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Eliza Au, *Wreath #1*

View our colour version of this Guide online at:

www.richmondartgallery.org

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 work shown in our Gallery is by local, national, and international artists that have been made within the past 10 years. Unlike work you may have seen in big art museums, living, working artists make all the work we exhibit.



Teacher and students from MacKenzie Elementary School

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 their work and what they propose to show in the Gallery.

A jury made up of our Exhibition Committee, Director/Curator, and Assistant 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. Once an artist's work is selected for exhibition, the exhibition is curated by our Director/Curator and Curatorial Assistant. Curating involves organizing the exhibition so that all the artworks in the Art Gallery work together visually, thematically, and/or conceptually.

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

The Gallery changes its art exhibitions every 5-6 weeks. Once an exhibition is over, the artist's work is returned to them and a different artist brings their work to the Gallery for display. This way, we can see many different artists' works throughout the year, so that there is always something new to see in the Richmond Art Gallery!

Is that art?

This is a common question heard in a contemporary Art Gallery. Some contemporary art can be difficult to understand because it is new and different. 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 their subject in that way before. Yet this is what makes art so exciting, it opens up our eyes 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 Elementary 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
- Discussing the materials and techniques used in the making of the artworks
- Creating art projects related to the exhibition and tour

While in the Gallery : Gallery Rules

It is important for all visitors to remember these rules of the Gallery:

- Do not touch the artworks or walls. Please stay at least 12 inches away from the artwork. Touching damages the artworks.
- Do not take still or video images of the artworks. Artwork is copyrighted by the artist and may not be photographed or copied. Photos are permitted in the art studio while your workshop is in session.
- Switch off cell phone ringers while on your gallery tour.
- Absolutely no running or yelling in the Gallery. Please be respectful of the Gallery space and careful around the artworks.
- During the workshops, please do not touch other's artworks. It is important for each young artist to work on their art by themselves.

For Your Information:

- Most art projects take at least one day to dry. Please arrange for pick-up of artworks at a later date.
- Free parking is available at the Cultural Centre parking lot, just off Granville Avenue.
- The Gallery is completely accessible to people with disabilities.
- Washrooms are located in the Cultural Centre rotunda behind the front desk, and there is one unisex stall in the art studio.

IN THE GALLERY: WHO YOU WILL SEE

Kim Huynh

Calgary based artist Kim Huynh was born and raised in Sai Gon, Vietnam and immigrated to Canada in 1980. She studied art history, philosophy, painting and drawing before going on to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Victoria in 1990 and a Master of Fine Arts, with a focus on Printmaking, from the University of Alberta in 1992. She has exhibited widely with solo exhibitions across Canada and in group exhibitions worldwide.



Kim Huynh, *Flash: Richmond* (detail)

Most of Kim's work is culturally driven, questioning what are stereotypical "Canadian", "Chinese", or "Chinese Canadian" expressions, accents or gestures. She is interested in the absurdities she sees and hears around her in everyday life, often using other people's words, phrases, and ideas and re-working them. Over the last 10 years she has been researching 'cultural identity', in particular the demographics of Chinese immigrants to Canada. Combined with her own experiences as an immigrant to Canada who learned both English and French, she is particularly interested in how ESL and ordinary language users relate to their surroundings through language.



Eliza Au

Eliza Au studied at Hugh Boyd Secondary School here in Richmond before moving on to her post-secondary education at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Rhode Island School of Design and at the University of Regina. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 2005. Her work has been exhibited across Canada and the United States since 2001.

Eliza uses the technique of mould making with ceramics in most of her work, drawn to the ability of this technique to create multiples. She is interested in creating symmetrical shapes, something that cannot be created by throwing clay on the wheel. By creating moulds, Eliza can create simple symmetrical forms, which once duplicated many times becomes something very complex and intricate. Eliza has been developing her own system of mould making for four years, and is constantly challenging the process and what moulds are capable of.

Photo courtesy of Contemporary Crafts Museum and Gallery, Halvorsen Studio. Credit-Katherine Bovee

IN THE GALLERY: WHAT YOU WILL SEE

Celebrating *Asian Heritage Month*, the RAG welcomes these two artists who use familiar cultural symbols and art forms in their works to create contemporary art installations.

Kim Huynh – *Flash: Richmond*



Kim Huynh uses everyday materials in a slightly absurd and unexpected manner. In her work *Blue Whale in the Fraser River*, Huynh pieces together a mural resembling an aerial map of Richmond. Upon closer inspection, we see the square tiles which make up the mural are segments of traditionally inspired Chinese ink paintings. As we step back, the silhouette of a blue whale appears as the city of Richmond. In her other two pieces, *Pacific Ocean* and *Handrails*, Huynh uses salt in both its pure form and in foods/herbs used in traditional Chinese medicine to react with structures she has made from copper.

As the salts react with the copper over the duration of the exhibition, her pieces transform to take on new forms and new meanings. Huynh's work uses visual language that requires active participation on the part of the viewer. As we look closer to see what materials and symbols Huynh has used, familiar associations and images come to mind relating to our environment, our communities, and our own personal history.

Eliza Au – *Wreath/Wreathe*

Eliza Au uses repetition in scale, pattern, and shapes to create sculptural works of circular forms and symmetry. Her large installation is made from many individual vessels referencing familiar objects such as a bowl or cup. Using a mould-making ceramic process to create these vessels, each one appears to be mechanically uniform and symmetrical at first glance. However, as we look closer we can see that each piece is unique and hand-made, impressing upon the viewer the labour-intensive process involved in creating the work.



Each star-shaped vessel in Eliza's installation creates a space where the next shape might fit, similar to tessellations. The symmetrical forms fit together and could seemingly continue forever. The title of her exhibition refers to a ring of flowers or foliage (wreath) and the act of coiling or encircling an object (wreathe). Together these terms reference cycles of nature and movement, emphasizing the circular and repetitive appearance of her works. Au is interested in the appearance of geometric symmetry as well as the reference to the cycles of life, birth, death, and rebirth.

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 some of the artists and their particular style of working. We will also look at the exhibition as a whole and how much art varies in style and function. In addition to viewing the individual artworks, students will discuss the mediums used by various artists.

The tour will focus on:

- Introducing students to different types of art mediums and practices.
- Encouraging students to think about subject matter and inspiration for creating art; the ways symbols and imagery are used by artists to express an idea.
- Introducing students to the methods and techniques the exhibiting artists used to create artworks.
- Introducing students to historical Asian art forms and how this influences contemporary artists.

EXHIBITION-BASED WORKSHOPS:



Landscape Mural Painting on Canvas:

Referencing Kim Huynh's style of painting small works on individual 'tiles' to be pieced together for a larger mural, students will create their own small paintings on canvas. Each student will be painting a section of a 'birds'-eye view' of a landscape, which will all be connected by one similar feature: a river. The river will connect each painting like a large puzzle, yet each student will create their own distinct painting. Upon completion, these paintings can be taken home individually, or mounted up in your school as a large temporary mural.

***note paintings will take at least one day to dry, please make arrangements to pick up your paintings at a later date.**

*Paper Sculpture with Multiples

Referencing Eliza Au's use of multiples and symmetrical shapes, students will utilize the basics of geometry and creating with multiples in a paper sculpture. Students begin by folding many circles of coloured and patterned papers in a similar way. Once they have folded their simple shapes, they will place and glue them together to create a very complex and colourful sculpture.

*Recommended for intermediate grades



GLOSSARY OF ART TERMS

Bird's-eye View – Seeing from a point of view from an altitude or distance; also called an aerial view. In this style of landscape art, the horizon line is usually placed very high or is not in the picture at all.

Chinese Brush Painting: Painting in the traditional Chinese style is done with a brush dipped in black or coloured inks, or watercolours.

Glaze: This is the “paint” used to decorate clay. The glaze is made of glass particles mixed with pigments, so the glass melts when it is fired in the kiln.

Horizon Line: Used as a perspective tool in art, where the sky and earth appear to meet.



Bird's-eye view of a Richmond garden

Installation Art: Art that incorporates the space of the Gallery or site as a part of the art piece.

Landscape: Artwork that deals with the representation of natural scenery.

Mould making: In the case of Eliza Au's works, she makes mould forms from identical pieces of plaster that are glued together. She pours liquid clay (clay with a lot of water mixed into it) into the plaster mould. When the clay hardens, she pops it out of the mould and then fires the clay object in a kiln.

Multiples: In art, this refers to any art object that can be reproduced in quantity from a single original template. Often this is done in printmaking, photography, and sculpture.

Pattern: A principle of design in which combinations of colours, lines, and shapes are repeated to show real or imaginary things.

Positive and Negative Space: Positive space is the object in a work of art; the negative space is the area around the object (sometimes called the background).

Tessellation: A tessellation is created when a shape is repeated over and over again without any gaps or overlaps.

RESOURCES

Asia-Art net: The Art of Chinese Brush Painting - http://www.asia-art.net/chinese_tech_brush.html

Gatto, Joseph, Alber Porter and Jack Selleck. (1978). *Exploring Visual Design*. Davis Publications Inc., Massachusetts, USA.

Incredible Art Department: Lesson Plan on Tessellations - <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/high/Myriam-tessel.htm>

Low, Joni. (2007) *Kim Huynh, Flash:Richmond - Eliza Au, Wreath/Wreathe*. Richmond Art Gallery Association.

Solga, Kim : project editor. (1997) *Art Fun! Art & Activities for Kids*. F & W Publications Inc., Cincinnati, USA.

Whole Movement (Geometry) by Bradford Hansen-Smith - <http://wholovement.com/gallery.html>

Lesson Plan (taken from: Art Fun! Art and Activities for Kids)



Veggie Geometry - Repetition in Design (Grades Pre-K – 7)

Objectives:

Students will:

- ✎ Create an artwork using the principles of pattern, repetition, symmetrical balance, and harmony.
- ✎ Create an artwork using the elements of shape and colour.
- ✎ Develop skills in printmaking methods.

Materials:

- ✎ Fruits and vegetables, sliced into large pieces
- ✎ White paper to print on (thicker paper which can tolerate thick paints and inks)
- ✎ Knives to cut vegetables with
- ✎ Paintbrushes or small sponges
- ✎ Thick tempera paints (a.k.a. pudding paints) or printmaking inks
- ✎ Cutting boards or other surface to cut food on
- ✎ Sample images of patterns. Patterns in art history include: mandelas, Persian tiles, porcelain (china) vases and tiles, and fabrics from various countries.

Procedure:

1. Discuss the use of repetition to create patterns. How are patterns created? How are shapes used in creating patterns? What is the difference between a symmetrical and asymmetrical pattern?
2. Show students samples of patterns seen in art. For this project, younger students will have an easier time creating circular or radiating patterns, so images of mandelas and plate patterns would be ideal. Older students can create more complex patterns and almost anything with repetitive shapes/lines can be used for inspiration. Discuss how the patterns were created by analyzing the simple shapes and lines you can see.
3. Discuss printmaking and how prints can be made by “stamping” shapes into a pattern. Multiple artworks can be made with printmaking as you are using the same ‘tools’ over and over again to create your artworks. (For samples and more details on printmaking, view the Teacher’s Guide for the RAG’s *In Print* online exhibition: <http://www.richmondartgallery.org/inprint/introduction.php>)
4. Teachers or students (with adult help) slice fruits and/or vegetables in half to reveal an interesting design or shape. Larger pieces may be cut down smaller, but ensure they are large enough to hold onto. Pat each piece dry with paper towels.
5. Look over what shapes you have, and plan some of your design. For example, larger pieces can make up the image in the middle, with smaller shapes around the outside.
5. Use a paintbrush or sponge to cover the sliced surface with paint or ink. Immediately press this onto the paper to print, so that the paint does not dry out.
6. Create a circle design by printing different veggie shapes around a larger centre shape, keeping the pattern the same on each side. Use the same shapes over and over in the same or different colours to use repetition. Overlap smaller shapes onto larger shapes for intricate designs. Patterns can radiate out and go on forever, so have them continue on until they fill the page.

Lesson Plan Continued

*NOTE: These prints can also be done with cut out shapes of foam instead of fruits and vegetables. Students cut out shapes from foam, and glue these onto a backing of cardboard or wood so they are easier to hold (like stamps). The same process as above is used with these hand-made 'stamps'.

Evaluation:

Did the students use repetition in shapes and colours? Did they use many different shapes and colours? Did they create a symmetrical pattern? Did they follow the steps of the printmaking process?



EXTENSIONS

Tessellation Drawings

Use repetition, symmetry and balance to create tessellation drawings. View the website in our Resources section to see step-by-step instructions on how to make tessellations. Use pencil crayons, crayons, felt markers, pastels, or paint to colour in your images and create complex designs using a simple shape as a starting point.

Paper Mosaics

Learn more about using simple shapes and colours to create a colourful paper mosaic using small squares of coloured papers as your 'paint'. Draw your image using line only, as your template for the mosaics. Select the colours you need from construction paper, magazine images, or other decorative papers. Cut your coloured papers into small squares (approximately 1cm x 1cm) to make your mosaic 'tiles'. Glue down your squares to fill your drawn image, as well as the background. For a glossy sheen, paint acrylic medium over the finished product.

Ready-made Multiples as Sculpture



Get creative with simple forms. Find simple objects that you can easily acquire many of (i.e. cupcake or muffin liners, bottle caps, paper cups, plastic spoons, etc.). Use only one type of object for your sculpture, yet use many of them as multiples. Glue, wrap, or tie together your multiples in many different ways to create a free-form sculpture. Geometric shapes, abstract forms, or representational objects (i.e. animals, plants, etc.) can be created by repeating the same shape over and over.

For examples of artists who use this technique, see works by artists like Brian Jungen or Andy Warhol.