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MULTIMIX

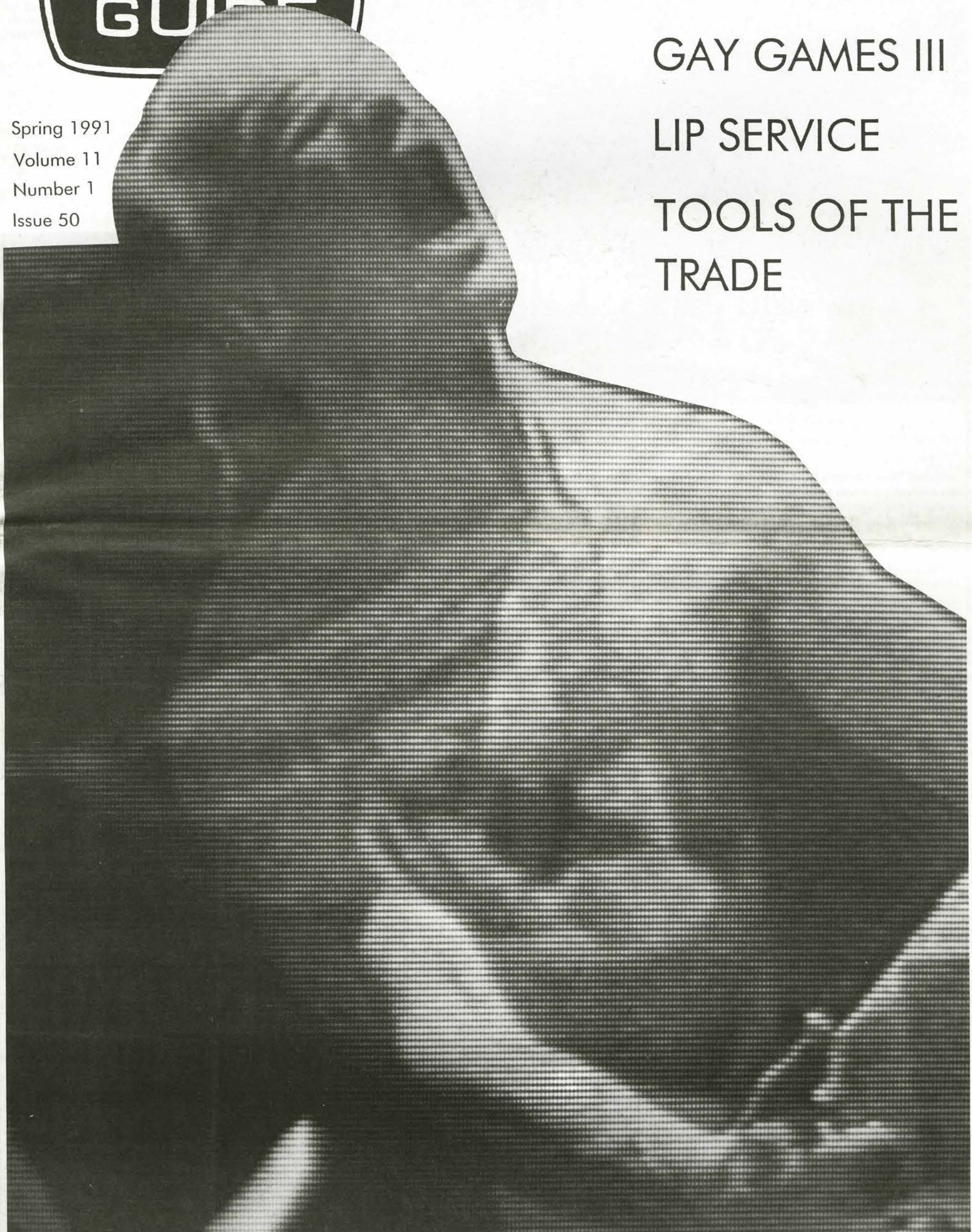
YELLOW PERIL

ANTI-RACISM

GAY GAMES III

LIP SERVICE

TOOLS OF THE
TRADE



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Video Guide,

I am writing in response to your last publication and in response to a panel discussion I attended at the Vancouver Art Gallery on January 28th about video art and the social narrative.

In both the paper and the discussion I felt frustrated at times with what seemed to me an excessive amount of theoretical and sometimes simply pretentious language. It is my hope that video makers value the possibility of communicating in a way that is accessible. Name dropping and theory that repeatedly refers to itself may impress those who are "in", but it is not understandable to most people.

I do not negate the value of theory nor self-reflexivity, but rather suggest that their value is precisely in their ability to enhance understanding.

I refer to an article from your paper to illustrate that simple language can express complicated and provocative

ideas. Barbara Hammer's *The Invisible Screen*, references feminist theory with clarity and simplicity. Theory is central to her discussion, and helps her to communicate an aspect of her experience.

On the other hand, John Morgan reviews the *Plains Film and Video Conference* using some (I think) unnecessary "10 dollar" words and phrases that are confusing for the reader. What does he mean with "controversy [that] continues although more abjectly as derision"? And what purpose do words such as "inimitable" and "eruditely" serve in his article other than to impress/intimidate the reader with his vocabulary? Morgan ends his article suggesting that work that is not about language and self-reflexivity is somehow necessarily anti-intellectual. Why? And is video art dedicated to proving that the artist is an intellectual or does it also have something to do with expression?

Sincerely,

Dawn Aarons

To the editor:

I have to admit to being somewhat at a loss since I have not read the entire article, but the bit that was shared with me I found quite disturbing. You see I was commissioned by "Alive From Off Centre" to create *Words on Fire*, not John Sanborn. I hired John Sanborn to direct some segments along with Skip Blumberg. Mr. Sanborn, having somewhat of a forceful personality, created quite a scene over his credits on the piece and has since then attempted to take shall we say, more of the credit than is due him. I am not generally concerned with this in regard to my own work, but enough is enough.

Sincerely,

Wendall K. Harrington

EDIT

VIDEO GUIDE

Vancouver's Video Magazine
Volume 11 Number 1 Issue 50

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This issue represents twelve years and fifty issues published. We are proud to be still active and relevant. Plans are underway to create some major editorial and structural changes to the magazine in the coming year.

Beginning with this issue, we are pleased to introduce new columns. These three columns will appear as regular features in the next four issues. Howard Bearham will write **TOOLS OF THE TRADE**. It will hopefully help to explain in plain language some of the in's and out's of current electronic developments. Elspeth Sage is a media arts critic and the associate curator of the national touring exhibition *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered*. Her column **LIP SERVICE** will isolate and identify important issues pertinent to new cultural thinking. Glenn Alteen is the director of the *grunt gallery* and a curator of contemporary art. **MULTIMIX** will reflect his ongoing concern with the current state of performance art.

Shawn Preus, the former managing editor is starting to index and cross-reference the first fifty issues of Video Guide. The complete index will be published as a supplement over the next four issues. Included with the index will be overviews, the reprint of historically important articles and photo essays.

The feature section in this issue specifically contains articles by and about Asian Canadians. The intention is to further identify an Asian Canadian sensibility that is emerging as a cultural voice in this country. Locating oneself within the 'multiculturalism' void is perhaps the most critical issue of the 90s. Elspeth Sage, in her column **LIPSERVICE**, looks into different strategies that federal, provincial and municipal funding agencies are developing to grapple with minority programs.

Multiculturalism, meltdown politics, indigenous culture will continue to be highlighted in future issues. We are hoping to include papers that were given at the recent *Twenty Years of Multiculturalism: Successes and Failures* conference held at the University of Manitoba.

The next issue will contain reviews of local (Vancouver) productions and exhibitions which have been plentiful. I would like to extend our thanks to Diane Leblanc who has overseen the production and layout of this issue.

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for the Satellite Video Exchange Society

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ANTI-RACISM ADVERTISING

by Effie Pow

"Hey, did you hear the one about the Oriental, the Jewish guy and the Pole? If you did, did you speak out against it? Racist jokes are no laughing matter and they reinforce prejudice and negative stereotypes. So, if it offends you to hear someone laugh at other people because of race or religion, say so. If you don't, your silence will speak for you."

—The Joke

An authoritative male voice intones, "RACISM—IF YOU WON'T STOP IT, WHO WILL?"

Since May 1990, anti-racism ads have aired on television and radio stations in British Columbia. Each one ends with the simple, pointed question — "If you won't stop it, who will?" The British Columbia Association of Broadcasters (BCAB) has chosen to sponsor such ads in response to growing changes in B.C.'s population.

Racism is a complex issue challenging all aspects of society. The issue is influencing the federal government's policies on multiculturalism. As a result, government-funded arts centres and their programming are affected. Mass media is quickly realizing it's good business to exhibit public awareness on racism. However, when a campaign such as the B.C. Broadcasters' is launched, one is instinctively sceptical. One questions the motives and the content.

Bill Coombes, president and general manager of the Fraser Valley Radio Group, (also chair of the Radio Board of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters) was one of the key players of the 'Racial Harmony' project from the beginning. "I was the arm-twister, the negotiator and bulldozer. Essentially, I brought these people together and helped them work together," Coombes said. "Why should we open this can of worms?" was the standard response. And my standard answer was 'Because it's good business. It's good business to be pro-active.' It's important for the public to see that we are ad-responsive. It's not so much a social thing; I look at it as a business matter to get response."

For the past ten years, the BCAB has identified a single cause or organization to promote for a year. The cause is awarded the 'Humanity Award' and launched officially at the association's annual convention in May. Until June, the radio and television stations in British Columbia run Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on the chosen cause on a volunteer basis. Traditionally, the BCAB receives applications from various groups for the Humanity Award. This year, however, there was not a single organization that encompassed the issue that Coombes had in mind. "One of the major challenges we thought people in B.C. and in Canada were facing was societal change. So we thought it would be interesting to look for an organization that addressed these changes," Coombes explained.

Specializing in race relations, Dr. Charles Ungerleider, a professor of Social and Education Studies at UBC who was also involved in the project, expressed another view. "The project was rather unique. It was a private sector initiative in racial relations. In previous years, the BCAB has given the Humanity Award to relatively safe causes such as anti-drunk driving, Seniors, Special Olympics." Some organizations that BCAB approached were too specific in their interests. Consequently, Coombes initiated a committee with representatives of social agencies, professionals, and various ethnic groups, to develop the campaign in June 1989. The committee met half a dozen times over nine months to define the specific goals. They came up with the 'Racial Harmony Campaign'. A creative team then joined the group, and story boards consolidated the ideas into a concrete marketing strategy. Coombes stressed the likely costs of the ad campaign. "The advertising company gave us their service free of charge for what normally would cost tens of thousands of dollars."

A member of the B.C. Organization to Fight Racism, Betty Lough was invited to be a member of the developing committee. She discussed the delicate elements of the ad campaign and how it was at times problematic. "It was important to recognize what we wanted to say, how the medium would transmit the message and how the public would view and see themselves. The language was critical and we wrestled with the language — changing a word here and omitting a phrase there. It was important how things were said."



'Multiculturalism', 'cultural mosaic', 'ethnic minority', 'people of colour' — are terms being questioned. Language is crucial to the subject: what is being said and who is saying it. Despite the base of input from ethnic groups, one considers who has the final control and sees that the voices of people of colour are still being filtered through the perspective of white males in positions of power. Lough concedes that this is a reality that is part of any progress and change. She said the broadcast industry has a poor track record with people of colour. "You can count on one badly mutilated hand, how many visible minorities are employed in the industry. The fact that Bill Coombes is a white male and came to us (BCOFR) is significant." Lough said such a public campaign has economic and social implications. "It is good PR (for Coombes and the broadcast industry). The faster the captains of the media and the corporates of the business world wake up to the fact, the better off we'll be."

Ungerleider offered a similar opinion. "The fact that this issue is being confronted directly in the medium of mass media is the important thing. The fact that it was going to look good for these guys when they go to get licence renewal. They're animated by the bottom line and this is the kind of thing that's going to help them."

Lough also subtly pointed to the politics of BCAB's annual promotional campaigns. "Very few people of colour were aware of the 'Humanity Award'. I've been involved with community organizations since 1984 and I've never heard of the award. That could say something about how some things are made known to some people and not to others." Yet Lough believes the PSAs are effective and positive. "This is something unique. Other broadcasters and government PSAs talk about what a wonderful country we have. Sometimes the focus was varied, but we all agreed that we didn't want any back-patting. Because if we're all nice people, what changes do we have to make?" said Lough.

When the direction was established, it was time to raise money. The major broadcasters funded the project with \$50,000 and \$75,000 came from the provincial government of British Columbia. "The money from the province came with no strings attached. They didn't try to run the project or ask for any credit. We made six 30-second TV spots and nine 30-second radio spots," Coombes said. The final results involved two production companies, Circle Productions and Griffiths Gibson and Ramsay Productions. Coombes estimates that the amount of air time the ads receive during the twelve months would cost approximately 1.4 million dollars.

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (the national arm of radio and television) has picked up the anti-racism campaign and will air the ads nationally in January 1991. "The response has been extremely positive. We have gotten contacts from across the country and the United States," said Coombes. According to Coombes, BCAB is targeting a mainstream audience. "When you are using mass media, you try to reach everyone. The idea is to get people to realize that it's off-the-cuff comments that may seem insignificant that contribute to the large problem. We want people to stop and think about it for a moment."

Coombes anticipates more programs will develop from the PSAs and gives examples of things that have been done up to date. "In some schools they are trying to use the heightened sensitivity to encourage discussion among the kids. And I've done my own ten 1-hour radio shows with experts on every aspect of societal change. Maybe this is a catalyst. If it sensitizes our industry and the public, then I'll feel it has accomplished its purpose," Coombes commented.

From the originating committee, a sub-group was struck to deal directly with the advertising aspect. The two men who headed the creative force were vice-president of McKim Advertising, Alvin Wasserman, and Dr. Ungerleider.

Wasserman explained that his approach to the campaign involved the input of a broad base of people. "I tried to distil from these people what would work. I wanted something that would reflect the experiences of the people involved." Ungerleider agreed that it was an "inter-active process". Before the final production evolved, two approaches were theoretically evaluated. For example, a campaign could be based on shock value. This meant deliberately presenting a situation to unnerve the audience. The other was based on empathy, an effective way to facilitate understanding, according to Wasserman. The latter approach was chosen by the committee.

Wasserman co-wrote the scenarios with Cathy Moss, another McKim Advertising writer, and realized how difficult it was. "Every word has connotations and language has a tremendous amount of baggage. It's such a loaded issue. We want to raise consciousness but we don't want a backlash. It's a touchy subject, and from the advertising side, I could never forget that," Wasserman said.

The scenarios that Moss and Wasserman generated were taken back to the committee and their respective organizations for input. Betty Lough presented the scenarios to the BCOFR for criticism. Many of the situations portrayed were experienced by the committee members and actors according to Wasserman. "Some of them are conglomerates of situations. We couldn't find the perfect representations, but some of the experiences were quite close. The Native woman said she had felt alienated from her own friends but had never told anyone until she did the scene. The Black woman in one of the ads had a lot of repressed anger but we couldn't use all of the tape. It's hard to be empathetic when people are angry," Wasserman said.

The language was deliberately straightforward. As predicted, however, some individuals identified with the 'others' making the racist comments. Ungerleider said some people could not remember the original tag line: "Racism — the most significant threat to the environment that British Columbians face."

Ungerleider also echoed the importance of portrayal. "We did not want the people who were portrayed to be perceived as victims. Visible minorities often appear in PSAs as recipients of beneficent treatment by white-skinned people. We wanted people to invest mental effort. That when you see the ad you're going to talk about it with somebody else: 'Oh, I've said that and I'm not a racist...or am I?'"

DIVERSITY?

by Anne Jew



(L.to R.) David Lam, producer, Blu Mankuma, host Jari Brodie, Feature Reporter from *Diversity*

The history of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) is exclusively focused on white issues from a white perspective. With the implementation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) and the Employment Equity Quota (officially endorsed 1987-88) the CBC did at least try to increase the hiring of visible minorities. But with the budget reduction of \$108 million dollars, the closing of eleven regional stations and the layoff of 1,100 people in December 1990, these positions will probably have been reduced drastically and quota hiring will freeze. Before the cutbacks, minority placement was the greatest in clerical, technological and accounting areas. We were least represented in middle management and only one out of seven positions in upper management was filled by a minority.

On camera, non-whites made appearances as token reporters on the evening news. The anthology *Inside Stories* featured dramas written by non-whites relaying "ethnic" experiences and of course *Beachcombers* portrayed some Native lifestyles. The only ongoing CBC drama that includes minorities on a fair and equal level with white characters is *Degrassi High*, a series about teenagers at a racially mixed high school.

With *Diversity*, a news magazine formatted program that aired five episodes last October and November on Saturday evenings, CBC attempted to fill the gap in news coverage of and by non-whites. Producer David Lam explained that the mandate of *Diversity* was to move away from the maintained misconception that Canada is an exclusively white Christian French/English society and to "reflect the experiences of Canadians who are not normally seen on TV". It was also a chance for non-whites to work behind and in front of the camera, a seemingly rare opportunity.

The program was hosted by Blu Mankuma, a black actor most noted for his appearances on Malacca Rattan commercials for their rattan furnishings. On-air reporters included Jari Brodie, a Chinese Canadian and Gobinder Gill, an East Indian Canadian among three other visible minorities. The majority of the crew behind the scenes were also non-whites.

Funding for the show came partly from the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and from the Help Fund, an agency set up by the CBC to provide "training for people not skilled in the CBC method of doing things". *Diversity* received between one hundred thousand and two hundred thousand dollars from this fund.

The news media generally fixates on either racially problematic news, such as violent youth gangs or the "invasion" of Hong Kong investment, or on celebrations of an "exotic" culture, such as acrobats from China or the Powell Street Festival of Japanese arts. Problematic news rarely includes non-white viewpoints and are sensationalized for higher ratings. They also depict minorities "as people who either have problems or cause problems for society".²

The latter can be termed as "'colourful' soft news"³ and are ones which viewers will quickly discern as peripheral to their society and therefore removed from their immediate concerns. The element of spectatorship in which the news topic is "performed" for the audience creates a distance between the audience and the "performers". This stereotypical relegation of minorities as problem people or exotic performers emphasizes difference as well as reinforcing distance.

For the most part, *Diversity* dealt with "soft news". Such features included a Chinese opera performed in English; a Kendo demonstration; Bangla, an East Indian dance; and

Feng Shui, the Chinese philosophy of harmonic composition.

The majority of people portrayed appear to be middle or upper class. Profiles of Arthur Hara, president of Mitsubishi Canada, and Stephen Sander, real estate agent, show minorities who have "made it" in Canada. The segment on Sander showed a clip from *Salaam Bombay*, a film about the impoverished street children of Bombay, to describe his humble beginnings. Success stories of this sort "ostensibly appear to be favourable to minorities... (but) accomplish the objectives of stereotypical reporting: (1) The majority audience is reassured that minorities are still 'in their place'.... and (2) those who escape their designated place are not a threat to society because they manifest the same values and ambitions of the majority".⁴

The segment on the Pablas, an East Indian family of twenty-one who occupy one spacious house, investigated their harmonious home life and prosperous business without mention of the racially motivated attacks on "monster houses" in Vancouver.

Interspersed are short pieces in which an ethnic person prepares a cold cure specific to their culture, e.g. Polish, Italian, etc. While these are entertaining and even useful they reinforce those stereotypes akin to secret Italian pasta sauce recipes or Chinese laundry techniques in advertising, where the audience is "let in on" an exotic mystery in the form of a product. Purchasing these products, patronizing ethnic restaurants or even making a cold cure enables acquisition of "culture" without further investigation into that culture.

Diversity also presented excellent and thought provoking pieces that represented a more accurate view of minorities as intelligent, creative people with insightful criticisms of our society. In the first episode, an artist originally from the Caribbean, described how difficult it was to be vocal about child abuse in her culture and how she discovered her paintings could be a forum in which to release her anger and pain. Also in this episode was a Native family's reaction to the contention at Oka, Quebec; one of the rare supportive views of Native actions to be covered by the media.

In following episodes, writer Neil Bissoondath criticized multiculturalism, and Japanese American Jude Narita, who brought her one-woman show *Songs of a Sansei/Coming into Passion* to Vancouver in October 1990, dispelled racist and sexist stereotypes of Asian women.

One of the problems with the uneven quality of *Diversity* is the staff's lack of experience. Jari Brodie's subjective report on Chinese Canadian war veterans focused on herself and her father. As they strolled arm in arm through Vancouver's crowded Chinatown the camera zoomed in on Ms. Brodie's troubled face while her father recounted his experiences with racism. The lack of recognition for Chinese Canadian veterans is an important topic and another reminder of how Chinese Canadians were suppressed in Canada's history and how we continue to be. Yet what attempted to be a qualification of Chinese Canadian war heroism became reduced to a sentimental, embarrassingly personal, albeit painful piece of nostalgia.

Co-producer Ken Coach recognized the difficulties that minorities have breaking into television and hired people with limited experience, but who "had potential" and "a fresh eye" and who then underwent training provided with money from the Help Fund.

The lack of "broadcastable" minority writing was addressed when the CBC organized screenwriting workshops run by whites with the intention of producing half hour

dramas for *Inside Stories*. Visible minorities were encouraged to write scenarios conveying positive images of ethnic people with disregard to the fact that solely positive representation is just as categorical as completely negative representation. The CBC also solicited screenplays nationwide which sent white producers racing to jump on the multicultural bandwagon.

There are many reasons for the invisibility of visible minorities in the media, ranging from our own cultural pressures to attain more stable and better paying jobs to the emphasis on viewpoints catering to white audiences in education and in practice. For changes to occur in Canadian television broadcasting, a much greater percentage of minorities have to attain levels of power in a white dominated arena, or as some have done already, create our own forums to express ourselves and reach out to our own communities. But as *Diversity* proved, plugging in minority staff alone cannot solve the problem. Stereotypes that are so deeply ingrained in our society and continue to go largely unchallenged, even by minority groups, must be constantly countered. The consumer/advertiser relationship must also change from its mainly white focus.

Diversity depicted a harmonic, multiracial Canada; one in which immigrant cultures are successful and thriving, yet are still singled out for their cultural differences. It reflected only a part of what is happening in Canada today and therefore painted a false picture of stability and growth. The fact that John Porter's "vertical mosaic" is still intact was barely evident. Even though it was primarily created and produced by a minority staff, it still expressed a white consciousness directed at white viewers.

With all its faults, *Diversity* did manage to bring to its audience a view of ethnic groups rarely seen on primetime. It was to be picked up for January 1991, but due to the budget cuts it was cancelled in December 1990, along with seven other regionally produced programs, including *Down To Earth*, a show on environmentalism. It was not surprising that both shows were terminated since they dealt with issues usually found at the bottom of any agenda.

All the outrage over the cuts and the Conservative government's continued slashing of Canadian communication networks, adding CBC to a list that includes Via Rail and Air Canada, elicits the concept of Canadian identity. CBC barely reflected the experiences of Native communities fighting for land claims, of new immigrants, sometimes escaping oppressive regimes, trying to forge new lives in Canada, or of other visible minorities who were born and/or raised here and are still not considered equal to their white counterparts in this country. All of these situations are integral to any dialogue on Canadian identity and unity and they need to be validated and represented in the most powerful medium. The sadness of CBC's financial blow is minimized when recognizing this lack and posing the question, "What did it have to do with me anyway?"

¹ In conversation with Bill Murray of Human Resources, CBC.

² Clint C. Wilson II and Felix Gutierrez. *Minorities and Media*, Sage Publications, 1985.

³ Ibid, p.139.

⁴ Ibid, p.138.

TURNING JAPANESE

by Zheng Miao Xian

I have been accused of being a Japanophile, an Orientalist bent on an imperialist will appropriating another culture alien to mine with which I have had no history. And I say in retaliation, that in the adoption of pagan traditions such as Christmas and Easter I have been co-opted, and have committed a worse crime than one of appropriation, and that is one of gross negation of my own culture.

For me as a child and young adult it was to deny being Chinese and to disengage myself from everything that seemed connected with it. Now as an adult, when asked "Where are you from?", my knee-jerk response is to speak perfect English and emphatically state that I am Canadian born. If the jackass persists in insisting that it be revealed what country I am from, I become creative, make up a story, any story, the more implausible, the better. I am in Canada struggling in the entertainment business because for a night's work I can make far more money than as a maid in a hotel. I do this in order to send money home to the husband and young daughter I left back in Hong Kong years ago. I let it be known that I am available for consultations today. Another story could be that my student visa has expired and that I need to stay in Canada otherwise the only other alternative I have is to return to the Buddhist nunnery back home. Someone makes a comment on my appearance, (I have

spiked hair), "Do your people do that to their hair over in your country?" I retort, "As a matter of fact, they do, but instead of using hair gel, they use the fat from a pig to bring out that extra sheen so highly prized in black hair."

I could not escape the implications/ramifications of the colour of my skin. I tugged and twisted the warp of my identity to include a culture closely akin to mine. Needless to say, I have never been to Japan nor have I been to China (though I have read *Shogun* by James Clavell sixteen times). Throughout the years I have revised, eroticized and romanticized this fascination with all things Japanese. In the beginning, it was innocent, mere child's play; later, much later I consciously, purposely, arbitrarily reconstructed and immortalized this fascination to serve me, to deny whatever was supposed to be Chinese in me. So much so, that at times, even I began to believe that certain parts of Japanese culture I had resurrected were inherently part of my identity.

I have taken many fragments, bits and pieces which seemed relevant, for example; "next-morning" poems were part of the elaborate courting and marriage customs of 10th century Japan. It was a time pervaded by a sense of the transitoriness of things, combined with an awareness of beauty so sharp that it was poignant. By projecting this particular sentiment to the twentieth century and by moving it into the realm of the dalliances of human relationships, I had at one time arbitrarily revived this particular sentiment to replace that much needed, reassuring telephone call after a consummated "first night" with a lover. I kept in mind that this was a careful construction of a custom long laid to rest in the Japan of today. This custom was revised to fit contemporary lines; the postal service replaces the courier on horseback; a felt-tip, non-recyclable pen replaces the grace of the writing brush; the paper is not made from rice but paper made from a combination of pulp and chemicals and the poem is written in English and not Japanese.

What would a typical response of a recipient be after receiving one of these poems? Usually a mixture of curiosity and embarrassment. However, more often than not, they did not call. At this juncture, it should be realized that these lovers were not Asian and that my liaisons with these people were enacted during the late '70s and early '80s. I recognize now that by playing the exotic, the enigma, some sort of Geisha, I have reinforced the stereotype of the Madame Butterfly syndrome. Yet, at the time I felt it was a source of empowerment of my sexuality, to the extent that I claimed control over my actions, an attempt to control to some degree the consequences of my promiscuity. Perhaps it has been worth doing, since I was not/could not be, what I contritely term, The Three B's, (blonde, blue-eyed and buxom). At least, this way I know I am more at ease and comfortable with my identification with a culture more akin to being Asian than to one that is not.

This year, November 25th will be Yukio Mishima's 20th anniversary of his infamous seppuku. I have been holding an annual Mishima event in Ottawa for the last five years to commemorate the anniversary. No, there will not be a symbolic disembowelment on my front lawn, nor will a

para-military troop dressed in resplendent uniforms perform drills. A few Shinto prayers will be recited, a purification ritual performed, candles lit, and of course a flowing stream of sake is to be consumed. I will not call upon people to submit a death poem, perform an interpretive dance, brandish short swords, nor will I request that white apparel be worn. (Who wears white in winter, or white at all for that matter?)

But wasn't Mishima fascist reactionary? Why commemorate a death, particularly the suicide of a man? Aren't we a little morbid in our quest to affirm otherness? Perhaps this is somewhat akin to the antics of the urban consumer who aspires to parade the ribbons of worldly cosmopolitanism by demonstrating his or her taste. I would consider my attention to the death of Mishima to be an outward manifestation of an elusive attempt to be in touch with my spirituality. There is a projected and deliberate linkage in choosing from his writings those images I consider to be important. What is of importance to me has been an acknowledgement of tradition and ritual, coupled with a fascination for blood, death and ecstasy. The language of Mishima's writings moved me to introspection. I acutely felt it necessary at the time to construct my thoughts into something tangible, in order to provide a haven for my musings. What remains as a residue is my annual Mishima Death Bash.



Osome and Hisamatsu (1753-1806)
by Utamaro Kitagawa (1753-1806)



The poetess Ono no Komachi in court dress
Japanese colour print by Harunobu (AD 1724-79)

(continued from page 3)

Mass media can provide a high profile for the issue of racism. According to Ungerleider the PSAs got air time during the World Series and *The Simpsons*. "The visual impact was essential to getting the message across. The ad campaign tried to show a range of people in ethnic background and age and the production values were high. We felt that even though it was a shoestring budget, we wanted it to look real. The camera was set up with interesting angles and it didn't look flat. It was visually interesting and had a documentary feel to it. We're drawn in closer to the main character," Wasserman said.

The actors that make the racist comments were known as the 'others' by the committee. The 'others' purposely create a disjointed feeling when they interrupt the main characters. Ungerleider said the discontinuity was crucial. "Empathy was established for one person and then the 'others' interject and say things like, 'I'm not prejudiced, but...' and 'They come here and take our jobs.' Many people say these things and don't recognize the implications."

On the other hand, the disruption did not always work. "When they were shooting one of the ads, they had two kids, one who had a mohawk that was multi-coloured and another

who was a skinhead. One of them says, 'They look different and I don't like it.' Well, when we screened it everybody laughed. The irony is great but it didn't work in the context of the other ads."

There was a four to five day casting call, some of the people who appear are volunteers and some are professional actors. Victoria Rooney, a Canadian actress of South Asian descent described her experience. "I thought the scripts were really good. But I wanted to change two things. I wanted the Indian woman I played to say that her family had been in Canada for three generations instead of two generations and I wanted to do the ad without an accent." Rooney thought it would be an effective contrast to have a woman wearing a traditional sari, speaking without an accent. In the end, neither of the changes were allowed.

Others involved in the production included Eugene Beck, a director from Toronto, and a cinematographer from Hollywood and Circle Productions who put it together at minimal cost. McKim Advertising also developed the scripts for radio. Wasserman felt "The Joke" conveyed the strongest message. "The Joke, to me that's the front lines, that's where you can stop it."

Ungerleider speaks sensitively about the issue of racism, but does not acknowledge that he speaks as a white representative of the academe. His personal views, however, are equally optimistic if not as simplistic as Wasserman's. "This is what education is about. It's not about advertising. It's about producing a socially just world where people feel intellectually and emotionally supported. So that doing something like that is consistent with my other responsibilities." Ungerleider also secured the financial support and educational commitment of UBC. "The responsibility really falls to a variety of institutions to keep the ball rolling and the university is one of them."

The anti-racism ads are conceived with good intentions and constructed with high production values. But until people of colour have direct control, the representation is still inadequate. The perspective of people of colour is still screened through a white male perspective. Until Coombes, Wasserman, Ungerleider and others realize people of colour need to represent themselves in radio, television and advertising industries, the images they see of themselves are not their own. 



from the video Chinese Cafes in Rural Saskatchewan by Anthony Chan

YELLOW PERIL: RECONSIDERED

by Paul Wong

Yellow Peril Reconsidered is a national touring exhibition of photography, film and video work by twenty-five Asian Canadians. This essay by the curator is one of six essays in the catalogue that accompanies the exhibition. Reprinted with the permission of the author and the publishers.

Yellow Peril: Reconsidered is a diverse selection of experimental and documentary photo, film and video work produced by Asian Canadians. It includes artists and producers of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Filipino origins. This grouping of twenty-five artists' works, collaborations and community projects represents the voice of new immigrants and of those who have been here for many generations.

The exhibition and publication focus on specific works that reflect Asian Canadian sensibilities. I have defined "Asian" by the colour of our skin and the geographic regions it implies. The ways in which we have been depicted, treated and consequently viewed by others in the New World are different from those of other visible minorities: Blacks, Natives and Indo-Canadians.

Asian Canadians have been excluded from contemporary art and from the production of film and television projects. As visible minorities, we have historically faced numerous racist obstacles such as the Head Tax, imposed on Chinese immigration from 1885 to 1923, the Exclusion Act which prevented new immigration from 1923 to 1947, and the internment and deportation of the Japanese during WWII. These and other legislative acts prevented earlier generations from obtaining equal rights in Canada, such as voting, land ownership, education. They also legitimized popular racism against the yellow hordes. This in turn created an inferiority complex that has helped shape behavioral practice within our communities, and the way our community is viewed in the New World by the dominant culture.

Behavioral codes include "try hard not to be noticed" and "be subservient to 'white people'". They are also evident in the ongoing stereotypical portrayal of Asian women in popular media as either being Susie Wongs or Geisha Girls. Further laws denied Asian workers access to skilled labour jobs. Asians were relegated to physically dangerous positions building the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) and to low paying jobs such as fish canning, sewing in sweat shops, operating laundries, farming and domestic labour. To insure that the population did not grow, women and children were not allowed to immigrate. To insure that Asian businesses did not prosper, they were discouraged from hiring white workers.

As late as 1947, Prime Minister MacKenzie King stated:

"The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration... The essential thing is that immigrants be selected with care, and that their numbers be adjusted to the absorptive capacity of the country. There will, I am sure, be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the Orient would change that fundamental composition of the Canadian population."

Although this Order In Council P.C. 2115 was finally repealed in 1956, the sentiment it expressed is still common today.

Despite the hardships, legal, semi-legal and illegal immigration continued. Asians created elaborate methods to take advantage of the widely-held belief that "all Orientals looked the same" to unite families and bring in new immigrants. Asians were silenced by the constant threat of deportation. Forces within and outside the community encouraged them "not to be outspoken and to be law-abiding". Asians had to prove themselves to be as good as whites.

Incredible pressures were placed upon the native-born children to be fully assimilated Canadians and to strive for success in the "prestigious professions" of doctors, lawyers and accountants.

The Asian community is made up of many different, and often oppositional, factions separated by class, politics and religion just like any other community. The indifference that Asian communities in the New World have toward alternative art and to support or recognition of the contributions being made by non-conventional Asian Canadians is no coincidence. Community leaders within minority groups tend to be extremely conservative. They often reflect the racist and oppressive attitudes of the dominant culture back onto their own, once again proving that they are just like the dominant voice. Entry into the community is difficult at best.

In general, few Asians venture into the field of contemporary art practice. Those who do, make fully assimilated "Eurocentric" work or choose to work in traditional forms or commercial art areas. In recent years, more Asians have been visible in the art milieu. This is especially noticeable when visiting art colleges. With this marked increase of participation by Asians we are slowly beginning to see works that address and question issues of race within a dominant white society.

Despite what we are taught to believe in Canada, it is appalling how far behind the United States and the United Kingdom we are in the development of "minority programs". The ongoing and unresolved bilingualism problem in Canada leaves little or no monies, political energy, commitment or media attention for other cultural issues. This inability to recognize "others" directly, and perhaps intentionally, suppresses our voices.

The idea of multiculturalism is in an infant stage of development. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which became law on July 21, 1988, requires that all departments and agencies of the federal government make multiculturalism part of their policies and programs. Multiculturalism is perceived as a "catch phrase", yet another "ism" not to be trusted, a buzz word used as a rallying point by the politician of the month, the deputy ministers and lifers (government employees), who interpret policies to insure that their jobs continue.

Most federal and related agencies are just starting to begrudgingly deal with this problem. It is the intention of *Yellow Peril* to contribute in a positive way to these discussions before policies and programs are defined. The exhibition and publication present critical views by Asian Canadians. To be understood, we must first be seen and be heard.

It is only now that we are beginning to see and to define ourselves. We have all learned about Western Culture and, in the art world, how to appreciate the banalities of the Euro avant-garde. These are the standards upon which we base our opinions.

It is a racist practice to judge marginalized work and new ideas that have never been given the opportunity to evolve. When confronted by work that is different, we don't understand because we do not know how to see. When viewing work that is critical of the dominant culture, we get offended because it is about us. When seeing work that is clearly and intentionally "reverse racism", we get reactionary and defensive. It's called a taste of your own medicine. The unfortunate part is that we usually dismiss work of this nature as being "not art" and being too "issue specific". It is institutionalized racism that allows these types of well-meaning qualifications to spew out of the mouths of so called non-racist white middle class liberals. I have spoken with those types who have rebuked my curatorial intentions by stating that "I was just as white, if not whiter, than they were". I have been called "a banana Asian", yellow on the outside and white on the inside. What makes me even more angry is the denial of our cultural possibilities by other Asians. It is the institutionalized racism

that permeates our everyday lives. It has oppressed people to the point where they automatically censor whole parts of their histories in order to function in society. While researching and developing the exhibition, I spoke with many Asian artists who chose not to be a part of this exhibition because their work didn't reflect an "Asian Canadian sensibility", or they did not want to participate in something that would stigmatize them as being Asian artists.

Although we are grouped together as one single "visible minority", the language and cultural problems within our specific ethnic groups are enormous. There is hostility and misunderstanding between native and non-native borns, the assimilated and the not-so assimilated, those whose native tongue is English or those whose is not.

I have also spoken with white artists who felt excluded from the process, arguing that they were as well informed, if not better, on the issue and had a stronger Asian sensibility than many of the artists in the exhibition. After all, they had spent many years in the Orient and were fluent in several dialects. They fail to see that the process of self-discovery they say they support for Asians, leaves no room for European colonialists.

This assumption is predicated on the hierarchical condition in which non-Asians (Asianphiles) embrace non-Canadian born Asians as the real thing. They embody the exotic, they fit more neatly into colonial expectations. Asianphiles' tendencies include hurling themselves at "things Asian" and gaining enlightenment through appropriating the hip elements of Eastern religions. Asianphiles are the collectors of Asian artifacts. They festoon themselves with curios, the trinkets of an imperial past. The current fascination is to watch the art world competing to embrace the "genuine Chinese" artists, to be the first one on gallery row to show off the "dissident artist" who boldly denounces the evils of communism.

This exhibition features the real views of the Asian New World. The focus is on the use of photography, film and video (the communication and information mediums). The tools of mass media and popular culture are the authoritative and principle voices for government and multinational corporations. Film, video and photography are the popular languages of our time and thus represent the most possibilities for innovations and ruptures. They are the 20th century forms that offer these artists the best potential to "define" themselves. They have not automatically been pigeon-holed into conventional modes of representation. In order to make new or radical statements, one must use new and radical means. These are the very media that have appropriated our culture and our heritage. The artists in *Yellow Peril* have set out to reclaim images that are theirs.

The *Yellow Peril* logo uses a commercially available typestyle known as *chintown*. Other similar typefaces are called *chopstick* and *fantan*. We are reclaiming the stereotype sign language as ours and repositioning it to mean far more than a Chinese Canadian restaurant logo or too much starch on your collar.

With this in mind, we have used the video image from "Nobuo Kubota at The Western Front" on some of our promotional materials. The tape is an improvised vocal sound performance of cross-cultural influences. These influences perhaps best exemplify a New World sensibility: Japanese opera, Korean court music, jazz, scat and concrete poetry. What we see is not what we necessarily hear.

Throughout the exhibition, various themes emerge. Food is at the centre of Daisy Lee's "The Morning Zoo" and Anthony Chan's "Chinese Cafes in Rural Saskatchewan". From the growing and selling in "Morning Zoo", to the cooking and serving in "Chinese Cafes", these works focus on the stories of ordinary people.

The reproduction capabilities of photography, film and video have attracted artists and producers engaged by the



from the tape *Sally's Beauty Spot* by Helen Lee

potential for wider distribution and access to a broader public. Several photo projects are book works. Melanie Boyle has produced "I Have Always Loved the Romance of Travel" in an accessible form. The 24-page book is available for \$1. The book was originally produced in 1988 using photocopier on rice paper. Each book was handsewn together. The work is based upon her first travels to China. The use of the inexpensive form fits her bewildered innocence of culture shock.

"Stories" by Benjamin Chou is a one-off 24-page accordion book. Stretching out 20 ft., it is exhibited laying flat and cannot be handled by the viewer. The accordion book is designed to be displayed or handled preciously. The intimacy of the family album suits the format.

"The Yellow Poem Project" by Nhan Nguyen is a 24-page book of photo-collages using current colour photocopier methods. Although the book is in an edition of 30, he will produce each book only as they are ordered. Each book is sold virtually for the cost of printing. Like Boyle, this is a first photo book work. Both consider themselves painters.

Nguyen is of Filipino/Vietnamese descent. He left Vietnam several months before the fall of Saigon. He learned more about the Vietnam War here than when he was there. His knowledge of those events and of history is informed by the images of mass media. His collages use those images to restructure his history. Many of the collages are about looking — Asians looking at Asians, Asians looking at Westerners. The juxtapositions of similar points of view clarifies the indifference, not the objectivity created by mass media. Being Vietnamese, he is constantly reminded about the war. There is an underlying assumption that he is directly responsible for it and the shaming of America.

America is still trying to cope with that defeat, which is being defined by the endless stream of Hollywood films that continue to portray the Vietnamese as unsavoury gooks and savages. Meanwhile the white or black American is portrayed as a big, camouflaged, sensitive sort of throbbing manhood. Feeling bad is predicated on looking good.

Much of the Vietnamese population in Canada is, in fact, ethnic Chinese. Although born in Vietnam, many were expelled in retaliation for China's aggressive acts on Vietnam's borders. These actions were directly related to the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. Nguyen's presence in the exhibition reminds us that we are not all here in the "land of opportunity" by choice.

Many of the works in this exhibition are about "loss of identity", searching and discovering various methods of making journeys to the unspoken past, decoding unrecorded histories, reclaiming territory, and locating our place now and in the future. The immediate family as a source of information and source of either agony or comfort is a strategy used by many of the participants.

The sense of loss is met head on in a number of works including Ruby Truly's "The Journey", Jay Hirabayashi's performance "Rage" and in the complex offering of Miki Onodera's "The Displaced View". These artists are Canadian-born Japanese. They carry the effects of the generation born after internment, growing up in the unspoken silence created by parents protecting them from the ugly truth. Truly left Hawaii and came to Canada as an act of protest over U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and to further distance her past. Her video, "The Journey", is a haunting work on the fear of returning to confront the (un)known. In "Rage", Hirabayashi concocts an angry fusion of dance,

theatre, music, and history to portray the emotional response to the Japanese having been branded as "enemy aliens".

"The Displaced View" touches upon many issues: wanting to grow up white, being isolated from other Japanese, growing up unable to understand or speak Japanese. The film explores these gaps by framing three generations of Onodera women. It is in English and Japanese, with only the English segments subtitled in Japanese. By not translating the Japanese to English, the non-Japanese speaking viewer shares the isolation felt by the film maker.

Tamio Wakayama is a documentary photographer. "Furusato" is the story of his search for identity as he journeys from rural Ontario in the 60's, to the Civil Rights Movement in the American South, to the plight of Native peoples across Canada, to Japan and finally, to his birthplace, Vancouver.

I have included the work "Silence Into Silence" because it represents work being produced by community organizations to be used within those communities. The tape produced by L'Amite Chinoise de Montreal is a dramatic fiction in Cantonese and English, and consciously not in French. It is a feminist work from a non-conventional viewpoint. It is an unusual co-production with Le Videographe and directed by three non-Asians. "Silence Into Silence" speaks of the difficulties of assuming one's voice.

Jin-me Yoon's installation work "(Im)permanent (Re)collection" addresses the packaging and displaying of culture as nifty artifacts. The work is a mix of her family snapshots, icons of Korean culture, and that of American imperialist points of view. The work questions who represents history.

"Ubiquitous China" by Laiwan is about the problem of language and its assumptions based on race. She asserts that the perpetuation of the English language constitutes the ongoing colonization of our cultures. This colonization is most evident in the case of the Vietnamese language in its written form. In forty years of European/American invasions, the language is now entirely based on the French alphabet. Its previous form, using Chinese characters, is barely known even to scholars.

Writing forms the basis of scripts for films and videotapes, the use of text occurs throughout the exhibition. Jim Wong-Chu is a photographer, writer, poet, broadcaster and activist. He has played a pivotal role in the development of an Asian Canadian identity. I have included five poem scrolls and the photo-triptych "Iron Chink". It depicts a machine of the same name, built in Victoria in 1909 to replace the Chinese worker in the fish canning industry. It was promoted as being able to clean up to fifty fish per day, thereby replacing about six Chinese labourers.

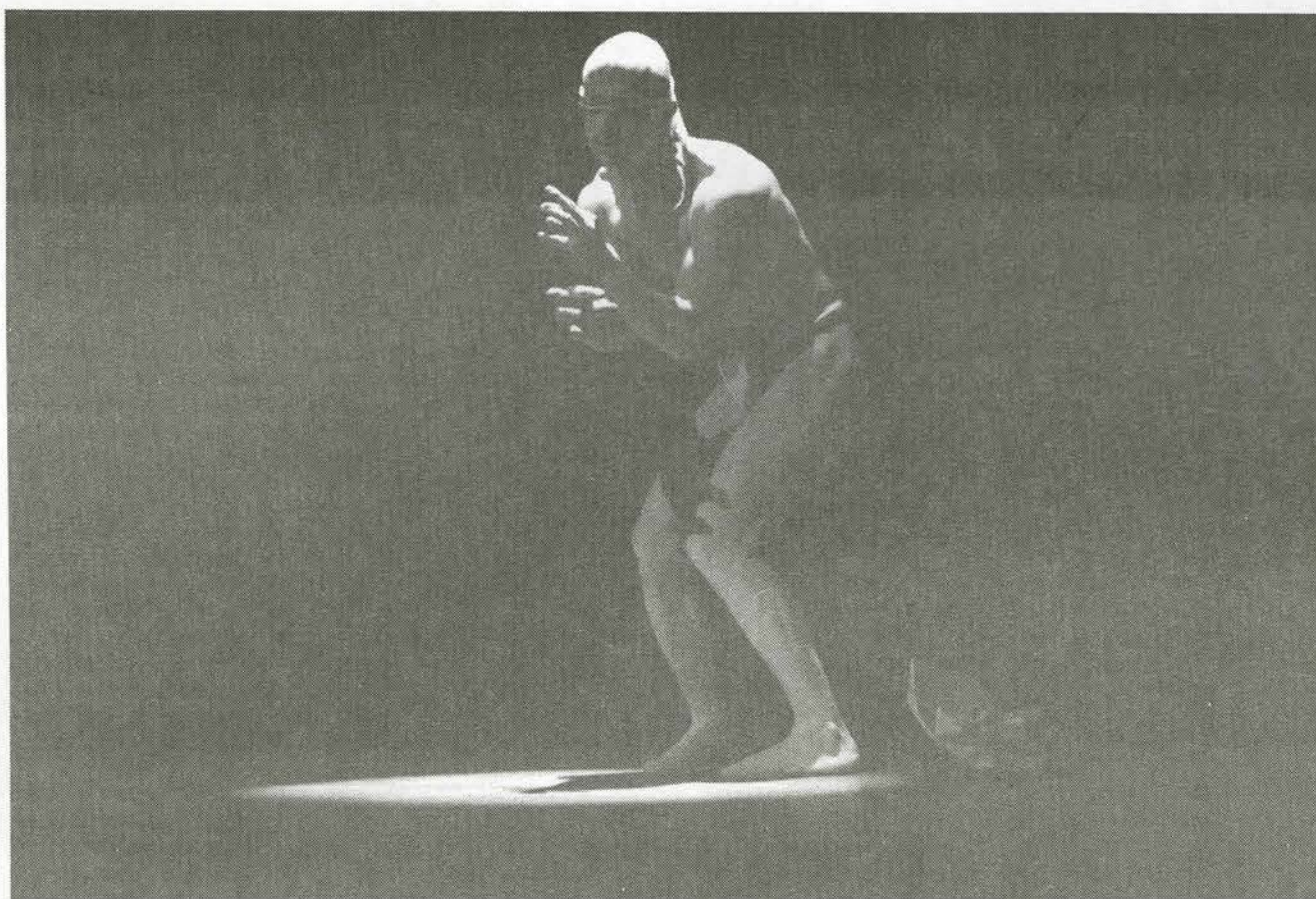
Many of the artists in this exhibition use nom de plumes or have had their names changed legally. They have done so for varying reasons. Jim Wong-Chu is a "paper son", a term describing the practice used to enter Canada or the U.S. using another's papers or that of a deceased relative. At the age of three, Jim Wong-Chu came to Vancouver. He was given to and adopted by an uncle. Wong-Chu is made from the two clan names. Another example is Ruby Truly, who was born Linda Ansai. Truly was a stage character that she developed and Ruby the name of a mountain in B.C.. Chick Rice grew out of Grace Eng, Taki Bluesinger is not a blues singer. Nhan Nguyen's mother is Vietnamese, his father is Filipino. To leave Vietnam it was more advantageous to use the Vietnamese surname.

Most of us are given two names at birth, names in our native tongues used in the home and English names to better fit in on the outside. We do not have to be ashamed of who and what we are. It is not necessary to go from being Pak Mo to Joe Blow.

Many of the *Yellow Peril* artists are gay or lesbian, and some have dealt with these issues in their work. I have included "Chinese Characters", the seminal work by Richard Fung that examines the desires of gay Asians in relation to white gay pornography. Richard Fung has produced an important body of work that is closely linked to a better understanding of self-identity. When I first met Richard in 1987, I remember being put off by his manner. I saw this later as perhaps my inability to place him. It wasn't native-born English, it wasn't English as a second language, it wasn't just the affected speech of a homosexual, nor was it the accent of a U.K. education. Like many of the artists in this exhibition, he is not native-born, but neither is he fresh-off-the-boat. He was born and raised in Trinidad. Fung continues to produce work about being on the outside of already marginalized issues.

Two first films, "The Compact" by Brenda Joy Lem and "Sally's Beauty Spot" by Helen Lee are centred around the stereotyped visions of Asian femininity and sexuality — each work explores the notions of interracial expectations of obsession and fetish.

Photographer Chick Rice is obsessed with the notion of style. "Tommy 1978-88" was edited for this exhibition. It is a series of portraits by Chick of sittings by Tommy Wong. We see the stylistic influences of the individuals and the imposed collaborative trust. The selection of seven photographs is a photographic history of the artist and the subject. It is about androgynous beauty.



from the video *Rage* by Jay Harabayashi

Confronting assumptions and making comparisons are underlying themes throughout the exhibition. Taki Bluesinger's cibachromes, "The Beginning of the East", are of minority, non-Han Chinese Muslims on the other side of the Gobi Desert. They are a gentle reminder that visible minorities exist in other cultures and that they are being attacked in totalitarian and democratic regimes.

"5000 Years of Good Advice", by Mary-Ann Liu and Jay Samwald, was shot in China on super 8 film and edited on video. It includes repetitive images of a caged tiger pacing and young school children doing calisthenics. This work, released in 1987, is now even more relevant following the events of Tiananmen square in 1989.

Marlin Oliveros' simple and visually stunning "Ati Ati Han" records what appears to be an impromptu celebration of semi-clad boys gyrating provocatively to the beat of primitive drums. It was recorded in Manila immediately after the fall of the Marcos regime. Oliveros' relationship to the New World may be one of the past. He is not a landed

immigrant, a Canadian citizen or a foreign alien. He has been to Canada and has tried numerous times to get landed status. I think he may have given up trying.

Chi Chung Mak's "East End Afternoon" is a single photograph that eloquently challenges the assumptions that all Hong Kong immigrants arrive with suitcases full of American dollars. Chi Chung Mak is a landed immigrant. Although he was educated in Canada, he has chosen to work in Hong Kong. The influx of recent Hong Kong immigration is not by choice. Given the choice to be able to live in a democratic Hong Kong or barbarian Canada, most would opt for the excitement of home.

Henry Tsang challenges our notion of what is foreign and undesirable from the point of view of a foreigner who cannot see why we are attracted to the opposite. The two photo works look at aspects of colonial culture as abnormal.

Making journeys and returning home are the principle subjects in the work of Sharyn Yuen and in one of the pieces

by Roy Kiyooka. The ancient custom of ancestral worship ties many of us to villages (burial sites) in Hong Kong, China, Japan, Korea and the Philippines. Where our bones rest, the places of our birth, the sites of our origins and those that came before us, are important links to our past and our present. As seen in Yuen's photo text emulsion on handmade paper, "Jook Kaak" is based on her first return. She states: "The intensity of the visit was overwhelming. It lasted all of 45 minutes."

I have witnessed this emotional journey, the years of assumptions and the confusion of expectations mixed with sheer excitement of the moment that happens all too quickly. Yuen uses memory, notations, and photographs to recount those events, to see what formed and informed the velocity of that visit.

In Cantonese we call it *hanng san* (walking the mountain). It is an ancient custom, a pilgrimage to the graves of our ancestors, where offerings are made to deities, rituals performed, firecrackers blown off and food shared at the graveside. It is not unusual to have bones exhumed and moved. We witness a similar ritual in Roy Kiyooka's photo mural, "her last trip up to the family grave on top of mt. hitsudan." The three large mural pieces in the exhibition attest to the way Kiyooka registers and views the world around him.

This exhibition includes the work of students as well as the important influences of Nobuo Kobuta and Roy Kiyooka, both born before internment. They are multi-disciplinary artists who have made significant contributions to contemporary art in Canada. In retrospect, they are the brave survivors of a generation that had to kick ass. Perhaps it is that drive that is at the very foundation of making art that attracts the so-called misfits and disenfranchised. It is those souls adrift and in search that often make the most worthy and brilliant statements of our time.

We can start to see what links us as Asians and as Canadians. We can see similar sensibilities at play and at work, we can start to see and to understand the differences. There is an Asian Canadian sensibility, there is an Asian Canadian contemporary art, there is an Asian Canadian photo, film and video community.

Produced against all odds, *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered* is a testimony that we do indeed exist. I am afraid that after having said that, we will be perceived as equals, as co-inhabitants. Unfortunately, in the search for "truth", I have also created the "big lie". This exhibition only exists due to the pressure applied to funding agencies and artist-run centres owned and operated by the white middle class. Perhaps I am helping to perpetuate the "one of each syndrome" that Midi Onodera outlines in her essay. The real truth is that there is very little activity in the area and I see no real or genuine support, other than on a one-off basis. 

HITTING THE NAIL ON THE HEAD TAX: An Interview with William Dere and Malcolm Guy

by Larissa Lai

In 1884, the B.C. government imposed a Head Tax of \$10 on every Chinese immigrant entering Canada. In 1886, the federal government followed suit, imposing a \$50 Head Tax. In 1900, it went up to \$100, and in 1904 to \$500. In 1923, the Chinese Immigration Act was passed prohibiting Chinese immigration altogether, although those who had paid the Head Tax were permitted to stay. The Act was repealed in 1947 in response to international pressure.

Presently, there is a movement to pressure the Canadian government to redress the Chinese for that treatment, as redress has been granted to the Japanese who were interned during World War II. However, the Chinese community is divided on the issue. Many feel that it was such a long time ago that it no longer matters. In addition, there is a measure of shame that goes with dredging up the degradation of the past. Others feel that redress is necessary and urgent since those who paid the Head Tax will soon have all died off. Many believe that the Canadian government is merely stalling until few or none of that generation are left before it will seriously address the problem. There is further debate over which organizations within the community have jurisdiction over the issue.

William Dere and Malcolm Guy are co-producing a film on the Head Tax entitled *It's Only Fair*.

LL: Why did you decide to make the film in the first place?

WD: I'm actively engaged in the redress committee for the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act.

LL: That's the redress committee organized by whom?

WD: The campaign is being led by the CCNC (the Chinese Canadian National Council), but here in Montreal we decided to form a local redress committee which would include various individuals and organizations who might not necessarily be affiliated with the CCNC.

LL: Such as?

WD: For instance, there's the Chinese Family Service and the Chinese Neighbourhood Society. We also have individuals. It's mainly the individuals who are doing a lot of the work in the community. These individuals are not associated with any of these two organizations nor with the CCNC. That was the purpose of our committee — to bring in people who were independent but who feel very strongly about redress for the Head Tax... I felt that culture, through the media would be a better way of doing it than making

speeches and logical arguments. We wanted a way to present our own culture, and through the culture and through the emotions, show that what happened to the Chinese happened to human beings who had families, who had wives, children, mothers, husbands, and so on, who were deeply affected by the Exclusion Act and the Head Tax...

To write a book takes too much work on the part of the individual to absorb the ideas because he has to do some reading. In a film you might not take everything in, but at least the images would evoke some response from individuals, so we thought a film would probably be the most powerful medium to do this.

LL: Do you want to say something about the content of the film?

WD: It's a personal journey going back to the history of my father and my grandfather in Canada at the turn of the century. It's a search of discovery for me to find out what kind of problems they had. I never knew my father until I was seven. My family was kept back at home when my father was here in Canada. We never really developed a so-called "normal" relationship in which he would tell me about things, about what happened to him in the past...

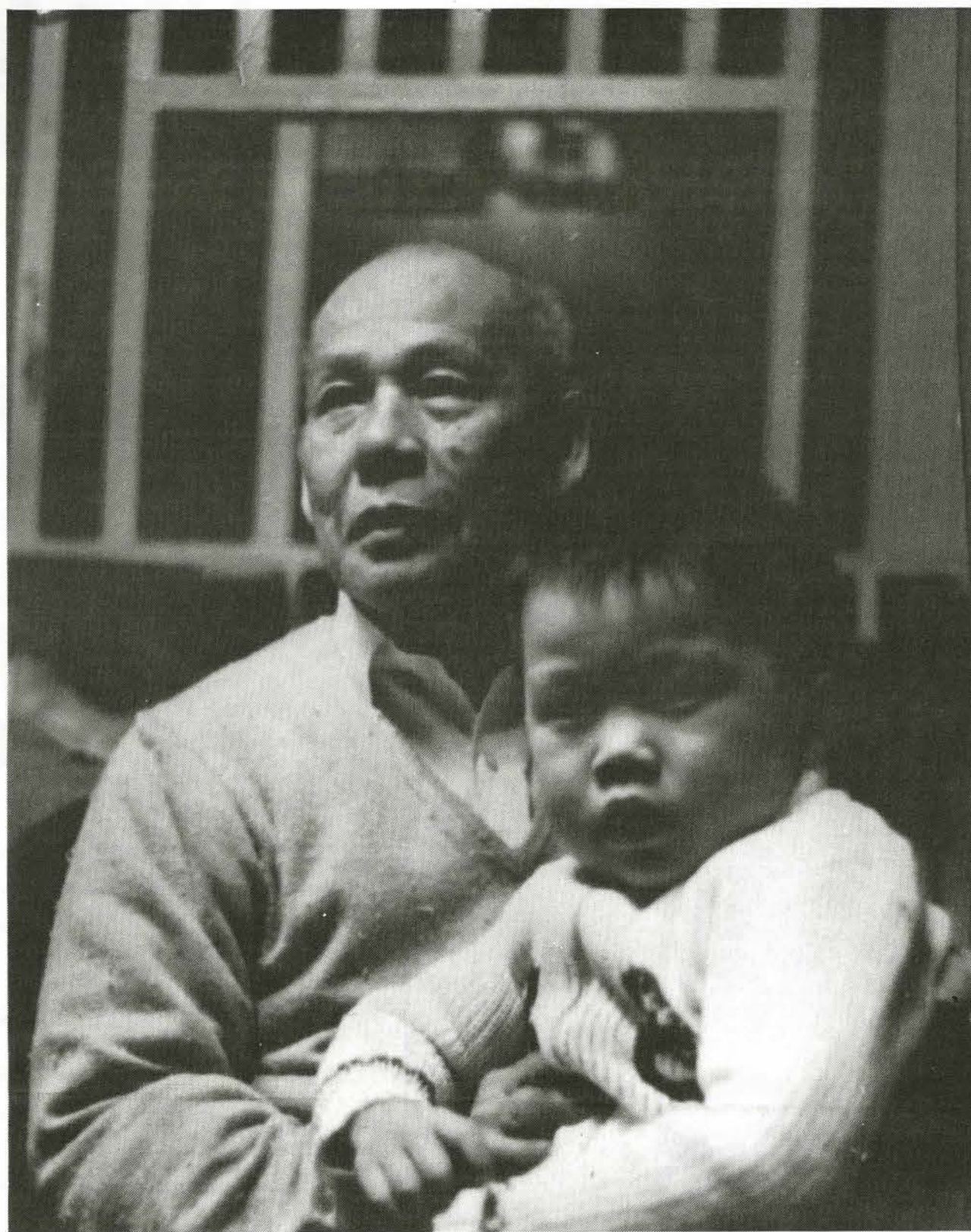


Photo by William Dere

very happy with it, although it's difficult because there's a part on the underground, so it's dangerous for them to show it.

LL: What about the role of women? You were saying you wanted to pull that in.

WD: The role of women is a very strong issue. They kept the families together back home, and they were able to keep the families together here, despite ten, twenty, thirty years of separation; and despite the type of oppression that they underwent here as women, and as Chinese women.

LL: Meaning what?

WD: When they came here, they were reunited with a husband they hardly knew. People like my father were brought over to work in the laundry. Because they were not able to make ends meet, a lot of women had to find outside work, as in a factory. When my mother came home from the factory, before she took her shoes off, she would have to plug in the iron; because then she would work in the laundry, then she had to cook and do the housework. So, it was like triple duty time, that was not abnormal for a lot of women.

LL: And there were how many kids running around?

WD: My mother was lucky, she only had me. If you had two or three other kids, then... So as the story goes, they were brought here to look after their sick or elderly husbands. When the husbands died they were left alone. Because of the cultural and generational gap that existed between the mothers and the children who grew up here, a lot of these women were left alone. Many of them ended up down in Chinatown. Many of them would try to seek independence and refuge with other women like themselves. So the effects of the Head Tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act continue today, in these women.

LL: Can I ask you where your funding came from?

MG: Both of us applied to the Canada Council section and we got a grant to begin. With that we started filming. We are going to apply to Multiculturalism and we are going to apply to Supply and Services. We are also going to go to some private sources as well. We were hoping to go to Canadian Pacific, since the Chinese built the railway. We thought it was about time they helped us show that story. There are others, like perhaps Air Canada...

LL: You don't think that will change the nature of your story?

MG: If it does, we'll send the money back...

LL: Why did you decide to make a film rather than a video?

WD: Well, we thought about making a video and we thought if we don't get enough money we'll make a video. (Laughs.) Technically, there's a huge difference between film and video. Aesthetically, there's a huge difference. Just to capture the expanse of this subject we thought we could only do it justice on film. For archival reasons too, we want to have some sort of a record of this story that only a film could provide.

LL: Do you think it will still be relevant in ten years?

WD: Well, the relevance of it depends on how we deal with the issue because it's a human story, and it could happen again.

LL: I was thinking more in terms of the mandate behind the film. It's as though you're expecting something to come out of it.

WD: What we're expecting out of it is government redress, but...

LL: Financial redress?

WD: Well, that has to be negotiated between the government and our communities. But that doesn't take away from the stories in this film, because these stories are the stories of a people who came to Canada, who came to build Canada.

LL: Where do you think the film is going to be shown?

MG: One of the reasons we wanted to do film, not that you can't blow up a video, was to get as wide an audience as possible. If we can get television distribution, that's fine, but we decided not to go for that first, to not tie our hands in terms of length, of the form nor in the type of story we hope to tell. We hope to present it to television afterwards. We hope that the story will be strong enough that they'll take it. If not, the CCNC has already agreed to help distribute it among their chapters. If necessary, we'll go around and hawk it ourselves. (Laughs.) I think it's important that the story be known outside of Canada. The myth that Canada is the land that treated its native population so well, but also that treated its newcomers well...

WD: I think we would like to break the whole stereotype — when you make film on a certain group of people, a minority group, that the audience is so limited. I don't believe that the audience is so limited. 

LL: Are you going to find out the particulars about your own family?

WD: Most men of my father's generation are dead. Exactly how they lived in the thirties, or forties, or twenties, is going to be very difficult to put together unless I can locate a lot of his close friends. Many of them have already passed away... I'm trying to put together a picture through my mother, my brother, my sisters, and friends who may have known him, such as James Wing, the other principle character in this film. It's also his journey back to his past from a detention camp in Vancouver. That was his first introduction to Canada. We'll also look at his life and how the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act has affected him. Then we'll enlarge it to the entire community.

LL: (to Malcolm Guy) How do you feel about your involvement in the film as a non-Asian? Is it problematic for you?

MG: No, it's not problematic, it's clear to me who I am and where I came from. I try to use my skills to allow Chinese Canadians to say what they have to say, and perhaps train a few so that there's something left behind. It's been a natural process because we worked together in the Exclusion campaign. We said let's do the film. William didn't have any film experience at the time. If he had, probably my role would have been different.

WD: I'm presently writing the script, and initially, I felt that this should be a political statement. But as we went along, Malcolm's been encouraging me to bring out the personal aspect. I needed his probing to develop that. I think we work together quite well so he can bring a less involved eye to what happened to our people, to bring it out.

I think both Malcolm and I have a very strong political commitment and belief towards this film. No matter how long it takes, this film is going to get done. It's a film that needs to be done...

LL: Is it going to be a purely historical film? There's a parallel, I think, between what happened at the end of the last century and what's happening now.

MG: Yeah, then we didn't want the Chinese because they were too poor and now we don't want them because they are too rich. It's that same kind of link, in the sense of racist and discriminatory laws. And they're continuing today. Most of the people, the pioneers of this country, would not be allowed in today. In that sense, it's very up to date. Yes, it's something from the past, but the same kinds of things are happening today.

LL: And there's that financial requirement there.

MG: Before it was five hundred dollars, now it's five hundred thousand, and you can still get in. But you still have to pay that head tax.

WD: It's still based on economic criteria, and not social or human criteria. That's been the issue. That's what pushes this kind of racism on our people today, as well as in the past.

LL: Do you plan to include the new generation, or is it going to be based on the generation that came with the railroad?

WD: The story of the present generation is a story that is still evolving. It's a story that can be developed as time goes on. But the story of the past, there's a certain urgency to it because many of these people are dying, and we don't want the stories to die with them.

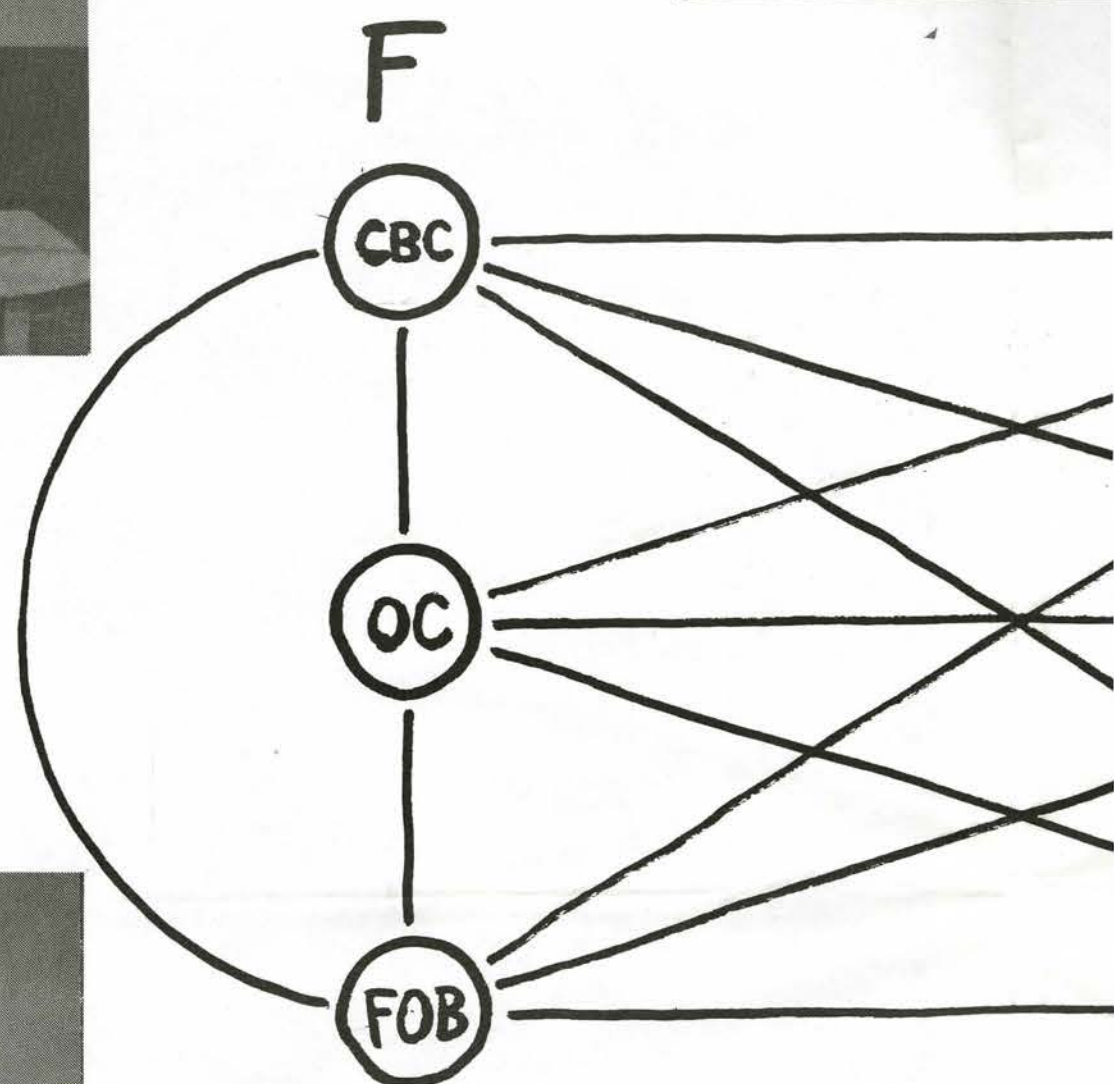
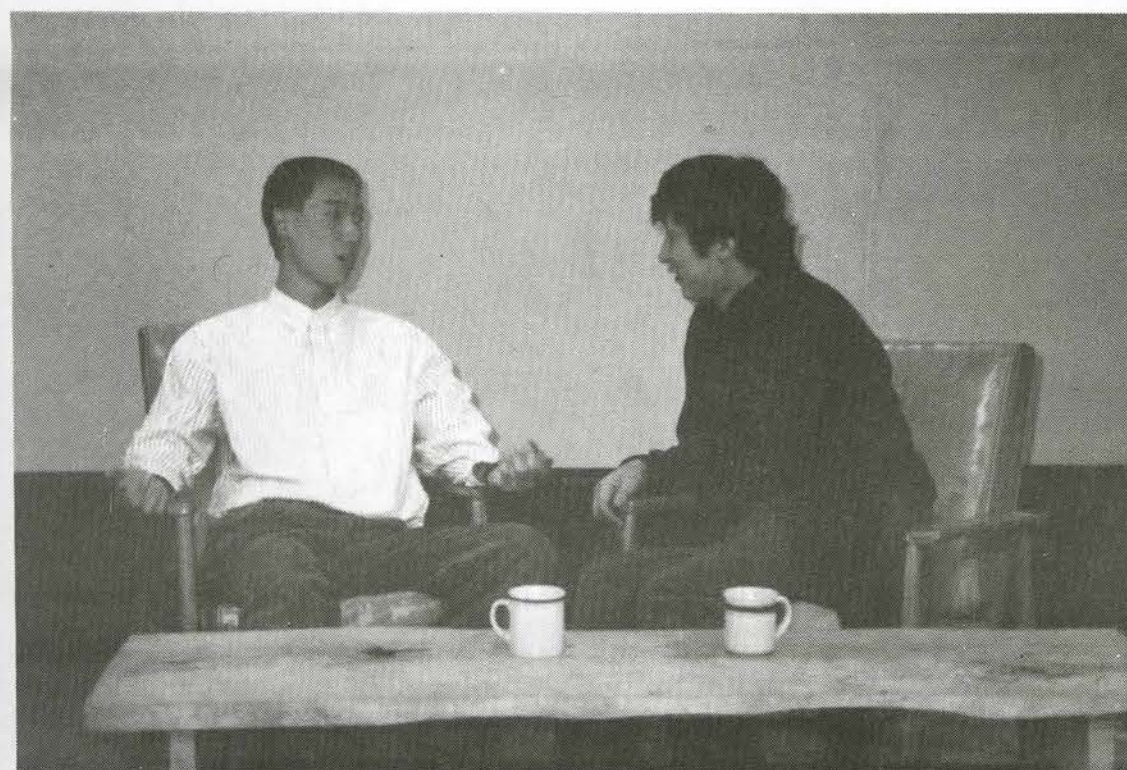
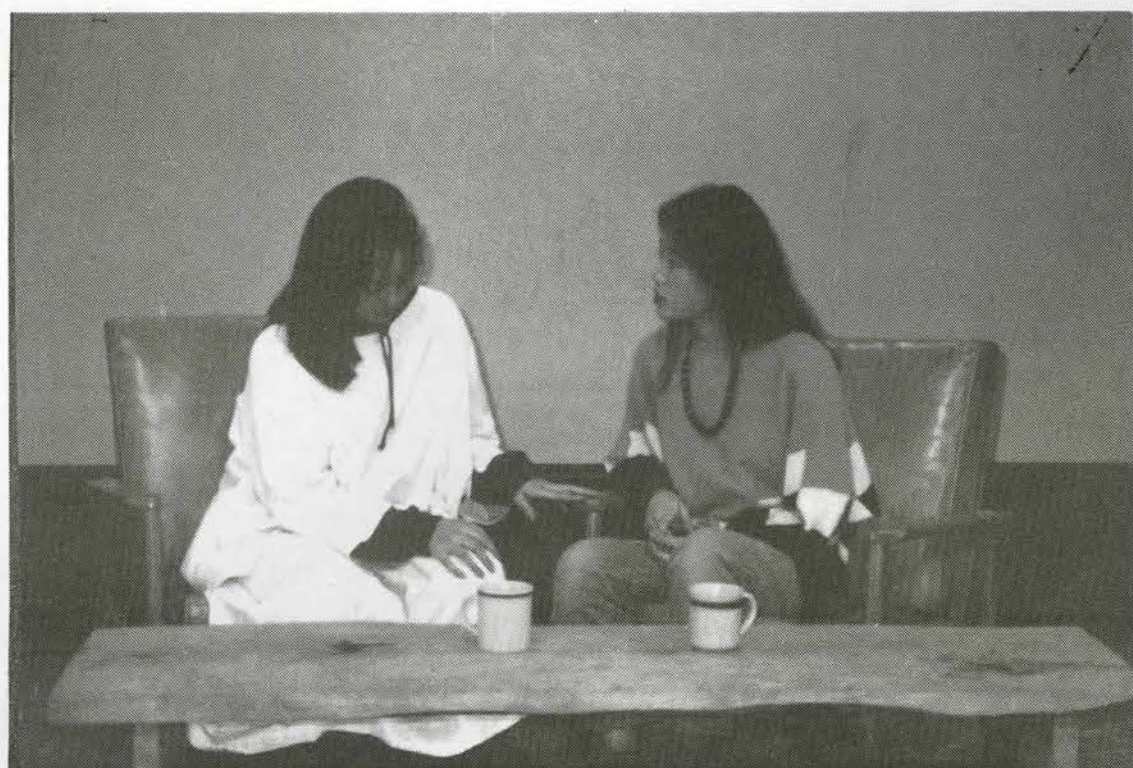
LL: You were working on a film about Filipino women before.

MG: Yeah, well I worked on that with my partner. We felt strongly from the beginning that there has been a problem of outsiders' involvement in the communities and we've always tried to be sensitive to the fact that they have their own story to tell, and that if we can use our skills to allow them to tell that story then we should do that. So for the women's film, for example, there were women's organizations and individuals who wanted to tell their story. So we went out and found funding, and they chose the people they wanted to interview and through them we discussed what we wanted and the film on the women came out of it. They're

DIALOG

BY HENRY T

INTER-DIALO



This is a case of an experimental document of a common language and experience that is altogether Chinese-Canadian, and of course is shared by many others who sense a self-difference (ie. Ismaeli, Korean, Italian, etc.). The concept is thus:

Inter-dialogues between 6 participants chosen as "Archetypes" for various Chinese-Canadian "experiences":

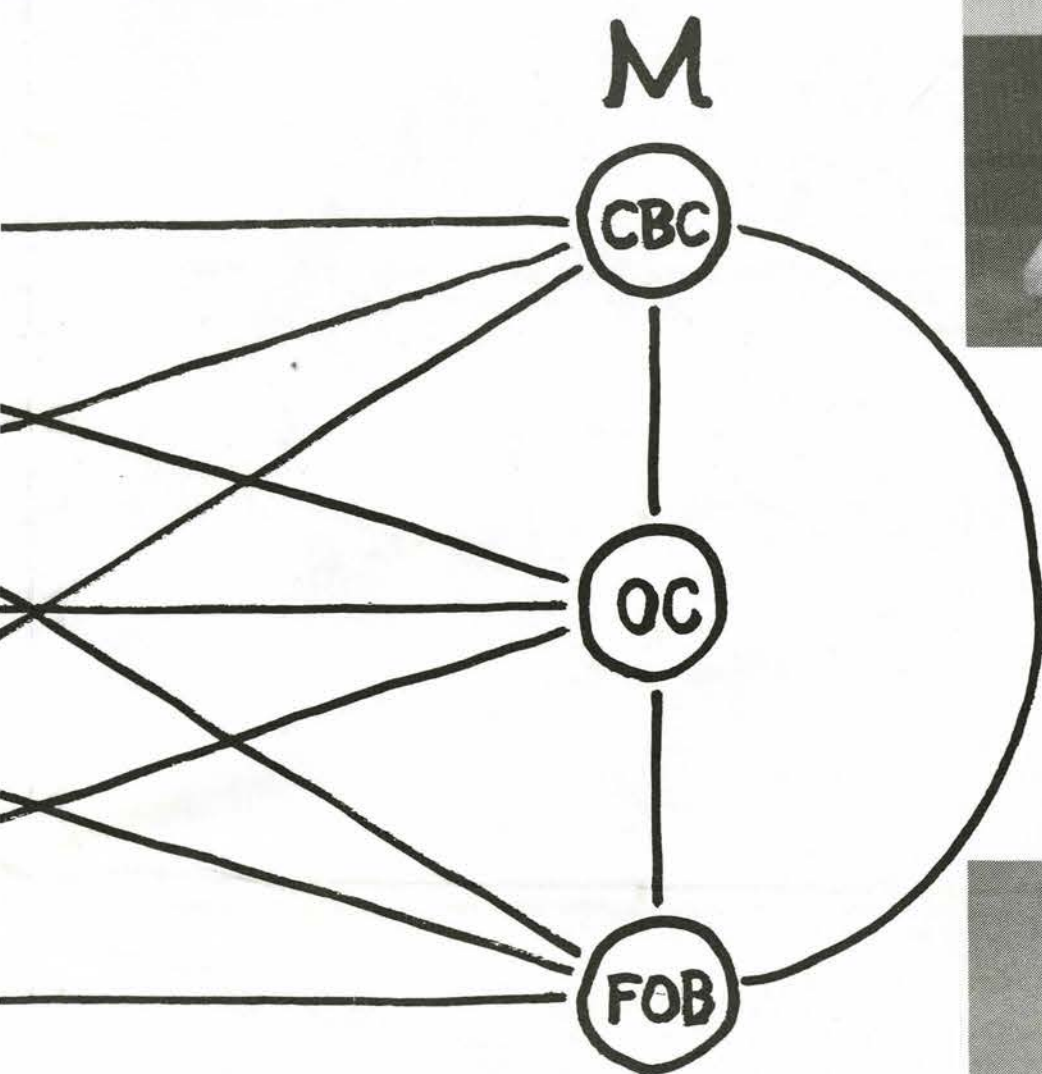
- 1) & 2) Canadian-Born Chinese, male and female. (CBC)
- 3) & 4) Overseas-Born Chinese, male and female. (OC)
- 5) & 6) Recent-Emigrant Chinese, male and female (FOB)

There will be 15 one-on-one dialogues, 2 same-gender "discussions" and one big final "jamboree" with all 6 participants. The studio sessions will be shot by camerapeople of colour.

DIALOGUE

RY TSANG

DIALOGUES



The intention is not to create some exemplary representation of what Chinese-Canadian identity is, but rather to "artifact" a discourse on a very informal scale, one that is alive and active but seldom documented. It is an articulation of a Vancouver 1990 from Chinese, Canadian, and/or Chinese-Canadian perspectives (and is an attempt at contextualizing the present and past explorations of the definitions of, and justifications for these such sub- and iconocultural terms).

This video in no way attempts to validate a Chinese-Canadian experience to that of the dominant white culture; it is by and for Chinese-Canadians, as an affirmation and acknowledgement that this sort of thought and talk exist, and that the dialogue is an ongoing one.

DIALOGUE is currently in co-production at the Western Front in Vancouver.

ASIAN LESBIAN PARTICIPATION IN CELEBRATION '90

by C. Allyson Lee



It's not easy being an Asian in Canada these days, let alone a lesbian. Every day, women like us face overt and covert forms of racism ("those Asians are driving up all our house prices"). As if this isn't enough, we also are forced to deal with homophobia and sexism as we attempt to live within our community in this unconventional lifestyle. So, what happens when an event such as Celebration 90/Gay Games III comes along — do we come out and join in all the fun, or do we retreat behind the safety of our own little closet doors?

Well, some of us did come out in the public eye, risking media exposure, living a nightmare of invasion of privacy and breach of confidentiality. Unauthorized use was made of a poster advertising Celebration 90 which contained a picture of a local Asian lesbian who was not yet out to her family. She had not given organizers media release for her photo, yet the poster was placed in the local daily newspapers. This resulted in painful, unpleasant consequences for her.

Some of us took active part in the Opening Ceremonies. One Asian Canadian lesbian carried the official banner into the stadium and led the parade of athletes; another lit the ceremonial torch marking the beginning of the week's festivities. The two of us shared mixed emotions about doing our respective duties: a bit shy of the media exposure, a bit proud to be representing other Asian lesbians, and a bit defiant, hearing murmurings of tokenism and over-representation. After all, there were no Asian lesbians (and no lesbians of colour) on the Organizing Board. Most of the participants and athletes were white. So why should Asian lesbians be asked to present themselves as symbols of gay society to be recorded and remembered for years to come and by subsequent Games spectators? Well, why not? If we had not been asked to participate, we might be complaining about the dominance of governing whites ignoring the presence and discounting the validity of Asian lesbians and lesbians of colour in the Games. We would be charging that Asians were under-represented in the ceremonies.

But, alas, under-representation did rear its ugly head after all, in the Literary component of the festivities. At the Literary Gala readings, Asians and lesbians of colour were conspicuous by their absence. And at one of the panels entitled "From the Outside Looking In" (discussing racism) we were alerted to the shocking fact that one of the panellists (a local Asian lesbian) was asked to be the moderator, yet was not offered an honorarium. Others got paid for officiating at the Games, for providing security and for performing. Is it too much to ask the organizers to put their money where their sensibilities are and have them make a fair offer to a lesbian of colour for acting in an official capacity? Apparently it is too much, for the offer was steadfastly not forthcoming. And when the suggestion was made by us to the organizers to make such an offer, it was refused.

There are dozens of lesbians of colour who are published authors, and many of them reside in this country. It wouldn't take very much time or effort to find them, resource them and accord any one of them the same respect which would be given to any local white lesbian author. Recognition is one thing, and sincerity is another. It is time that white people (who are usually in the driver's seat of many of these financially spectacular extravaganzas) own up to the fact that they are actively turning a blind eye to the obvious wealth of talent and intelligence of people of colour in their own neighbourhood.

We are diverse and special in all areas. Asian lesbians came from as far away as England for Celebration 90. We competed in tennis, softball, physique, croquet and soccer. Some of us were finalists, winning bronze, silver and gold medals. We also performed dance, music and poetry. We had parties and socials which provided opportunities for people to meet, exchange ideas and have fun. Asian lesbians of Vancouver hosted a welcoming party for all athletes, participants and volunteers of Celebration 90 at a local bar, and everyone was treated to poetry readings and a Taiko (Japanese Canadian drumming) performance. That party had a block-long lineup to get in until bar closing time.

Those who attended the socials got the sense of community and camaraderie that we locals share here. We certainly did make a point of noticing other Asian lesbians and seeking them out. A video is now being produced by two San Franciscan Asian lesbians which will portray the Asian lesbian participation in the Games. Hopefully this will be completed in the winter. Watch out for notices. Once we get a hold of this film, you can bet that Asians and non-Asians alike will be falling over themselves to view it!

Asian Lesbians of Vancouver (A.L.O.V.) is a group formed last year by several women who wanted to get together socially. We are continually meeting more and more Asian lesbians in this city and hope to build a large network for us to share common interests and goals. We hope to host several events in the future — including benefits, slide shows, dinners and entertainment. We are hoping to get some funds together in order to produce and distribute a newsletter and get a postal box for replies. We feel that there is a growing need to outreach other Asian lesbians who may not have the opportunity to reach us. We need to let others know that we are here to lend our friendship and support to those who may feel that they are alone in this racist, homophobic world. For those interested in getting more information about A.L.O.V., please write:

A.L.O.V.
Post Office Box #66106
Station "F"
Vancouver, B.C.
V5N 5L4



PUTTING IN THE PICKLE WHERE THE JAM SHOULD BE



Photo by Maya Chowdhry

An Interview with Seni Seneviratne and Maya Chowdhry

by Andrea Fatona

Seni Seneviratne and Maya Chowdhry are two South Asian women of mixed heritage who participated in the Literary Festival of the Gay Games in Vancouver. With co-author, Shahidah Janjua, they wrote the book of prose and poetry titled *Putting in the pickle where the jam should be*. The book covers a wide range of issues from being a Black woman in British Society; to the Irish liberation struggle. It is a compilation of writings which generates excitement in the way it fluidly and vividly expresses the nuances of these women's everyday reality. *Putting in the pickle where the jam should be* is a valuable contribution to the expanding body of women of colour/black women's writing.

AF: How do you utilize writing and film to articulate your feelings around issues of cultural displacement within a predominantly white society?

SS: I use writing as a vehicle to sort through the confusion and pain about what my identity is. I was brought up in a family, and extended family that was white. I grew up feeling confident about who I was, but as I came into contact with the real world, and the increasing racism in the society that I live in, then I became more confused about who I am; not only who I am but where I belong, and to which community I really belong to. I've come to a point, partly through my writing, and the political struggles I've been involved in, where I no longer need to apologize or hide any parts of my background that are important to me, whether they are coming from a white working class experience or the experience of the Asian communities that I have lived in. Writing has certainly been a way for me to sort through these ideas.

MC: I've been writing since my teens; it was something I did to get rid of some of the anger I felt about the environment I was brought up in. I grew up in Scotland and there aren't very many black people there — using the word 'black' as a political term to denote people who experience racism. It is a term which is used in Britain as opposed to 'coloured'. When I was younger I did not notice the difference between myself and anyone else; I felt Scottish. As I got older and went to school I realized that there was something different about me. People would punch me in the playground but I still couldn't understand it. Through my writing I've wrestled with who I am, where I belong, what was I doing here — I think I'm still wrestling with it. I became involved in student politics and the anti-apartheid movements as a way of voicing my anger against racism and the struggles in which black people are involved.

AF: Is there a feeling of alienation which you experience as you try to live within two cultures?

SS: Sometimes I feel that it is not merely two cultures, but several. I haven't lost the sense of not really fitting into any situation completely. There is always something that separates me, so one can never actually find a place to call home. The places one used to call home in the traditional sense aren't, because there is no acknowledgement of racism. In my family, racism was never talked about. There are also the "communities", and a sense that one doesn't belong either. In the so-called lesbian community (whatever that is), one comes up against issues around being a black woman communicating to them what it is I'm talking about, in a way that is not constricting. This is a problem that is not confined only to the lesbian community. I work in an environment of mainly Asian women who have different languages, religions, and life experiences. I share a lot with them, but there is always a sense that there are differences. I do not come into contact with very many lesbians from the Asian community, so there is always a feeling of division. Life becomes compartmentalized, so one tries to knit all the good bits together. It is a struggle. One of the exciting parts about doing the book with Maya [and Shahida] is that it became a place where each of us brought the sense of not belonging, yet creating a place to belong together with our differences.

AF: Have you dealt with inherent/latent racism within the publishing industry? What were your experiences with finding a publishing house for your book?

SS: We got into the publishing industry at the right time, and we were the right colour. I'm not sure how one would break that down but it is the sort of phenomenon one would call positive discrimination. This does not necessarily make one feel very good, as one is never sure of the rationale behind it. It isn't as straightforward as saying that black people cannot get published. In England, it is now trendy to publish works by black people. It is another kind of imperialism. A black woman will write a novel about her life, and a publisher will scoop it and send her on a tour around the country. She will then become an authority who can speak on behalf of all black women. The positive aspect of our doing this book together is that we were constantly there as reminders to each other so we would not be co-opted into that way of thinking. There are other black women that are out there writing and creating, and will never be published because they do not have the capital or the contacts. We were lucky as we knew where to go and we did it at the right time. If we had done it a couple of months later, they might

have already found the token person or people. Community presses are publishing anthologies in which there are a few black women. These black women are generally used as promotion tools.

AF: Is this tokenism part of the misappropriation of black people's culture for the benefit of a white readership?

SS: It's this thing about people reading books, about and by black individuals, because that is their shorthanded way of learning about black people. For instance, an Asian woman writes a book about arranged marriages — which is what everyone wants to read about — and everyone wants to get a hold of it and read it. The content is then taken as the universal truth. There is a power imbalance between the written word and the spoken word. If something is written in a book, especially in white culture, it is seen as the truth. One is fighting against this all the time, because it is the publishers who decide which truth they want to read. The topics and issues which get published aren't necessarily what we want to say. We don't always want to speak about racism or oppression. This is the reason we included a wide range in our book. That is a statement in itself, as our lives aren't just about fighting racism. They're also about our families, love, relationships and not always the sensationalism that publishers want to pick up on.

AF: As two women who have recently published a book, how do you create an intersection/junction between the oral and the written?

SS: The book is not the sum total of what we have to say, so we've been carrying on with the things we've always done — i.e. writing articles, continuing dialogue with other women. These are just as important as the book.

AF: How do you use language to present yourselves as black people?

SS: We try to use accessible language, one which is not abstract but related to everyday life. People will understand it without having to have formal training. I find I go around not understanding what various words mean, and I find it very frustrating when people say they mean something fairly obvious. To me, language like that is very alienating.

MC: I use photography and film as mediums for expressing myself, as I feel image is important as well. One can put different images together in the same way one can use words. The problem I have with photography and film-making is that they are subject to wide interpretations and sometimes I have a direct message which I do not want to be misinterpreted.

VIDEO SCANNING SCANNING SCANNING

VAN EVENTS

THE 4th ANNUAL VANCOUVER MAYWORKS

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ELIZABETH VANDER ZAAG

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SUSAN BUCK-MORSS

"East/West: Is There a Common Postmodern Culture?"

Thursday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.
URG Annex 4th Floor
KOBENA MERCER
"Race and Ethnicity in the Public Sphere"

Thursday, June 13, 7:30 p.m.
URG Annex 4th Floor
ROSALYN DEUTSCHE

Thursday, June 20, 7:30 p.m.
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Elizabeth Fischer

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Ronald Ramage is an expert in the Targa system and a professional on-line editor. He has recently taught courses at Inter/access and Trinity Square Video, both artist-run centres in Toronto.



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Since September 1987, the Lower Mainland Composers Society, through the CEIC, has offered ongoing high level technical and artistic job training to select Canadian composers; towards teaching expertise in the latest technological innovations and developments in the post-production field of film and television.

Training consists of composition techniques, sound creation, synchronization methods, Foley, sound editing and related audio post-production.

Hands-on work in the field is an integral part of training. The previous two training programs have resulted in approximately 90 projects (films/video/commercials) being scored by the trainees. These projects were done in conjunction with: Emily Carr College, U.B.C., the Vancouver Film School, non-profit Societies, local television stations, and various independent film producers from the Lower Mainland.

We are currently seeking directors with films in need of music (any style) or other audio post-production. Films must be submitted by mid-April '91. Hopefully, successful director/composer relationships will lead to future beneficial contacts between parties.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE
CONTACT WILLIAM MUTUAL AT 589-0283.

NAT EVENTS



1991 Independent Film and Video Alliance AGM/Showcase Calgary June 17 - 22

EM/Media, in collaboration with the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (CSIF), is hosting the Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Independent Film and Video Alliance (IFVA/AVCI).

included in the SHOWCASE and a panel on the Future of Independent Film and Video in Canada.

Held for the first time in Alberta this major event will bring together delegates from over 50 artist-run film/video production and distribution and exhibition centres from across Canada, as well as numerous observers. It has been expanded by one day and in addition to the AGM it will include a Curator's Panel discussion of the works

At least ten hours of recent film and video from across the country will be programmed over four evenings and an on-demand Mediatheque will house an additional 60 hours of material. Intermedia artist Marcella Bienvenue, Video/performance artist Nelson Henricks, and playwright Sharon Pollock have been invited to curate the SHOWCASE. The wrap-up hoop-up will take place at the Home Place Ranch, complete with horses, BBQ, and C&W band.

#200, 116 - 8th Avenue S.W.
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Hours of operation:
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A three-week challenge. Learn to respond with all your senses, to become fully in touch with your creative power. A memorable learning experience for anybody with an open mind, ready to break through routine to discover what making art and living really means.

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KINGSTON CONFERENCE 1991 FRAGMENTED POWER: ART VOICES FOR 2000 MAY 22-23, 1991

The Agnes Etherington Art Centre will hold a national artists' conference at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario on May 22 and 23. It will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first Kingston Conference of 1941 as well as the sesquicentennial of the University.

The 1991 conference theme is *Fragmented Power: Art Voices for 2000*. The conference will explore the artist's place within shifting cultural and political power structures and address the urgent need for full recognition of cultural diversity among Canadian artists.

Keynote speaker will be artist Peter Dunn - social and political activism and issues of multinationalism are central to his work.

Also on the program are Canadian artists Lisa Steele, Robert Houle, Buseje Bailey, Jamelie Hassan, Sara Diamond and critics Richard Martel, Clive Robertson, Carol Laing and Francine Perinet who will address issues relevant to Canadian art practice. Four video artists will make their cultural "otherness" the subject of their art in "A Likeness..."

Information on the program as well as registration forms are available from Conference Co-ordinator, Cindy Rannels, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6. Telephone (613) 545-2190

Barnard College Library Fifteenth Annual

WORKS BY WOMEN

A Film and Video Festival October 1991

CALL FOR ENTRIES

"Works by Women: A Film and Video Festival" has been held annually at Barnard College since 1977. The festival features films and videotapes made by women. The festival is held in October. Applications are due April 30. Materials received after the deadline will only be previewed for the following year's festival.

Any film or video directed by a woman is eligible for submission. Entries will be accepted any time prior to April 30, 1991. For further information and applications, call

Barnard College Media Services at (212) 854-2418 or write Barnard College Media Services, 3009 Broadway, New York City, New York 10027-6598

GLOBAL EVENTS

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Eligibility

Deadlines:

January 15, 1991

May 1, 1991

September 15, 1991

application procedure

1) Send a one-page project description, time length of proposed completed video project, outline of equipment needs, project timeline, and resume to:

San Francisco Artspace
1286 Folsom Street
San Francisco, California 94103.

DANCIN' VISUALS

In September 1991 the Video Gallery in Copenhagen presents its third festival with international Video Dance.

The greater part of the festival contains recent '90-'91 international Video Dance productions, selected by a 3-member research committee. We define Video Dance as the synthesis between the language of movement and the language of images.

The second part of DANCIN' VISUALS contains a live Video Dance performance, produced especially for this occasion.

The third part is a retrospective with a not yet chosen video-artist or choreographer.

Finally, DANCIN' VISUALS includes a stringent program with documentaries, that reflect upon Video Dance as a genre.

PLEASE SEND PREVIEW COPIES FOR SELECTION BEFORE MAY 15, 1991, OR CONTACT US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

ADDRESS: Video Galleriat, Huset, Copenhagen, Radhusstraede 13, DK-1466

TELEPHONE: 45-33-13 59 49

FAX: 45-33-32 50 05



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Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Society	Cross-cultural education outreach	4,720	3,000
Headlines Theatre Co.	Facilitator training	6,000	3,000
Jewish Festival of the Arts Society	Exhibition outreach	11,090	4,000
Karen Jamieson Dance Co.	Artistic collaboration	5,000	4,500
New Play Centre	Multicultural playwrights workshop	2,200	1,000
Powell Street Festival	Race, ethnicity and culture forum	2,500	2,500
Vancouver Art Gallery	Cross-cultural Art	10,000	5,000
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VDC Dance Centre Society	Culture-specific dance directory	4,400	2,225
Van. East Cultural Centre	Native theatre outreach	4,020	2,500
Van. Folk Music Festival	Ethnic music disk/cassette	5,500	4,500
Van. Multicultural Society	Exhibition outreach	10,000	2,500
Van. Symphony Society	Cross-cultural marketing	5,000	2,000
Van. Women in Focus	Cross-cultural research/outreach	10,000	5,000
TOTALS		94,840	50,225

SOURCE: Social Planning Dept., Standing Committee on Finance and Priorities, City of Vancouver, Nov. 13/90

(2) (Published list of successful applicants and project info)



Vancouver City Hall

Photo by Elspeth Sage

For the past 20 years, various levels of government in this country have been struggling with the "issue" of multiculturalism.⁽¹⁾ It has partly been a reaction to the increasing numbers of non-European immigrants to Canada, who are actually part of a global demographic shift, but also as a salve for the cultural problems and conflicts that have arisen from among the existing predominantly Euro-based populations adjusting to the latter 20th century immigrants. The initial motivation for addressing the problem was clearly to help Euro-Canadians adjust to the influx of new citizens rather than the other way around. In spite of the regional, bilingual conflicts that most often preoccupy the government, multiculturalism has found itself on the agenda because the structure of Canada's population has changed.

The early stage of multicultural development saw an attempt on the part of the authorities to fit the new citizens into a French or English community, where the immigrant's original cultural ties were allowed to exist in a nominal, non-threatening way within the mainstream of Canada's two national identities. The key word here was assimilation. It was a play that worked relatively well in the beginning because immigrant Canadians were grateful for their prized citizenship, and thus docilely relegated their cultural traditions in an attempt to embrace their new lives and fit in.

Problems arose however, when the indigenous non-European communities — some of whom had been in Canada far longer than the cultural mandarins in Ottawa who were deciding their language and taste — developed a new kind of cultural pride. This was partly a spill over from the Civil Rights movement in the US and partly a result of the economic clout that their numbers were starting to provide. It was no longer an accepted practise that all Canadians celebrate such eclectic holidays as St. Patrick's Day, Christmas, etc. but rather, ancient ceremonial traditions from the host countries of the non-white Europeans started to come out of the closet, and with them a contemporary cultural development that was beginning to vie for attention and government funding with the accepted art forms of the Europeans.

Within this cultural ferment were the seeds of Canada's present multiculturalism policy, enacted into law in July,

1988. This formal recognition allowed that there were now more than two official cultures, but still only two official languages, in Canada. It affirmed that diversity should be encouraged and that a multicultural Canada should develop several harmonious strands at once. This principle, and act of parliament, percolated down through every level of government bureaucracy, and eventually began to affect funding policies in the arts. Numerous committees and study groups were established within the bureaucracies to help each sector adapt to the multicultural reality of this new Canada. Most were well-meaning but rarely included representatives from the various minority groups that were meant to be most assisted by this change in policy.

In fact, the flurry of government adjustment went unnoticed by the new target communities who were too busy trying to survive, learn English and deal with the cultural alienation never anticipated in the early, heady days of immigration to the promised land. More importantly, the avenues of access for these groups to the various levels of government that might assist with 'encouraging their multicultural development' didn't exist. For the most part, the new immigrant's experience with any level of government had been an unpleasant one, and therefore the last place to look for intellectual succour was from the bureaucracy.

Today, every level of government funding for the arts has made a conscious and sometimes very vocal commitment in aligning itself with the federal government's multicultural policies. Not surprisingly, the Canada Council was in the foreground of the movement, where conscious attempts have always been made to compose juries of peers for each applicant, and this naturally now included representatives from visible minorities. The Council is not completely without criticism however, as there have been occasions in the past where "marginalized" work was refused funding based on the subjective criteria that it didn't represent "artistic excellence".

In the spring of 1990, the Canada Council set up a multicultural advisory body that was to report directly to the Policy Secretariat of the Council's board. The formation of this body was largely a response to the fact that the communities were organizing on their own, across the country,

to lobby various levels of government for a piece of the action. The committee, headed by Chris Creighton-Kelly (a cultural worker well-known for his minority advocacy work), included 12 representatives from minority groups across the country, working across disciplines, regions and races. It was mandated to meet three times, with its first meeting in May, 1990 and the second in October, 1990.

The committee, in the person of Creighton-Kelly, also meets with individual artists to solicit opinions, and assists with intra-Council meetings and workshops dealing with multicultural issues. Creighton-Kelly welcomes contact from various individual artists and groups for discussion, etc. but cautions against anyone presenting him with a formal brief, in that his position is purely advisory, and therefore not empowered to produce policy, yet.

Its purpose is to identify and discuss the reality of multicultural support specifically in relation to access to Canada Council funding. Its ultimate findings are to be reported to the Council Secretariat and the Director, Joyce Zemans. Its recommendations will be that of a 'non-binding advisory committee' but it is apparent from discussions with Creighton-Kelly that there is good will, and therefore a potentially fruitful working climate, between the advisory body and the Policy Secretariat. At time of writing, none of the advisory body's findings had been reported to the host organization.

The existence of this committee, whatever its successes or failures may be, is a clear recognition on the Canada Council's part that it must now deal with applications from artists across cultural levels and not solely those reflecting European or American contemporary art practices. It is a recognition of the difficulties faced by minorities in being accepted in the contemporary art field unless, as in the recent past, their work is presented from a completely assimilated viewpoint.

The previous buffer against minority applications for other governmental funding bodies was provided by the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, where applications dealing with 'ethnic traditions' were traditionally handled. Today, it is no longer considered the only funding source for

continued on page 19

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

by Howard Bearham

TIME CODE

The most common video time code system in use in North America is SMPTE/EBU time code. Introduced as a standard in 1969 by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers it was soon adopted by the European Broadcasting Union. It provides a precisely aligned frame numbering system for tape recording devices. Basically, the time code information is burned into the tape with a numerical address attached to each frame of video. Thus, frame number 12:29:02:27 is always that frame number at any time on any machine that reads time code. The time code numbers will produce a reliable edit decision list since those numbers provide an absolute address for each frame.

The time-consuming task of cutting a production can be done on copies (window dubs) of the masters using less costly facilities. The final edit can then be executed on any machines compatible with the master tapes and capable of reading the time code. Consistent, dependable edits can be achieved without the need for contrived procedures. Multiple machines are easily incorporated and computer-assisted editing implemented.

There are two types of SMPTE time code. "Longitudinal" can be recorded on a standard audio track or separate address track and "vertical interval" time code (VITC) recorded as a part of the video signal in the vertical blanking interval.

Longitudinal SMPTE time code is made up of a string of pulses; 80 per frame of video. Each pulse is referred to as a "bit". They are read like serial binary data and are recorded the same way as a voice or musical instrument would be recorded onto audio tape.

In addition to the hours (00-23), minutes (00-59), seconds (00-29), there are four other groups of bits (information). These are the "drop/non-drop frame" bit, the "colour frame" bit, the "user" bits (see side bar) and the sync word which indicates the end of the 80-bit frame and makes it possible to determine in which direction the tape is moving. It should be noted that not all systems implement "drop/non-drop frame", "colour frame" or "user" bits.

VITC is made up of a string of 90 bits. They are also read like serial data. The 90-bit string is recorded as part of the video signal on two non-adjacent lines in the vertical blanking interval of each field. This means that the information is recorded 4 times per frame which allows for error correction in the case of tape drop-out.

VITC contains all the same information as longitudinal time code. Its structure is slightly different though. The sync word is replaced by 9 pairs of sync bits. It has a field bit which identifies field 1 or field 2. VITC also contains 8 bits of error checking.

VITC must be recorded at the same time as the video. If time code has to be added to a tape you must make a dub, losing a generation in the process.

With longitudinal, a built-in time code generator records the time code on a dedicated address track or a separate time code generator records the time code on one of the audio tracks.

VITC offers some definite advantages such as the ability to read at slow tape speeds right down to still frame, but generally you will find more facilities equipped with longitudinal time code; mainly due to lower equipment costs.

The same kind of care used in recording video or audio should be used when recording time code. Tape heads should be cleaned, cables should be checked and levels

should be set carefully. Time code should be recorded at levels from 0 to -5 db on most 1/2 inch and 3/4 inch VCRs and from -5 to -10 db on most audio recorders. Even though time code can be recorded on an audio track, signal processing equipment, such as equalizers, limiters or digital delays should be removed from the time code signal path. Always make a test recording once you are set up. Be aware that different pieces of time code equipment may use different cables and connectors; BNC, XLR-3, RCA/phono. If a tape with time code is to be dubbed and it is desired to retain the same time code it is important to regenerate the time code because the sharp edged pulses are degraded by the recording process.

Utilizing time code in the "off line" editing process involves making "window dubs"; dubs of the master tapes with the time code readout superimposed over part of the picture. Time code readers and generators are available which provide a video signal output with the digits inserted. The same thing can be accomplished with a simple keyer with the key camera focused on the LED display on the time code reader or playback VCR.

The computer, when used with time code, can be made to control video and audio tape recorders, switcher, audio mixers and a wide range of special effects devices through the use of the general purpose interface (GPI) trigger. Well-integrated time code editing systems allow one to attempt complex sequences that might not be possible otherwise.

Sidebar

Drop Frame/Non Drop Frame.

Drop frame and non-drop frame time codes are a "work-around" which takes care of the timing differences introduced with colour television. To make the new (1954) NTSC colour broadcast system compatible with existing black and white television sets, the operating frequencies had to be kept close to the originals; 30 frames/60 fields per second (vertical) and 15,750 Hz (horizontal) for black and white versus 3,579545 MHz (subcarrier), 29.97 frames/59.94 fields per second (vertical) and 15,734.26 Hz (horizontal) for colour. The main difference to note is 30 frames per second and 29.97 frames per second. Operating with non-drop frame time code in the colour system introduces a discrepancy of 3.6 seconds per hour between the time code and real or clock time. Drop frame time code actually leaves out two frames per minute except for every tenth minute. This brings the two timing systems into agreement since it leaves out a total of 108 frames each hour.

Broadcast productions with their critical timing are more likely to use drop frame time code. On the other hand presentational videos can tolerate a discrepancy of 3.6 seconds per hour.

If this bit is set, time code will be identified as drop frame.

Colour Frame.

One inch SMPTE type C VTRs and Betacam and MII VCRs use a system which designates a colour frame as 4 fields. Fields 1 and 3 being colour frame A, fields 2 and 4, colour frame B. Since the colour subcarrier rotates 90 degrees each field, it takes 4 fields for the relative phase to return to 0 degrees. If this bit is set it indicates that colour frame identification has been applied to the time code which allows the editing system to correctly align odd and even fields for proper colour burst phase.

User bits.

8 groups of 4 bits each. These 32 bits can be used to record 4 alphabetical or 8 numerical characters or a combination of the two. Possible uses might be to number or date each tape.

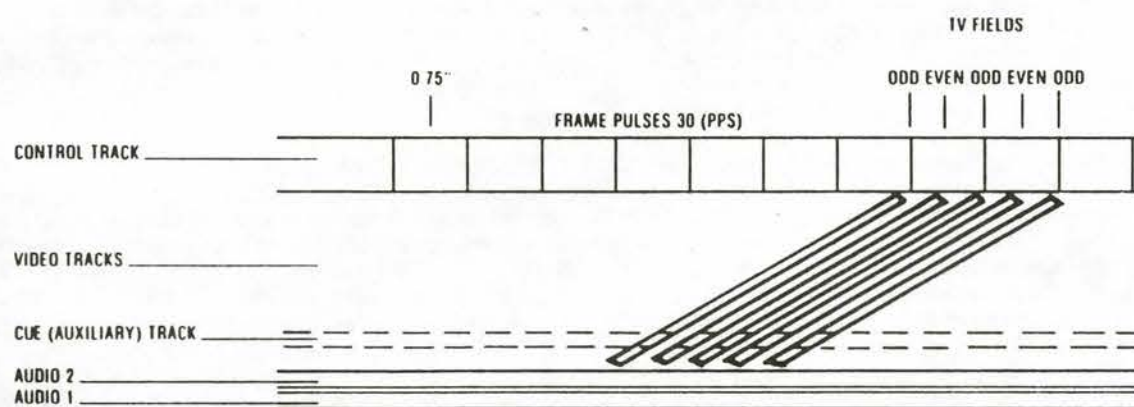
Address Track.

Because the dedicated address track occupies the same area on the tape as the video signal it is not possible to add time code to this track once video has been recorded. 

VITC

VITC BIT NO	SYNC BIT	SYNC BIT	BIT NO
0	-1		0
1	-0		1
2		1	2
3		2	3
4		4	4
5		8	5
6			6
7			7
8			8
9			9
10	-1		10
11	-0		11
12		10	12
13		20	13
14			14
15			15
16			16
17			17
18			18
19			19
20	-1		20
21	-0		21
22		1	22
23		2	23
24		4	24
25		8	25
26			26
27			27
28			28
29			29
30	-1		30
31	-0		31
32		10	32
33		20	33
34		40	34
35			35
36			36
37			37
38			38
39			39
40	-1		40
41	-0		41
42		1	42
43		2	43
44		4	44
45		8	45
46			46
47			47
48			48
49			49
50	-1		50
51	-0		51
52		10	52
53		20	53
54		40	54
55			55
56			56
57			57
58			58
59			59
60	-1		60
61	-0		61
62		1	62
63		2	63
64		4	64
65		8	65
66			66
67			67
68			68
69			69
70	-1		70
71	-0		71
72		10	72
73		20	73
74			74
75			75
76			76
77			77
78			78
79			79
80	-1		80
81	-0		81
82			82
83			83
84			84
85			85
86			86
87			87
88			88
89			89

Longitudinal Time Code





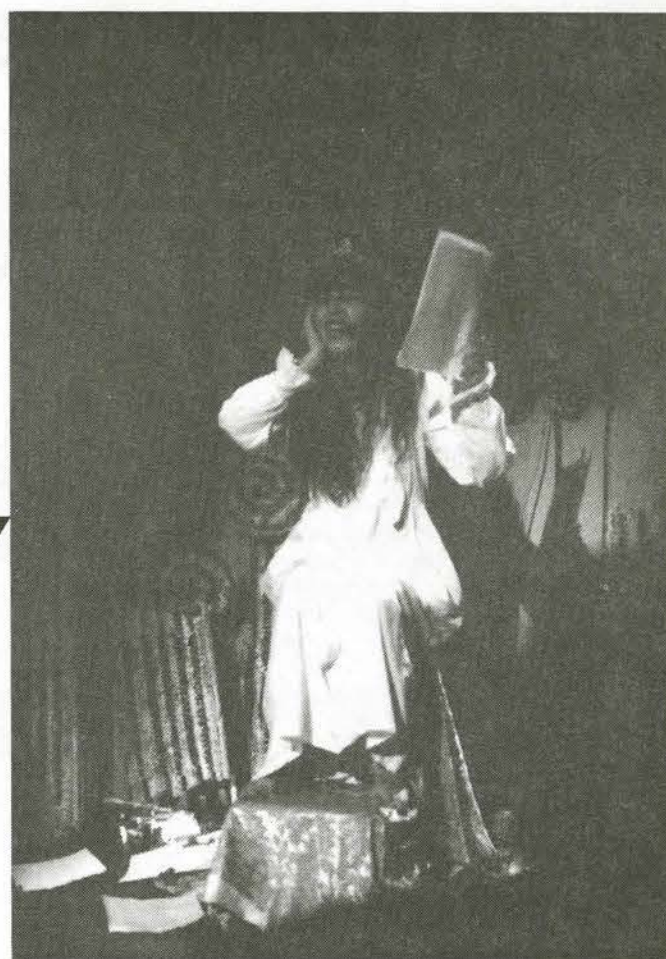
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Margo Kane

MULTIMIX THE FAILURE OF TECHNOLOGY

By Glenn Alteen



Elizabeth Fischer

As we move closer into the 21st century the idea of technology breaking down barriers between people becomes increasingly remote. Last week, I was in Newfoundland watching news of the war on the local cable channel. Nothing new there, that particular news illuminates nothing and simply provides us with an odd sort of quasi entertainment; endless discussions on equipment capabilities and mindless commentary from retired generals. It was later when the local news came on that McLuhan's *Global Village* disintegrated before my eyes. Newfoundland's cable station buys its signal from downtown Detroit and the local news was from that area. But from where I was sitting, it said very different things to me in Newfoundland than it did to a Detroit factory worker. For the majority of Newfoundlanders who don't know any black people, disproportionate representation in Detroit newscasts reinforces ugly stereotypes. Violent crime by black men becomes a recurring message, and because it is beamed to a place where Afro American culture or people aren't visible and violent crime rare, one sees a racist reinforcement unabated. This message is largely due to technological advancement out of context, because no one means for Newfoundlanders to get this message, but nonetheless, there it is.

In this last decade we have seen the breakdown in McLuhan's views on technology. The war in the Gulf and the continuing problems of racism have shown us that changes in technology don't necessarily represent breakthroughs in communication. This seems to be making its way into the art community. Artists working in performance seem to be actually turning away from technologies such as video or computers or using them in an increasingly incidental way. And increasingly, the shift is towards skills and older forms such as theatre, dance, and music. When one looks at the Ideophrenia series at Pitt Gallery or the Performance Series at the Fringe, multimedia work was largely not seen, and when it was, it was in a basic and secondary capacity. The focus of none of these performances was the exploration of these newer technologies and there seems to be a general disillusionment with this exploration as a direction in performance art.

This represents a basic shift in performance from the late '70s/early '80s, and that shift has artists moving towards a type of personal storytelling or exploration of ideas. During a forum at grunt gallery during the Fringe, actress and performance artist Margo Kane spoke of performance as being a place she could tell her own story; something she was unable to do as an actor, dancer or musician. The reaction of other artists was agreement, especially in that performance offered them a control unattainable in other forms. The history of performance has essentially been as an offshoot of visual and media arts and I was curious to see if that had changed over the last decade. It became increasingly obvious to me that the influences of the older forms (the ugly stepsisters of dance, theatre and music) were exerting some sway. Did this represent a change in the very nature of performance work from visual art to a more multi-disciplinary approach? With increasing numbers calling themselves performance artists, often with little background in media or visual art, where was performance headed? And what would it be when it got there?

It is obvious that performance is a changed beast. First off, much of the animosity that grew up in the sixties and

seventies between theatre and performance has disappeared, at least among the younger generation of performance artists. Theatre has become just another area to pillage and the idea of theatre's 2000 year history devouring performance becomes increasingly remote. What emerged during this discussion is the idea of performance retaining one basic element from the visual arts and that is of the single vision. Performance might employ skills from various forms but like the painter in the studio it is essentially one person's voice. Collaboration, if it does exist, happens on a secondary level and while solo performance may look like theatre or dance or music, for the most part it is not collaborative in the way these other forms are by their very nature.

This lack of structures in performance has become increasingly seductive to practitioners of other forms, probably by virtue of it not being chained to a set of conventions or a process. While theatre remains chained to its history and conventions, performance retains its freedom to experiment. As Margo Kane pointed out, the other forms allow you to speak in other voices but never in your own. Eric Metcalfe once said that a difference between theatre and performance is in theatre you always know they're acting. Even when playwrights use their own life's experience to write a script it is fictionalized in the process. Theatre, by its very form, requires this. Conversely, performance does not require these conventions. It allows artists to speak in any voice they choose, including their own. It furthermore gives the artist complete control over script and direction. Other performers act in a secondary fashion and never question the premise or require 'motivation'.

What is curious though is the return to basic skills to interpret these personal visions. Storytelling becomes more important than video, computers are almost nonexistent and technologies such as audio and slides become increasingly unimportant or secondary. There seems almost a reluctance towards these technologies and when they are used it is often only as a backdrop or mood-setting device. When it does get used beyond that, it almost always plays a secondary role re-echoing the theme rather than pushing the main action forward. It is as if the medium is not capable of putting ideas across or not to be trusted in this capacity. But what of the wonders of computer graphics in 2D and video, that in the '70s and early '80s threatened to revolutionize the face of visual art and performance forever? It's obvious now that the '80s heralded "the return of painting" in visual art and not the breakthrough in new technologies that was once predicted. The sheer cost of and access to equipment is still prohibitive. As well, the endless bray of MTV and Much Music which utilizes these technologies extensively are now looked on negatively by artists. Even those who had access such as Laurie Anderson and more Pop-oriented performance artists tended by decade-end to settle in to utilizing the technologies in basic ways and ceased experimenting with them.

The idea of performance as a one-off activity is becoming less an issue as well. Performances often get done and redone, changing as they go but increasingly needing more and more preparatory work. The idea of the 'action' becomes lost in the shuffle. The audiences' expectations are changing as well, a five minute work leaves people thinking it's not 'enough'. In place of the action we now have the 'spectacle', the large event that by its very scale makes the one-off essential. Action and installation pieces still exist but are

increasingly lost in the shuffle. Time-based performance as it exists in Britain and Europe never really took hold here and process is increasingly subsumed by spectacle. Increasingly, theatre's bastard children are employed. These were the essentially theatrical forms theatre would never embrace and include: circus skills, drag, storytelling, ritual, stand-up comedy and probably 'All Star' wrestling.

Where much '60s and '70s performance art was in reaction to the theatre and the theatrical, by the '80s they learned to co-exist. Theatre had become less experimental and more concerned with audiences. Theatre stopped questioning its process and finally just accepted it, and theatre artists working with changing theatre's process and conventions had to enter into a no man's land that wasn't embraced as theatre. These artists turned towards performance as a way to continue the explorations. Surely this was true of artists such as Eric Bogosian and Spalding Grey, but in Vancouver, there were Margo Kane, Sheri-D Wilson and Scott Tate, essentially making the same shift. Dance by the early '80s was breaking out of its mould and integrated different medias such as video and slide, moving further away from dance's accepted history. This included the marriage of dance to other forms, such as poetry and theatre, which culminated in multi-disciplinary events such as *City on the Edge*. Japanese-based movement performance such as "butoh" became known and further questioned the accepted movement forms.

Artists working in solo performance that was visual art based seemed to also want to make transitions. Suddenly, questions of quality shifted from the ideas to the performance itself. Rehearsal suddenly became the norm. Performance tended to be less spontaneous, more and more preparation was required. Artists would tour a piece performing it over and over again and the audience for such work began to expand. Artists such as Laurie Anderson attained popularity, which during the '70s would have been unthinkable. Performance artists were featured in *People* and started popping up in Hollywood films.

What does remain in performance is the idea of the single vision, as well as the notion that performance is still about image making. Unlike theatre, it does not have to tell stories; unlike dance, it is not about movement. When I go to a performance art work I can expect to be bored and this does not impact negatively on the work. The same boredom at a play would represent a failure. I also go with different expectations and an open mind. One requires a certain amount of trust in where the artist is taking us and we give a certain leeway that would be unthinkable in other forms.

It is in the area of trust where the failure of technology becomes so readily apparent. Its role as agent of truth or communication is in extreme doubt by all of us at this place in time. One has only to look at the war in the gulf and the CNN 'news' to see this mistrust in action. It seems time has proved McLuhan wrong and Orwell's 1984 closer to the truth. Performance artists are starting to reflect this distrust. Most significant in the difference between McLuhan's vision and Orwell's is the optimism the former implied. By 1991, in Vancouver, this optimism is dead and performance artists reflect this. The heady days of Intermedia are long gone. The important thing now is to find a place from which to speak and the voice to tell your own story. 

VANCOUVER PERFORMANCE ART SERIES 1990

sponsored by grunt gallery



Andrew Wilson



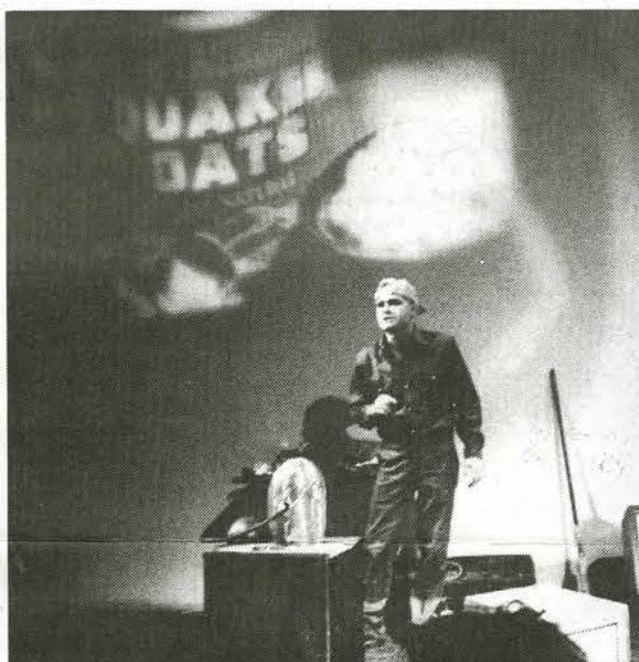
Sheri-D Wilson



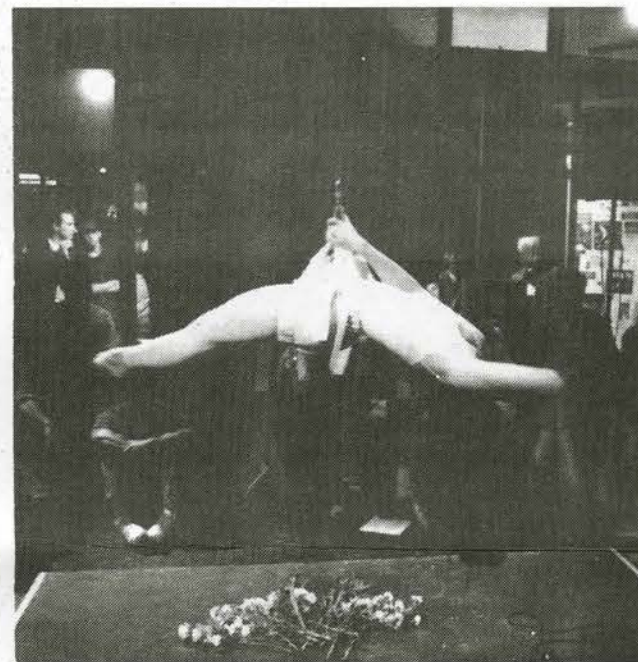
Oliv



Lowell Morris



Scott Tate



Sandra Lockwood

Curated by Glenn Alteen and Susi Milne

all photos courtesy of grunt gallery by Merle Addison

(continued from page 16)

art work outside the mainstream. While the Secretary of State still maintains programmes that 'encourage work that reflects the multicultural aspects in Canada', it has been reluctant to support work or initiatives that question or challenge stereotypical portrayals of marginalized cultures. In fact, there is resistance to applications that do not reflect or address either of the two official languages. It had shown itself to be a mediocre supporter of contemporary work, preferring instead to present non-European work as exotic and imported.

In the province of B.C., the last governmental funding body to recognize the need to shift funding priorities in line with the changing population and attitudes has, not surprisingly, been the Socred government. Their minimal support for cultural funding allows very little time or money for mainstream art practises, let alone those that have been marginalized because of language barriers or prejudice. There is no official policy on how to deal with this issue at the provincial level, although that may change in the very near future, now that Premier Vander Zalm has announced at the October 1990 Socred Convention that multiculturalism is a cornerstone of the party, and therefore, his government.

The City of Vancouver has perhaps the most progressive, and far-reaching approach to its cultural agenda. This is largely because of necessity, where depending on whose statistics are cited, the non-white population of that city has now risen to 20 per cent. It is clearly incumbent on any politician intending to remain in office that she/he reflect the views of her/his constituents, in all matters, and most particularly, culture.

In October 1990, the city announced a new "Cross-Cultural Initiatives Program", with \$50,000 in funds available for local arts groups with the following objectives:

"To encourage and enable cultural institutions and arts organizations to be more responsive to Vancouver's multi-cultural reality through organizational change, including employment equity, board membership, cross-cultural training for staff and

volunteers, and innovative cross-cultural audience development strategies and outreach programs."

It is a clear signal of an end to arms-length funding policies at the municipal level, much prized within arts communities across the country. The key intention of this new initiative by the city is to affect not only programming, but also the structure and personnel make-up of the organizations funded.

This heavy-handed approach is sure to be unpopular once its extent is understood, and depending on whatever obvious repercussions there are for societies whose all-white boards don't adapt to the new reality as perceived by the city's social planning department. On balance, it may be a useful and perhaps inevitable representation of the changing status quo. In reality, the programme is a token attempt to address multicultural funding. Of the 47 applications, totalling \$269,195 in requests, in the October, 1990 competition, 17 were given funding.⁽²⁾ (See Box on page 16)

The danger inherent in the funding bureaucracies' shifting attitudes toward multicultural funding is that, like the City of Vancouver's unabashed efforts to enforce change, individual artists and cultural groups will begin to tailor their work and programming to fit funding guidelines. In recognition of this pitfall, writer and film maker Midi Onodera addresses the dilemma in her essay in the *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered* catalogue:

"As producers, we are sometimes too eager to grab our share of the pie without regard for the long term effects. We actively participate in the 'one of each' syndrome perpetuated by 'multicultural' funding agencies when we announce that we speak for 'our people' and demand funding on the basis of racial quotas rather than on the merit of the work. We limit the content of our work to suit the criteria of the multicultural programs, instead of lobbying for diversity not only in content, but also form."

The process of work and thought being co-opted is an insidious one, especially when it involves money and much-needed visible support for work previously ignored. It would be paranoid to suggest that this new emphasis on multicultural funding is an intentional design on the part of governmental funding bodies to buy off critical views. It is less cynical to suggest however, that there is a certain motivation, or more precisely, lack of one, in these policies.

Fear of becoming a replica of the American melting pot has resulted in a jittery Canadian reaction to somehow defend 'distinct' cultures within the national whole. The irony is that this poorly-conceived approach has resulted in confusion and gross imbalances in arts funding across the country, while the American experience, where every citizen is forced to become 'American' first and foremost, has resulted in strengthening cultural and ethnic communities.

A possible solution for the negative attitude toward multiculturalism is for governments at all levels to stop seeing the cultural make-up of Canada as a problem. It is perceived as such, largely because of the competition between the old and new order for recognition, and money. Ultimately, the democratic principle of proportional representation, however shaky, will win out and funding allocations, not just in the arts but throughout society, will reflect this. As has happened often throughout history, the power structure in Canadian society is changing, from the bottom upwards. Cultural manifestations are only the most visible example of it.

(1)

The term 'multiculturalism' is in dispute among many government bodies and artists' groups, hence the various terms applied to the title. For the purposes of this article I have chosen to use it exclusively as it represents the term used by the federal government, whose proclamation of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988 resulted in this issue coming to the forefront at all levels of funding. 

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OTTAWA

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67 rue Nicholas,
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THE PUBLICATION

Yellow Peril: Reconsidered
Editor: Paul Wong

Innovative film, video and photographic work from twenty-five Asian Canadian artists featured in the national touring exhibit **Yellow Peril: Reconsidered** is highlighted in a 72-page publication, 7 by 7/8 x 10 by 9/16, perfect bound, with a 4-colour cover, b/w plates and 8 colour pages. ISBN 0-9694777-0-8

The lack of critical writing by Asian Canadians is offset by six commissioned essays ranging from theoretical analysis to anecdotal humour, including a chronicle of community media organizations, a dissection of umuticulturalism, and an examination of historical exclusion.

Insight into the artists and their work is relayed through accompanying statements, biographies and photo reproductions.

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