

De-Colonizing Art Institutions

Maria Thereza Alves
Song-Ming Ang
Priscila Arantes
Stefan Baltensperger + David Siepert
Fabiana de Barros
Mabe Bethônico
Flavio Cury
Jimmie Durham
Gabriel Flückiger and Vera Leisibach
Hikaru Fujii
Szuper Gallery
Patrick Hamilton
Ana Hupe
Taloi Havini and Gabriella Hirst
Balz Isler
Daniel Jablonski
San Keller
Astrid S. Klein
Michael Leung / Kai Fong Pai Dong
Marinka Limat
Nkule Mabaso
Filippo Minelli
Lisl Ponger

Raghavendra Rao K.V.

Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada: A site specific art exploration

Roe Rosen
Sally Schonfeldt
Katrin Stroebel and Simo Laouli
Túlio Tavares
Navid Tschopp
Lucie Tuma
Maíra Vaz Valente
Katie West
Claire Wintle
Casa da Xiclet
Zou Zhao

**ONCURATING
PROJECT SPACE**

Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada: A site specific art exploration
A Canada 150+ Project, commemorating 150 years since Canadian Confederation
Curator: Raghavendra Rao K.V.
With the South Asian Canadian Histories Association (SACHA)



Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada will present a series of public art events and exhibitions to explore experiences of trauma as neglected and yet foundational parts of the story of Canada. The project emerges out of recent commemorative events and reconciliation processes related to troubled aspects of the Canadian past, such as (a) residential schools, which forced indigenous children across Canada into boarding schools that did not allow them to speak their languages and practice their culture; (b) the Komagata Maru incident in 1914, when 350 British Indian subjects were denied entrance to Canada as a part of a broader effort to end immigration from Asia to Canada, which had also led to the imposition of a high Head-Tax on all Chinese immigrants, at a time when immigration from Europe was actively encouraged; and (c) Japanese Canadian internment during World War II, involving the disappropriation of property and forced removal of Canadians of Japanese descent from the West Coast of Canada. Recent efforts to come to terms with these histories have made clear the need to explore how the past shapes our present. The core of the project is an art exhibition, at multiple sites, featuring works by artists across Canada who engage with traumas that are a part, directly or indirectly, of the Canadian experience. This exhibition will be accompanied by a theatrical production that explores the intersections of the lives of Canadians coping with different kinds of trauma, distant and near.

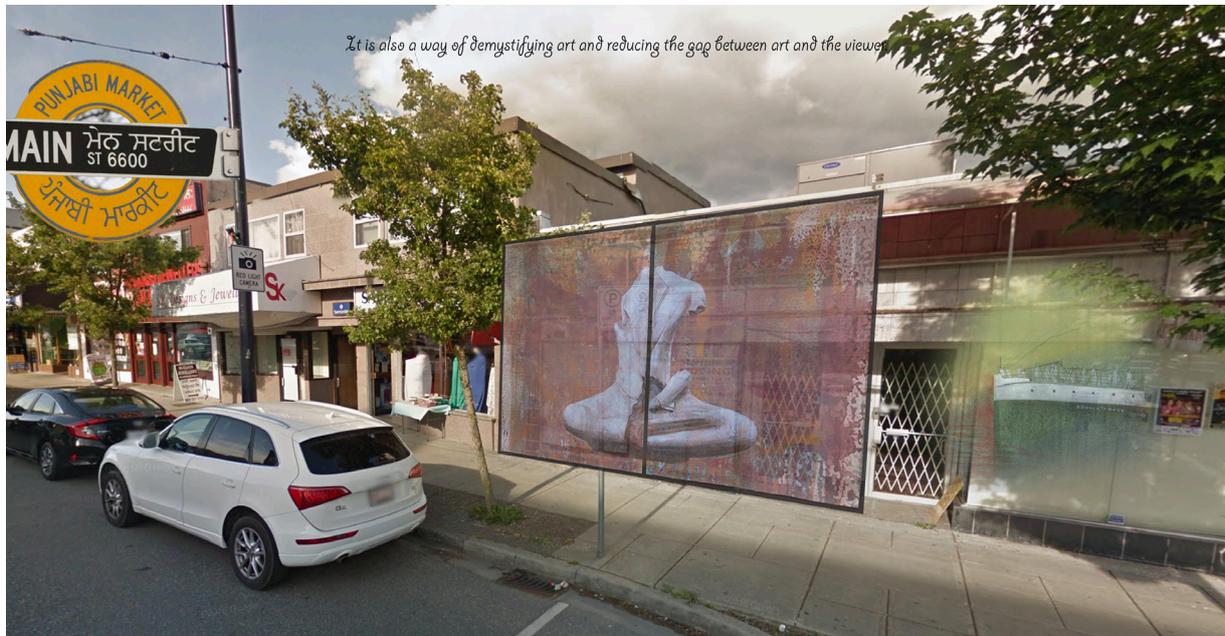
This is a way of bringing art out of institutionalized spaces and plonking it in the middle of spaces that people don't expect to see.



As a practicing visual artist, I am curating this project to engage public spaces as sites that express and are anchored within the histories of local communities and the theme that we are working on. The main exhibition will take place in the "Punjabi Market" area of South Vancouver, which has been the historic home of North America's oldest South Asian communities and which is undergoing a major transformation at this time, and/or a "Vancouver Special" home, a style of home associated with migration in the 1970s-80s, when many Asian communities began to come to Canada in larger numbers. The theatrical work will also be staged in the "Vancouver Special" home. Artists will choose from a series of exhibition spaces in "Punjabi Market," or at the University of British Columbia, to engage the story of Canada from the perspective of its traumatic aspects, on the sides of buildings, on fences, and within active businesses in the Market.

The effort is to bring art out of institutionalized spaces and place it in the middle of spaces that people don't expect to see. It is a way of demystifying art and reducing the gap between art and the viewer, and between the public and its own history. This is of course not original—this is not the first project to move out of the museum and gallery space—but it is something that needs to be done constantly, repeatedly, to break the barrier between art and the viewer, between the work and life.

Here another barrier that is broken is between past and present, through the eye of the artist, and through the haunting of the past in the space of the community, at the centre of its life.



Trauma in this project can refer to colonization and migration, but is not necessarily something that happens *in* Canada, such as the partition of British India (which has its 70th anniversary in 2017), the expulsion of South Asians from Uganda in the 1970s, and the violence against Sikhs in India in the 1980s, all of which are events/experiences that have profoundly shaped the lives of South Asian Canadians.

As this list of events signals, this project is founded from a locally embedded South Asian Canadian perspective. It reaches out and through such experiences to connect with parallel processes of recognition, healing and recovery across communities, peoples, and languages. What we will explore are not isolated events that pertain to singular, homogenous communities, but instead opportunities for shared understanding. In calling attention to them, we invite the public to embrace the complexity of the Canadian story, its transnational dimensions, and the recovery and healing at its core.

Raghavendra Rao K.V.

Curator

Trauma, Memory and the Story of Canada exhibition

Founding Member, SACHA