



## TEACHERS' GUIDE

April 26 – July 6, 2008

**Amy Chang** – *Donated Organ*

**Tomoyo Ihaya** – *Water, Rice and Bowl*

**Deborah Koenker** – *Missing / Las Desaparecidas*



Amy Chang, *Organ*, 2006, variable size  
clay, plastic tubing, metal bowl



Tomoyo Ihaya, *Sketch for Water, Rice and Bowl*  
2006-7, Mixed media on Paper



Deborah Koenker, *Missing/Las Desaparecidas*, detail  
2004-2006, collaborative installation, variable size

This guide is designed for teachers as a preparation and follow-up of the **School Art Workshop** at the Richmond Art Gallery, or for those who wish to use our online resources in their own classrooms.

Included is background information on the artists, a pre-visit activity, a post-visit lesson plan adaptable to the specific needs of your students, and resources for further exploration.

More images and information on our exhibitions and programs are available at [www.richmondartgallery.org](http://www.richmondartgallery.org)

If you have any questions or comments regarding your School Art Workshop, please contact:

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# ABOUT THE RICHMOND ART GALLERY

The Richmond Art Gallery is a non-profit organization, which means we are not in the business of selling art like a commercial gallery would be. Our mandate is to exhibit and collect contemporary art, showing art for visitor's enjoyment and learning. Our educational programs complement the exhibitions to help develop visual literacy and educate visitors about contemporary art practices.

## **What is a contemporary art gallery?**

Contemporary art is artistic work from the present era that uses the current practices and styles of art. The works shown in our gallery are by local, national, and international artists that have been made within the past 10 years.

## **Where does the art come from?**

Every year, many artists submit applications to the gallery to exhibit their work. Applications include images and written statements about the artist's work and what they propose to show in the gallery.

A jury made up of our Exhibition Committee and Curator go through artist applications and select works they believe would fit into the Richmond Art Gallery based on our Curatorial Mandate. The Curatorial Mandate of the Richmond Art Gallery is to mount exhibitions of local, Canadian and international stature of interest to our local community and of importance to the contemporary art community across Canada.

## **Why is the Gallery different from the last time I was here?**

The gallery changes its art exhibitions every 5-6 weeks. This means we can see many different artists' works throughout the year, so that there is always something new to see in the Richmond Art Gallery!

## **Why is that art?**

This is a common question heard in a contemporary art gallery, because the work is new and different than the usual artwork you see in art museums. Contemporary artists respond to the world they live in, just like artists have always done in the past. Sometimes, we cannot immediately understand what the artist is trying to communicate because we have not explored the subject in that way before. Yet this is what makes art so exciting, it opens up our eyes and mind to new images and ideas!

The best way to learn and enjoy your art gallery experience is to slow down, relax, and be open to ideas. Ask "what do I see?" or "what do I think is happening here?" while looking at an artwork. Look for clues to discover what an artist is trying to say or do. If you need more information, ask! Ask gallery staff and read the text panels on the walls for more information about the exhibition. Most importantly, be curious and have fun exploring contemporary art!

# SCHOOL ART PROGRAM INFORMATION

The School Art Program has been developed for students and teachers to experience the contemporary arts in Richmond. The goal of the program is to educate students about contemporary art, practice art skills, and to develop visual literacy. We do this by:

- Viewing and talking about works of art in the Gallery
- Learning vocabulary relevant to the visual arts
- Discussing the context of artworks
- Creating art projects related to the exhibition and tour

## Pre-Workshop Information

**Fee** – Cost is \$90 per class, or \$75 per Pre-School group. Maximum 35 students. Fee is payable on the day of your workshop at the Cultural Centre front desk.

**Schedule** – The RAG School Art Workshop is 1-½ hours in total, or 1 hour for Pre-School groups. The Gallery tour will last approximately 20-30 minutes (10-15 minutes for Pre-School), and 1 hour working on a hands-on exhibition related art activity.

**Parking** - Free parking is available at the Richmond Cultural Centre parking lot, or if full you can try parking across the street at Richmond Centre Mall.

**Washrooms / Accessibility:** The Gallery is completely wheelchair accessible. Washrooms are located in the Cultural Centre rotunda behind the front desk, and there is one unisex stall in the art studio.

## While in the Gallery : Gallery Rules

Please remind students that appropriate behaviour is expected in the Gallery. Each artwork is an original piece of art that it is our job to display AND protect. It is important for **all** visitors to remember these rules of the Gallery:

- **No touching!** Please stay at least 12 inches away from the artwork or from sculpture stands. Please keep 12 inches away from artworks on the floor as well.
- **No running or yelling in the Gallery.** Please be respectful of the Gallery space and very careful around the artworks.
- **No photos of the art please. Artwork is copyrighted** by the artist and may not be photographed. Photos are permitted in the art studio only.
- **No food or drink** is permitted in the Gallery.
- During the workshops, please do not touch other's artworks. It is important for each young artist to work on their art by themselves.

## After Your Workshop – Picking up Artworks

Most art projects take at least one day to dry. Please arrange for pick-up of paintings or prints at a later date. Artworks are packaged up with your school name and workshop date on the package. Please pick up your artwork packages from the Programming Room any time the Gallery is open, from Mon-Thurs, 10am - 6pm and Sat-Sun, 10am – 5pm. If the Gallery is closed for installation, please ask the Cultural Centre front desk to call Gallery staff.

## IN THE GALLERY : WHAT YOU WILL SEE

The works of all three artists in this exhibition consider basic human needs (food, water, shelter, safety) in the context of global citizenship. How does food gathering differ in other countries? How does the abundance or scarcity of water affect people and society? How do the consumer needs and expectations in affluent countries affect those living in poorer third world countries? Each artist has seen the impact of poverty first-hand in the various countries they have visited or lived. Their works use visual symbols of the body, food/water, and identity to comment on the value of human life. While dealing with large social issues that occur in Third World countries, the exhibition also looks at the commonalities we all share as humans no matter where we live.

**Amy Chang** is a ceramic artist who recently graduated from Emily Carr Institute. The works in *Donated Organ* originated from the artist's interest and research into biological science. Her clay pieces are both repulsive and beautiful in their reference to the human body. Placed on the floor in various formations, we see them as sculptural objects at first, attractive in their simplicity of design and colour. Upon closer examination, the unsettling references to human organs become apparent and the objects take on a whole new meaning. Chang's works consider how we view our bodies: as beautiful artworks full of life, as something repulsive, or even as something to be bought and sold.

**Tomoyo Ihaya** has shown her work internationally for a decade and has received numerous awards, grants and residencies. Originally from Japan, Tomoyo now resides in Vancouver after studying at Mount Allison University and the University of Alberta. *Water, Rice and Bowl* includes ink drawings and stuffed paper figures for a mixed-media installation. The works in this show are based upon her reflections of India and Mexico while living and travelling through those countries. She focuses on the theme of food and water as symbols of life by using symbolic imagery (i.e. bowls, teardrops, rice grains) in her drawings to tell a story. Portraying the rituals involved in collection and daily use of water and rice, she considers the increasing scarcity of these resources and the impact this has upon people. While looking at the food and water supplies in other countries, she reminds us of the cycles of nature and the interdependence of all living things.

**Deborah Koenker** is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr Institute, and is a practicing artist based in Vancouver who has exhibited extensively in Canada, the United States, and Mexico for the past 30 years. Her current work is the culmination of three years of working in collaboration with the residents in a small town in Mexico. Together with the residents of Tapalpa, Jalisco, Mexico, Koenker worked on an installation incorporating embroidery and photography. The subject of this work is the hundreds of missing and murdered women from factory towns along the US-Mexico border. Women arrive from villages all over Mexico seeking work sewing clothing and assembling small appliances in the production factories that have sprung up all along the US-Mexico border in the past decade. These girls and women are very vulnerable, as often they are away from family for the first time and have no rights or money. Since 1993, over 500 of these female factory workers have gone missing or been found murdered.

The artist worked with families of the missing women in creating large embroideries of fingerprints symbolizing the identity of a family member or friend who has "disappeared". Koenker also collected photos and names of all the victims to exhibit along with the embroidery installation. While dealing with a very serious and sad subject, working with the families facilitated an opportunity for public protest, mourning, and awareness of the issue. This very powerful work serves as a memorial to the victims and gives their families a voice in their grief. The hand-made works of individuals from another place also brings a personal connection for the viewer, as we consider their lives and how this might impact us here in Canada.

# BACKGROUND: NARRATIVES IN ART

## COMMUNICATING IDEAS WITH IMAGES - USING NARRATIVE ART

Narrative art is art that tells a story. The subject matter may be taken from literature, mythology, history, current events, or personal events. Genre paintings depict everyday scenes that tell a story, while historical narratives depict a famous event. Narrative art may also refer to art that includes text within the image.

Narratives serve many different functions in a work of art, depending on the artist's intention. They may teach, enlighten, or inspire and often carry moral, social, or patriotic messages. Early examples include the frescoes and stained glass images in European churches, designed to tell bible stories to the masses that could not read. Traditional Chinese scrolls often depicted illustrated novels with the accompanying text presented in calligraphy. Narrative art can be in any medium, from video to painting to sculpture to book illustrations.

Some strategies for creating narrative art include:

- Portraying exaggerated facial expressions of figures in the artwork
- Freezing an action like a movie still
- Dramatic use of light or shadow to emphasize a detail
- Using symbols or symbolic imagery
- Using multiple images (i.e. a storyboard)
- Combining text or pictograms within the images

**Tomoyo Ihaya** draws images that incorporate symbols (i.e. bowls to represent eating or food), portrays exaggerated poses in human figures, and has multiple images on each drawing. Her images have the look of pictograms, simple imagery placed throughout her drawing as if they are to be read like words across the page. Using these strategies, her drawings tell a story of people involved in the rituals of food and water gathering. She explores how things like the weather and other people can affect the abundance or scarcity of water, how hunger affects people's lives, and how much the environment is connected to our food and water sources.

**Deborah Koenker's** installation also incorporates narrative by using symbolic imagery (i.e. fingerprints to represent a person or an identity) and combining photographs with text to document a current event in a specific place. The combination of imagery and materials, as well as documentation of the process for creating the work, further explores the issues behind the event she depicts. All these elements work together to provide information about the subject of her piece and gives the viewer some insight to the details of who, when, where, what, and how.

## GLOSSARY OF ART TERMS

**Conceptual Art:** Art movement that started in the 1960's, where the art is intended to convey an idea or concept. Often this type of work rejects the idea of making an art object as a commodity, but rather focuses on the process, analysis or idea behind a work of art.

**Contemporary Art:** Artwork that is produced in this current time, generally considered to be artworks made from 1970 to the present.

**Embroidery:** The art or craft of decorating fabric with designs stitched in thread or yarn using a needle. Embroidery may be done by hand or with a sewing machine. Embroidery has been around for centuries, with evidence of it being done in many different cultures all around the world. Hand embroidery is a traditional art form passed from generation to generation in many cultures, including northern Vietnam, Mexico and Eastern Europe.

**Installation Art:** Art that has been arranged in a place by the artist or as specified by the artist. Installation art may be made from almost any medium, and considers where the art will be located to create an experience in a particular environment.

**Medium:** The material or technique used by the artist to make an artwork. For example, paint is the medium used in a painting.

**Narrative Art:** Art which tells a story or relays information about an event.

**Pictogram:** Also called a pictograph, drawing or picture representing a word, sound or idea. Earliest form in the evolution of a system of writing (i.e. ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs).

**Symbol:** A form, image or subject representing a meaning other than the one with which it usually associated. For example, a key may represent knowledge or a pig may represent gluttony.

## RESOURCES

### ONLINE:

Incredible Art Department – [www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/)

KinderArt Lesson Plans – [www.kinderart.com](http://www.kinderart.com)

ArtLex Art Dictionary - <http://www.artlex.com/>

### PRINT:

*Art Fun! Art and Activities for Kids.* North Light Books, USA: 1997.

Edwards, Betty. *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain.* Penguin Putnam Inc., USA: 1989.

Steele, Bob. *Draw Me A Story: An Illustrated Exploration of Drawing-as-Language.* Peguis Publishers, Canada: 1998.

# PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY – COMMUNICATING WITH IMAGES

This is an exercise that can be done in almost any media you have on hand. Projects may be a painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, etc.

## Objectives:

- To understand how artists use personal imagery to communicate ideas or tell a story.
- To use purely visual means (colour, line, form, shape, etc.) to communicate a word or story.

## Materials:

- Story books with illustrations
- Art supplies of your choice (i.e. watercolour paints, pencils, felt markers, pencil crayons, tempera paints, etc.)

## Preparation:

- Have some examples of narrative artwork or telling stories with pictures, with picture books or images from art history.
- This project can connect to lessons in poetry, journal writing, novel studies, or other forms of narrative that you are already doing in class.

## Activity:

- Discuss narrative and telling stories with images. Show some samples of picture books or artworks that use this technique. Discuss the techniques the artists used to tell a story or narrative (i.e. depicting an action, the expression on a person's face, etc.)
- Discuss symbols and provide examples of some common symbols (i.e. lion=power, red rose=love, dove=peace). Can students think of any symbols they have seen before? Make a list of all the symbols you can think of.
- Can students create their own image from a word or story? The teacher selects words at random and assigns a word or sentence from a story to each student or group of students in the class. Students may use pictograms or personal symbols. They may use objects they associate with the word(s), or they may translate and write the words in another script or language with which they are familiar. Encourage students to use personal imagery and associations.
- Students share their works with the class and discuss:
  - What story do you think the artist was trying to tell?
  - What narrative techniques did the artist use to tell their story?
  - What emotions are expressed in this artwork?
  - Why did you choose to represent this story or event? What relevance does it have for you?
  - How did you use the elements of art (colour, line, shape, texture, and value) in your artwork?
  - Does your artwork accomplish what you intended it to say?
  - Is it necessary to know the story behind an artwork to fully appreciate it? Explain.

# IN THE GALLERY : WHAT YOU WILL DO

**All tours and workshops are adapted for the grade level of your students.**

## **TOUR:**

As students are led through the exhibit, we will discuss the artists and their particular style of working. We will also look at the exhibition as a whole and how the artists' works relate to one another.

The tour will focus on:

- Introducing students to the various art materials and techniques the artists have used.
- Encouraging students to think about subject matter and inspiration for creating art, and the ways artists express an idea or emotion.
- Discussing historical art forms and how this influences contemporary artists.
- Introducing the basics of developing visual literacy.
- Discussing narratives in art and the techniques gallery artists have used in telling a story or informing the audience about an event/issue.

## **EXHIBITION-BASED WORKSHOPS:**

### **Printmaking on Foam Board – Using Line:**

Referencing the embroidery works developed by artist Deborah Koenker, students will use line to create a portrait of themselves or a family member. Students will develop a portrait using line only, by drawing with pencil in foam. The lines created are 'carved' into the foam. Coloured inks are rolled onto the foam board, paper is pressed on top, and colourful prints are lifted off. This also allows for many prints to be made from one single drawing.

### **Ink and Watercolour Drawings – Telling Stories:**

Referencing the drawings of Tomoyo Ihaya, students will draw and paint their own personal stories onto watercolour paper. Reflecting on their own lives, what story would they tell about themselves or their families? How do you tell a story in images? Learning the basics of drawing with inks, students will develop drawings in line first and then add washes of watercolour to create colourful paintings.

**\*Prints and Paintings will take at least one day to dry and must be picked up at a later date.**

# POST – VISIT ACTIVITY: STRING ART

Adapted from *Art Fun! Art and Activities for Kids* by North Light Books.

## Objectives:

- Practice contour line drawing: drawing the shapes of an object with a continuous line.
- Develop hand/eye coordination with gluing and placing of string.

## Materials:

- String or Wool, long pieces approximately 4' - 6'
- Cardboard or poster board backing (optional – fabric backing such as canvas or burlap)
- Pencils and erasers
- White glue
- Brushes or popsicle sticks to apply glue
- Small containers or plates to contain glue for each student

## Preparations:

Students should practice contour line drawing first. Contour line drawing is the outline of something, using line only rather than shading. The idea is to observe closely what you are drawing, drawing only the shapes you see and not all the details. For lessons on contour drawing, follow procedures from books such as *“Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain”* by Betty Edwards or websites such as *KinderArt* ( <http://www.kinderart.com/drawing/blind.shtml> ).

## Procedure:

- Pick an everyday object like a shoe, a toy, or a plant. Students may also use the idea of fingerprints from Deborah Koenker’s works, looking closely at the lines in a fingerprint.
- Draw the object with one long line, trying not to lift your pencil off the paper as you draw. The key is to stare at the object you are drawing the whole time, not at your paper.
- Draw the shapes you see. Draw only the lines you see.
- Once you have practiced contour drawing, do a contour drawing onto the cardboard or poster board surface. Make sure you draw with one long continuous line.
- When the drawing is finished, start to paint a thin layer of glue onto your lines. (Younger students can just paint glue over the entire picture).
- Start to stick down one end of the string or wool onto your line. Keep following the lines on your drawing, pressing the string down into the glue as you go.
- Use as much string as you can, adding loops and swirls to fill in any empty spaces or shapes. Keep brushing on more glue onto the paper as the glue dries.
- Leave your string art to dry for at least one day.