

Prolific 83 year-old Richmond artist to have first solo exhibition at Richmond Art Gallery

## Pierre Vassura

### *New Work 1983 - 2018*

December 1, 2018 - January 20, 2019

Curated by Jonathan Middleton & Eli Bornowsky

Curatorial Tour:

Friday, November 30, 6:30 pm

Opening Reception:

Friday, November 30, 7 - 9pm

Richmond Art Gallery (RAG) is proud to present the first solo exhibition by Richmond artist Pierre Vassura. Over forty years in the making, the exhibition will showcase a range of sculptures, paintings and drawings, highlighting a strong graphic style and vibrant use of colour.

Many of Vassura's paintings are in series, like classic grand narratives, and the sculptures shown will include puppets and purpose-built stages. These artworks are a joyous celebration of storytelling and visual culture that cross national, cultural and language boundaries, drawing from diverse sources. Vassura evokes classic literature including the *Decameron*, *Dante's Divine Comedy* and *Aesop's Fables*, as well as referencing the Tarot and stories from The Bible.

The exhibition's co-curators are also artists, and both Jonathan Middleton and Eli Bornowsky are excited by Vassura's visual style, especially his "polychromatic, mandala-like, dizzying use of colour."

Middleton elaborates: "The title *New Work* is usually applied to an exhibition of a recent body of work within the span of an artist's career. Vassura's work is, however, new in that this is its first public exhibition in that time. The title also points to the inventiveness of Vassura's practice—combining important influences and ideas in a way that feel rather singular, and indeed, new."

"It is rare to encounter an artist working at this level that has not exhibited before" said RAG director Shaun Dacey, adding that there is a vast cache of finished work to draw from. "Since arriving in Canada in 1983, Vassura shared his work just once, at the Italian Cultural Center." However, Dacey notes that the artist has "continued to work tirelessly, entirely filling his Richmond home with paintings, sculptures and drawings". RAG is honoured to host this important exhibition and believes Vassura's work will have broad appeal.



## BIOGRAPHY

**Pierre Vassura** was born Romagna, Italy in 1935. The son of an architect and teacher, he enrolled in agricultural studies following the death of his father at age thirteen. Farming was not his passion however, and at age twenty Vassura moved to France in search of artistic experiences. He first secured work as a ceramic designer at the Faïencerie de St. Clement, and later a ceramic studio in Cote d'Azur, Vallauris-Juan les Pins. Vassura became a technical and production expert in several ceramic factories in Switzerland, France, Italy and Israel and he participated in Israel's vibrant emerging ceramics industry with Palceramic in Haifa. With the Beit-Hagefen Art Gallery, Vassura first exhibited his paintings in Tel-Aviv and Haifa from 1963 to 1965. In this fruitful period, Vassura also met his future wife, Fotiny with whom he would have two children. In the early 1980's Vassura and his family moved to Richmond, BC. In 2002, Vassura exhibited a mature body of work at Vancouver's Italian Cultural Centre, *Pierre Vassura: New Work 1983 - 2018* is his first major solo exhibition.

## THE CURATORS

Born in Alberta, **Eli Bornowsky** received his BFA in Visual Arts from the Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver (2005) and completed his MFA at Bard College, New York (2014). His paintings have been exhibited widely, including Richmond Art Gallery, the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery, Western Front, Burnaby Art Gallery, Ottawa Art Gallery, G Gallery, Diaz Contemporary, and the National Gallery of Canada. Bornowsky has curated exhibitions at the Or Gallery including a series of experimental sound performances and his writing has been published in several art catalogues and in *C Magazine*, *Pyramid Power*, *Fillip Review*, *Setup*, and *the Bartleby Review*. He currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.

**Jonathan Middleton** is an artist, curator, and publisher based in Vancouver. Middleton served as Director/ Curator of the Or Gallery (2007-2017) and the Western Front Exhibitions Program (1999-2005). He was the founding publisher of the art periodical *Fillip* (2004-2008) and currently works as co-director of Information Office, a design and publishing studio focused on the contemporary visual arts. Middleton is a member of the Duplex Artists' Society and has presented his own work at the Contemporary Art Gallery (Vancouver), Vancouver International Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival, VIVO Media Arts, and Tracey Lawrence Gallery, among others.

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For high resolution images and interviews please contact

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## FREE EVENTS

Tour by Eli Bornowsky & Jonathan Middleton  
Friday, November 30, 2018, 6:30 pm

Reception  
Friday, November 30, 2018, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Family Sunday  
Sunday, December 2, 1:00 - 4:00 pm  
Hands-on art activities and tours for families.

Drink and Draw  
Friday, January 18, 7:00 - 9:00 pm  
Social evening of art-making with drinks for adults.

**RAG** RICHMOND ART GALLERY

[richmondartgallery.org](http://richmondartgallery.org)

*The only public gallery in Richmond, the Richmond Art Gallery (RAG) is a municipal gallery supported by the non-profit Richmond Art Gallery Association. In operation since 1980, the Gallery presents exhibitions by regional, national and international artists, maintains a permanent collection of over 400 works, and presents innovative and diverse programming for children, youth, and adults. Richmond Art Gallery is dedicated to promoting dialogue among Richmond's diverse communities through the presentation of contemporary visual art.*

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### LOCATION

Richmond Cultural Centre  
7700 Minoru Gate  
Richmond, BC V6Y 1R9

### VISIT US

Monday - Friday: 10 am - 6 pm  
Saturday - Sunday: 10 am - 5 pm  
Free Admission

### CONTACT

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604-247-8300  
[richmondartgallery.org](http://richmondartgallery.org)



We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia

Image: Pierre Vassura, *Acheron Red River of Sorrow*, 2000, enamel on wood panel.