Limits of Tolerance:
Re-framing Multicultural State Policy

EXHIBITION: May 19 – June 23, 2007
OPENING: Friday May 18, 8pm
Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday,
11:00 -18:00
Sunday-Monday closed

SYMPOSIUM: Saturday May 26,
14:00 – 17:00, UBC Robson Square theatre
Speakers: Laiwan, Candice Hopkins and
Keith Langergräber
Free to the public

Guest Curator: Liz Park

Presented with support from the Alvin Balkind Fund for Student Curatorial Initiatives, the
Department of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory, and the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery
at The University of British Columbia.

A group exhibition with works by Dana Claxton, Stan Douglas, Laiwan, Paul Lang and
Zachary Longboy, Ahasiw Maskegon-Iskwew, Anne Ramsden, Ruby Truly, Henry Tsang,
and Paul Wong.

In a country that has touted its multicultural policies, the resurgence of racist attitudes after 9/11
prompts critical assessment of race issues today. In an effort to review race politics in the
context of Canada's colonial and immigrant policies, the exhibition Limits of Tolerance examines
a period in recent history when cultural diversity became Canada's state policy with the 1988
Multiculturalism Act.

In the late 1980s, an increasing number of artists explored and questioned their own identity
based on race, gender and sexuality, as lobby efforts and activism of people of colour and
aboriginal ancestry gained momentum. With the 1988 Multiculturalism Act demanding
government agencies to reform or invent equity policies, the arts and culture sector in particular
underwent a turbulent period in which comfort zones of liberal attitudes were challenged. The
present exhibition Limits of Tolerance re-presents a selection of artworks produced in
Vancouver in the late 1980s and early 1990s when artists, writers and academics engaged in
intense debates about identifications based on race, gender, and sexuality. This selection
emphasizes the various and often contrasting ways in which artists deal with issues of identity
and critique social structures which inform their identity.

The artists featured in the exhibition used non-traditional visual media such as video,
performance, and photo-installation to push the limits of art production at a time when the
concept of a singular culture was under scrutiny. While some artists actively identified their
subjective positioning and sought to speak from within communities defined by race, gender, or
sexuality, other artists deliberately avoided such self-identification or resisted being categorized
under a homogenous group. The differing strategies deployed in dealing with the question of identity have insulated discussions of certain artists' works from others. Yet this exhibition brings together these works in renewed discussions of identity and reflects on the common place and time shared by each artist despite his/her distinct experience of race, gender and sexuality.

Presented alongside the artworks are archival materials from the cultural equity caucus for the former Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres (ANNPAC), *Minquon Panchayat* (1992-1993), the film festival *In Visible Colours* (1989), and the exhibitions *Yellow Peril: Reconsidered* (1990), *Self Not Whole* (1991), *Racy Sexy* (1993). The records of these cultural activities help reframe the presented art works in broader terms, which include social and political history of Canada, and the changing questions of community in an increasingly globalized world. Revisiting this recent past sharpens a critical lens through which one can see how race politics is played out in art and the sociocultural and political arenas today.

A symposium will be held on Saturday, May 26, 14:00 – 17:00 at the UBC Robson Square theatre, featuring Laiwan, Candice Hopkins, and Keith Langergräber as speakers. The symposium will explore questions around issues of difference and marginality and analyze the present state of the arts and culture field in Canada.

Centre A gratefully acknowledges the generous support of its patrons, sponsors, members, partners, private foundations, and government funding agencies, including the Canada Council for the Arts, the British Columbia Arts Council, and the City of Vancouver through the Office of Cultural Affairs.

For more Information, please contact the gallery:

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