



Brenda Joy Lem, *Floating*, (detail) 2008, silkscreen on paper, 22" x 30"

Homage to the Heart

BRENDA JOY LEM

Richmond Art Gallery
April 15 – June 12, 2011
Opening: Thursday April 14 at 7pm

Homage to the Heart addresses themes of memory, oral history, spirituality and “the enduring heart” as the artist explores her family history and the threads that connect the generations.

Working from family and archival photos and stories told to her by relatives, she recounts fragments from the history of her family’s immigration from China and early history in Canada. Lem’s grandparents came through the Victoria/Vancouver port when they arrived in Canada over 100 years ago. They eventually settled in Oshawa, Ontario where Lem’s grandfather opened the town’s first hand laundry in 1921. The stories told to Lem, like those of many new immigrants, chronicle exclusion, colonialism and personal strife - they also speak of survival, joy and the ability of the heart to persevere.

Lem describes her art as a spiritual practice, a developing awareness and understanding of self and nature. It is through the process of making her work, sifting amongst images and personal stories received as memories from her relatives, that recognition and a deeper understanding of self emerge. Lem says, “My work is a means of survival and self-transformation, a means to understand myself and the world.”

Photography and memories are often at odds with each other. Photographs capture a scene within the frame of the lens; memory is more fluid allowing us to capture and retain what is relevant and significant to the holder, including emotions, sensations, conversations and the residues of previous experiences. Exploring a familial history from which she was mostly absent and has no memory of, Lem connects the past and present, the stories and the photographs, giving the images new significance and meaning.

Brenda Joy Lem is a multi-media artist. She works in printmaking, collage, film, writing and improvisational music-voice and piano, as well she has been Taiko-drumming for over 25 years. She lives and works in Toronto. Lem has been exhibiting her art for over 20 years in galleries across Canada and the United States. Most recently her work was exhibited at the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario.

The artist will be in attendance at the opening reception in Richmond.

The Richmond Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Richmond, the British Columbia Arts Council and the Province of British Columbia.

EXHIBITION RELATED PROGRAMMING

Storytelling with Jim Wong-Chu

Saturday May 7, 1–2pm

Local storyteller Jim Wong-Chu will share personal and historical stories that include tales of the Chinese Lepers colony of D'Arcy Island, the 1907 Riots in Vancouver's Chinatown, Bing Kee Street in Nanaimo, Chinese House Boys and China Mary.

Mandarin and English Tour Guides

Saturday May 7, 11am–1pm and Sunday May 8, 11am–3pm

Mandarin and English speaking Tour Guides will be available to visitors.

Imaginary Enclave

Saturday May 7, 6–8pm

Short performances and interactive activities throughout the Cultural Centre including music, dance, spoken word, and visual art. Gallery event: Storyteller Jim Wong-Chu will relate short stories and poems reflecting personal and historical events from Chinese-Canadian history in BC.

Richmond Art Gallery

Press Kit

www.richmondartgallery.org

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Gallery Hours

Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm

Weekends, 10am to 5pm

Closed for statutory holidays

Richmond Art Gallery

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LIST OF WORKS

Homage to the Heart series

A Car in the New World, 2008, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

A Clear Flame, 2008, silkscreen on paper, 55 × 75 cm

Every Woman Should Have a Gun, 2008, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

Floating, 2008, silkscreen on paper (2 variations), 55 × 75 cm

"My Father...", 2008, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

The Three Highs in Life, 2008, silkscreen on paper, 55 × 75 cm

The Butcher, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 55 × 75 cm

Car Ghosts, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

Caught, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 55 × 75 cm

The Chestnut Tree, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

George, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

The Globe Restaurant, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

"How Can You Let Those Chinese Boys Do Better Than You?", 2009,
silkscreen on paper, 55 × 75 cm

A New Fridge, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

No Fear, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

Opening Day at the Hospital, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

The Regent Theatre, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 55 × 75 cm

Throwing Rocks, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 75 × 55 cm

White Gift, Sunday, 2009, silkscreen on paper, 55 × 75 cm

"Yahn Sum Nguk Jou" (The Human Heart is Born Compassionate) series

Open Heart, 2008
linocut, silkscreen and Chine collé on paper, 31 × 31 cm

Clenched Heart, 2008
linocut, silkscreen on washi, 31 × 31 cm

Defended Heart, 2008
linocut, silkscreen on washi, 31 × 31 cm

Feeling Heart, 2008
linocut, silkscreen on washi, 31 × 31 cm

My Heart was becoming less sensitive series

My Heart was becoming less sensitive, 2009
silkscreen on washi 31 × 31 cm

Alive. Dead. 2009
silkscreen on washi, 31 × 31 cm

My pulsing heart, 2009
silkscreen on washi, 31 × 31 cm

I am alive, 2009
silkscreen on washi, 31 × 31 cm

a tree, a rock, a cloud, 2009
Three DVD projections Rick Wong: Camera; James Lim: Editor

Tell Me a Story, 2009
wood table, silk Chinese tablecloth, photos, photo album, rock, sound and sensor
table: 72.5 × 75 × 105 cm