

Far and Near: the Distance(s) between Us

那麼遠，又那麼近：我們之間的距離

Opening Reception

Hart House Quad, Wednesday, September 6, 2017, 6 - 8 pm

Public Programming

Please check the exhibition webpage for latest updates on the events:

<http://artmuseum.utoronto.ca/exhibition/far-near-distances-us/>

Re:Visiting Desires, a video screening presented in conjunction with the exhibition, followed by Q & A
Works by **Jennifer Chan**, **Richard Fung**, **Brenda Joy Lem**,
Ho Tam, **Lisa Wong**, **Wayne Yung**
Music Room, Hart House
Friday, September 15, 7 - 9 pm

Artist's Talk: Chih-Chien Wang

Supported by the Department of Arts, Culture and Media's Equity and Diversity in the Arts initiative, University of Toronto Scarborough (1265 Military Trail)
Room AA304, Arts & Administration Building, UTSC
Tuesday, September 26, 1 - 2 pm

Chinese Diaspora in Canada: Chinese Canadian Art as an Apparatus of Revisiting History, a talk by Henry Heng Lu, as a part of the Moon Festival celebrations at the Toronto Public Library

Hinton Learning Theatre, Toronto Reference Library
Saturday, October 14, 2 - 4 pm

Public Lecture: Ken Lum

Room TBA, Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design (1 Spadina Crescent)
Thursday, October 19, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Discovering and Preserving the History: Chinese Canadian Archives at Toronto Public Library, a talk by

Annie Fan, Archivist, Toronto Public Library
Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
Saturday, October 21, 1 - 2 pm

Curator's Tour: Henry Heng Lu

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
Saturday, October 21, 2 - 3 pm

Artist's Talk: Karen Tam, moderated by Professor Lily Cho
Sponsored by the Bissell-Heyd-Associates Chair of American Studies

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
Thursday, October 26, 2 - 4 pm

Off-site Projects

Gu Xiong's photographic intervention "I am Who I Am" and a selection from **Karen Tam**'s Chinese restaurant menu collection, at the John M. Kelly Library, St. Michael's College (113 St. Joseph St, 1st floor); **Gu Xiong**'s work is also on view at the E.J. Pratt Library, Victoria College (71 Queen's Park Crescent).

Far and Near: the Distance(s) between Us

那麼遠，又那麼近：我們之間的距離

September 6 - October 29, 2017

Curated by Henry Heng Lu 盧恆

Works by Alvis Choi aka Alvis Parsley,

Chun Hua Catherine Dong, Gu Xiong, Will Kwan, Ho Tam,

Ken Lum, Morris Lum, Karen Tam, Chih-Chien Wang,

Paul Wong, Winnie Wu

Within the realm of postcolonial theory, there have been recurrent discussions of the idea of home. For Chinese Canadians, whether Canadian-born or naturalized, is Canada home? As addressed in this exhibition, "Chinese" does not necessarily imply being born in China, but indicates what or who may be seen or identified as Chinese. While the notion of "Chinese" is highly debatable as a term to categorize and configure multiple ethnicities, how does mainstream Canada define "Chinese" identities? Hyphenated citizens or not, how do Chinese Canadians position themselves in national narratives?

In Canada, discriminatory legislative acts such as the Head Tax, imposed on Chinese immigration from 1885 to 1923, and the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, evidence a racist past of this country. (The Immigration Act was repealed in 1947, but some of the unfair policies were retained until 1967 when the ethnicity-based immigration system was ceased.) As the widely-accepted 1988 Multiculturalism Act fails to acknowledge the historical inequities of race and ethnic relations¹, it has also been seen to entrench problematic practices of Cultural Essentialism, while not eliminating ongoing systemic racism and challenging whiteness on an institutional level. **Far and Near: the Distance(s) between Us** aims to open up conversations about what *Chineseness*, *Canadianness* and *Community* mean in the evolving political landscape of Canada. Concerned with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through to current Multicultural policies, the exhibition also seeks to de-categorize the more recent Chinese immigrants as a Model Minority, and to address their social, cultural and political segregation.



Alien in Residence (2014), Alvis Choi aka Alvis Parsley. Photo by Kat Rizza Photography.

The late 1970s and 1980s witnessed the emergence of Asian² Canadian identity politics in the wake of Canada's adoption of Multiculturalism. For Asian Canadian art (and the visual arts specifically), the early 1990s were a time when influential exhibitions started to proliferate in the context of the peak of Canadian cultural race politics³. Inspired by earlier hallmark exhibitions such as "Yellow Peril: Reconsidered" (1990) and "Self Not Whole" (1991), *Far and Near* seeks to make a connecting link between the preceding and the more recent generation of artists, and to offer recent perspectives onto the Chinese Canadian community's historical and cultural evolutions. Engaging with eleven Canadian artists of Chinese descent, the exhibition presents overlooked narratives by exploring notions of distancing and being distanced in relation to race, identity, sexuality and their intersection with Chinese Canadian history.

The idea of *distance* unfolds in multiple layers: in the geographic sense, as in the passage from point A to point B, including the construction process of the Canadian Pacific Railway; in the cultural sense, through the mainstream's imposition of stereotypes, as in how the Chinese Canadian community has been culturally isolated and essentialized; and in the context of the Chinese community itself, as

in who is "Us", and the distances between different groups of ethnic Chinese.

This multifaceted exhibition also aims to offer insight into the shared experiences of Chinese Canadians as affected by specific laws, government policies, and cultural history. Part of the ongoing exploration and manifestation of ethnic and social forms of identity, it seeks to create new dialogues amongst different generations and highlights their urgency in the context of the rise of global Conservatism and the resurgence of Nativism. While 2017 marks the celebration of Canada's Sesquicentennial, it is also a timely opportunity to mobilize momentum to look back and re-examine the political and historical realities of what constitutes who we are today. The selection of the works is intended to reflect on issues of historical representation and the aesthetics and politics of Chinese diaspora in Canada in an effort to offer a more complex view of Canadian art history, *negotiated* by diaspora.

Another agenda of the exhibition is to bring forward the bitter reality that even today, Asian Canadian art practices remain under-represented in major spheres of Canadian contemporary art. A younger generation of Asian Canadian artists is still marginalized within Canadian art history. While the global interest in contemporary art by Mainland Chinese artists grows steadily, what place does art by Chinese Canadian artists hold?

In the context of this year's 70th anniversary of the abolishment of the Chinese Exclusion Act and Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation, the artists in this exhibition recollect some of the less visible as well as some of the contested histories of the country.

¹ Augie Fleras, *Racisms in a Multicultural Canada: Paradoxes, Politics, and Resistance* (Waterloo: ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2014), 243-246.

² The simultaneous use of the terms "Chinese" and "Asian" is to highlight the shared experiences and entangled histories of the Asian Canadian communities which cannot be neatly divided. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 was the first act in Canada that targeted one specific ethnicity, but it has been a major symbol and embodiment of the Yellow Peril sentiments.

³ Alice Ming Wai Jim, "Asian Canadian Art Matters", *DIAAALOGUE* (July 2010), Asia Art Archive.

Curator's Acknowledgements

Many, many thanks to my mom Li Baoyu (李寶瑜), my dad Lu Liang (盧亮), and my advisor and mentor Barbara Fischer.

My sincere gratitude also to my family in China, Ed Pien & Johannes Zits, Rick Halpern, Alice Ming Wai Jim, Connie Lutz & Marc Lutz, Li Xiaoqing, Lu Hao, Zou Tingting, Yang Lan, Emily Zhuang, Weide Li, Halina Li, Vanessa Li, Hualong Ye, Yi Gu, Tong Lam, Annie Fan, Gloria Gao, Rubing Xu, Lisa Steele, Kim Tomczak, Jenn Goodwin, Jaclyn Quaresma, Marsya Maharani, Sarah Robayo Sheridan, Heather Darling Pigat, Rebecca Gimmi, Brittany Brooks, Nina Bakan, Maureen Smith, Dax Morrison, Aamna Muzaffar, Tanya Mars, Elizabeth Legge, Julie Witt, Vincent Yung, Eddie Lin, Jessie Chen, Tom Niu, Betty Xie, Monique Curnen, Yang Yue, Nicolas Hardt, Charles C. Smith, and especially **all of the artists**.

Last but not least, very special thanks to those who have contributed to the small archive of Asian Canadian exhibition catalogues and ephemera displayed behind the gallery front desk, especially Marilyn Jung, Henry Tsang, Paul Wong, and Brenda Joy Lem.



Acknowledgments

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Art Museum

Art Museum
University of Toronto

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
University of Toronto Art Centre

Visiting the Art Museum

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H3
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University of Toronto Art Centre
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Tuesday	Noon-5:00 PM
Wednesday	Noon-8:00 PM
Thursday	Noon-5:00 PM
Friday	Noon-5:00 PM
Saturday	Noon-5:00 PM
Sunday	Closed
Monday	Closed

Closed on statutory holidays.
Class tours and group bookings by appointment.


Admission is FREE.

The galleries are wheelchair accessible.



all our days are full of breath:
a record of momentum


Curated by Jenn Goodwin
3/24/2017 - 4/8/2017



for there are many stories here

Curated by Jaclyn Quaresma
4/20/2017 - 5/20/2017

Art Museum at the
University of Toronto
Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, On



Doris McCarthy Gallery
University of Toronto Scarborough
1265 Military Trail
Scarborough, On



Far and Near:
the Distance(s) between Us

Curated by Henry Heng Lu
9/6/2017 - 10/29/2017

*This exhibition is produced as part of the requirements for the MVS
degree in Curatorial Studies at the University of Toronto.*