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Centre A's Annual Recent Graduates Exhibition Showcases Six Young Emerging Artists From Across North America

VANCOUVER, BC (May 27, 2016) – Centre A is excited to announce the June 3 opening of *Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet*, featuring works by Mika Agari, Keely O'Brien with Popcorn Galaxies, Soraya Pathman, Kiyoshi Whitley, Tongyu Zhao, and Pongsakorn, curated by Christian Vistan

'The great wall, the bricks, the letters, the typing hand, the smelly feet. The people, the brains, the language and the country, those I'm not concerned. Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet, and to comment in a offline online-presence until the time when we all get our feet on the ground, firm and soundless.'

excerpt from *Did you wash your feet today?* (poems on Facebook), 2015, Tongyu Zhao

Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet is a series of events, performances and artist projects curated by Christian Vistan, taking place on June 3 - July 2, 2016 at and around Centre A, 229 East Georgia in Vancouver's Chinatown. This month-long program includes performative, collaborative and participatory works and projects by Mika Agari (Nashville, TN), Keely O'Brien with Popcorn Galaxies (Vancouver), Soraya Pathman (Vancouver), Kiyoshi Whitley (Vancouver) Tongyu Zhao (Chicago, IL), and Pongsakorn (Vancouver).

Taking its title from a poem on Facebook by participating artist, Tongyu Zhao, the events, performances and projects in ***Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet***, take up concerns of space, location, collaboration, displacement, gentrification and an ongoing engagement with the public. Permeating in and out of the walls of Centre A, the works in this series leak out into the surrounding neighbourhood, blurring the boundaries between the gallery space and Chinatown and pushing the act of art making into the public realm. The artists' works in this series engage with Centre A's Chinatown location and neighbourhood through a string of public performances, calls for participation and collaborative projects that call to mind our relationship with history, space and one another.

Interacting with and inspired by discourses around 'intangibility' in Chinatown and the gentrification happening in the area, this series of events and projects explore the inherent 'intangibility' that comes with exhibiting performative, collaborative and participatory works in a traditional exhibition setting and the museological strategies that are employed when approaching these issues. With an interest in various approaches to ephemera, presentation, representation and documentation of the artists' work, in the gallery, the works sit in a liminal state between activation and a resting pose, subverting the gallery's function, proposing utilitarian, theatrical, academic, institutional, communal and poetic modes of operation. *The series subverts the gallery's function proposing a utilitarian, poetic, theatrical mode of operation.*

Online, ***Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet*** extends out to a larger public through a collection of written and photographic documentation provided by audience members, neighbours, writers and other participants.

Join us on **Friday, June 3rd at 7pm** for the **Opening Reception** of ***Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet***, thru to July 2, 2016. Regular gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 11am-6pm.

Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet, is taking place on traditional unceded Coast Salish land including the territories of the xʷməθkwəy̕əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Mika Agari's work asserts intimate acts in public spaces. Her video performances revolve around a single objective—whether that be to drink orange juice with her dad, to unveil a public sculpture, to make a wish in a wishing fountain, or for this series, to talk to strangers. The objectives in the artist's work are explored, exhausted and pushed to their most raw and tender points of execution. Agari will be launching a month-long hotline, ***CALL ME I WOULD LIKE TO TALK***, with Hitomi Agari, Weng Tze Yang, and Sam Chan, where she invites strangers from and around Chinatown to call in and talk. The conversations will be collected and available to listen to in the gallery, as well as on the website.

Keely O'Brien with, theatre collective, **Popcorn Galaxies** is presenting ***Elk Walk***, a large-scale public puppet intervention featuring five puppets inspired by the fossilized skeletons of the extinct Irish Elk—the largest species of deer to ever live. Throughout the exhibition, the puppets will wander in and out of the gallery in weekly walks, culminating in a **July 1, 3pm** derive. With a volunteer cast of puppeteers, a mixture of Chinatown locals and organizers and local theatre performers and artists, the derives through Chinatown will see the work interact with complex local histories and ongoing processes of urban change.

Soraya Pathman's recent documentary video work, ***Girls Group***, is the result of a three-month collaboration with eight girls from a local high school. Through conversations and interviews, play with camera work and direction, this most recent iteration of the ongoing project represents the groups interest in collaborative research and the writing of histories through negotiation.

Kiyoshi Whitley utilizes architecture, constructed or found, in his performances. Influenced by history, memory and gentrification in Vancouver, Kiyoshi negotiates spaces and memories in his work. His performance addresses the space, as it is occupied by the audience's bodies and his own, as well as the architecture that is the container that appears to be invisible, or neutral. Whitley will be doing an iterative performance over four nights that work off of Centre A's storefront and main gallery's architecture and location, along with an ongoing written project throughout the month, ***Projections under one's tongue / Hanabi, June 22-25, 7pm***.

Currently based in Chicago, **Tongyu Zhao**'s work concerns itself with the ground underneath it. Being a transplant from China, Zhao's work investigates her current location (the United States), dislocation, displacement, memories and experience. She works through these themes and ideas through humour, props and material research and exploration in her objects and performances. Zhao will be collecting and sending props and objects from Chicago and Chinatown for her closing performance at Centre A, ***Foot Note On A Few Things (day 30), July 2, 8pm***.

Pongsakorn is interested in subverting, examining and deconstructing contemporary everyday values

and beliefs through tongue-in-cheek propositions that also serve practical functions outside of the arts. Pongsakorn is building an alternative Centre A website (documentcentera.org), where the documentation of this series is produced through co-authorship. The artists, neighbours, audiences, writers, community members and others are invited to document, interpret, write and contribute to establishing the open content and documentation of the series as it is displayed on the website.

Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet is made possible through a curatorial mentorship co-op funded by BC Arts Council's Early Career Development Grant.

About Centre A:

Established in 1999, Centre A is Canada's only public gallery devoted to contemporary art of the Asia-Pacific. Located in Chinatown's East Georgia Gallery Cluster, we have presented the works of over 300 Canadian and international artists and produced over 80 original projects. As a key piece of Vancouver's cultural infrastructure, Centre A works with artists, curators and other cultural producers from throughout the region to facilitate critical inquiry and provide a platform for conversation and artistic experimentation. Centre A is also home to the Centre A Reading Room including among a vast collection contemporary Asian art books, the Finlayson Collection of Rare Asian Art Books.

Centre A is a collaborative effort powered by generous support from:



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Available for comment on *Here I only worry about my feet, your feet, everybody's feet*:

Exhibition Curator: Christian Vistan

Artist: Mika Agari, Keely O'Brien with Popcorn Galaxies, Soraya Pathman, Kiyoshi Whitley, Tongyu Zhao and Pongsakorn

Images and a PDF of the press release are available through our [Dropbox press pack](#).

**To arrange an interview with any of the above, or for media requests and further information,
please contact:**

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