

RAG

RICHMOND ART GALLERY
School Art Program



Teacher Guide

Karilynn Ming Ho: ***For The Left Hand Alone***

Ho Tam: ***Cover to Cover***

April 6 – May 27, 2018

Table of Contents

Program Overview	3
Program Goals	3
Big Ideas explored.....	3
Before Your Visit	4
Discussion: Identity.....	4
At the Gallery	4
About The Exhibitions.....	5
About The Artists	8
After Your Visit.....	9
Activity: Complete your Artist book	9
Extension Activity: Classroom Series	9
Artist Series: Background.....	9
Resources	11
Glossary.....	12
Image Credits	13
School Program Supporters and Partners	13

Program Overview

Dear Teachers,

This guide contains information about the exhibition, the artists, and some classroom activities that will help you to prepare your students for their visit to the Richmond Art Gallery. Please review this package with your students to get the most out of your gallery visit. The suggested activities require a minimum of materials and are adaptable to the needs of different grade levels.

Throughout the guide you will find art vocabulary words in bold that are defined in the vocabulary section, and resource links have been included for further topic explorations.

Program Goals

The goals of the gallery tour and art workshop are to encourage students to:

- Describe and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent
- Observe and share how artists use processes, materials, and techniques to express ideas
- Explore personal experience, community, and culture through art making
- Examine the relationship between art and the wider world
- Create artworks using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

Big Ideas explored

- People create art to express who they are as individuals and as a community
- People connect to others and share ideas through the arts
- Exploring works of art exposes us to diverse values, knowledge, and perspectives
- Works of art influence and are influenced by the world around us
- Artistic expressions differ across time and place
- Experiencing art challenges our point of view and expands our understanding of others

Before Your Visit

Discussion: Identity

Both gallery exhibitions explore the theme of identity through photography, video, installation, and artist books. While we will discuss the theme of identity in the gallery tour and workshop, you may want to give students time to explore this topic ahead of time in class. In the gallery workshop we will be creating an artist book on the topic of identity and it can be useful for students to have done some thinking on their own beforehand. Some topics to think about:

How do people “see” themselves?
What shapes identity and makes us who we are?
Is identity constant or can it change?
What do I care about?
What do I want others to know about me?
How my friends would describe me
How I’m like others and how I’m unique
My favorite thing about myself

At the Gallery

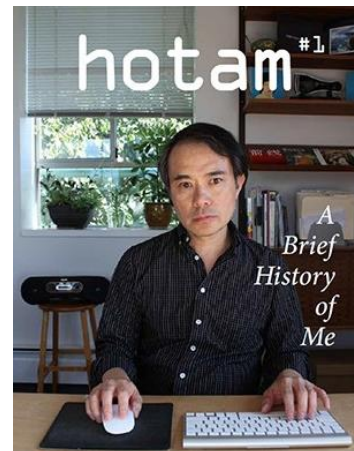


Preschool / Kindergarten Workshop: Students will create a drawn portrait as their cover for an artist book that explores their identity. Students will be guided through the steps in drawing the face, and will then construct an artist book that can be added to with different pages that explore aspects of their identity.

Image: Ho Tam, *Matinee Idols*, oil painting on panel, 1995-2014.

Primary / Intermediate Workshop: Students will pose for the camera and this photo will be printed and used as their ‘cover photo’. Using mixed media techniques, they will develop the rest of their pages to create an artist book that reflects different aspects of themselves and their understanding of their own identity.

Image: Ho Tam, *Hotam #1: A Brief History Of Me*, edition of 250, 56 pages, 2013.



About The Exhibitions

The work of two Vancouver-based artists is featured in the exhibitions *For the Left Hand Alone* and *Cover to Cover*, by Karilynn Ming Ho and Ho Tam respectively. Although created as separate exhibitions, both artists focus on the theme of personal identity and the construction of a public persona. Both artists also have photographs featured along the Canada Line in Richmond, as part of the Capture Photography Festival happening throughout April.

Through the medium of **video art** and **installation**, Karilynn Ming Ho explores how our experience of self and of reality has become disrupted with the increasing reliance on digital platforms and artificial substitutions for real, lived experiences. In *Cover to Cover*, Ho Tam examines how we construct a public persona, revealing different facets of the self in a series of **artist books**, drawing from the visual language of magazines, advertising, and **street photography**.

For the Left Hand Alone

In this exhibition, Karilynn Ming Ho uses the metaphor of **phantom limb syndrome** to explore how our lives have become fractured in the digital age. We are at a time in our culture where we are constantly bombarded by digital information in the form of images, videos and sound-bites. With so much information coming at us on so many different platforms (television, telephones, tablets, etc.), many people are either unable to or choose not to distinguish between real and fake, true and false, facts and opinions.



In her video piece titled *For the Left Hand Alone*, Ming Ho uses the examples of online relationships, “bot” social media accounts, and even dairy-free ice cream to illustrate how the lines between reality and fiction are blurred with new technologies. The video piece uses the same filming devices of popular media to demonstrate how our experience of reality is increasingly being replaced by virtual substitutions, which have no more basis in reality than a reflection in a mirror. We are designing our world to fool our brains and our senses into accepting as real that which is not, creating increasingly elaborate simulations until the simulation supersedes the original experience.

Phantom limb syndrome is a mysterious phenomenon in which people who have lost connection with a body part due to paralysis or amputation can still feel sensations in that body part, even if it isn’t physically there. It is not completely understood what causes these sensations, which can vary from light touch to actual pain. Further complicating the mystery is that the syndrome has been treated successfully through mirror therapy, in which a mirror is placed next to the other limb, tricking the brain into thinking the reflection is the actual missing or paralyzed limb. This mirror reflection can actually be “felt” by the person doing the therapy, and serves as a metaphor for how virtual experiences can feel “real” to the person experiencing them.



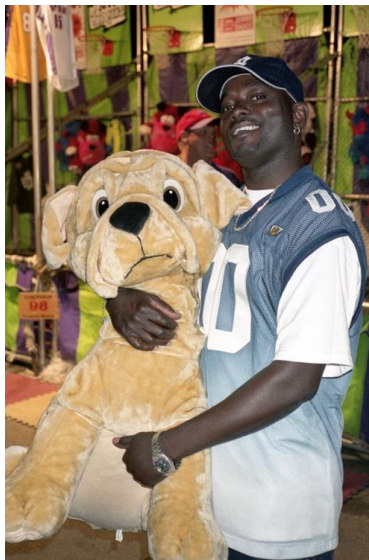
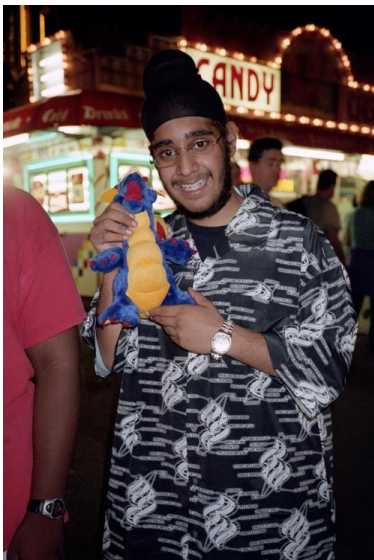
Accompanying the video is a sculptural installation that further illustrates the metaphor of the phantom limb. A **classical bust** sculpture has been cut in half, and is displayed against a mirror surface to create the illusion of a complete whole. Rounding out the theme, the music of Paul Wittgenstein plays in the background of the exhibition. Paul Wittgenstein was an Austrian pianist who lost his right arm during the First World War. In order to continue his career as a concert performer, he commissioned music “for the left hand alone” from some of the most distinguished composers of the day.

Cover to Cover

The other exhibit is *Cover to Cover*, an overview of Ho Tam's artistic career. Tam is known for his series of self-published artist books such as *Hotam* and *Poser*, which explore the intersection of the personal and political. Tam's exhibition deconstructs his recent book works, displaying selected paintings, collage works and photographs that make up the pages of his magazines and books. Overall the exhibition exists as a free-flowing collage that links three decades of the artist's works, and also links to Tam's ground-breaking video works such as *The Yellow Pages*.

Using the magazine format, the artist approaches each issue of *Hotam* as an independent art project to explore and experiment with the printed format. Many of the themes explored are parallel to his current and ongoing research. Issues include *A Brief History of Me*, an archive of his life, as well as *The Greatest Stories Ever Told*, a collection of fairy tales translated into various languages, formed of **collaged** illustrations created with international banknotes.

Similar to *Hotam* in format, *Poser* is a series of books of **snapshots** of strangers in public, repeatedly in the same location. No matter the situation his process is the same – a film camera and one shot. *"The exchange is usually completed within a few seconds, using analogue film, I never take more than one picture of each individual,"* explains Ho Tam. *"It is both an exciting and nerve-wracking experience because one never knows what the response will be."*



The simplicity in his process results in a series of images which are hilariously similar, brightly shot and full of awkward smiles. Ho Tam proves in this series that no matter how of a rush we are in, and however enormous personal problems may seem, we're all quite similar really. With humour and directness, the resulting images explore the individuals, the grouping, and how each person poses for the camera.

About The Artists

Karilynn Ming Ho is a Vancouver-based interdisciplinary artist working with video, performance, multi-media installation, sculpture and collage. Her work draws on existential themes as a means to examine formal and conceptual ideas around screen culture, technology, performativity and the body. Ming Ho has exhibited in solo shows across Canada including the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Trinity Square Video in Toronto, Optica Centre d'art Contemporain in Montreal, and Khyber ICA in Halifax. Her work has been screened widely in film and performance festivals in Canada, the US, and France.

Karilynn Ming Ho's website: <http://karilynnmingho.com/>

Ho Tam was born in Hong Kong, educated in Canada and the U.S. and worked in advertising companies and community psychiatric facilities before turning to art. He practices in multiple disciplines including photography, video, painting and print media. His first video, *The Yellow Pages*, was commissioned by the public art group PUBLIC ACCESS for an installation/projection at the Union Station of Toronto in 1994/95. Since then Tam has produced over 15 experimental videos. He was included in the traveling exhibition *Magnetic North: Canadian Experimental Video* by Walker Art Center, Minnesota. His feature documentary film *Books of James* was awarded Outstanding Artistic Achievement (Outfest, LA) and Best Feature Documentary (Tel Aviv LGBT Film Festival). He also publishes several series of artist's books and zines. Tam is an alumni of Whitney Museum Independent Studies Program, Bard College (MFA) and recipients of various fellowships and artist's grants.

Ho Tam's website: <http://ho-tam.com/>

Ho Tam Press website: <http://hotampress.com/>

Video Interview with Ho Tam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNQ-y1ngghc>

After Your Visit

Activity: Complete your Artist book

During the gallery workshop, the entire book may not be completed, and there may be additional blank pages that can be used to focus on other topics to do with identity. Students can add photos, drawings, poetry, or found objects that are meaningful to them. When completed, students can share their books, and learn more about their classmates, or do a self-reflection on the process of creating the books and what they learned about themselves through making the books.

Extension Activity: Classroom Series

Many artists have chosen to work in series to further investigate a topic or interest. It can be a very useful creative process to learn, as it encourages seeing a subject from many angles and helps artists generate ideas for future artworks. After having seen Ho Tam's work in the gallery, students may be interested in trying out this process themselves as a collaborative classroom activity.

First, review the background information below, and show students some of the provided examples of artists who have worked in a series. Compare and contrast some of the images in each artist's series. What differences or similarities do they notice in each artist's work? Why do you think so many artists work in this way?

As a group, choose a subject for your series. Students can then create or bring in examples on this subject, such as drawings, photos, or actual objects. Discuss various ways of organizing and displaying them once collected, and then examine the series as a group. What are the similarities? What are the differences? What do you notice about them now that they are all gathered together? Reflect on the process of creating a series, and the things you can learn from using this process.

Artist Series: Background

Ho Tam has created several series of paintings, photographs and collage works that are then developed into artist books and magazines. The artist has used these books to explore aspects of his own identity, or as Tam explains, "*The books are about how I, as an artist, insert myself into the world.*" Some books focus on his Chinese background, others document a specific event in his personal life, while others are snapshots of people he encounters on the street. By looking at the similarities in subjects, whether this is by the clothing people are wearing or the activity taking place, Tam groups these similar subjects into a series of works.

Many artists work in a series as a way to fully explore a topic or subject matter. This artistic process helps artists to understand something by looking at many examples of it, to see similarities and differences, to discover patterns, to understand more deeply, or to generalize from particulars. Working in a series means that one art piece is not a stand-alone completed

work, but one in a series of experiments, explorations, and questions. In order to visualize working in a series, share some visuals of artists who work and think this way.

Examples of working in a series

There are many artists from art history who work in a series. This trend was very much seen in the history of painting, where the artist would focus on the same place, drawing and painting many images of the same landscape to capture the variances of light and shadow over time. Examples of this practice include many of the impressionist painters such as Claude Monet ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouen_Cathedral_\(Monet_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouen_Cathedral_(Monet_series))) or the post-impressionist Paul Cézanne ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Sainte-Victoire_\(C%C3%A9zanne\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Sainte-Victoire_(C%C3%A9zanne))).

This method of working in a series continued through modernism and pop art, where the artist would develop works that are based on the repetition of a standard unit, like Andy Warhol who focused on Campbell soup cans <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79809> or Josef Albers who did over 1000 variations of paintings, drawings, and sculptures of coloured squares <http://www.artnet.com/artists/josef-albers/>. These artists worked with the same subject, to vary it in size and colour and see what new things they could discover about the elements of colour, shape, and design.

With the advent of photography, working in a series became almost the standard for photo-based artists. Photographers often work in series, and you may see many photo books or 'portfolios' of a photo series organized by theme. Some examples of photographers to look at: Janine Antoni - <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/5377>
Hans Eijkelboom - <http://ca.phaidon.com/agenda/photography/articles/2014/october/02/ten-questions-for-photographer-hans-eijkelboom/>
Suzy Lake - <http://www.suzylake.ca/>

Resources

Artist Books & Bookmaking

Bookworks: Making Books by Hand by Gwenyth Swain

Making Books With Kids: 25 Paper Projects to Fold, Sew, Paste, Pop, and Draw, by Esther K. Smith

Types of Book-Binding <http://www.studentbookbinding.co.uk/blog/types-of-binding>

Phantom Limb Syndrome

Phantom Limbs Explained <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySIDMU2cy0Y>

Create your own mirror box https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbzrPX_Urb4

Rubber hand trick: BBC Horizons video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxwn1w7MJvk>

Street Photography

Vancouver Street Photography

<http://capturephotofest.com/exhibitions/an-evolutionary-look-into-vancouver-street-photography/>

Fred Herzog – Vancouver Street Photographer

<http://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/canada-150/canada-150-fred-herzog-colourful-street-photographer>

Artist's working in Series

Claude Monet [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouen_Cathedral_\(Monet_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouen_Cathedral_(Monet_series))

Paul Cézanne [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Sainte-Victoire_\(C%C3%A9zanne\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mont_Sainte-Victoire_(C%C3%A9zanne)).

Andy Warhol <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79809>

Josef Albers <http://www.artnet.com/artists/josef-albers/>

Janine Antoni <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/5377>

Hans Eijkelboom - <http://ca.phaidon.com/agenda/photography/articles/2014/october/02/ten-questions-for-photographer-hans-eijkelboom/>

Suzy Lake - <http://www.suzylake.ca/>

Glossary

Artist Book	A publication (book, magazine, or newspaper) designed and made by an artist rather than a publishing organization, and which often reflects on the publication medium as part of the theme of the artwork.
Bust	A sculpture depicting the head and shoulders of a person.
Classical	The art style of ancient Greece and Rome, characterized by realistic depictions of idealized human forms.
Collage	Collage was originally a French word, derived from the word “ <i>coller</i> ”, meaning “to paste”. Collages are made by gluing elements such as papers, photos, or cloth to a flat surface, creating a new picture or design.
Contemporary Art	Artwork that is produced in this current time, generally considered to be artworks made from 1970 to the present. Contemporary art is a very broad term, including artworks made in almost any medium and incorporating many different themes and ideas.
Installation	An art form that uses almost any media (sculpture, video, paint, etc.) to create a sensual and/or conceptual experience in a particular environment. Often, the gallery space is used directly in the installation.
Phantom Limb Syndrome	When a person who has lost a limb due to amputation or paralysis feels physical sensations in that limb such as pain, tingling, or touch.
Series	A series of images, photos, a number on a similar theme
Street Photography	The practice of taking candid or informal photos of people in public places with the intent to portray the everyday realities of urban life as encountered by the photographer.
Video Art	An art form that emerged in the 1960’s, when artists began to explore the possibilities of video as an art medium. Video art differs from film or videos seen on television, as there does not necessarily need to be a narrative or definitive beginning, middle and end. Often video artists experiment with sound, video imagery, and how the work is viewed (i.e. projected or on different screens).

Image Credits

Cover, Page 5, 6: Karilynn Ming Ho, *For the Left Hand Alone*, production stills, 2017.

Page 7: Ho Tam, *Poser 2: Toronto*, Edition of 250, 8.25" x 10.75", 64 pages, 2013.

School Program Supporters and Partners



The Richmond Art Gallery School Art Program is one of many gallery programs made possible by the Richmond Art Gallery Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to extending the reach of our gallery exhibitions through community programming.



www.islbus.com

International Stage Lines is making it possible for more schools to visit by donating free bus travel to and from the gallery. Enter to win a free bus trip at <http://www.richmondartgallery.org/learn-and-create/schools/elementary>



BRITISH COLUMBIA



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ARTS COUNCIL
An agency of the Province of British Columbia

*We acknowledge the
financial support of the
Province of British Columbia*



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



Guide materials prepared by: Melanie Devoy, Kathy Tycholis, and Salisa Jatuweerapong.