

from the **collection**

# Kids Take Over

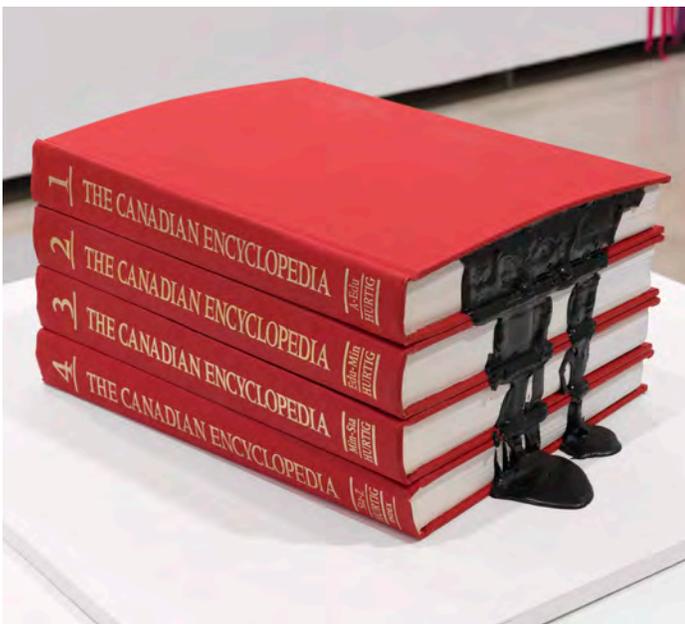


**TEACHER STUDY GUIDE**  
SPRING 2022

**Vancouver**  
Artgallery

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***"I think the artist wanted us to think about how so many books written just leave out so many parts."***

- Grade 4 Student

# VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

## TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

*Kids Take Over* aims to engage students of all ages. The exhibition vividly captures the perspectives and creative expression of elementary and high school students from Metro Vancouver, who, through weekly visits over a period of two months, were asked to respond in various ways to the paintings, prints, photographs and sculptures in this exhibition, which were produced between the 1960s and the present. Susan Rome, the Gallery's Program Coordinator for Schools and Youth, presented students with photographs of an assortment of artworks and asked students to reflect on such questions as, "What do you see?" "What would you ask the artist?" and "What do you think the artist wants us to think about?" She then invited students to write down their thoughts, create their own drawings and collectively move their bodies, using the artworks as inspiration. Spirited, curious, thoughtful, whimsical and funny, the results of these weekly workshops are scattered throughout the exhibition alongside delightful photographs of the students taken by local documentary photographer Anita Bonnarens. *Kids Take Over* is affiliated with the international Takeover Day initiative, organized by Kids in Museums, whose mission is to make museums more accessible to children, youth and families.



### DEAR TEACHER,

This teaching guide will assist you in preparing for your class tour of the exhibition *Kids Take Over*. It also provides activities to facilitate discussion before and after your school tour. Engaging in the suggested activities will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require very few materials and are easily adaptable to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Glossary section.

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Kids Take Over* takes place on the unceded territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

# **KIDS TAKE OVER**

## **3 MAIN GOALS**

1

### **TO INTRODUCE**

STUDENTS TO NEW STRATEGIES FOR HOW TO LOOK AT  
AND RESPOND TO ART

2

### **TO CONSIDER**

NEW WAYS OF SEEING AND THINKING ABOUT ART

3

### **TO EXPLORE**

INDIVIDUAL ARTWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF IDEAS, TECHNIQUES AND  
INSPIRATION



# GLOSSARY

**COLONIALISM** The practice of extending and maintaining a nation's political and economic control over another people or area.

**CONCEPTUAL ART(IST)** The idea itself, even if it is not made visual, is as much of a work of art as any finished product. Conceptual artists use their work to question the notion of "what art is."

**CONTEMPORARY ART** Art of the present day and of the recent past (within the last 30 years).

**COSMOLOGY** The study of the origin, evolution, and eventual fate of the universe. It is a body of beliefs based on creation and the destiny of humanity.

**FORMLINE** Formlines are the connected pattern of painted or carved, positive space that creates and defines Northwest Coast images. Formlines alter their thickness, usually as they bend around a corner, which introduces tension and release in traditional design.

**HAPPENING** An event that combined painting, poetry, music, dance and theatre elements and was staged as a live action. Happenings are considered the forerunners to performance art.

**PERFORMANCE ART** Performance art can be many different things, but it usually means that an artist uses their body to express ideas instead of paint. Performances can be spontaneous or planned. Artists can perform to the camera, to an audience or in a public space. It can be a bit unexpected and unusual but it should make you think deeply about the context and environment in which the performance takes place.

**PHOTO-CONCEPTUALISM** An artistic movement that emerged in Vancouver in the 1960s. The work is characterised by large-format photographic prints. This movement explored the ideas behind the photograph, the assumed "truth" of photography, and the nature of photography as fine art versus commercial art.

**OVOID** One of the basic shapes of traditional Northwest Coast art. They are building blocks that form visual centres from which design patterns or movements flow or emanate. Ovoids are thickest on the top, thinner on each side, and thinnest on the bottom. They can change orientation, but their characteristics remain the same. Ovoids are used to represent joints, eye sockets, or non-specific anatomical parts that help create the flow of the overall design.

**POP ART** Art based on modern popular culture and the mass media, especially as a critical or ironic comment on traditional fine art values.

**RACISM** When people are treated unfairly because of their skin colour or background. It causes great harm to people.

# GLOSSARY CONTINUED

**SCANNER** A scanner is a computer input device that photographs documents such as photographs and pages of text. When a document is scanned, it is converted into a digital format. This creates an electronic version of the document that can be viewed and edited on a computer.

**UNCEDDED** A term for a relationship between the government of Canada and Indigenous people where no treaties have been established. In general, "unceded" means the lands and waters of the Indigenous people were never surrendered and were taken without permission.

**VANCOUVER SCHOOL** The term has been used to describe a group of artists from Vancouver whose work is based in photo-conceptual practices and who often photograph the city itself.



***"Inside there has lots of detail, cozy warm. I'd like to read in there."***

-Grade 1 student

***"I think it is very good to recycle 110 sweaters."***

-Grade 5 student

***"Evelyn Roth's Environment for Reading is an artwork that best depicts a human's and moth's paradise. The cozy environment the artist created, using warm lights and wool, attracts those who yearn for comfort and welcomed silence. The patterns themselves appear to dance and give whichever fortunate bookworm a unique kind of company and reassurance."***

-Secondary student

# ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Kids Take Over* challenges the hierarchy that says only adults can provide art interpretation. Representing a rich array of styles and subject matter, the exhibition showcases artworks from the Gallery's collection, alongside texts and drawings by local students aged five to eighteen. For the first time ever, *Kids Take Over* reveals the process of how Gallery educators and students work together to explore and respond to art. The exhibition is the result of that vibrant process.

To prepare for this exhibition, Susan Rome, the Gallery's Program Coordinator for Schools and Youth, made weekly visits to three classrooms across Greater Vancouver over a two-month period, including grades 1/2, 3/4 and 11/12. Presenting students with photographs of the artworks, Rome asked students to observe the works' formal attributes, reflect on the themes evoked, and imagine the intentions of the artists. She then invited students to vocalize or write down their thoughts, create their own drawings, and collectively move their bodies, using the artworks as inspiration. Two of the exhibition's artists, Evan Lee and Brendan Lee Satish Tang, also visited the classrooms to discuss their art practices and engage directly with the students. The students' often-unexpected responses are scattered throughout the exhibition. Photographs of the process taken by documentary photographer Anita Bonnarens further enliven *Kids Take Over*.



*Kids Take Over* emerged from a desire on the part of the curators to engage with children and youth, highlighting their creativity and to cultivating a future generation of artists and art lovers. Moreover, Gallery staff wanted to bring new voices into the Gallery and make space for fresh points of view on the Gallery's collection.

*Kids Take Over* empowers students to develop, deepen and express their responses to the world around them in an unfiltered way through art.



***"I see the tentacles in the U shapes."***

–Grade 1 student

***"I see a bird-octopus-eel hybrid thing and I think it's partying."***

–Grade 4 student

Opposite: Photo: Anita Bonnarens. Above: Robert Davidson, *Octopus (Nuu)*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

# PRE- AND POST-TOUR ACTIVITIES

## GRADE 2 – GRADE 12



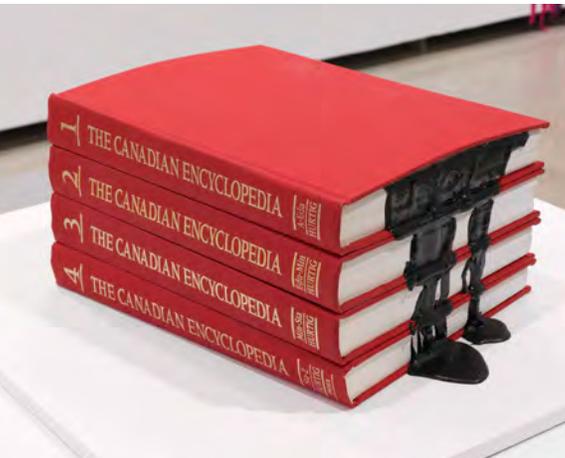
### 1. ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

Pre-Tour Activity



### 2. ALL AGES / IN MY HOUSE

Inspired by the art of Annie Pootoogook



### 3. INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / ALTERED WORD POEM

Inspired by the art of Chantal Gibson

Above, from top: Photo: Anita Bonnarens.



Hum hum hummm  
hum hummmm  
Hum hummmm  
hum hum hummm  
Hum hum hummm  
hum hummmm  
Hum hummmm  
hum hum hummm

#### 4. INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / STRIKE A POSE

Inspired by the art of Ken Lum



#### 5. ALL AGES / UNDER A TREE

Inspired by the art of Evan Lee



#### 6. INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / MASH UP

Inspired by the art of Brendan Tang



#### 6. ALL AGES / WHAT'S BEHIND THE DOOR?

Inspired by the art of John MacGregor

# ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY



### OBJECTIVE

Students connect with the lives, artistic processes and works of artists in *Kids Take Over*.

### MATERIALS

- Writing materials
- Access to the internet
- Artist Information sheet (p.16) and the Student Worksheet (p.18)

### PROCESS

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Give each group one of the artists from the Artist Information Sheet. (p.16)
- Give each student a copy of the Student Worksheet (p.18) and ask them to consider what they need to find out to complete their section.
- Have them conduct research using the internet, either at home or at school.

- Ask each group to find and describe a piece of work by the artist and add it into the space provided on the Worksheet.
- Have each group present their information while the rest of the students fill in their worksheets.

### CONCLUSION

Discuss the following:

- What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?
- Which piece are students curious about seeing in the exhibition?
- Do the artists' works connect to or resonate with students' lives? Why or why not?
- What else are students interested in finding out about the artists?

Above: Photo: Anita Bonnarens. Opposite: Left: Gathie Falk, *30 Grapefruit*, 1970, ceramic, glaze, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Endowment Fund; Right: Photo: Anita Bonnarens

# ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

*"Artists show things that are not going well to help people see."*

–Grade 4 student

## ARTISTS BACKGROUND

### Gathie Falk, b. 1928

Born in Manitoba, Gathie Falk has fond memories of her childhood: piles of fresh vegetables, trees covered in fruit, beautiful homemade dresses—all images that would later become key to her creative process. She moved to Vancouver in 1947 and taught elementary school. She studied art in her spare time and became a full-time artist in 1965. She enjoys creating using different media, such as painting, drawing, performance art, sculpture and ceramics, to transform ordinary objects into extraordinary things. Falk has produced some of the most well-known art in Canada and abroad, reinventing clothing, fruit, plants and shoes to ask us to consider the beauty of everyday things. Gathie Falk has become one of Canada's most critically acclaimed artists, and at 94 years old, is still working and creating in Vancouver today.

### Evan Lee, b. 1975

Vancouver-based Chinese Canadian artist Evan Lee creates paintings and drawings but is best known for making photographs in new and unexpected ways. One unexpected way is to not even use a camera. Lee uses a flatbed scanner to make images, so these images are scanner "captures," not photographs. These are called camera-less photographs. Lee also experiments by creating bodies of work in which he prints found imagery onto photo paper, and then paints into the ink, creating artworks that lie between the definition of photography and painting. Evan Lee pushes the boundaries of how to create or "capture" images with and without a camera. Scholar Clint Burnham has suggested that Lee's artworks "reveal the world we cannot see, either with, or without a camera."



# ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

### **Ken Lum, b. 1956**

Born in Vancouver, Ken Lum is a conceptual artist. He uses combinations of photographic images and text, sculptural components, and ideas about language to produce art that addresses modern life. He often pairs an image with text in ways that invite the viewer to ask questions about social issues such as identity, immigration, language and political differences. He rarely creates his own art but works with studio photographers and tradespeople on his projects. In addition to his text and photograph artworks, Lum is also known for his furniture sculptures. In 2010, Lum completed Monument for East Vancouver, known as the East Van Cross, one of many public art projects he has worked on in his career. His work has been widely exhibited around the world since the 1970s.

### **Annie Pootoogook, (1969-2016)**

Annie Pootoogook was a Canadian Inuk artist known for her pen and coloured pencil drawings. She worked in the Inuit tradition of *sulijuk*, which means "it is true." This means Pootoogook often portrayed the experiences of those in her community of Kinngait, Nunavut and the memories and events from her own life. Pootoogook drew from memory and her work primarily focused on three subject types: the everyday experiences of women living in Kinngait, the hardships faced by northern Canadian communities, and the impact of technology on traditional Inuit life. Her art was influenced by both her mother, Napachie Pootoogook, and her grandmother, Pitseolak Ashoona, both of whom were accomplished artists. Annie Pootoogook became an internationally-known artist after becoming the first Inuit artist to win the Sobey Art Prize in 2006. Her art is recognized as an important contribution to Canadian contemporary art.

### **Evelyn Roth, b. 1936**

Evelyn Roth is primarily a self-taught experimental artist. She was born in Mundare, Alberta and moved to Vancouver in the early 1960s. While living in Vancouver, she received international attention for her experimental approach to creating artworks that do not distinguish between art, craft and use. Roth has been interested in recycling since the 1970s and uses her knitting and crocheting skills to recycle natural fibres she finds in thrift stores, videotape, and other found material into moveable, wearable artworks. She continues to be interested in the relationship between the materials she uses and the possible forms they can be transformed into. Evelyn Roth currently lives in Adelaide, Australia.

# ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

### ARTISTS BACKGROUND CONTINUED

#### **Brendan Tang, b. 1975**

Born in Ireland to Trinidadian parents of Chinese and Indian descent, Brendan Tang received a formal art education in the United States and Canada, where he is a naturalized citizen. Currently living and working in Vancouver, his family heritage has inspired his widely-known sculptural ceramic work that unites Asian and Western cultural styles. He combines traditional forms such as vases and plates decorated with Ming-style patterns and fuses them with brightly-coloured, cartoonish parts that reflect his personal interest in pop culture, sci fi, manga and game design. He likens his artistic practice to channel-surfing, where he absorbs, interprets and banks a great deal of visual information to inspire his work. Humour is also an essential part of Brendan Tang's art as an effective way to invite the viewer to consider sensitive issues such as globalization, climate change, war and politics. Brendan Tang continues to produce and exhibit work and his practice has taken him across North America and to India, Europe, the Middle East, the Caribbean, China and Japan.

#### **Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, b. 1957**

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun is a Vancouver-based artist of Tsartlip (Coast Salish) and Okanagan descent. Yuxweluptun is Salish for "man of many masks," a name given to the artist during his initiation into the Sxwaixwe Society at the age of fourteen. Yuxweluptun is a political activist and he has chosen art as his way to give voice to his political concerns. He sees himself as a history painter whose art is about putting Indigenous people and issues in stories about modern day life. He does this with figurative and abstract works that are full of striking and vibrant colour, combining Coast Salish cosmology, Northwest Coast's traditional formlines and ovoids along with elements of European landscape painting and Pop art. Inspired by historical events, documents, treaties and his own personal experiences, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's art is very much about creating discussions and awareness regarding Indigenous issues and culture and the destruction of the natural world, believing that art can create discussion between people from different cultures and belief systems.

# ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

### ARTIST INFORMATION SHEET

#### GATHIE FALK

- childhood memories are key to her creative process
- transforms ordinary objects into extraordinary things
- has created some of the most well-known art in Canada and abroad
- enjoys creating in different mediums

#### EVAN LEE

- creates paintings, drawings and installations
- best known for making photographs in new and unexpected ways
- often creates camera-less photographs using a desktop scanner
- creates prints of found images, and paints into the ink

#### KEN LUM

- conceptual artist
- combines photographic images and text
- creates art to ask questions about social issues
- created the public artwork Monument for East Vancouver in 2010

#### ANNIE POOTOOGOOK

- Inuk artist
- uses pen and pencil crayon to create drawings
- draws from memory
- portrays experiences of those who live in Kinngait, Nunavut

# ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

### ARTIST INFORMATION SHEET CONTINUED

#### EVELYN ROTH

- primarily self-taught experimental artist
- has been interested in recycling since the 1970s
- uses knitting and crocheting skills to recycle found materials into moveable sculptures
- interested in the relationship between materials and how they can be transformed

#### BRENDAN TANG

- born in Ireland to Trinidadian parents of Chinese and Indian descent—his family heritage inspires his work
- widely known for his ceramic sculptures which are a mash-up of different styles and interests
- his art invites the viewer to consider globalisation, war, politics and climate change
- humour is an important element of his art

#### LAWRENCE PAUL YUXWELUPTUN

- a political activist
- Indigenous artist of Tsartlip (Coast Salish) and Okanagan descent
- style combines Coast Salish cosmology, Northwest Coast's traditional formline and ovoids with European landscape painting and Pop Art
- creates discussions and awareness for Indigenous issues and culture and the destruction of the natural world

# ALL AGES / GET TO KNOW THE ARTISTS

## PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

STUDENT WORKSHEET (FILL IN THE CHART WITH THE FOLLOWING)

	PERSONAL INFORMATION	TYPE OF ART	MATERIALS USED	AN ARTWORK
<b>GATHIE FALK</b>				
<b>EVAN LEE</b>				
<b>KEN LUM</b>				
<b>ANNIE POOTOOGOOK</b>				
<b>EVELYN ROTH</b>				
<b>BRENDAN TANG</b>				
<b>LAWRENCE PAUL YUXWELUPTUN</b>				

# IN MY HOUSE

## INSPIRED BY ANNIE POOTOOGOOK



### OBJECTIVE

Learn more about the life and art process of Inuk artist Annie Pootoogook and create a drawing of everyday life in your home.

### DISCUSSION

Inuk artist Annie Pootoogook created drawings of everyday life in her community of Kinngait, Nunavut. She worked in the Inuit tradition of *sulijuk*, which means "it is true." Annie Pootoogook drew life exactly as she saw it.

Although technology and colonialism have dramatically changed Inuit life, the North has also stayed true to tradition: community, food and language remain sources of Inuit pride. In her drawings, Annie Pootoogook depicted what is still valued and unique in her culture and what is changing rapidly.

Annie Pootoogook was born in 1969. She grew up surrounded by artists, including her grandmother, parents and uncle. After high school, she began to draw regularly, working alongside the Elders at Kinngait Studios. She would watch and imitate senior artists while developing her own individual style. For Pootoogook, drawing was a daily ritual. Each day she would work at the studio with focus, intent and a drive to represent something new. Through her drawings, she found purpose and independence.

Annie Pootoogook became well known for her work showing contemporary Inuit homes. Using felt-tip pen, graphite and pencil crayon, and drawing from memory, her works are narrative-based, telling stories or documenting her life. They depict life as she experienced it in Kinngait, from eating meals and doing her hair to watching television and playing games. Her home interiors are often a combination of many real homes. Pootoogook widened the possibilities for what Inuit art could depict, beyond hunting and fishing, and in doing so broke ground for a younger generation of artists. She became an internationally-known artist after becoming the first Inuit artist to win the Sobey Art Prize. Today, her art is recognized as an important contribution to Canadian contemporary art.

Annie Pootoogook, *Listening to the Radio*, 2005–06, coloured pencil, ink on paper, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft

# IN MY HOUSE

## INSPIRED BY ANNIE POOTOOGOOK

### MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pencil crayons
- Felt tip pen

### PROCESS

- Begin by looking at Annie Pootoogook's drawing titled *Listening to the Radio*, 2005-2006. (p.19) As a class, discuss what you see. What similarities do you notice in your own home? What is different? Annie Pootoogook shares Inuit cultures in her work—can you find them? What narrative (story) can you tell by looking at Pootoogook's drawing?
- Close your eyes and imagine a room in your home. What are some of the things you like to do in this room? What are some of the objects you find in this room? What are some of the details that make it personal?
- Using a light coloured pencil crayon, create a light sketch from memory of an everyday event in the room you chose. Don't worry about mistakes. If you sketch lightly, you will be able to make the lines you don't like disappear as you begin colouring in your drawing.
- Go over the lines you are satisfied with using the felt tip pen.
- Colour in your drawing with pencil crayons.

### CONCLUSION

- Display the artworks in the classroom.
- How are the artworks similar and different? Did you learn anything new about your classmates by looking at their drawings of everyday life in their home?
- Discuss the process. What was easy or hard about creating your drawing? What are some techniques you discovered? If you were to do the project again, what would you do the same and what would you do differently?
- Go back to the room you documented in your home. Do you see it any differently now? If so, how?

# INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / ALTERED WORD POEM

## INSPIRED BY CHANTAL GIBSON

### OBJECTIVE

To look more closely at Chantal Gibson's altered book sculpture, *Untitled (Redacted Text)* (2019), and create a redacted-text poem inspired by her work.

### DISCUSSION

Chantal Gibson is a mixed-race Canadian writer, poet, artist and educator. Her art and writing confronts colonialism, racism, and representations of Black women in Western culture. She has been making altered book sculptures since 2010 that challenge the ways that colonial values and narratives exist in everyday objects and cultural histories. She is interested in how knowledge is produced and reproduced, and how it becomes naturalised and woven into the fabric of Canadian culture. She has become particularly well known for works in which she manipulates books and written language to make the text unintelligible, or make the text tell a different story. Sometimes she adds sculptural elements that resemble black hair to books which frequently omit the history of Black Canadians from their pages, as a way to reclaim a physical Black presence. Gibson has further developed these ideas by utilising materials such as ink and rubber to enact a variety of conceptual interventions within the archives of history.

Chantal Gibson's altered books remind us that we are part of history. We are not separate from the books we read. They say something about us and the cultures we live in, and the way we produce and share information. We are part of the national histories we read and study in our schools every day. While growing up, Gibson did not see any Black figures in her secondary school history books. She never questioned why until she went to university. Her work asks us to consider the voices, stories and bodies that have been erased or excluded from historical narratives, and she presents ways in which we can resist these historical erasures.

*Untitled (Redacted Text)* is an altered book sculpture composed of four Canadian encyclopedias that are presented in a vertical stack. Black rubber pours out from between the covers and drips down the edges of the books, giving the impression that the ink is exiting the book, or rather that Blackness itself is being pushed from the pages. The piece attests to the compelling relationship between writing and visual art within Chantal Gibson's practice, where books meant for reading become sculptures for viewing.



Chantal Gibson, *Untitled (Redacted Text)*, 2019 (installation view), mixed media altered text, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Audain BC Art Acquisition Fund

# INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / ALTERED WORD POEM

## INSPIRED BY CHANTAL GIBSON

### MATERIALS

- Newspaper article, old book page or magazine
- Black marker
- Pencil
- Eraser

### PROCESS

- As a class, discuss Chantal Gibson's artwork, *Untitled (Redacted Text)* (p.21). What do you see? What is Gibson asking us to think about? How do you think she created this sculpture?
- Find a newspaper article, old book page or a magazine that you feel comfortable altering.
- Skim the words on your page. Don't read the words carefully. Keep an eye out for an "anchor word" as you skim the page. An anchor word is one word on the page that stands out to you because it is loaded with meaning and significance. Starting with an anchor word is important because it helps you to imagine possible themes and topics for your poem.
- Now read the page of text in its entirety. Use a pencil to lightly circle any words that connect to the anchor word and resonate with you. Resonant words might be expressive or evocative, but for whatever reason, these are the words on the page that stick with you. Avoid circling more than three words in a row.
- Go back and read the words you've lightly circled. Erase any that you do not need. You can also eliminate parts of words, especially any endings, if it helps to keep the meaning of the poem clear. If you need a few connecting words (a, it, the, etc.), then dive back in and see if you can find them between the words you want to connect. You often can.
- Go back through your poem and boldly box the words you are keeping with a pen. Erase any circles around words you do not want.
- Black out all the text you do not want with your marker. Be very careful not to draw over the circled words you selected for your final poem.
- Display your altered text poems in the classroom.

### CONCLUSION

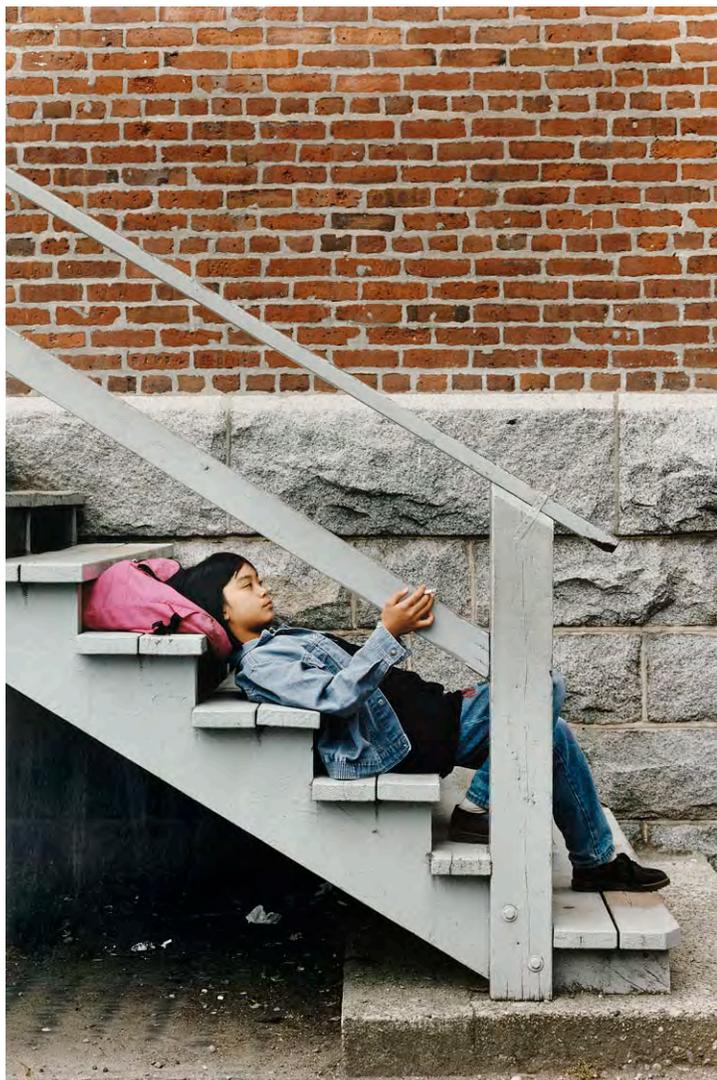
- Read your poems in class.
- Discuss the process of creating your poem. In what ways was it surprising or challenging? If you did this process again, what would you do the same? What would you do differently?

***"I think it looks like books with ink spilling out. It looks like words leaking out of this book about history but it doesn't have enough black history"***

–Grade 5 student

# INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / STRIKE A POSE

INSPIRED BY KEN LUM



Hum hum hummm  
hum hummmmm  
Hum hummmmm  
hum hum hummm  
Hum hum hummm  
hum hummmmm  
Hum hummmmm  
hum hum hummm

## OBJECTIVE

Create a photographic image mixed with text to convey a message important to you inspired by Ken Lum's artwork titled *Hum hum hummm* (1994).

## DISCUSSION

Ken Lum has become well known for his photo-text works. When he first began to attract attention as an artist in the early 1980s, he was closely associated with the Vancouver School, a group of artists working mostly with photo-conceptualism. These artists were working with media that deliberately blurred the boundaries between the worlds of commerce and art. Lum's experience as a Chinese Canadian living in East Vancouver has provided the context for much of his work, which often explores ideas pertaining to class, culture, race and identity.

Ken Lum, *Hum, hum, hummm*, 1994, chromogenic print, lacquer, enamel on aluminum, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Anonymous Gift

# INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / STRIKE A POSE

## INSPIRED BY KEN LUM

In his art practice, Ken Lum works with studio photographers and tradespeople. He rarely manufactures or fabricates his work by himself. Using the portrait as his working model, Lum comments on various elements of contemporary life and art by mixing in text, whether it be a person's name or a fragment of a thought or dialogue, with photographs of stereotypes of people in ordinary, but staged, situations and environments. The friction that is created between the text and the image, while usually ironic, is unsettling and vague, but in the end, the viewer often feels some kind of kinship and sympathy for the characters in Lum's images.

*Hum Hum Hummm* is part of a series that Ken Lum produced in 1994 which was presented on large aluminium panels. In this work, Lum pairs photographs with various texts that appear to be the thoughts or fragments of dialogue of the characters portrayed. In *Hum Hum Hummm* a small child is seen laying down along the lower end of an outside staircase. There are a number of possible interpretations to this photograph: the child could be waiting for someone, daydreaming, skipping school, or running away, or could be hurt and unable to move. The text paired with the image suggests an optimistic reading: a child resting on a school step, their thoughts focused on nothing but being. The child here represents a new generation and the hope for the future.

## MATERIALS

- Cameras
- Printer (to print images)
- Coloured paper
- Markers
- Glue

## PROCESS

- Look at Ken Lum's work titled *Hum hum hummm*. (p23)
- Discuss the artwork. What do you see? What is happening in the image? What is the child doing? How does the text relate to the image? Does the text offer clues to what is happening in the picture? What choices did Ken Lum make when composing the portrait in regards to posture, gesture and gaze? Do they offer clues to the story within the image? Why do you think Lum added these words to the image? What is the idea of the artwork?
- Break into groups. Within your groups come up with an issue or message important to you. An example might be bullying, inclusion, healthy lunches, more free time, etc. What do you and your group want to share?
- Ken Lum stages his portraits of ordinary people doing everyday things. Decide who will be the actors, photographer and director in your group.

# INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / STRIKE A POSE

## INSPIRED BY KEN LUM

- Think about what you need to support the message you want to tell in your image. Location? Props?
- Think about how the actors will support your message. What is their posture? How should they gesture? Where should they be gazing?
- Photograph your image.
- As a group, choose the photograph you consider to be the most successful.
- Have your teacher use the printer to print your image.
- What text do you want to add to your image? Think about how the words will help support your idea.
- Choose a piece of coloured paper you think enhances your work.
- Glue your image on one side of the coloured paper.
- Use markers to add your text to the coloured paper.
- Display your finished work in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

- Each group should have the opportunity to share their artwork with the class. Ask the rest of the class what they think the idea behind the artwork is. What do they see that makes them think that? Share your idea and the decisions you made to support your idea/message.
- What did you learn about composing a photograph? How important was the posture, gesture and gaze of the actors? How did you make decisions regarding the addition of text in your artwork?
- Was the process challenging? What would you do the same or differently next time? Did you think the addition of text made sharing your message easier? Why or why not?

***“The humming is the music in her head and she forgot the words.”***

–Grade 2 student

***“It makes me feel real relaxed because they’re lying down and the words are things I might say when I am meditating.”***

–Grade 4 student

# ALL AGES / UNDER A TREE

INSPIRED BY EVAN LEE



## OBJECTIVE

Create a pastel drawing of a tree inspired by *Woman Under a Tree* (2019), by Evan Lee.

## DISCUSSION

Evan Lee is known as a photographer. He likes to create in new and unexpected ways. Sometimes he starts with found photographs that he repurposes and transforms with oil paint, sometimes he prints photographs on canvas so they look like paintings, and other times he doesn't even use a camera! Instead, he places objects directly on a scanner and makes prints.

When asked about his process he said, "There is no easy answer." In his photo paintings there are different layers of printed pigment and oil paint. Some parts of the painting were first printed from heavily-edited digital composites of photographs and

then painted over afterward. Evan Lee added, "I like to think it makes it more interesting and helps the relevance of painting in the age of photography."

This painting was based on a series of photographs that Evan Lee took in East Vancouver. He created abstract paintings by changing the colours and shapes of what he saw in the photographs.

## MATERIALS

- Drawing paper
- Pastels (oil or chalk)

## PROCESS

- Discuss the artwork (above). What words would you use to describe the colours in this painting? This painting is called *Woman Under a Tree*. What do you think the woman is doing there? What do you see that makes you say that? When an artist changes the shape, colours or size of objects, it is called abstraction. Where did Evan Lee use abstraction in this painting? What are some of the different brushstrokes you see in Evan Lee's painting?

# ALL AGES / UNDER A TREE

## INSPIRED BY EVAN LEE

- As a class, go outside and find a tree to sit under. If your class is unable to go outside, imagine yourself sitting under a tree.
- Think of three words to describe the experience while you are sitting under a tree. Think about what objects you would surround yourself with while sitting there. If the tree was broken into shapes, what would those shapes be? What colours would you use to describe your experience?
- Come back inside and create an abstract drawing of your experience. Start by drawing your tree using the shapes you discovered while outside, or using your imagination.
- Think about what colours you will use to describe your experience. Remember that in abstraction, colours do not have to be the same as they are in real life. You can use colour to describe emotion or temperature.
- What other elements do you want to add to your artwork? Will you place yourself under the tree?
- Fill in your drawing with colour. If you are using oil pastel, try to add at least three layers of colour to your work before you begin to blend. Think about the directions you use to add colour. Maybe you want to colour with a curved line when colouring your tree. Maybe you could use a dash or horizontal line for the sky and a vertical or wavy line for the ground.
- Display your drawings in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

- Discuss the process and the finished works.
- What were some of the things you had to take into consideration while planning and creating your work?
- Did the experience of going outside and sitting under a tree (or imagining sitting under a tree) change how you made your artwork? Why or why not?
- Where do you notice similarities and differences in shape, colour and styles?
- Share the decisions you made in your drawing in regard to shape and colour.

***"I think Evan Lee wants us to think about how beautiful life can be if we take the time to find it."***

–Grade 2 student

***"This piece now makes me feel a new sense of meaning. I like thinking of the way it brings underrepresented communities to a place of showcase. It brings life to the mundane moments of day-to-day living in an engaging way for the viewer. The process of this being a painting of a photo that Lee took highlights the idea of real moments."***

–Secondary student

# INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / MASH UP

## INSPIRED BY BRENDAN TANG



### OBJECTIVE

To create a mash-up drawing that represents you, inspired by Brendan Tang's *Manga Ormolu 5.Oj* (2010).

### DISCUSSION

Brendan Tang is widely known for his sculptural ceramic work. His work explores issues of identity and the hybridization of our material and non-material culture while also expressing a fascination with both futuristic and ancient traditions. Tang is an artist who gets inspiration from many sources, then dives into the studio with a head full of images and tries to bring them to life. His early exposure to multiple cultures taught him to be able to shift the way he expresses himself to fit in with different social situations, and he believes the cultural mash-up he grew up with results in the type of work he makes. Humour plays a role in his work also. Tang believes

humour serves to not only hold the viewer's attention, but it is also a great way to deliver heavy concepts. His sculptures are labour-intensive and detail-oriented.

In the words of one high school student, "*Manga Ormolu 5.Oj* represents hybrid identity, using traditional art and ceramic styles and mingling them with modern, technology-inspired visuals. It reconciles two main wars within the human experience: a clash of ethnic identities, of cultural dissonance, and historic value being corroded or ignored due to the demands of modern life and technology. It's interesting that it looks almost anatomical, like a heart or a human body, as if this war is taking place within us and the artwork is a portrait. I like that the different materials present in this piece don't merge smoothly—the vase structure at the top creases and there are harsh, clear lines connecting the different elements. The creased pottery is reminiscent of clothes folding as a person moves, which further emphasizes the theme of human portraiture. The entire thing seems to be pulling focus toward the centre, so I find it interesting that the very centre is this void of black nothingness. Maybe it represents a feeling of desolation, that we lose a part of ourselves, of our core identity and history, through this warring hybridity."

# INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY / MASH UP

INSPIRED BY BRENDAN TANG

## MATERIALS

- Paper
- Drawing pencils
- Eraser
- Markers (optional)

## PROCESS

- Discuss Brendan Tang's *Manga Ormolu 5.Oj.* (p.28) What do you see? What do you think the artist is interested in? How do you think he made this artwork? How has he mashed up different cultures? What do you think Tang wants us to think about?
- Think about objects you would use to represent you. In one minute, write down as many things as you can think of that have a connection to you. Don't think about it, just do it.
- Now think about an animal that you feel a connection to. Again, take one minute to write down as many different animals you feel represent you, or that you feel a connection too.
- Go over your list. Circle two objects and one animal that you feel best represent you.
- Brendan Tang often begins with sketching while creating ceramic sculptures. Use the three things you chose to begin your mash-up sketch. Start by drawing lightly. This way, any shapes and lines you do not like will easily disappear when you begin to finalise your drawing.
- Brendan Tang's interest in manga, sci-fi, pop culture and video games often inspire his style. How can your interests inspire your mash-up sketch?
- Once you are satisfied with the light sketch of your mash-up, begin to darken the lines you want to keep and add shading or colour.
- Once your drawing is complete, display it in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

- What choices did you make when mashing up your two objects and one animal?
- What other things did you think about when creating your drawing?
- Was this process easy or challenging? Why or why not?
- How are your drawings similar? How are they different?

***"This piece reflects the fragile balance of modern technology and the restoration of culture. The clash of ethnic identity and modernity can result in the destruction of culture; and so, this piece presents an important question: how does culture fit into a futuristic society?"***

–Secondary student

# ALL AGES / WHAT'S BEHIND THE DOOR?

INSPIRED BY JOHN MACGREGOR



John MacGregor, *Three Doors; Yellow Door*, 1970, wood, paint, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe

# ALL AGES / WHAT'S BEHIND THE DOOR?

INSPIRED BY JOHN MACGREGOR

## OBJECTIVE

Create a story inspired by John MacGregor's *Three Doors; Yellow Door* (1970).

## DISCUSSION

John MacGregor was born in England and came to Canada as a child. Early in his career as an artist, he liked to do uncommon things with everyday objects. He gained a certain notoriety in the 1960s with his graphic and sculptural works which gave domestic objects such as doors, pianos and chairs human characteristics. *Three Doors; Yellow Door* by John MacGregor is an example of his work during this time.

## MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pencil or pen

## PROCESS

- Discuss John MacGregor's *Three Doors; Yellow Door*. (p.30) How is this door different from the doors in your home? If this door was human, what would its personality be like? What do you see that makes you say that? What do you think the rest of this door's house looks like?
- Take a moment to think about what is behind this door. What would the room look like? What would be in it? Who would live there? Would they be friendly? Mean? Outgoing? Shy? How would they dress? What would they like to do?
- Once you have begun to let your imagination run loose looking at MacGregor's *Three Doors; Yellow Door*, write a short story about what you find when you open the door.

## CONCLUSION

- Share your stories in class. How were they similar or different?

***"It looks like a smile from the side view."***

–Grade 2 student

***"I think the door almost looks like it's sentient and has emotions, like it's leaning to the side in an inquisitive way. It almost reverses the idea of a door or opening; rather than me wondering what's behind the door, the door is wondering about me. It looks surreal, with the line of the ground being off kilter, like something from Alice in Wonderland. I would like to ask where he imagined this door to lead."***

–Secondary student

# FURTHER LEARNING

## TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCES



### INFORMATION REGARDING KIDS IN MUSEUMS TAKEOVER INITIATIVE

- [www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk](http://www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk)

### INTERNET

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun

- <https://vancouversun.com/entertainment/local-arts/lawrence-paul-yuxweluptun-the-indigenous-history-painter-of-modern-life>

Brendan Tang

- <https://interlocutorinterviews.com/new-blog/2021/6/15/brendan-lee-satish-tang-interview-c24-earthen-delights>
- <https://lhproject.org/residency/past-residents/brendan-tang/>

Annie Pootoogook

- <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/annie-pootoogook/biography/>

### DEFINITIONS

- <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms>
- [www.sealaskaheritage.org](http://www.sealaskaheritage.org)

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*Kids Take Over* is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery, and is curated by Zoë Chan, Assistant Curator; Mandy Ginson, Assistant Curator; and Julie Martin, Curatorial Assistant, in collaboration with Susan Rome, Program Coordinator: Schools and Youth, and Christina Jones, Family Programs Coordinator

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