

For Immediate Release

Richmond Art Gallery exhibition *NOURISH* examines isolation, fear of food shortages, poverty, and the importance of mental health

Show features artist duo Mizzonk and the Canadian debut of American poet Jane Wong

JAN. 4, 2021 (VANCOUVER, B.C.) — The **Richmond Art Gallery (RAG)** presents *NOURISH*, a new exhibition on display from **Jan. 22 to April 3, 2022**, by curator **Nan Capogna**. Featuring American poet and writer **Jane Wong** and Vancouver-based artist duo **Mizzonk** (Wan-Yi Lin and Roger Chen), the exhibition offers insights into ideas around nourishment and care.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated many of the issues raised in *NOURISH*: isolation, fear of food supply shortages, poverty, and the importance of mental health,” says Capogna. “It has also prompted many to recognize the quiet pleasures that can be found in making, from DIY projects to sharing a meal together. The ways we nourish ourselves and each other speaks volumes about our personal and collective identities.”

For her Canadian premiere, Wong will present *After Preparing the Altar, The Ghosts Feast Feverishly*, an installation that features an oversized, round dining table that holds bowls containing fragments of a poem written by the artist. Viewers must walk around the table in order to read the full poem. Food imagery pays homage to Wong’s experiences growing up in her family’s Chinese American restaurant in the 1980s and ‘90s. It also recalls her family’s history of hunger during the Great Leap Forward, a campaign to implement agricultural and industrial reforms that claimed an estimated 36 million lives through the resulting Great Famine. Wong’s artworks address this historical juxtaposition of hunger and gluttony, as well as familial labour, and silenced histories. First shown at Seattle’s Frye Art Museum in 2019 — her first solo art show — the installation has been adapted for the RAG exhibition and features updated elements, including a new “chandelier” comprised of soup spoons. The work will be accompanied by *The Long Labors*, a video of the artist reciting the poem while making dumplings.

Seattle-based Wong is the author of *How to Not Be Afraid of Everything* (2021) and *Overpour* (2016). She holds an MFA in Poetry from the University of Iowa, a Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington, and is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Western Washington University.

For the exhibition, Mizzonk will present a new work titled *Six Acres*, named after the six-acre expanse in Metro Vancouver the artist duo calls home. A projected animation produced from watercolour drawings on paper, the work was developed from Mizzonk’s observations of living and working in the serene, outdoor escape. The pair moved to the rural stretch of land after experiencing 9/11 from the rooftop of their Brooklyn studio; they decided to move outside of urban centres in search of a natural environment. Their lives today centre around the natural rhythms found in the tranquility of their new surroundings, such as the sounds of a running creek and ripples across a pond.

Mizzonk is the collective name of Taiwanese Canadians Wan-Yi Lin and Roger Chen, both graduates of the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Recent projects include a work at the Oak Bay Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition; a temporary public art installation at Spaceworks Tacoma, Washington; and a piece at the Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition in La Conner, Washington.

NOURISH will feature robust ancillary programming, presented in partnership with #RichmondHasHeart, a city-run initiative that builds community connectedness by introducing the public to uniquely Richmond events.

Programming will include a virtual cookbook made from community submissions, recipes from local chefs, and artist talks in English and Mandarin. Select highlights include:

Artist Talk with Mizzonk

Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022 | 2–3pm

Moderated by Nan Capogna

Saturday, Feb. 5, 2022 | 2–3pm

Moderated and delivered in Mandarin

Mizzonk (an artist duo comprised of Wan-Yi Lin and Roger Chen) discuss living and working on Six Acres for the last 20 years, including what brought them there and how the natural environment has sustained them.

Nourishing Stories: Storytelling Workshop with Jane Wong

Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022 | 1–2:30pm

In person workshop

Jane Wong leads a workshop for participants to share their own stories about food, food writing, and delicious poetry. Class will include generative prompts. Limited capacity, registration required.

BC Family Day at the Richmond Art Gallery

Monday, Feb. 21, 2022 | 11am – 3pm

Hands-on art activities and tours for all ages

As part of the Richmond Children's Arts Festival, the gallery will be welcoming families for registered drop-in activities throughout the day. Local artist Jeni Chen will lead art activities to create watercolour artworks for a small hand-made book inspired by the gallery exhibition. More information at childrensartsfestival.ca.

Restaurant Babies with Jane Wong

Saturday, March 12, 2022 | 1–2:30pm

Online Panel Discussion

Jane Wong leads a discussion with other “restaurant babies,” those who grew up in their family's restaurant or store and how these places gave, and are still giving, bright futures to generations of immigrant families. Session will be hosted online with a Q+A for audiences to join in the conversation. Registration required.

All events will be held in strict compliance with the province's latest health orders. For more details about the gallery's COVID-19 safety precautions, programming information, and registration, visit richmondartgallery.org. For more details about #RichmondHasHeart, visit richmond.ca/richmondhasheart.

About Richmond Art Gallery

The only public gallery in Richmond, the Richmond Art Gallery (RAG) is a municipal gallery supported by the non-profit Richmond Art Gallery Association (RAGA), a charitable organization. In operation since 1980, the gallery presents curated exhibitions by British Columbian, national and international artists, maintains a permanent collection, and presents innovative and diverse programming for children, youth, and adults. Since 1992, the gallery has been located in the Richmond Cultural Centre, and has evolved into a well-regarded professional contemporary art gallery that was awarded a Richmond Arts Award for leadership in 2010. RAGA supports the gallery through membership, fundraising, and advocacy.

Press kit and photos

bit.ly/RAGnourish

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