 Argyle Avenue, West Vancouver.

For more information, visit: www.westvanartscouncil.ca/exhibition-schedule

December 10, 2024–January 7, 2025

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The holiday season has arrived, and 2024 is quickly drawing to a close. I hope this year has treated everyone well. Take time to enjoy the festive spirit and make some cherished memories with loved ones. Bundle up and explore some of the exciting events and shows happening this month. Wishing you all the best – see you in the new year!

* * *

Divya Mehra: *Live Laugh Love*
Now until Jan. 12, 2025
www.cagvancouver.org/exhibition/Divya-Mehra

The work of Divya Mehra melds critical precision with biting wit to produce disarming, deceptively complex meditations on difficult subjects. With a canny visual language and piercing concision, Mehra's works give unexpected form to trenchant observations on themes spanning racial violence, colonial theft, displacement and grief, deftly layering nuanced critique with an acerbic humour. In *Live Laugh Love*, Mehra presents a pair of new works aimed at the social landscape of the Pacific Northwest. On the walls of the B.C. Binning Gallery, a monumental monochrome painting anchors the exhibition. Offering a wry critical counterpoint to the work of late American artist Robert Ryman, Mehra renders in white-on-white a racist poster that circulated in suburban Vancouver last year, producing a ghostly space at once seemingly empty and laden with the ways whiteness operates, occupies and subsumes. In the gallery opposite, Mehra has constructed a child-sized play structure assembled from nearly 1,000 yoga blocks. Modeled on a castle from Nintendo's original Super Mario Bros, the sculpture rehearses references familiar to the region – leisure, wellness, safe spaces, tech – while asking to whom the benefits of these cultures might primarily accrue and, more pointedly, who might require safety from whom in this landscape.

* * *

Ruth Beer: *Seep / Swell*
Now until Feb. 9, 2025
www.evergreenculturalcentre.ca

The Art Gallery at Evergreen in Coquitlam and the Burnaby Art Gallery co-present the exhibition *Ruth Beer: Seep / Swell*, an exhibition in two parts. Taking place across the two galleries concurrently, this exhibition contemplates Beer's artistic research on the entwined relationships between humankind and our industries. For decades, Ruth Beer has used sculpture to explore the depictions, constructs and myths of landscape. Her dynamic practice revolves around an ecological examination of our rapidly transforming Pacific Northwest region. Beer's early explorations of minimalist abstract and elemental forms have evolved into an interest in materials and their relationship to culture and society. In the artist's hands, raw natural materials are shaped through the cultural and sociopolitical forces that harvest them. Through an array of materially seductive artworks – glistening copper weavings, tapestries, bronze and ceramic stones, woven photographs and prints on paper – Beer offers timely reflections on themes related to belonging, human-land relationships and the pressing climate crisis.

* * *

Music for the Winter Solstice
Dec. 11–12, 7:30 p.m.
www.musiconmain.ca/event/music-for-the-winter-solstice-2024

At the most crucial point of the winter in Vancouver, when the rain is constant and darkness comes too early, Music on Main brings light to Heritage Hall, transforming the gloom of the season into a celebration of the Winter Solstice. *Music for the Winter Solstice* is Music on Main's beloved annual tradition that is anything but conventional. Described as "calm and contemplative" and "intimate, warm and welcoming" (STIR) the seasonal performance is all about being together, having a nice glass of wine and listening to some enchanting music. Experience pianist Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa, vocalist Amanda Sum, violinist Karen Gerbrecht and cel-

list Olivia Blander whose music will uplift your spirits and infuse the season with magic and joy.

* * *

Make It: The Handmade Revolution in Vancouver
Dec. 12–15
www.makeitshow.ca/vancouver

Since 2008, *Make It* has grown to become one of the most popular and well-attended craft fairs in Canada, with biannual shows in Vancouver and Edmonton. This massive growth would have never been possible without the support, enthusiasm and love from the amazing community. Each year, more and more conscious shoppers buy from Makies, which in turn allows them to do the work they love. From Dec. 12 to 15, the show will be at the PNE Forum with hundreds of your favourite Makies and their clothing, accessories, art, home decor, gourmet goodies and more!

* * *

Lionel Bart's *Oliver!*
Dec. 12, 2024–Jan. 4, 2025
www.gatewaytheatre.com/events/oliver

The award-winning musical adaptation of the classic Dickens novel, *Oliver!* springs to life with some of the most memorable characters and songs ever to grace the stage. Join young Oliver Twist as he navigates the Victorian London underworld, searching for a home, a family and – most importantly – for love. Oliver, a malnourished orphan in a workhouse, becomes the neglected apprentice of an undertaker, then escapes to find acceptance amongst a band of pickpockets led by the conniving Fagin. When Oliver is captured for a theft he did not commit, the benevolent victim, Mr. Brownlow, takes him in. Fagin, fearing the safety of his hideout, has Oliver kidnapped, threatening the boy's chances of discovering the true love of a family.

* * *

Vancouver International Black Film Festival
Dec. 13–17
www.vancouverblackfilmfest.com

The Fourth Vancouver International Black Film Festival is back with a hybrid version (in-person and online) to amplify the voices of Afro-descendants in British Columbia. The in-person screenings and events will take place at the VIFF Vancity Theatre and Studio Theatre. The opening night is a red carpet event happening on Friday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. and opens with Matthew Leutwyler's powerful film, *Fight Like a Girl*, at the Vancity Theatre, a film about a young Congolese woman who rebuilds her life by joining a renowned all-women boxing club in the border city of Goma, where she discovers resilience, community and the strength to reclaim her future. For tickets, showtimes and more information, check out the festival's website.

* * *

Cinderella! A Traditional British Pantomime!
Dec. 13, 2024–Jan. 5, 2025
www.metrotheatre.com/cinderella-a-traditional-british-pantomime

You are cordially invited to *Cinderella! A Traditional British Pantomime!* Metro Theatre's yearly holiday tradition is back for the 39th time, with the same creative team that brought you last year's big success, *SINBAD!* This fairytale family favourite is sure to please young and old, prince and princess alike with exciting musical numbers, games, and laughs galore. Discover why the British Pantomime is a Christmas staple across the UK, and maybe start a family tradition that will last a lifetime. This Christmas, the magic is in the shoes!

* * *

Solicitude: Music to Shine in the Darkest Winter
Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m.
www.musicaintima.org/solicitude

Solicitude will feature the music and voice of Lil'wat composer and singer Russell Wallace as he explores what winter means to him through his Indigenous musical traditions and perspectives, paired with music that reflects the season from our own and different cultural traditions by Wallace,

Reena Esmail, Saunder Choi and Rebecca Dale. Join *Solicitude* in the warm and welcoming acoustic of Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, a decommissioned church and start your new holiday tradition!

* * *

Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker*
Dec. 19–22
www.gohballet.com/the-nutcracker

A holiday classic and a favourite Vancouver tradition, Goh Ballet's annual production of *The Nutcracker* provides aspiring dancers with an exceptional performance opportunity, bringing together the best local talent and principal dancers from world renowned professional companies on the stage at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Experience Clara's dream come to life as she embarks on a magical journey through the Land of Snow to the Kingdom of Sweets where she is greeted by the enchanting Sugar Plum Fairy. An unforgettable adventure awaits as her gallant Nutcracker battles the evil Mouse King and his army of mischievous mice. This heart-warming production is sure to delight audiences of all ages with more than 200 dancers, actors, gymnasts, glittering costumes, dramatic sets and valuable lessons – all danced to Tchaikovsky's memorable score performed live by members of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra.

* * *

Someone Like You
Jan. 9–Feb. 9, 2025
www.artsclub.com/shows/on-tour/2024-2025/someone-like-you

Open-hearted Isabelle is a life-long romantic, but modern love isn't like a pop song or an old novel – or is it? When her best friend, Kristin, embarks on a rebound romance, things get complicated as Isabelle's "wingman" duties cross the line. This charming new comedy launches the mistaken identities of Cyrano de Bergerac into 21st-century Vancouver with millennial manifestos, dating apps and the quest for self-love. For more information, check out the Arts Club website.



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