

Derya Akay

Artwork Becomes Dinner Party, 2023

wood, ABS filament, metal

Courtesy of the artist and Unit 17, Vancouver

In this colourful work, Akay stacks a wooden shelf with wooden, metal, and 3D printed dishes. During the *FOODWAYS* opening reception, some of these will be used to serve baked goods—lahmajun, cheese pide, and jingle bread—selected by the artist from the local Armenian bakery and café Lamajoun. Though Turkish-Armenian relations are fraught, especially since the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and 1916, it is not surprising that the countries' cultures and cuisines share many parallels after centuries under the Ottoman Empire. Akay has been researching these interrelated connections through the lenses of foods, recipes, and kitchenware.

Derya Akay

Red and Yellow Shelf with Belvedere Lath, 2015/2020/2024

12 ounce to-go coffee cups, 12 pieces Turkish tea saucers, 3D printed alley rescue orchid (blooms white), 3D printed colchicine jar, 3D printed homegrown leek, 3D printed oncidium orchid, 3D printed vessel, apple cider vinegar, apples dehydrated at the Polygon, ashtray from Serdar, beads found in the garden, beans with bug hole polka dots, beeswax with dried dahlias, big boy crackers packaging, black Play-Doh, blown glass jar, borage flowers, bottle found in the Adriatic sea, brackets, bulgur, burnt old artwork ashes, calcium hydroxide pickled flowers, canola oil, cardboard box painted with acrylic, carrot seeds, cedar, ceramic cookie, ceramic ornaments, ceramic Turkish coffee pot, citric acid, clay orchids by Kingphaka, clotted cream, coriander, cumin, debris from Belvedere lath, dehydrated three stem cherry, deli cups, deli cups with pigments, dried butterfly pea, dried flowers, dried madder stem and leaves, dried spicy peppers, dye sublimation print, glass, glass jar, grandpa's cigarettes, hibiscus, homegrown oregano, lead, leek and onion seeds, MDF, menus from "Estradiol Kitchen" at Moodswing Bar in New Westminster, BC, metal measuring cups, mint, mountain thyme, mustard oil, oblong ping-pong, olive oil, painted rock strawberry found in the couch at Pale Fire, paper fold widgets from anxiety, part of a pot I found somewhere, pennies used to make blue woodwash, Plaster pigment shelf, plaster relief of wheat I grew in the alley, plastic cherry blossom with tree stem, plastic clothespins,

plastic lettering, pomegranate molasses, rice vinegar, Salem brand red hot pepper flakes, salt, studio mix herbal tea, studio mix tea #2, sumac, tape, tomato paste, trash from The Neighbour's Plate exhibition, true cinnamon, unknown rock #1, unknown rock #2, Virginia gold tobacco that I grew in 2014, walnut husks, wood clothes pins, zaatar

Artworks courtesy of the artist and Unit 17, Vancouver

Reading more like a literary text than a mere technical description, the label for this work vividly offers insight into Akay's identity and interests even before the audience may have turned their attention to the piece in question. This eclectic list includes items that reveal a sense of play ("beans with bug hole polka dots"), nostalgia for family ("grandpa's cigarettes"), trans identity ("menus from 'Estradiol Kitchen' at Moodswing Bar, New Westminster, BC," where they cooked and bartended in 2023), love of gardening ("Virginia gold tobacco that I grew in 2014"), and of course, their boundless delight in collecting and recycling art materials and food ingredients alike as part of their practice.

Derya Akay

Vessel from Artwork Becomes Dinner Party, 2023

ink on paper

Artworks courtesy of the artist and Unit 17, Vancouver

Derya Akay

Making a Menu (Moodswing), 2024

canvas, dye sublimation prints, paper, ink, pins, thread, and foam core with cedar artist's frame

Courtesy of the artist and Unit 17, Vancouver

This work is a part of a new series that marries together several of this casually cosmopolitan artist's multiple interests, including cooking, gardening, hosting, drawing, writing their memoirs, and researching Turkish food and its related material cultures. Under the guise of a mood board for the menu developed for Moodswing Bar last year, the work makes manifest Akay's desire to chart the interconnectivity of their own specific practice—as complicatedly entangled as the many ethnocultural, national, and historic influences that feed into what is known as Turkish cuisine today.

袁慧嫻 **Marlene Yuen**

Peace Together, 2024

relief and screen prints on washi paper
Courtesy of the artist

Marlene Yuen acknowledges the generous funding provided by British Columbia Arts Council for the completion of this project.

Vancouver-based artist Marlene Yuen is known for her artist books and multiples integrating her printmaking, illustration, and storytelling skills, notably to unearth the microhistories of Vancouver's Chinatown. Past works have included *Vegetable Sellers Association* (2017), which examines Chinese vegetable sellers, and *Ho Sun Hing Printers* (2020), which focuses on Canada's first Chinese-English print shop.

Yuen lends her playful Pop aesthetic to this new series of prints inspired by Hong Wo, a general store run by local merchant Ling Lam, which served Steveston's Indigenous, Chinese, Japanese, and white settler communities between 1895 and 1977. Yuen's research included poring through the store's stock lists and black-and-white photographs of Hong Wo found in the City of Richmond's Archives. She also visited former local councillor's Harold Steve's private collection of objects, which he salvaged from the store before its demolition in the 1970s. Yuen's colourful prints boldly infuses this fading history with fresh energy, vibrantly bringing to life the items that topped grocery lists of the era—everything from popular processed foods like Prem pressed meat and pickles to commodities like rat poison and paint.

Learn more about Hong Wo and its owner by visiting HONG WO, an exhibition hosted by the City of Richmond Archives, located just between the Cultural Centre Reception Desk and the Richmond Public Library.

Tania Willard

***Future Feasts*, 2024**

laser cut print on used butcher paper

Courtesy of the artist

Tania Willard

Sovereign-tea, 2022

clay slip and sgraffito, herbal tea in hand-sewn muslin

Concept by Tania Willard, vessel made by Brooke Waldron, Grayhorse Native Art and Ceramics

Refugitivi Tea, 2024

clay slip and sgraffito, herbal tea in hand-sewn muslin

Concept by Tania Willard, vessel made by Myung Sun Kim

digital print on banners

Courtesy of the artist

Of Secwépemc and settler descent, teacher, writer, curator, garlic farmer, and mother, Tania Willard has long cultivated an artistic practice that reflects Indigenous aesthetics within a contemporary context—often involving a compelling mix of unpretentious readymade commodities with traditional materials and craft techniques. Her work urgently brings to the fore the importance of Indigenous cultural revitalisation through an art-making that is integrally connected to land and community.

Indigenous food sovereignty is the focus and the inspiration for the works presented here: a scrappy DIY-style stands on metal legs is fringed with deer hide; a sandwich board announces “FUTURE BERRIES;” a banner imprinted with a short text that tenderly entreats us to “Take time/Visit long/Prepare/Harvest/Repeat;” a laser print of the delicate yet durable weaving pattern of a cedar fibre and bark basket onto used butcher paper, stained with blood and ice, the traces of a Sharpie scrawl evokes its former meaty contents.

Tania Willard

Fringe Labour, 2022

nylon, deer hide, metal

Future Berries, 2024

metal, laser cut print on wood

Courtesy of the artist

Kosisochukwu Nnebe

an inheritance, 2022

digital prints

Courtesy of the artist

Though best known as a starchy staple popular in the Caribbean, South America, and Africa, cassava can also be used as a source for the extraction of cyanide, a lethal potential that was exploited by enslaved people during and after the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Drawing from this colonialist history, Kosisochukwu Nnebe inserts herself into this black-and-white photographic series where she mimics the bland instructions of 1950s cookbooks, captioning the tidy images with simple directives to produce a type of cyanide from cassava: CUT, PEEL, GRATE, WRING, PUTREFY, HARVEST, DRY, POWDER, LOAD. Nnebe references incidences of historic rebellion in which an enslaved person would fill a long thumbnail with the poisonous powder before slipping it into the food and drink of slave owners. Other times, they used the poison to kill the slave master's livestock, and other times, themselves, as an act of suicide.

This series was first presented in the Spring 2022 edition of *cmagazine*, dedicated to the theme of grief, and accompanied by an incendiary text by local curator Nya Lewis. Lewis writes,

Nnebe's photo series positions rage as a necessary aspect of resistance for communities in constant mediation of racism. [...] (C)assava became, for some enslaved Africans and Indigenous people, a weapon with which to poison enslavers and colonialists. For those who made use of it in this way, it was the ultimate rejection of a world order premised on their dehumanization, their way of asserting their agency and subjectivity both covertly and revolutionarily. Nnebe mocks the societally ingrained, repetitive process of grieving, inviting Black audiences to confront the persistence of grief [...]. Black rage is made visible, constructively defying Black victimization and passivity.

张雪菜 Shellie Zhang

Bigger and Better than Ever, 2022

neon and Plexiglas

Courtesy of the artist and Patel Brown

In 1934, the Danforth Business Men's Association protested against what they described as the "scourge" of greengrocers who sold their wares not only inside their shops but also on the sidewalks of Toronto's Danforth Village. This sparked public debate as to whether shop owners were creating congestion for pedestrians with their colourful displays of fruit, vegetables, and flowers. Although bylaws stated that shop displays could occupy no more than eighteen inches of sidewalk width, the City of Toronto ultimately decided not to enforce these rules. Often immigrant and family-run, these shops served the needs of their surrounding populations while creating a sense of community and a lively atmosphere in their neighbourhoods.

Inspired by the early logo of the family-run Vincenzo's Supermarket on Danforth Avenue, Shellie Zhang's neon cornucopia and fruit basket celebrate the contributions to community of these diverse mom-and-pop shops, especially in the face of such megastores as Costco or Superstore.

张雪菜 **Shellie Zhang**

Bigger and Better than Ever 2, 2022

neon and Plexiglas

Courtesy of the artist and Patel Brown

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Patrick Cruz

Kitchen Codex, 2021

digital print on textile

Courtesy of the artist

“... I started to think of how to portray a community through what was cooked in the area. That’s when I decided to trade recipes in exchange for food.” – Patrick Cruz

Patrick Cruz’s *Kitchen Codex* is an ongoing multi-form project in which the artist has collected recipes from the inhabitants of various cities, including Guelph, Canada; Berlin, Germany; Mexico City, Mexico; and Malmö, Sweden. In exchange, Cruz cooks and serves them a Filipino dish. These hand-written or emailed recipes are then printed on to textile. Laid out on low tables for the public to read, these tablecloths hold the traces of past meals shared while also functioning as co-authored cookbooks—the unofficial culinary and cultural archive of a community.

Sara Angelucci

Left to right

Bella di Notte: May 22 - Common Poppy, German Chamomile, Common Mugwort, White Garden Snail, Wall Barley, 2023

Nocturnal Botanical Ontario: June 30, Apples with LDD Moth Caterpillars, 2022

Nocturnal Botanical Ontario: July 25, Bee balm, Thimble weed, St. John's Wort, Mallow, Water Iris, 2022

Nocturnal Botanical Ontario: September 21, Burdock, Wild Strawberries, 2021

Bella di Notte: June 1 - Sambuco, Wax Leaf Ligustrum, 2023

Bella di notte, Artichoke #2, 2022

Bella di Notte: Bella di Notte flower, Caper berries & flowers, Common Hedge Parsley, Flax-Leaved Horseweed, 2023

pigment print on archival paper

Courtesy of the Stephen Bulger Gallery

The Toronto-based artist Sara Angelucci's nocturnal photographs reveal intimate glimpses of unruly flora. She first started photographing her own garden with a scanner to process her profound grief after the death of her sister—"turning to the cycles of nature to embrace the cycles of life." However, during the social distancing and isolation necessitated by the pandemic, Angelucci grew to consider the project as a methodology of close looking that deepened her relationship the plant and animal life around her. This project also made her keenly aware of the impacts of colonisation on the land.

As she writes:

Invisible and layered histories are embedded in these compositions. Indigenous plants grow entwined with foreign/cultivated and invasive species. Considering these compositions closely, my passion and attachment to this place is entangled with deep colonial histories and ongoing commercial interests in the land. Using high-resolution imaging tools, looking closely raises difficult questions. To whom does the land really belong? And how did these plants come to be entwined?

Once travel was possible again, she turned her lens to the fields and forests of her family's ancestral village in Italy, where she captured the plants—some wild, some cultivated—that she imagined her great grandmother would have foraged or grown for their edible or medicinal values: caper berries, elderflowers, chamomile, artichokes, and other herbs and fruits.

黃柏武 Paul Wong

媽媽的藥櫃 *Mother's Cupboard*, 2019

inkjet prints

Courtesy of Paul Wong Projects

Paul Wong honours the skills, knowledge, and frugality of his mother Suk-Fong by documenting her collection of Chinese herbs, medicinal ingredients, and hand-made tinctures that she preserved in recycled jars. The jars still bare the logos of inexpensive, well-known North American brands like Classico, Miracle Whip, Nabob, and Taster's Choice, over which she affixed her own handwritten labels identifying the contents and the date. Wong elevates the jars by displaying them in spacious configurations against brightly lit, white backdrops, worthy of glossy advertisements for luxury goods. Printed in regal large scale, the jars emanate a luminous, almost holy aura. This tribute to Wong's mother, who arrived in Canada in 1950 and died in 2017, serves equally as an homage to a generation of Chinese women who built new lives and raised families in the face of racism, limited financial means, and language barriers, among other issues.

엘리 허경란 **Ellie Kyungran Heo**

Janchi Guksu (Banquet Noodles), 2016

HD video

4 min. 18 sec.

Courtesy of the artist and Lux Distribution

In this brief video, Ellie Yungran Heo takes us on a fast-paced journey that depicts the preparation and consumption of *janchi guksu*, a festive dish of noodles in anchovy stock, usually served with meat, eggs, and vegetables. The artist explains its significance:

The name derives from the Korean word *janchi* (meaning 'feast' or 'banquet'), as the noodle dish is traditionally eaten on special occasions throughout Korea, such as at weddings and birthday parties. The word *guksu* means 'noodles' in Korean and they symbolise longevity.

Heo keeps us in close proximity to the food preparation and the dining, focusing on both the audio and the visual. We see and hear water running from a tap, a knife chopping, the whipping of eggs, the sizzling of ingredients in a hot pan. She refrains from showing the faces of the people who are interacting with the food, focusing instead on the food and the vital role it plays in bringing family, friends, and other groups together. She also reminds us of how we often unthinkingly depend on plant and animal life for nourishment on a daily basis, or to mark special occasions.

엘리 허경란 **Ellie Kyungran Heo**

Did You Eat Rice?, 2017

HD video

53 min. 5 sec.

Courtesy of the artist and Lux Distribution

This video plays on the hour, every hour.

In Asian culture, the question 'did you eat rice?' means 'have you eaten?' (usually referring to a specific meal: breakfast, lunch or dinner). Moreover, this question could also function as a greeting and an expression of concern for someone; for example, a substitute for 'how have you been?', 'are you okay?' or 'is everything all right?'. – Ellie Kyungran Heo

Like many of Heo's documentaries, *Did You Eat Rice?* engages the audience's sense of hearing through her precise sound design. Her patient camera encourages us to listen to the sound of rain droplets landing on a scarecrow's crudely taped-up face, the shrill cries of crickets, the mechanics of hand-cranked machinery reaping rice, the rustle of sheaves of rice as they are gathered, the comic gummy sound of a rubber boot being pulled out of mud, the shrieks of children. Filming in Omachi, Japan, where the namesake strain of rice that was discovered over a hundred years ago is cultivated, Heo tracks the harvest season of this prized heirloom grain, following farmers and a class of young students that visit the farm to learn hands-on about the harvesting process. If systems of capitalism typically obscure the labour behind the production of a commodity, Heo instead makes us hyper-aware of it.

譚嘉文 Karen Tam

One Hundred Blossoms Lanterns series (excerpt), 2005-2007

Dragon & Phoenix (Lantern 1), 2005

Shrimp Cracking (Lantern 6), 2007

Eating Bitterness (Lantern 7), 2005

***Citrus Wizard and Friends versus Dr. Fu Manchu
(Lantern 8), 2007***

Haiiee-yaa! Warrior and Cook (Lantern 9), 2005

handmade mulberry paper cutouts, Tyvek, wood, red tassels

Courtesy of the artist and Hugues Charbonneau

I made this series of lanterns to be part of the decor of the various versions of the *Gold Mountain Restaurant* installations that I presented from 2004 to 2019. For me, the Chinese Canadian/Chinese American restaurant is a metaphor for *Cathay* or the *idea* of China in the West, and with the installations, I deconstruct and reconstruct the Chinese restaurant to see which elements signify meaning for the public and, thus, play a role in influencing Western perceptions of the Chinese. I use certain elements in restaurant décor seemingly present in almost every Chinese Canadian restaurant including lanterns. The imagery on these lanterns ranges and contrasts from traditional Chinese motifs to chinoiserie designs, characters from literature, racist political cartoons, silver screen actresses, historical and legendary figures.

– Karen Tam

Jesse Birch

Born Broken, 2021

stoneware with rattan cane

kintsugi (urushi lacquer and gold repair) by Naoko Fukumaru

Cups for Richmond Art Gallery, 2020-2021

stoneware

Courtesy of the artist and Richmond Art Gallery

“I just wanted my pots to find their way into the lives of people who work so hard to make culture happen.” – Jesse Birch

As part of the ceramic-centred exhibition *Imperfect Offerings* presented at Richmond Art Gallery in 2021, Nanaimo-based curator and potter Jesse Birch created a stoneware tea set for Richmond Art Gallery’s staff as a gesture of appreciation for their often under-appreciated daily work with artists, other cultural workers, and the public. He imagined the set being stored in the Gallery’s kitchen and used at meetings, during grant-writing sessions, and all the many tasks that make up a day.

Aiming to please a range of tastes, Birch created an assortment of cups, differing in silhouette, glaze, and firing method used. The set embodies Birch’s adherence to the values espoused by legendary potters Bernard Leach and Hamada Shōji—both deeply influential in BC—who believed that pottery should be hand-thrown, made with local materials, and embody utility and simplicity of form. The teapot and cups will be used in our public programs during the *FOODWAYS* exhibition.

Marlene Yuen

title wall, 2024

screen print

The watermelon has become associated with the Palestinian liberation movement, as it shares the red, green, black, and white of the Palestinian flag. Depictions of this fruit were first used as a symbol of Palestine in 1967 when Israel made it a criminal offence to display the flag in public. Usage has increased globally since the start of the Israeli-Palestinian War—images of watermelon slices proliferate on placards at demonstrations, on pins and clothing, and on social media accounts.

Contents of Vitrine

Left to right (top)

Shie Kasai, *Survival Japanese Cook Book*, Montréal, 2008

Shie Kasai, *Supermarket visits with my tween daughter: things she chose to find unexpectedly tasty*, Montréal, 2020–2021, edition 43/50

Shie Kasai, *Survival Japanese Cooking*, Montréal, MAI (Montreal, arts interculturels), 2010

Postcard for *Les Rasssembleurs / The Convenors exhibition*, curated by Dean Baldwin, MKG 127, Toronto, July 12 – August 23, 2014, Photo: Rademés “Juni” Figueroa

Jumana Manna, *Wild Relatives*, 2018 in “Jumana Manna Interviewed by ma ma, Perpetual Scofflaws,” *cmagazine* 154 (Spring 2023), pp. 24-25

Charlene K. Lau and Negin Zebarjad, *Stories and Storefronts*, Toronto, 2022

Postcard for Reed H. Reed and Hannah Jickling’s *Big Rock Candy Mountain*

Yang Yu, *Rolling Filling Steaming*, brochure, Vancouver, n.d.

Lucia Hierro, *Las Mellas Menu*, 2023 in Winter 2024 brochure for Esker Foundation, Calgary

Armand Eisen, *The Joys of The Garden*, Kansas City, Andrews and McNeel, 1992, pp 48-49

Maya Rae Oppenheimer, *Re-enactment Recipes*, Department of Art History, Concordia University, Montréal, 2019, ed. 71/90

karen elaine spencer, “to peel an orange,” Festival des Faubourgs, Montréal, 2024

Bill Burns, *The Country Singer, The Salt, The Milk, The Goats*, Foreman Art Gallery of Bishop’s University 2022-2023 exhibition brochure

Diego Hernandez, “Mercado Alternativo Tlalpan,” *Food Journeys Issue 01: Mexico City*, The Occasional Press, 2024, pp. 30-31

Left to right (bottom)

Tania Willard, *The Capilano Review*, Spring 2024, p 70

Derya Akay, *Manti, Börek, Baklava*, Vancouver, Contemporary Art Gallery, 2017

cmagazine 110, *Food*, Summer 2011

Annie Pootoogook, “Composition (Licking the Plate Clean),” 2004-2005 and “Skinning a Seal in the Kitchen,” 2004-2005 in *I Am Here: Home Movies and Everyday Masterpieces*, ed. Jim Shedden et al, Del Monico Books & Art Gallery of Ontario, pp. 88-89

Megan Kyak-Monteith, “Whale Hunt: I Think Everyone is Here”, 2020, and “Large Feast on a Bed of Carboard”, 2019, *INUA: Inuit Moving Forward Together*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2022, pp 62-63

Contents of Vitrine

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Pacific Authentic Richmond BC Dumpling Trail Brochure

Dana Quaddah, *We're not the only ones but.....the special ones*, Capture Photography Festival catalogue, Vancouver, 2023

New BC Indian Art and Welfare Society Collective, *The Bush Manifesto*, Burnaby Art Gallery, 2017, pp. 4-5

Postcard for Palestine

Postcard included in Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*, Milkweed Editions, 2018

Postcard for *Alimentaires et Fourragères*, New York, John Derrian Company, 2010

Emily Neufeld with Cease Wyss, *What Are Our Supports? Common Place*, OR Gallery and Richmond Art Gallery, Vancouver, 2018, translations by Cease Wyss and Vanessa Campbell at the Musqueam Language and Culture Centre

Katie Scott & Kathy Willis, *Welcome to the Museum Botanicum*, London, Big Picture Press, 2016

Leah Penneiman, "Black to the Land," *Black Futures*, ed. Kimberly Drew & Jenna Wortham, New York, One World, 2020, pp. 188-119

Recipe card for *Poutines à trou*

Cindy Mochizuki, *Autumn Strawberry, Scene 1* (boxset), Surrey, Surrey Art Gallery, 2022

Amy Lee Baksh, "Bitter Roots," *Maisonneuve*, Issue 91, Spring 2024, p 18-19

Michelle Jane Lee, "Finding Korean Food Through Sung", *Amadeus Magazine*, Issue 20, pp 56-57

Bookmark for Urban Bounty

Luce Girard, "The Nourishing Arts", *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vol 2*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & London, 1998, p. 151

Sameer Kulavoor, *The Ghoda Cycle Project, DABAWALLA CYCLE (loaded tiffin delivery cycles of Mumbai)*, limited edition of 250 screen printed posters, Mumbai, Bombay Duck Designs, 2012

Postcards by Supersudaca, *These Are Free Postcards (Pero Nada es Gratis)*, n.d.

Recipes for Cook Up Rice, Yoghurt and Pepper Pot in curator's recipe collection

Brochure for *Mouthfeel, Big Rock Candy Mountain*, curated by Reed & Jickling, November 1 – December 15, 2018

Contents of Vitrine

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Sally Wolchyn-Raab, "L'Chaim: Crippling the Jewish Taste for Life,"
Permission Cookbook, 2023, pp. 42-43

Karen Tam, *Orientially Yours*, 2007 & *Shangri-la Café: A Division of Gold Mountain Restaurant*, 2006, in Karen Tam, curated by Mary Jane Jacobs, New York, Cue Art Foundation, January 31 – March 8, 2021

Postcard for Henry Tsang, *Riot Food Here*, Vancouver, 2018

Postcard for Tonia Di Risio, *Parts and Labour*, The Red Head Gallery, Toronto, April 29 – May 23, 2015

Biaankwad (Mark Douglas), KAM STORY, *cmagazine* 110, Summer 2011, pp. 28-29

Collection Close-up

Gu Xiong

Cafeteria #3, 1992

silkscreen on paper

Richmond Art Gallery Permanent Collection

Artist Gu Xiong was a University Professor in China before immigrating to Canada following the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989. Gu's immigrant story reflects the challenges many new Canadians face. Shortly after arriving in his new home country, one that offered the promise of artistic and personal freedom, Gu struggled to maintain his professional and economic standing. This included a downgrade in his living conditions—he and his family lived in a poorly lit basement apartment with two small windows facing a wall. In his late 30s and unable to find work as a professor, Gu embarked on rebuilding his career to ensure he could continue providing for his family. Gu worked as a busboy at the University of British Columbia student cafeteria for two years. He recalls, “My daily job was to collect tableware, wipe the tables, wash dishes, wash knives and forks, tableware, and kitchen utensils.”

Cafeteria #3 presents us with a heap of unremarkable, utilitarian utensils, uniform in size and appearance, drawing us into the humble humdrum of repetitive labour. The transition from an esteemed university professor in China to a modest busboy in Canada marked a profound juncture in Gu's life, precipitating a phase of self-examination and introspection. As Gu states philosophically, “While cleaning tableware, I was also cleaning my inner self, standing up from the bottom of society and revealing my true self. Mass-produced products represent lifeless replication, and yet individuals are reborn in the crushing process of replication.”

Today, Gu Xiong is a visual arts professor at UBC and an artist whose works have been exhibited nationally and internationally. His work was presented at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2017, the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale Parallel Exhibition, and the Hubei Museum of Art in 2015.

– Maria Filipina Palad, Curatorial Assistant

The presentation of this print in the Gallery's Art Lounge is part of a new initiative Collection Close-up wherein we highlight a work from the Collection, which has a formal or thematic link to the featured exhibition(s). For this third edition of Collection Close-up, Cafeteria #3 is on display in conversation with our fall exhibition FOODWAYS.