

REDRESS EXPRESS



EXHIBITION

Date: August 3 to September 1, 2007

Venue: Centre A, 2 West Hastings Street

Opening: Friday, August 3, 8pm, Centre A, 2 West Hastings Street

SYMPOSIUM

Date: August 2-3, 2007, 10am to 5pm

Location: Chinese Cultural Centre, 555 Columbia Street

Free admission

The exhibition **"REDRESS EXPRESS: Chinese Restaurants and the Head Tax Issue in Canadian Art"** features recent photography, video and installations by five Chinese-Canadian artists: Gu Xiong (Vancouver), Shelly Low (Montreal), Ho Tam (Victoria, BC), Karen Tam (Montreal), and Kira Wu (Vancouver). It is held in conjunction with the two-day symposium **"REDRESS EXPRESS: Current Directions in Asian Canadian Art and Culture"** which brings together over twenty scholars, community activists, cultural organizers, and artists from many disciplines to consider current and future directions in Asian Canadian art and culture. The **REDRESS EXPRESS** project is curated by Alice Ming Wai Jim and accompanied by an exhibition catalogue with essays, artist pages, and additional graphic illustration by Joanne Hui (Montreal).

As a whole, the **REDRESS EXPRESS** project is an attempt to examine the current politics of representation, redress and recognition in Canada as they relate to art, activism, identity and geography. The call for redress has long been the bookends for Asian Canadian critiques of Canada's racist past. The recent victory of the redress campaign for surviving Chinese head tax payers and their spouses and its inevitable effects on the current politics of reparation and representation in this country, however, presents another challenge: to ensure an ongoing, rigorous treatment these issues demand in political, cultural and educational sectors. With the host of 2007 anniversaries of historical dates significant to Canadians and Asian Canadian communities in particular celebrated this year, this provision of critical texts in contemporary discourse and practice and the broadening of understanding to address cross-cultural perspectives on redress politics remains imperative.

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Providing the starting point of this project, the **exhibition** brings together recent artworks that explore the Chinese restaurant as an iconic institution and bring forward critical discourses in relation to the head tax redress and identity politics in general. The Chinese restaurant installation by **Karen Tam** exposes the cultural underpinnings and ethnic stereotypes that define family-owned Chinese restaurants in Canada as well as the evolution of Chinese Canadian cuisine. **Kira Wu's** photographic series of the exteriors of Chinese-Canadian restaurants in the neighbourhood initiate a review of signage and cultural arbitrage. **Shelly Low's** self-portraits and Rice-Krispies squares sculpture intimates a self-conscious projection and representation of the consumable ethnic or exotic 'other'. *The Yellow Pages* (1994) by **Ho Tam** provides a video primer from A to Z of past and present Asian experience within North America. **Gu Xiong's** series of hanging banner portraits of present-day and historical figures important to the development of Chinese Canadian communities gives face to the historical moments of redress.

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The two-day Redress Express **symposium** seeks to bring exposure to ongoing and emerging scholarship and artistic practices exploring redress issues in Canadian art and culture; to open broaden this exploration to considerations of imbricating cultural contexts and experiences; and to explore the implications of these convergences for future theoretical and practical directions.

Speakers include: Makiko Hara, Miko Hoffman, Joanne Hui, Christopher Lee, Karin Lee, Xiaoping Li, Joni Low, Kirsten McAllister, Kelty Miyoshi McKinnon, Don Montgomery, Liz Park, Inge Roecker, Sid Chow Tan, Henry Tsang, Mary Sui Yee Wong, Su-Anne Yeo, Beverly Yhap, Henry Yu, Hank Bull, Alice Ming Wai Jim & the exhibition artists Gu Xiong, Shelly Low, Kira Wu, Karen Tam, and Ho Tam.

Keynotes: Victor Wong, Executive Director, Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) & Lily Cho, Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Theory & Criticism, Department of English, University of Western Ontario

The REDRESS EXPRESS symposium is co-sponsored by the Gail & Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art at the Department of Art History, Concordia University, and the Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies (INSTRCC) at the University of British Columbia, and additionally supported in part by le Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec; the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver; the Emily Carr Institute for Art + Design + Media, and St. John's College, UBC.

Exhibition Patron: Anndraya T. Luii

REDRESS EXPRESS is presented in conjunction with the 2007 Anniversaries of Change, the 2007 Powell Street Festival, and explorASIAN 2007.

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For more Information

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