

BIG IDEAS

HOMAGE TO PARENTHOOD

Toni Latour (Vancouver, Canada)

WHO MADE THIS PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION? Toni Latour is a multidisciplinary artist based in Vancouver, Canada. She works in video, sound, photography, installation, text-based work, drawing and performance art. Latour received her BFA from the University of Windsor in 1998 and her MFA from the University of Western Ontario in 2000. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally since 1994 and has received numerous grants and awards in support of her practice. Latour's work is included in several catalogues and publications by Artspeak, The Burnaby Art Gallery, PaperWait, Aspect: The Chronicle of New Media Art, MIX Magazine and Border Crossings. Her art is held in both public and private collections, including the Portrait Gallery of Canada and the Surrey Art Gallery. Toni Latour teaches Media Art at Capilano University in British Columbia.



Life is a bowl of cherries,
 Nobody's perfect,
 If it ain't broke, don't fix it,
 Mother says that never,
 An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,
 What doesn't kill you makes you stronger,
 Don't shoot the messenger,
 Always look on the bright side of life,
 Patience is a virtue,
 The more things change, the more they stay the same,
 Don't say ever applied math,
 This too shall pass,
 If at first you don't succeed, try, try again,
 Every dog has his day,
 It's not the end of the world,
 Good things come to those who wait,
 Stop and smell the roses,
 Do it with a smile on your face and song in your heart,
 Turn over a new leaf,
 Seize the day,
 Wax and wane,
 What you see is what you get,
 Don't put all your eggs in one basket,
 Only time will tell,
 If you want it done right, do it yourself!
 Measure twice, cut once,
 The grass is always greener on the other side,
 One foot up, one foot down,
 You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink,
 That's the way the world goes,
 If the shoe fits, wear it,
 You're one to talk,
 It's my way or the highway,
 No pain, no gain,
 When life gives you lemons, make lemonade,
 Get your feet wet,
 Break a leg,
 Don't make a mountain out of a molehill,
 Share your dreams,
 Live and learn,
 Think good thoughts,
 Here is where the heart is,
 No man is an island,
 One day at a time,
 Get off your high horse,
 Beggars can't be choosers,
 What goes around comes around,
 You reap what you sow,
 Necessity is the mother of invention,
 Ask and you shall receive,
 It's a dog eat dog world,
 Better safe than sorry,
 Don't count your chickens before they're hatched,
 Don't let the devil win,
 No trees - a good thing,
 The apple doesn't fall far from the tree,
 Put your best foot forward,
 Take the bull by the horns,
 Keep your head above water,
 Life goes on,
 You can do it,
 Get with the program,
 Don't be a chicken,
 Nip it in the bud,
 What's good for the goose is good for the gander,
 Laughter is the best medicine,
 You can't have your cake and eat it too,
 Roll with the punches,
 Every rose has its thorn,
 Don't put your foot in your mouth,
 Make good on your word,
 Take it or leave it,
 It could be worse,
 Put your money where your mouth is,
 Silence is golden,
 Waste not, want not,
 The third time's a charm,
 When in Rome, do as the Romans do,
 Count your blessings,
 Don't break the bank,
 Every cloud has a silver lining,
 There are plenty of fish in the sea,
 Absence makes the heart grow fonder,
 Tomorrow is a new day,
 Many hands make light work,
 Sleep your sins up,
 Clean the bell,
 You can't teach an old dog new tricks,
 His bark is worse than his bite,
 There's a light at the end of the tunnel,
 Money doesn't grow on trees,
 Greed that bridges when you come to it,
 Don't hold your breath,
 When it rains, it pours,
 Fine lines when you're having fun,
 All that glitters is not gold,
 Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,
 The best things in life are free,
 You can't judge a book by its cover,
 That's the bottom line.

WHAT IDEAS ARE BEING EXPLORED IN THIS WORK? This work explores ideas of language, familial upbringing, and the cultural specificity of clichés and idioms. For the artist, it also exists as an homage to her recently deceased father.

HOW WAS THIS MADE? This conceptual work of art was inspired by the artist's father, and the sayings that he would use to teach and speak to his children. The work began with Toni Latour writing down remembered phrases and then researching existing cultural clichés and idioms. Combining both of these sources, her list grew to over 100 sayings. From there, the artist edited and ordered the sayings in a poetic fashion, considering literary flow and sometimes considering narrative connection between each line. Once her list was complete, Latour entered the 100 lines of text into Photoshop and hand selected each colour to replicate the colour spectrum of a rainbow. This work was originally a 15 foot long print, but was adapted for installation at Brighthouse Skytrain station, making it a site-specific work of art. The final piece in Richmond exists as a 6-panel installation facing people as they enter the station.



3

HOW DOES THIS WORK CONNECT TO THE ARTIST'S OTHER WORK? Toni Latour has been working on several text-based works over the last few years. Top 20 is an archival inkjet print from 2008. In an attempt to expose and disrupt patriarchy in the local art world, this piece lists the top 20 artists in Vancouver, all of whom are male. The work, with its phallic configuration of names, is influenced by feminist artists like The Guerrilla Girls and Carolee Schneemann and writer Linda Nochlin.

I've Never Heard of You is a neon sign, also made in 2008. It is inspired by a conversation the artist had with a representative from the Canada Council for the Arts. This piece humorously examines Latour's continuous reflection on art world dynamics and her career as an artist.

TO LEARN MORE:
<http://tonilatour.com/>

IAN
 TIM
 ROY
 KEN
 RON
 JEFF
 IAIN
 ARNI
 ALEX
 STAN
 EVAN
 KEVIN
 BRIAN
 SCOTT
 STEVEN
 DAMIEN
 RODNEY
 STEPHAN
 DOUGLAS
 GEOFFREY

4

Glossary

CONCEPTUAL ART—Conceptual art is art in which the concept or idea is the most important element of the work and takes precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns.

CLICHÉS—A cliché is a frequently used saying or expression that is expected or predictable. Clichés are often thought of in a pejorative manner, but they are not always false or inaccurate. Some clichés are stereotypes, while others are simple truths.

IDIOMS—An idiom is an expression that is often culturally derived or based in a specific language. The meaning is not understandable from the words used (eg. she’s over the moon, get your feet wet), but is understood metaphorically and learned through cultural exposure.

SITE-SPECIFIC—Site-specific art is art that is created for a certain place. Typically, the artist takes the location into account when planning and creating the work.

INSTALLATION—Installation art often has several components that are combined to create a single work.

PATRIARCHY—Patriarchy is a male dominated social system.

FEMINIST—A feminist is an advocate for women’s rights and sexual equality.

GUERRILLA GIRLS—The Guerrilla Girls are an anonymous group of radical feminist artists established in New York City in 1985. They are known for their posters, books, billboards, appearances and other creative forms of culture jamming that expose discrimination and corruption. Trained as visual artists, their first work was putting up posters on the streets of New York decrying the gender and racial imbalance of artists represented in galleries and museums. They wear gorilla masks in public and take the names of dead women artists as pseudonyms.

CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN—Carolee Schneemann is an American visual artist, known for her discourses on the body, sexuality and gender. In 1975, Schneemann performed her very famous Interior Scroll. It was a piece in which she pulled a scroll from her vagina and read it aloud. The text described sexism and misogyny in the art world at the time.

LINDA NOCHLIN—Linda Nochlin is a professor and feminist art historian. In 1971, she wrote the very influential essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”.

CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS—The Canada Council for the Arts was established in 1957 to act as an arts council for the government of Canada. It was created to foster and promote the study, enjoyment and production of art. It funds Canadian artists, curators galleries, museums and arts organizations.

WHO PUT THIS INSTALLATION ON DISPLAY IN RICHMOND? This sculpture is part of Vancouver Biennale 2009-2011 Exhibition. The Vancouver Biennale is a non-profit charitable organization that celebrates art in public space. Each exhibition transforms the urban landscape into an Open Air Museum, creating globally inspired cultural experiences where people live, work, play and transit. The Biennale features internationally renowned and emerging Contemporary artists that represent a diversity of cultural perspectives and artistic disciplines including sculpture, new media, performance works and film. The objective is to use great art as a catalyst to transformative learning and social action.

The Vancouver Biennale also creates supporting public programs, events and publications including the award-winning BIG IDEAS Education program, the International Artist Residency Program inspired by Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream", the CineFest LIVE documentary film festival and the Tour de Biennale and BIKennale arts & culture cycling events.

TO LEARN MORE you can search the terms **BIENNALE**, **PUBLIC ART** or **OUTDOOR SCULPTURE PARKS** on-line. Also Visit the Vancouver Biennale website at www.vancouverbiennale.com

IMAGE CREDITS:

- 1 Artist portrait; Mary-Anne Latour
- 2 *Homage to Parenthood*; artist
- 3 *I have never heard of you*; artist
- 4 *Top 20*; artist

Author: Toni Latour
Designer: Julie Rudd