Beyond the Horizon

Marisse Cheung
Ayal Heinrichs
Anthea Kwong
Megan Lane
Lucy Li

Mickey Morgan
Angel Pan
Atheana Picha
Lily Wang
Mandy Xu

Youth Mentorship Program
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Richmond Art Gallery
This exhibition was conceived as an opportunity to showcase works from the Richmond Art Gallery Permanent Collection, while also creating a dialogue with art produced by local secondary school students. The Richmond Art Gallery began to build its collection in 1982 and most of the works in the collection have been the generous donations of artists, who were exhibiting in the Gallery, or donors, who were often active members of our community. The works offer a snapshot of both the history of the Gallery and art in the greater Vancouver area. The thematic choice of landscape offered us the opportunity to include a number of very different works that span nearly a century, but also presented a thought-provoking departure point for the students.

The collection works may afford a view of the past, but the works of the students illuminate our path looking forward. Many of the students’ works address environmental concerns such as climate change and large-scale pollution, demonstrating their commitment to using their art to advocate for the protection of our natural landscapes. The timing of this exhibition in the year of Canada’s 150th anniversary is wholly intentional: these are landscapes that have existed and were occupied long before the confederation of the country. It is my hope that through the advocacy of a new generation of artists, such as these students, the natural beauty of Canada might continue to exist long into our future.

I would like to thank the staff at the Richmond Art Gallery for their support throughout this exhibition. Special thanks to Melanie Devoy, School Art Program Coordinator, who has met with the students weekly in order to oversee their sessions with guest artists and more recently, to offer guidance as they have produced their works. I am also very grateful to the artists, Diyan Achjadi, Tsēma Igharas, and Keith Langergraber, who each led the students in a series of workshops. Finally, this exhibition would not have been possible without the generous support of the BC Arts Council Youth Engagement Program.

Dr. Hilary Letwin received her PhD in Art History from Johns Hopkins University, and holds additional degrees in archaeology and history. She has curated a number of exhibitions, including at the Seymour Art Gallery and the Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art. She previously worked as the Curatorial Assistant at the Richmond Art Gallery and currently works as the Collections Assistant at the Burnaby Art Gallery.

Dr. Hilary Letwin
Exhibition Curator

Image, left: Marisse Cheung, printmaking ink on kraft paper
Marisse Cheung

Eric Hamber Secondary School, Grade 12

I want my work to narrate the beauty of life in our natural world. In a time when we are so caught up in the pressures of school, work, and all the stress that comes along with life, we routinely put off what really makes us happy. For me, I begin to forget how much I love being engaged in the natural environment. I'm at my happiest when I'm surrounded by nature, and this is also when my creativity is at its peak. I'm curious as to what the world has to offer, as well as what I'm capable of doing to give back to it. I want my art to serve as a monument that the Earth does not belong to us. We were given this beautiful place to call home, and it's the only one we have. I also hope to remind myself and my audience that we are all so small in the grand scale of things and that there will always be more to learn about the world we live in and the people around us.

Ayal Heinrichs

Traditional Learning Academy (TLA), Grade 12

Ayal Heinrichs grew up in Vancouver and has been surrounded by mountains and forests her entire life. She draws inspiration from British Columbia's rugged landscapes in her art, finding pattern and beauty in overlooked wildlife. Using paper and ink, Ayal documents the layers and depth of the forest. In her work, "Whispers," she explores plants and animals through pattern, capturing the solitude and vastness of nature.

Anthea Kwong

JN Burnett Secondary, Grade 11

As people grow up, we change. We adapt to the chaos of the outside world and we forget how to dream, to live without a care in the world. Through my artwork, I bring the fantasy of fairy tales -- an idea often thought of by society as immature -- into reality. As my personal response to other pieces in this exhibition, I include the otherworldly and improbable -- things that the brain unconsciously conceives -- into landscape art. My goal is to remind us to view the world with a childlike mindset, to rediscover the world anew and to rekindle imagination.
Mickey Morgan

Steveston London Secondary School, Grade 12

This work is a portrayal of the impact our industrialization has on the beautiful landscape in which we live. We have come to believe that evolution of our culture means that we attempt to increase everything "man-made". What started with a loom and hand-sewn clothes by one's parent has become fabrics sourced from a developing country, made in factories where workers are paid pennies to mass-produce items that will not be worn in three months because it is not in fashion. What once were small villages and longhouses is now an assemblage of towering glass and steel that would rarely permit a homeless person inside, even to wash their hands. We have appropriated beauty that is not ours and eclipsed it with what we believe will serve us best.

Angel Pan

Richmond Secondary School, Grade 9

I immigrated to Canada at age ten, and am now a grade nine student at Richmond High. I created this group of fish to draw attention to the growing problem of sea litter, which affects the ocean views, threatens the safety of navigation, and has a negative impact on marine systems. The Pacific has more than three million square kilometers of ocean litter, which means it is even more than the whole of India! If we do not take measures, the ocean will not be able to recover, so humans will have a very difficult time surviving. Most of the sea trash is plastic, accounting for almost half, so I used recycled plastic for the outside shape of the fish. I chose bubble wrap because it is slightly reflective, so it looks like fish scales. Plastic sheets are transparent, and inside the fish is filled with examples of ocean litter, which represents the harm we are doing to the sea.

Megan Lane

Hugh McRoberts Secondary School, Grade 12

It is unusual to come across a tree which grows upside down. Through the use of visual metaphor, Megan Lane utilizes her work to examine the kind of life she intends to live. Just as a tree's identity is defined by the source in which its roots find their nourishment, Lane's identity is found through her faith in God, represented in this work by a house. Her work describes how she hopes to grow in ways solely defined by these roots – unexpected, precarious, and perhaps even peculiar to those who observe. Lane's work hopes to convey the unusual and unique beauty her life may contribute to this world through the growth she experiences. A recent high school graduate, Lane intends to pursue a career in theatrical design.

Lucy Li

Richmond Secondary School, Grade 11

I was born in China and immigrated to Canada when I was eleven. Now I live in Richmond and go to Richmond Secondary School. One day I came across an article talking about how all humans belong to a single species that all originated in Africa. As a newcomer, I experienced isolation due to racism and am troubled by the fact that racism is still ongoing worldwide. I chose the shape of Pangea because it is the shape of the globe hundreds of millions of years ago when all the continents were connected, which to me represents unity. The facial features on the landscape come from all age groups and genders, representing people from all around the globe. As I am sculpting I find that the faces look similar to each other even though they have distinct features. I hope that by looking at my work people can understand the importance of equality.
Atheana Picha

Matthew McNair Secondary School, Grade 12

Atheana Picha is a recent graduate of the AP art program at Matthew McNair Secondary School, and a recipient of the 2017 YVR Art Foundation Scholarship. In this artwork, she is trying to avoid the manufactured feel that some contemporary art evokes and rather embody the more organic feel of the original gesture sketch. The painting incorporates indigenous designs and form-line shapes such as ovoids, U shapes, and S shapes. The frog in the foreground was inspired by a memory of catching frogs in her friend’s yard, and the organic shape of the trees was inspired by Dr. Seuss’ illustrations. Her goal is to broaden people’s horizons through different types of art. The more that people are exposed to art, the more their perspectives change. She plans to expand upon this idea in a future series.

Lily Wang

Richmond Secondary School, Grade 11

In Asian culture, lanterns made of paper are often seen as symbols of celebration and nostalgia. Paper lanterns carry their maker’s wish and guide the loved one’s soul back home. To Lily, they mean peace and guidance along her way to Canada. Water occupies a large portion of people’s life, both geographically and biologically. Water is calm, mysterious, yet dynamic. Thus, she incorporated these two elements into her work. Instead of portraying water flowing in an organic form, she used geometric shapes to achieve a sense of modernization and complexity to represent her immigration experience. She hopes to create a contrast between geometry and nature which, just like cultures, are dissimilar while existing in harmony.

Mandy Xu

Richmond Secondary School, Grade 11

As a child, Mandy Xu was fascinated with the intricate and meticulous illustrations in plant encyclopedias. In this piece, she wants to recreate the same quality of cleanly-drawn lines and warm, earthy tones. Mandy Xu is a Grade 11 IB art student currently studying at Richmond Secondary School. Lush and riveting, the British Columbia temperate rainforest is truly a place of magic. Inspired by her hikes in British Columbia’s forests, Mandy establishes a sensually invigorating artwork that immerses the viewer in the environment itself through the interaction of the painting and projection. “Growth” is a combination of traditional materials, such as watercolour paint with digital technology, encouraging a visual dialogue between the two elements.
Workshop with Diyan Achjadi

1. Mandy Xu, printmaking ink, paint on glass
2. Mickey Morgan, printmaking ink, sign, plexi-glass
3. Lucy Li, ceramic paint, ceramic cup, plates
Workshop with Keith Langergraber

1. Anthea Kwong, ink on paper (detail)
2. Angel Pan, watercolour & ink on paper
3. Marisse Cheung, ink on paper (detail)
Workshop with Tsēma Igharas

1. Megan Lane, willow branches, yarn
2. Ayal Heinrichs, cotton fabric, willow, thread, beads
3. Lily Wang, willow branches, feathers, fabric, shells
Guest Artists

Diyan Achjadi’s work examines historical prints and surface ornamentation, tracing narratives of cross-cultural imaginings, influences and contaminations, retranslating and reinterpreting them through drawing, printmaking and animation. Achjadi received a BFA from the Cooper Union (New York, NY) and an MFA from Concordia University (Montreal, QC). She has exhibited widely at galleries and film festivals across Canada and beyond, including solo presentations at Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (Victoria, BC), Oboro (Montreal, QC) and AIR Gallery (New York, NY), among others. In October 2016 her work was featured in the Richmond Art Gallery exhibition; Diyan Achjadi and Shawn Hunt: Cultural Conflation. Born in Jakarta, Indonesia, Achjadi currently resides in Vancouver, BC where she is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

Tsēma Igharas (formally Tamara Skubovius) is an interdisciplinary artist and member of the Tahltan First Nation. She studied Northwest Coast Formline Design at K’saan (2005/06), has a BFA from ECUAD (2011) and MFA from OCADu (2016). Tsēma has shown in notable group shows Interweavings for emerging First Nations artists who have previously won a YVR Art Foundation scholarship (RAG 2014/15), Culture Shift, Contemporary Indigenous Art Biennale in Montreal and has shown her solo exhibition, Ore Body at Gallery 44 for Imaginative Film Festival (Toronto 2016). Tsēma graduated from the Interdisciplinary Master’s in Art, Media and Design program at OCADu showing her thesis work, LAND | MINE that connects materials to mine sites and bodies to the land.

Keith Langergraber received his BFA from the University of Victoria and his MFA from the University of British Columbia. He has exhibited extensively in solo and group shows in galleries in Canada, the United States, and Asia since 1995. He has received many grants and awards for his work on the leading edge of Canadian Art, including being nominated for the Sobey Award in 2009. Keith has taught at the University of British Columbia, Emily Carr University, and North Island College. In 2005 he was selected to represent Emily Carr at the Canadian Art Colleges Collaborative Banff Residency, Media and Visual Arts. His artwork grows from an interest in social, cultural, and political change found through scrutiny of a selected site. His exhibitions consist of the accumulation and reconstitution of information through the peeling back of layers of the vernacular landscape. In 2014, the Richmond Art Gallery exhibited Keith Langergraber: Theatre of the Exploding Sun.

Program facilitated by Melanie Devoy and Kathy Tycholis

Image, right: Atheana Picha, fabric, netting, leaves, tape