

Richmond Art Gallery SCHOOL ART PROGRAM TEACHERS' GUIDE



Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge, *Liberty Lost (G20 Toronto)*, 2010, Inkjet Print on Paper

September 15 - November 10, 2012

Open Conversations: The Art Practice of Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge



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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Open Conversations: The Art Practice of Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge is a two-part exhibition presenting Toronto collaborative artists, **Carole Condé** and **Karl Beveridge**. The first part of the exhibition is a retrospective of selected works by the artists created during the time period 1980 to 2011. The second part of the exhibition is the presentation of a new work created by the artists specifically with and for the Richmond Art Gallery. By tracing the artists' body of work, *Open Conversations* examines how Condé and Beveridge have used community participation in the process of their work since the 1970s and how this process has continued and evolved to today.



Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge, *Class Maintenance*, 2003, Inkjet Print on Paper

Condé and Beveridge use dialogue to engage with communities in order to give voice to previously unheard histories and perspectives. They literally “make art out of a conversation” by meeting with groups of individuals and creating images based on the stories they are told. For example, for the work *Class Maintenance*, the artists met with the elementary and secondary school custodians of CUPE Local 474 in Edmonton. The artists held workshops with the custodians so they could discuss issues important to them, such as their sense of responsibility and commitment towards the children at the schools they maintain. To create the artwork, the artists photographed five of the workers, who have their portrait combined with an image of themselves acting in stories that centre on their relationship to the children they clean and care for.



Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge, *Public Matters* (detail), 2012, Inkjet Print on Paper

The new Richmond Art Gallery work specifically showcases Condé and Beveridge's dedication to community participation. *Public Matters* concerns cultural issues relating to the Richmond Art Gallery, Richmond Museum, Richmond Archives and the Richmond Library, all located in the Richmond Cultural Centre. Condé and Beveridge collaborated with employees from these institutions through a series of conversations over the last year to create an artwork that explores larger issues such as what is cultural work, how is it valued, and the roles these institutions play in the community of Richmond. The image portrays a worker from the Richmond Museum accepting a donation for a museum display from a woman who worked in Richmond's canneries, an Art Gallery worker showing artwork to a visiting child, Cultural Centre staff answering questions and assisting the public, and the Richmond archivist managing documents and records, to name just a few. Condé and Beveridge's artwork makes visible all the work undertaken behind the scenes by Richmond's cultural workers, and their contributions to the Arts, Culture, and Heritage of Richmond.

The result of this collaborative conversation between the artists and communities visually takes form in a **photomontage**. **Photomontage** refers to the process of making a “composite” photograph by the cutting and joining of multiple photographs into one image or single, final photograph. Initially, the artists combined multiple images in the darkroom by exposing different photographic negatives onto the same print. As technology advanced, their practice has moved to using computer software, such as Photoshop, to digitally combine multiple images into one final image.

Creating a dialogue with the community is an essential part of Condé and Beveridge’s artistic process, and the collaborative process is as important to them as the finished artwork. Because their work deals with community, and with larger political and social issues, their work has been described as “Art with a social conscience”, and as such, the artists seek to create work that can foster positive change in society.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge are a collaborative artist team based in Toronto. For the last thirty years they have exhibited work all across Canada and internationally in both art and non-art contexts such as trade union halls, art galleries and museums. The duo is also active in several labour arts initiatives, including the Mayworks Festival in Toronto and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre in Hamilton, Ontario. The artists’ major influences include Soviet photomontages from the 1920s, advertisements, commercials, and documentary stories from magazines such as *Life* from the 1940s and 1950s, as well as film stills by French filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard. Condé and Beveridge are two of Canada’s most influential artists in contemporary art history, making a name for themselves as early as the 1970s. *Open Conversations* is the first solo exhibition by the artists in British Columbia.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Artist’s Website: <http://www.web.net/~condebev>

Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art Page on Condé & Beveridge:

http://www.ccca.ca/artists/artist_info.html?languagePref=en&link_id=6084

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

Condé and Beveridge tell stories with their pictures by using visual **symbols**. A **symbol** is something that stands for, or represents something else or carries with it a meaning or message. In the work *The Plague*, we can see how the artists are using symbols to represent the issues of the current economic and environmental crisis.



Carole Condé + Karl Beveridge, *The Plague*, 2009, Inkjet Print on Paper

In the lower left corner, a young boy is blowing bubbles, which symbolizes the boom and bust nature of our economic system, with housing “bubbles” and market “bubbles” that swell and then pop. Next to him, a man is rolling dice, symbolizing the gambling and chance of the stock market. Across the picture, is a wave of frogs, symbolizing both the plague of frogs from the Bible, as well as the fact that frogs are vulnerable to environmental change, and are like the “canary in the coal mine”, (also visible in the lower left corner), warning us of approaching environmental disaster. The image is filled with visual **symbols**, all of which combine to tell the story of our current economic system, and how it is hurting people and the environment.

ACTIVITY - SYMBOLS IN ART

Because artwork does not usually contain writing, artists have used symbols to tell stories or communicate a message from the earliest times. Art was often used as a way to tell stories in the past because many people did not know how to read, so artists needed to be able to use a “language” that it’s audience could understand, and that language was **visual symbols**. This can be in the form of the colours artists use, such as white which can stand for purity or innocence, or by the objects that are placed in an artwork, such as a lion which can symbolize bravery, or scales which represent justice.

Introduce the concept of **visual symbols** to the class. As a class, look around the classroom to see how many examples of symbols you can find. Some examples are signs for washrooms or exits, clothing and sports team logos, flags, or symbols on maps or charts. Discuss the different ways we use symbols, and ask students to think about places they see symbols, or symbols they use themselves (such as emoticons or smileys when texting). Discuss the ways artists use symbols in their artwork to tell a story or deliver a message or moral.

Ask students to imagine they have been asked to design a holiday card for a person who does not know how to read. Each student can choose a different holiday, or you can assign a specific holiday to the class. Are there colours associated with that holiday? What are they and why are they used? Are there objects or characters that are used to represent that holiday, such as a bunny for Easter, or a jack-o-lantern for Halloween? List as many of these objects and characters as you can. Could these objects or characters be called symbols? Why or why not? Each student can then make a card using their favourite symbol for their chosen holiday.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Noun Project - online database of visual symbols: <http://thenounproject.com/>

Symbols in Art - Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery Educational site:

<http://www.schoolsliasion.org.uk/aliens/access/signsSym/signsSym.htm>

AFTER YOUR VISIT

Photo Montage Collage

Condé and Beveridge use **Photomontage** to create their artwork. **Photomontage** refers to the process of making a “composite” photograph by the cutting and joining of multiple photographs into one image or single, final photograph. Artists have been making photomontages for as long as there has been photography! During the Victorian era humorous combinations of the wrong head stuck on a different body were quite popular. It was much later that artists started using photomontage as a new art form. Photomontage can be a great way to really express your creativity and imagination in making interesting combinations of unexpected items. Instead of using Photoshop or a darkroom to create your photomontage, you can use collage, and cut out pictures from personal photos or magazines, and then combine them on paper. Some ideas to try:

Fanstasy Creatures Zoo: A giraffe with wings? An elephant with fins? Have the class create a zoo filled with weird and wonderful animal combinations.

Ultimate Vacation Spot: Ever wanted to water-ski around the Eiffel Tower? Snorkel with polar bears at the pyramids? Have the class create picture postcards showing the ultimate vacation spot.

Cyber-human: Students can create a human/robot hybrid of themselves, adding digital “implants” such as ipods, satellite dishes, or keyboards.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Cut and Paste, A History of Photo Montage: <http://www.cutandpaste.info/>

Lesson Plan: Cubism Photo Montage
<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/high/cubismphoto.htm>

Using Digital Cameras in the classroom, and Photo Lesson Plans:

<http://www.wacona.com/digicam/digicam.html>

<http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~toh/image/DigitalCameraUses.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Family Sunday

Sept 23, Oct 28, Nov 25

Drop-in 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Families are invited to participate in various exhibition-related art projects and activities on the fourth Sunday of each month. Stories, music, art...activities vary from month to month! It's free, thanks to the RBC Foundation.

Culture Days

Friday-Sunday, Sept 28 - 30, 2012

City-wide celebration of arts and culture, featuring free events throughout the weekend.

Saturday Sept 29:

- Gallery Tours in English and Mandarin - 11am-1pm
- Panel Discussion - *What is Arts and Culture Work?* - Cultural Workers at the Richmond Cultural Centre - 1-2:30pm
- Curator Tour and Talk with Scott Marsden - 2:45 -3:45pm

Sunday, Sept 30:

- Gallery Tours in English and Mandarin - 11am-3pm
- Richmond Printmakers Open House - 1:00-4:00pm

Contemporary Art Talk - Socially Engaged Art Practices

Saturday, October 13: 3:00 - 4:00pm

Free visual presentation on the emergence of artists who work collaboratively with artists, communities, and organizations to develop socially engaged works.

Free Film Screening - *Portrait of Resistance*, with Guest Curator Scott Marsden

Saturday, October 20: 2:00-4:30pm

In this feature documentary, seminal Canadian artists Condé & Beveridge are the subject of an in-depth examination of the artists' methods of collaboration and work for social change, introduced by Scott Marsden who curated their exhibition for the Richmond Art Gallery.

ART FOR LUNCH - Curator tour with Scott Marsden on Condé and Beveridge

Thursday, October 4, 12:00-1:00pm - #246727

Great food, great art and great conversation! Join us for a tour of the current exhibition with the Guest Curator, Scott Marsden, followed by a lunch in the Gallery. Pre-registration required, \$10 per person includes tour and tasty lunch.

LET'S MAKE STUFF! SUNDAY ARTIST GROUP

2nd Sunday of each month, Drop-in 1:00 - 4:00pm

Join us in the Gallery Art-Room for a relaxed, social studio time. Get inspired by bringing new or mid-stream projects, your own art materials, and work alongside fellow artists. Adults only. \$5.00 drop-in, or FREE for Art Gallery Members. For more information contact ktycholis@richmond.ca.

Oct 14 - No session in Nov and Dec due to holiday and renovation

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

In connection to Conde and Beveridge's exhibition, the Art Gallery will present workshops on basic digital photography and video techniques. Pre-registration required.

Photography - Photo Composition: Telling a Story with Photographs - #246747

Saturday, October 27, 1:00 - 4:00 pm, \$20/session

Digital Photography: Taking Better Photos - # 246752

Thursday, November 8, 1-3pm, \$20/session