

The New York Times

In Canada, an Artwork With Its Own Barkeeps

By CHARLES McGRATH

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — This city is not just temporary home to the Olympics, it's a hotbed of conceptual art and conceptual artists. There are also a lot of bars here, some so crowded during the Games that people have been spilling out onto the streets. Fittingly, a new installation on the third floor of the Playwrights Theater Center on Granville Island, the touristy, artsy part of town, examines the subtle conceptual difference between drinking and "drinking" and between the bar as mere watering hole and as self-activating performance space.

In a 12-by-20-foot plywood box, a little bigger than a shipping container, Theo Sims, a British-born neo-conceptualist, has erected the Candahar, a painstaking mock-up of a Belfast pub. A self-taught carpenter, he built

the whole thing himself using a router and a drill, and it's pretty authentic looking. There are beer taps, a brass rail, a bench balanced on beer kegs and reproductions of the buzzers once used to alert the barman that a customer will be needing a fresh pint shortly. The wall behind the bar is decorated with racehorse prints, and except for a brief lapse to show the Canada-Switzerland hockey game, a TV up in one corner has been more or less permanently tuned to Irish horseracing.

The main differences between the Candahar and the real thing are that the Candahar serves not Guinness but beer made by the local Whistler Brewing Company, and that the purchase of a pint entails sliding a ticket across the bar and not some pound coins. That's because strictly speaking, and to satisfy the Vancouver licensing authori-



KIM STALLKNECHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Chris, left, and Conor Roddy, the barmen at the conceptual artwork Candahar, a re-creation of an Irish pub in Vancouver.

ties, the Candahar is not a bar but a theater space.

To tend the bar, Mr. Sims has imported two authentic Irish publicans wearing fedoras and thick Irish sweaters: Conor Roddy, 49, and his brother, Chris,

who says he is "47-ish." "They're real barmen," Mr. Sims explained. "But they're also unscripted performers playing themselves."

The purpose of the installa-

Continued on Page 6

Cheering Team U.S.A. On NBC's Olympics

Curling is a favorite Olympic guilty pleasure, but so is churling, a home game that consists of sneering at the triumphalism and bathos of NBC's coverage.

ALESSANDRA STANLEY

THE TV WATCH

(Hurling is its X Games equivalent.) Technology evolves, organizers add new sports — this year it's ski cross — but NBC's Olympic reportage, up close and way too personal, never seems to change. And in Vancouver the best exploits of what the network unfailingly refers to as "Team U.S.A." only bring out the worst in network heavy breathing.

At a time when American athletes are amassing record numbers of medals, and NBC is drawing an impressive number of viewers, sports fans couldn't ask for more fulsome, pro-American coverage — they could ask for a

little less. NBC anchors, including those paid by the news division, glom onto the glamour and reflected glory of winsome champions, as per Matt Lauer's no-boundaries embrace of the skier Lindsey Vonn on "Today" after she won the downhill race. He draped a chocolate gold medal around her neck, gave her flowers ("just because we adore you") and hugged her tight ("we are so proud of you") — as if he and Meredith Vieira had spent the last 15 years rising at dawn to drive her to training.

All nations give special, fawning attention to their own teams. But NBC commentators seem so wedded to script — and prepackaged gauzy biographies — that they act as if any deviance from the party-hearty line will somehow appear unpatriotic. Even the calm, professional Bob Cos-

Continued on Page 6

An Artwork With Barkeeps

From First Arts Page

tion, Mr. Sims went on, is to stimulate social interaction, encourage people to re-examine their preconceptions and start cross-cultural conversations on the order of one he had in 1992, shortly after moving to Ulster to study art. "We were having a party in the house where I was living," he explained, "and this guy said to me, 'What's an English bastard like you doing in my country?' I said, 'What's a Fenian bastard like you doing in my kitchen?'"

The name Candahar, he added, comes from a street in Belfast that used to be the headquarters of a school of Irish artists trying to break away from the imagery, then prevalent, of the Troubles: guns, helicopters, balaclavas. But the Candahar is actually based on the Blackthorn, a defunct pub that used to be a hangout for artists and journalists. "I researched my project for two years there, seven days a week, gleaning inspiration," Mr. Sims said.

Conor Roddy said that in the evenings the Candahar, which opened on Feb. 12 when the Olympics did, sometimes gets quite rowdy. But on a recent afternoon the cross-cultural interactions were pretty tame. They consisted mostly of puzzled-looking Canadians wearing red hockey jerseys, some with maple leaves painted on their cheeks, wandering in, having their pictures taken with Conor and trying to understand Chris's almost incomprehensible Ulster accent. He pronounces "spirits" — as in "spirits merchant," his fancy name for his profession — as "spurts."

Like most artworks the Candahar repays close study. In a vase on the bar, discretely tucked in among some white lilies, for example, are some irises — an allusion to Iris Robinson, the wife of Northern Ireland's first minister,

who has recently been caught up in a scandal over an affair with a teenage boy whom she tried to set up in the pub business. The clock over the bar is permanently set to 3:11 because, Conor Roddy explained, that's the exact moment when the Titanic went down. Like much of what he says, though, this should probably be taken as metaphorical, conceptual-art truth and not gospel.

The Candahar has been installed in Canada on four previous occasions, in Calgary, Montreal, Winnipeg and St. John. It was brought to the West Coast by Reid Shier, the director of Presentation House, a gallery in North Vancouver, who said recently that he thought Vancouver needed an alternative to the Games.

"This gives people an opportunity to have a slight respite from all the Olympic fever, and it has really brought the community together," he explained.

The only glitch in getting the piece installed, he added, was that, as on a previous occasion, the Roddy brothers, who arrived in Canada in their sweaters and fedoras but with little luggage and less money, had trouble getting through immigration. In this case they had an incorrect permit, and Mr. Shier had to reassure the authorities that they were not imposters but legitimate performance artists.

The installation will come down next Monday morning, after the Olympics have ended, and after that it's not entirely clear what will happen to it. Mr. Shier speculated that maybe it could be sold to a collector, with the provision that the Roddys be imported for two weeks every year to "activate" it.

Mr. Sims explained that artists need to move on. "In my dream world I'd take it down, make a bonfire and burn it," he said.

"Then why go to the trouble of taking it down?" Conor Roddy said. "Just blow it up."

★ THE OPENING CEREMONIES: PAUL WELLS VS. MARK STEYN ★

MAGLEAN'S



MAR.
1st
2010

HEARTS OF GOLD

The inspiring story behind an Olympic triumph P.32

Alexandre Bilodeau
and his brother
Frédéric

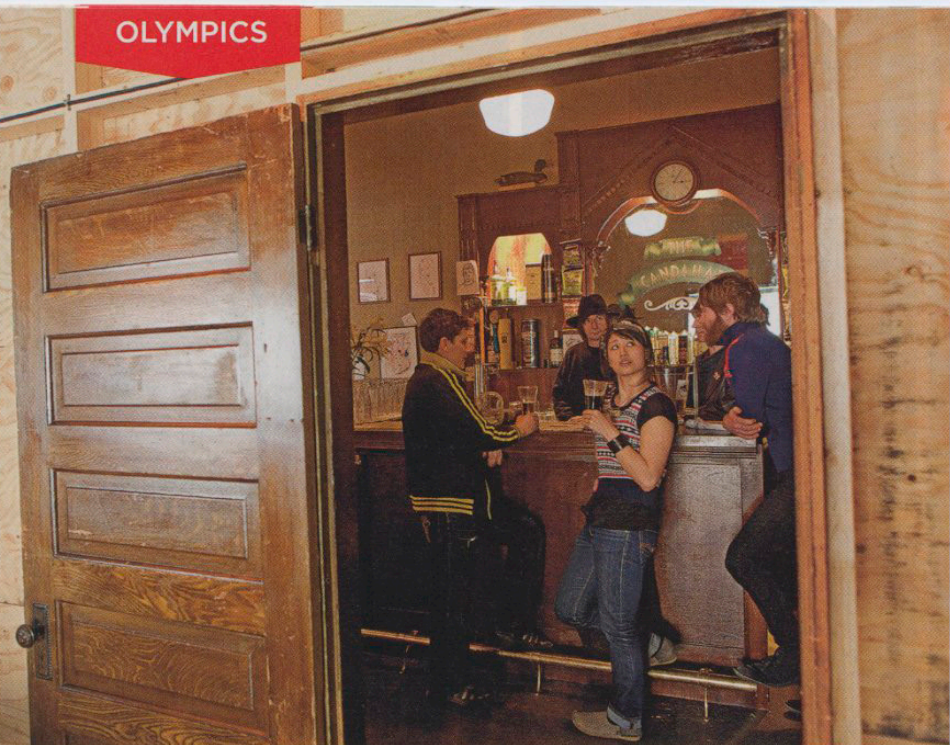


www.macleans.ca

\$6.95 PM 40070230 R 08973



**PLUS: THE CHILLING
DOUBLE LIFE OF COL.
RUSSELL WILLIAMS P.14**



PUTTING THE 'art' back in 'party' has been a recurring theme in the Cultural Olympiad

YOU ARE IN CANDAHAR

It's a bar, an art exhibit, the star of the other Olympiad in Vancouver

BY ANNE KINGSTON • As millions tuned in to watch Canada's founding First Nation tribes being celebrated with spectacular production values in the Olympic opening ceremonies at B.C. Place, another audience was participating in a more gritty and audacious Aboriginal spectacle just blocks away at the far less grand Playwrights Theatre Centre on Granville Island. There, more than a hundred thronged to the Candahar Bar when doors opened at 7 p.m., eager to check out the opening night of one of the most buzzed-about art installations on Vancouver's jam-packed 2010 Cultural Olympiad calendar: a pop-up replica of a Belfast public house that's part performance space, part ongoing social experiment.

The fact the \$5 admission covered a glass of wine, beer or whiskey helped draw the crowd. But when patrons approached the pub to wet their whistles, they found it packed with revellers. A burly bouncer blocked the entrance; only Aboriginal people were allowed inside, he told them. Everyone else had to wait until 8:30 to be served liquor; until then, there was water or pop. The only non-native

revellers inside were the Belfast-born brothers Chris and Conor Roddy—the unscripted performance artists who also serve drinks—and Theo Sims, the puckish British-born artist who masterminded the Candahar, which is named after a street in Belfast. Sims wanted to construct a space that would dismantle the car-bombs-and-balaclavas stereotype of Northern Ireland, where he went to university. First staged in Calgary in 2006, the installation has since toured the country, with Vancouver its fifth and final stop. When it was exhibited at the 2007 Biennale de Montréal, Sims deflected the demand to provide bilingual barkeep, which became a heated subject of debate within the bar itself.

And so it was last Friday night, when patrons discovered they'd been part of "Indians Only," a one-off production by Vancouver multidisciplinary artist Rebecca Belmore, herself an Aboriginal Canadian. The idea, Belmore told *Maclean's*, was to confront stereotypes about Indians drinking and to challenge presumed notions of privilege and prejudice.

Some people left in protest, others in disgust. One guy who tried to sneak in the pub's back door was kicked out. "It really did get the hackles up; you did feel the tension, definitely," says Sims. "It was great." Belmore recalls one woman told her she'd felt upset by the experience but not unhappy about it.

"She was conflicted, which was the point."

Sims is pleased one of the first-night performance pieces offered a stark contrast to the official opening. He also hopes his final Candahar installation will provide "an oasis of integrity" amid the mass-market government pavilions. Unlike Irish House, there's none of what Sims calls "paddy-wackery": shamrocks, shillelaghs, James Joyce quotes. It's also a Guinness-free zone; they made a point of sourcing beer from a local microbrewery. "We're trying to support the small guys," he says, which is tricky with VANOC as a financial sponsor. "They weren't pressuring us to use people," he says. "But we have to be careful how we display our other sponsors."

The Candahar is also an interesting counterpoint to the activists bemoaning the clamp-down on anti-Olympic expression, and the effect of the 2010 Games on the arts community. The cuts to arts budgets have sparked angry protests—"With Joyous Hearts We Destroy the Arts," one placard read. Yet the Cultural Olympiad, which runs Jan. 22 to Mar. 21, has created a city-wide focus on the arts. It will bring Robert Lepage's *Blue Dragon* and the world premiere of Laurie Anderson's *Delusion*, and offer relief from the hype and slick packaged showmanship now synonymous with the Games. Slick showmanship exists within the Cultural Olympiad too. But for every big-ticket show like Feist there's a concert from the Central American singers who form the amazing Umalali: The Garifuna Women's Project.

If nothing else, the Cultural Olympiad offers an opportunity to participate in events that aren't just another corporate branding platform—like the exuberant dancing flash mob of 2,000 at the corner of Robson and Bute last Saturday afternoon organized by the non-profit group Imagine-1-Day. It has put the "art" back in party. Author Lee Henderson, who performed at the Candahar earlier this week, has been enjoying local artists DJing at the Light Bar, an installation that also includes light sculptures, live music and lectures. "It's been a great party," he says. "Everyone's in a great mood."

Sims understands that creating a party is a way to draw a crowd that likely wouldn't visit an experimental gallery. That's a phenomenon playing out across a city filled with public art and surprise performances. That's the case with an ongoing piece at Candahar that will run until its final last call on Feb. 28: in Alex Leslie's and Elizabeth Bachinsky's *Blackout*, the audience create "found poetry" by blacking out months' worth of Olympic coverage from local and national newspapers with Sharpies. As Sims points out, revelling in the irony: "Were it not for the Olympics, none of this could have happened." M



Gay rap opera



Out of towners



Irish pub art

Vol. 101 No. 15 • Friday, Feb. 19, 2010

Established 1908

photo Dan Toulgoet

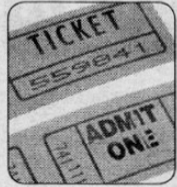
THE VANCOUVER

WEST WEEKEND EDITION

Courier

Functioning Belfast bar and social experiment intended to move beyond niceties to the 'nitty gritty'

Irish pub art installation doesn't serve stereotypes... or Guinness



State of the Arts
with
Cheryl Rossi

The Candahar is both an art project and a detailed recreation of a Belfast pub with a functioning bar set up on Granville Island for the duration of the Olympics. And it doesn't serve Guinness.

"The spirit of the project is to try to break down some assumptions and associations by deliberately misleading people by calling the bar Candahar," said Theo Sims, the artist behind the installation.

He likens its misleading nature to the way the media has "misappropriated" Northern Ireland by focusing on The Troubles.

"There are so many more stories that need to be told," said Sims, an Englishman who's based in Northern Ireland.

To that end, visitors to The Candahar won't hear Irish jigs, see fields of shamrocks or swill green beer so prevalent in what Sims calls "Disney-fied" Irish bars. Sims is equally disparaging of the cultural stereotypes he sees at various Olympic pavilions.

Occupying a 12-foot by 20-foot plywood box, the bar sits in the corner of the open third floor space of the PTC Studio at 1389 Cartwright St. Narrow red benches, textured wallpaper, brass coat hooks, an odd assortment of art, wooden details and an old TV showing horse racing contribute to the pub's cozy feel. The buzzers on the walls used to be more prevalent in the past, says Conor Roddy, one of the bartending brothers from Belfast who staff the bar. He says when levels of Guinness in customers' pints were getting low, they'd buzz to get another one poured so it would have time to settle.

Conor staffs the bar/sculpture/theatrical stage with his brother Chris and they



Belfast bartender Conor Roddy serves up a pint for Theo Sims and artist Rebecca Belmore at The Candahar.

photo Dan Toulgoet

collaborate with Sims by acting as themselves. Sims said they've already had punters come in charged with ideas for him and the Roddy brothers to challenge.

"We fully want that," Sims said. "[To] have those conversations and sit down and talk about it all, because that's the only way we can move on, really, in life is by talking with each other, communicating with each other and not just standing back and assuming."

The Candahar Bar opened Feb. 12 and visitors from Seattle with roots to Northern Ireland have already asked Sims his opinion on the reunification of Ireland.

"And I responded by saying that Northern Ireland, Belfast, had a Roma community up until a few months ago." According to Sims, Romas were driven out of a Loyalist community with bricks and broken windows. "They were all put on a bus and flown back to Romania," Sims said.

He believes outsiders should ask residents of Northern Ireland about the issues they face rather than focus on romanticized notions of reunification and what they think Ireland should be.

Bartender Chris Roddy, who's worked in pubs since he was 10, says he's had to challenge some stereotypes.

Local artist Rebecca Belmore posted a sign that says "No liquor served to Indians after sundown," on opening night and customers have assumed the men from Belfast put it up.

Sims said such a sign resonates with Chris who worked in bars in London, he believes in the 1970s, where posted signs said "No Blacks, no Irish, no dogs."

A beloved, now defunct Belfast pub inspired Sims' Candahar project. He says the A-1 Bar, known more commonly as Benny's, after its owner, was smaller than Sims' recreation of Belfast's Blackthorn Bar.

Benny's foundations were so worn that you had to swiftly grab a wet-bottomed pint off the bar or it would slide down its surface and smash to the floor. But the "wonderful" space where Catholics and Protestants mixed faced the wrecking ball in 1998.

"My idea at the time was if only we could try to save this and have a contemporary anthropology, a museum of now," Sims said.

He'd only recently moved to Belfast to pursue a master of fine arts, and noted other English folks denying their heritage and reinventing themselves. Sims preferred to tackle stereotypes and assumptions head on, especially when he had a few drinks under his belt, and was keen to create a space where people relax enough to move beyond niceties to the "nitty gritty."

Sims said The Candahar Bar is as much social practice as it is visual art, "whatever that is."

Reid Shier, director of Presentation House Gallery on the North Shore, curated the project as part of the Cultural Olympiad. Local author Michael Turner and invited guests have programmed a series of nightly music shows, theatrical presentations, performances and talks by local and international artists at The Candahar Bar.

Upcoming events include less than serious videos of wacky interviews from Nardwuar, local inquirer extraordinaire, potential dance parties with DJs and a closing event, Feb. 28, that includes local poet Elizabeth Bachinsky, Ken Lum, the artist behind the "East Van" cross, and the artist behind the photo of a recreated Gastown riot at the Woodward's development, Stan Douglas, choosing the tunes.

The Candahar has been previously staged in gallery settings in four cities across Canada and Vancouver is its last stop before it's dismantled for good.

For more information, see www.presentationhousegall.com.

rossi@vancourier.com

**VALENTINE
DINING**
AVOID THE
BIG CROWDS 65

**FASHION
FAIR**
GREAT LOCAL
DESIGNERS 33

**ANVIL
ROCKS**
A STUNNING
COMEBACK 71

**DA VINCI
DRAWINGS**
LEONARDO AT
THE VAG 51

THE GEORGIA straight

NOW
ON YOUR
MOBILE



VANCOUVER'S NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

WWW.STRAIGHT.COM

ARTS

Belfast bar puts art on tap

> BY ALEXANDER VARTY

Olympic money is responsible for bringing the Candahar Bar to Vancouver, but it is nonetheless a refreshing antidote to Olympic hype—even if you don't drink.

Intrigued? Better get down to Granville Island's PTC Studio between Friday (February 12) and February 28, especially if you're looking for an intimate and open-ended alternative to the micromanaged spectacle that has taken over the rest of the city.

The brainchild of British artist Theo Sims, who's now based in Winnipeg, the Candahar is a near-perfect re-creation of a Belfast bar, complete with brothers Chris and Conor Roddy working the taps. But it's more than that: it's a sculptural installation, a temporary performance venue, and a work of relational art that requires your presence to be complete. And, remarkably, it all started with what very nearly could have been a brawl.

As Sims tells it, he was living in a rental house on Belfast's Candahar Street when an artists' party got a little bit out of hand. "This guy said, 'What's an English bastard like you doing in my country?'" Sims says in a phone call from the pub. "And I turned and without missing a beat just looked him in the eye and said, 'What's a Fenian bastard like you doing in my kitchen?'"

"What happened after that," he continues, "was that we got into a really great discussion about local politics there, and the history of the English in Ireland and the stereotypes that the Irish have of the English."

Sims started thinking about doing an art project that could serve to spark similar discussions about identity, politics, and culture, and he eventually settled on building a tourable version of the Blackthorn Bar, a beloved Belfast watering hole for art students and media types. It's also a way, he says,



The Candahar Bar is such a meticulous replica that the art installation even has real Irish bartenders working the taps, including Chris Roddy, shown here.

of undermining popular stereotypes about Irish culture: the only shamrock on view is part of an unobtrusive candle holder, and there's one inky tippie that's most definitely not on the menu.

"People always say, 'Well, it's not an Irish bar if it doesn't sell Guinness,'" Sims notes. "But we always try to support a local brewery—family-owned, or a small venture—and resist all that corporate thing. And it's interesting hearing people getting quite defensive about what an Irish pub is. I always thought an Irish pub was about the *people*, basically. I don't think it's any more than that."

To bring people to the Candahar, Sims has enlisted the help of Presentation House Gallery, which in turn has hired local novelist and agent provocateur Michael Turner to program an impressive array of diversions during the art bar's 17-day

run. Planned events include musical performances, readings, film screenings, and a variety of performance-art-style interventions—both inside and outside the venue. (For a schedule, see www.presentationhousegall.com/.) Also noteworthy is that

the Candahar's admission fee—\$5 from noon to 4 p.m., \$10 after 7 p.m.—includes a complementary beverage.

"The idea is that you can leave where you are," says Turner in a separate telephone interview, adding that he hopes the Candahar will offer "a nice soft place to go and hide out" during the Olympic festivities. "You can literally walk inside of Belfast when you walk into that bar. Everything in that bar is of that place, and I think in some ways that's what art tries to do: it can transform your experience and take you somewhere else." ♦

Check out...
STRAIGHT.COM
Visit our Web site
for morning-after
reviews and local
arts news

arts alive

NORTH SHORE

Feb
10

www.artsalivenorthshore.ca

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH VANCOUVER OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

A publication of the North Vancouver Office of Cultural Affairs in partnership with Capilano Performing Arts Theatre, Centennial Theatre, Kay Meek Centre, North Vancouver Museum & Archives, North Vancouver Community Arts Council, Presentation House Gallery and Presentation House Theatre.

Prints and Pints...

Get going. Get real. Get hooked.

Care for a Pint?

Irish artist Theo Sims' *The Candahar* is a meticulously detailed recreation of an Irish public house, based on the interior of the now defunct Blackthorn Bar in Belfast.

Candahar Bar
February 12 to February 28, 2010
Offsite on Granville Island
Playwrights Theatre Centre
3rd Floor, 1398 Cartwright Street
Vancouver, BC

Part sculpture, part theatrical stage, *The Candahar* is an artwork that is also a functioning bar, open to the public and staffed in collaboration with two Belfast bartenders who act as unscripted performers. The project fuses the authentic with fantasy, spectacle with stage, and at its heart acts as a catalyst for conversation, debate and dialogue — and a pint here or there.

The Candahar is a locus for social interaction and the host site for an ambitious series of nightly events — musical programs, theatrical presentations, performances and dialogues, both scripted and unscripted — curated by Vancouver author Michael Turner (*Hard Core Logo & 8 X 10*). Highlights include an opening launch on February 12 scripted by Vancouver based artist Rebecca Belmore, and over the next sixteen days events by a diverse range of Vancouver's cultural community, including a slideshow by David Wisdom, readings by authors Timothy Taylor and Lee Henderson, performances by visual artist Rodney Graham,



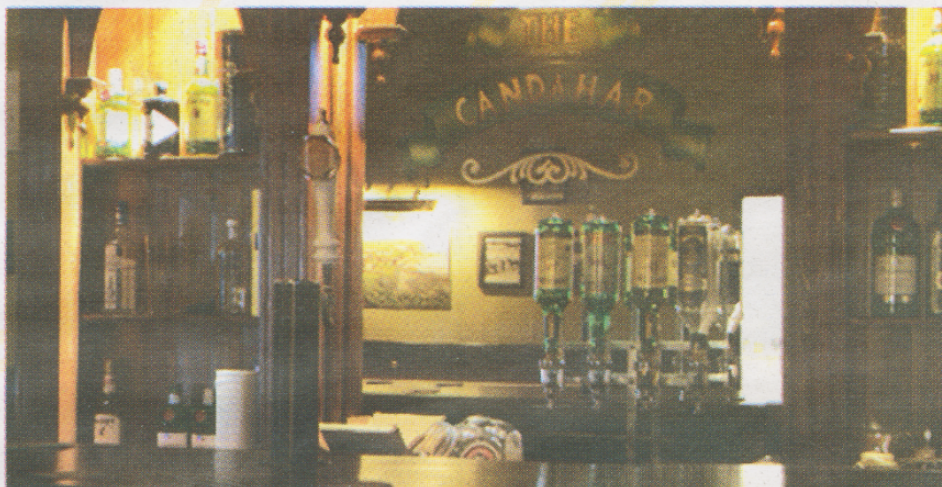
Bartenders Chris and Conor Roddy staffing *The Candahar Bar*. Photo: Guy L'Heureux

Hello World, *The Here and Now* and Kevin Schmidt, DJ'ing by Stan Douglas, Adrian Buitenhaus, Stephen Murray and Tim Lee as well as an Olympic "wrap up" salon with talks by Jeff Derksen, Peter Dickenson, Clint Burnham and Ken Lum among many others.

The Candahar is presented as part of the 2010 Cultural Olympiad.

For details please visit
Presentation House Gallery at
presentationhousegali.com

The Candahar Bar. Photo: Guy L'Heureux



cmagazine106

THE SUPERNATURAL

*International Contemporary Art
Summer 2010*

Michael Jackson is Alive
Paulette Phillips | Scott Treleven
Photographic Miracles | Psychometry
The Center for Tactical Magic
Funkaesthetics | Liam Gillick
Barbara Louder | Will Munro
Textiles | Vancouver Special



\$7.50 CAD & USD | 5.00€



7 25274 83226 2

"Point the cameras!," "CA-NA-DA!," and "They're looting! They're looting!" As the field lit up, spectators became participants in a choreographed public performance that explored connections between sport, spectacle, group identity, protest and violence. The artist collective Norma, a six-person team armed with megaphones and wearing matching black uniforms—part tracksuit, part activist—went through a series of lock-step boot-camp drills, call-and-response cheers, and locker-room pep talks that contrasted with pop-cultural grabs from *The Warriors*, *Rocky*, and Abbot and Costello's "Who's On First?" skit. It was an entertaining barrage of overlapping messages at the gateway to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Sport and spectacle are rich topics to draw from, especially amidst the Olympics' attendant baggage: how does one reconcile his or her opposition to a monster rolling into town with a massive security force, corporate and real estate glad-handing by different levels of government and cost overruns that could be spent on better long-term things *and* still be stoked about hockey gold?

The same friction exists in political or crowd action, with "the riot" as a culturally freighted rupture that gets absorbed into a city's heritage (see May 1968, burning *banlieues*, the WTO shutdown, Watts and Rodney King, and Winnipeg's 1919 General Strike). Likewise for a massive sporting victory or loss. Whether by soccer hooligans or middle-class anarchists, crowd psychology plays itself out for participant and camera. For Vancouverites, the trauma of the Canucks' 6th-game loss and the resulting 1994 Stanley Cup riots remain embedded in local memory.

In the midst of ongoing anti-Olympic protests, Norma's *Brawl* linked all of the above in the wake of malicious arts funding cuts by the BC Liberal government. Conversely, money from the city and the Cultural Olympiad allowed for the night's events to happen—but with no promise of anything to help sustain the arts after the party, on top of a creeping financial hangover for Vancouver residents. It seemed fitting that in response to Norma's tandem chant of "WAGES! WAGES! WAGES!," one angry local on the periphery of the crowd echoed it back at them before telling the crowd, passersby and wandering Olympic revellers alike to, "Get the fuck out of my city!," after throwing his duffle-bag in a rage that alerted onsite security. Pub-

lic performance strategies allow for, and even welcome, these kinds of contingencies to up the ante, and one resident's anger couldn't have been scripted any better. In fact, it almost trumped the actual performance.

—Christopher Olson

HEIDI NAGTEGAAL: REDIRECTING TRAFFIC (HASTINGS BETWEEN HEATLEY AND HAWKES)

Heidi Nagtegaal is an energetic Vancouver artist whose work incorporates the solitary focus of craft and the performative aspect of the social. Whether by playing a crochet-beard-masked "Bad Santa" at Access Gallery's holiday fundraiser, making colourful medical syringe cozies, opening her home for an ongoing series of exchanges as part of *The Hammock Residency* or giving away handmade headbands and bracelets at various events (almost everyone I know in Vancouver has been "headbanded" at some point over the last few years), Nagtegaal's work is playful in execution but deadly serious in motivation, with neither pole battling for supremacy in terms of message.

Critical of Vancouver's "World Class City" aspirations and public space being hijacked for the 2010 Winter Olympics, Nagtegaal installed herself on a Sunday at the intersection of Hastings and Heatley, wearing a reflective store-bought traffic flagger's jacket with four hand-made pylons crocheted from orange caution tape. Setting herself up, she briefly redirected traffic out of one of the city's many "Olympic Lanes"—the curbside lane reserved during the Games for buses and officially sanctioned Olympic vehicles. Car traffic calmly obeyed her and was diverted around Nagtegaal as people carried on with their day: it's no big deal in a city that has had to get used to traffic and transit delays, detours and road closures—all to accommodate the Olympics rolling into town and setting up shop. Nagtegaal continued for 10 minutes until an unmarked police cruiser rolls up, and the performance ends with some explaining to do and no charges laid.

For the record, I missed seeing this performance. As a matter of fact, most people did; the documentation was simply posted to YouTube and spread among peers via social-networking sites such as Facebook and Tumblr. It wasn't supposed to be a spectacle at all, simply a brief gesture, a small refusal that changed the flow of the

city, if only for a few minutes. One could question whether this act was an effective form of protest, but considering the programmatic and media-friendly skirmish between Black Bloc protestors and the police had been intended to give capitalism a heart attack (or something) a week earlier, with the usual street battles and window-smashing-as-photo-op tactics, both events point to a broader crisis within the Left: one that requires some serious regrouping and rethinking in terms of message, methodology and effectiveness.

In this case, subtlety wins out. Protest marches featuring badass revolutionary posturing have become *de rigeur* spectacle: self-congratulatory for the participants while alienating the general public, and, in turn, misrepresented by the media as the issues are lost amidst the bluster. Whether it was the artist's intent or not, *Redirecting Traffic* highlighted codified terms of dissent and asked what else was possible.

—Christopher Olson

THEO SIMS: THE CANDAHAR, PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY

Conceptualized by Theo Sims and facilitated by the Presentation House Gallery as part of the Cultural Olympiad, the Candahar was a functional bar tended for two weeks by a pair of laidback Irish barmen, and unscripted performers Chris and Connor Roddy. This watering hole provided respite from the intensity of Olympic related activities, and offered the locals a space sorely lacking in Vancouver: a warm, unassuming gathering place conducive to talking, dancing and relaxing.

There was no television broadcasting Olympic events at the bar. Instead, the Candahar offered a series of evening performances programmed by Vancouver-based writer—and former owner of the Malcolm Lowry Room multi-media nightclub—Michael Turner. Mounted four times previously in various parts of Canada, the Candahar, in its Vancouver manifestation, emphasized its potential as a site of congregation at a time when gatherings were being obsessively controlled and bureaucratized by the Olympic machine. The changes to such civic measures of control as traffic regulations and liquor licences meant changes in the social spaces available in the city. In contrast to teeming sports bars and Olympic-designated tents and pavilions, the Candahar did not try to present a coherent, marketable image of a

collective national identity to the crowd gathered there. Rather, it served as a stage for diverse and polyphonic performances that engaged with the bar as a social site.

For the opening night performance by Rebecca Belmore, for example, the bar served only those customers with a status card, while a sign declared that no alcohol would be served to Indians. A pointed response to the pacified ways in which aboriginal cultures were represented in the Olympics while the country's colonial history remained mostly mute, this performance set the stage for the bar as a place that welcomed politically charged dialogues. This performance also highlighted alcohol as a social tool that can both intensify tensions and lubricate social interactions, as well as the bar as a site of conviviality and conflict.

At the heart of the Candahar's success as a social space and an artwork is Sims' hands-off approach. He does not engineer or puppeteer the interactions. The locals, the performers and the audience alike bring with them the issues and topics of discussion foremost on their minds. As an artwork, the Candahar transmutes and responds to its immediate context, while those who come to the bar complete this work.

—Liz Parks

TO SHOW, TO GIVE, TO MAKE IT BE THERE: EXPANDED LITERARY PRACTICES IN VANCOUVER: 1954-1969, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY GALLERY, AND GEOFFREY FARMER: EVERY LETTER OF THE ALPHABET, 1875 POWELL STREET AT VICTORIA DRIVE

The exhibition *to show, to give, to make it be there: Expanded Literary Practices in Vancouver: 1954-1969* is an archeology. Guest-curated at the SFU Gallery by Michael Turner, it examines what he calls "expanded" or "collagist" practices in Vancouver during a specific fifteen-year period. A lot of underappreciated work is featured here, such as the text art of Maxine Gadd and Judith Coperthorne. At times, the exhibition feels as if it forces an antagonism between literary practices of the 60s that were less disparate than the exhibition posits. What *to show, to give* establishes, for example, is that "straight" or "modernist" practices (such as those found in magazines like the *Georgia Straight's*

"Writing Supplement" and *TISH*) were not in opposition to "expanded" or "collagist" practices (such as those found in *blewointment* or *radiofreerainforest*); they, at the least, were developments. That small quibble aside, *to show, to give* provides a generative elaboration on late modern cultural practices in Vancouver, some of which help put certain contemporary and literary practices into historical context.

(T)o show, to give begins with the page-spread of Malcolm Lowry's *Through the Panama*, which Turner rightfully claims in his accompanying essay is Vancouver's "first collagist work of fiction." From there, the exhibit proceeds through the sound art of Al Neil, the paintings and ideogrammatic work of Roy Kiyooka, bill bissett's magazine *blewointment*, Ray Johnson's mail art—which includes participation by local artists Michael Morris and Gary Lee-Nova—and culminates in work gathered in Alvin Balkin's 1969 *Concrete Poetry* exhibition. In the middle of the gallery space sits a Gestetner similar to the one on which both *TISH* and bissett's *blewointment* were printed, highlighting the technological apparatus that produced—or made available—such collagist literary practices.

The exhibition is timely, not only because it follows the publication of Michael Turner's excellent novel *8 x 10*, which he himself describes as "collagist," but also because it features the opening of Geoffrey Farmer's *Every Letter of the Alphabet*, a project funded through the "Mapping and Marking" City of Vancouver public art initiative funded through the Olympic and Paralympic Art Program. *Every Letter* is both a reading room and a project space through which, over the course of the year, Farmer will commission text- or print-based artworks that will subsequently be exhibited or otherwise displayed, disseminated, or broadcast. Projects already completed include a poster project by Jeremy Shaw and a sign by Alex Morrison, among others. Not only is *Every Letter's* reading room a pleasant destination on a Saturday afternoon, but it is also a development of those "expanded" practices of the 60s—by rethinking the relationship between text and art, or what it could be, through the production of a space, in this case a reading room.

—Aaron Peck

HERE YOU ARE, PART ONE (STAN DOUGLAS, KEVIN ROMANIUK, JAMIE HILDER, HÅVARD PEDERSEN, WEEKEND LEISURE, SHANNON OKSANEN, JEREMY SHAW, LAURA PIASTA AND DAVID CATHERALL), AND CHRISTIAN KLIEGEL: WALK IN, VANCOUVER CENTRAL LIBRARY

Commissioned as part of the City of Vancouver's Olympic and Paralympic Public Art Program, *Here You Are* is a video program curated by Cate Rimmer and installed in a viewing theatre cum conceptual installation, *Walk In* by artist Christian Kliegel, that is situated on the outdoor plaza of the Vancouver Central Library. The video program, the first of a series of six programs, featured video works and video documentation of performance works by mainly Vancouver-based artists, many of whom had previously been exhibited in other exhibitions or contexts. With common themes of performance, endurance and spectacle, many of the works addressed and responded to the Olympics as a site for collective excitement, hype and hysteria. For example, Shannon Oksanen's dreamy and hypnotic *Spins* (2002) featured a continuously spinning female figure skater underneath a theatrical black sky with sparkling white stars. Seen in relation to the Olympic figure-skating footage, Oksanen's skater intriguingly conveyed a greater sense of fantasy despite her amateur skills and attire.

Situated a few blocks away from the two-week long, raucous street parties on Granville and Robson streets, *Walk In/Here You Are* was also well suited to casual (or inebriated) passersby, as many of the works featured music or extremely short narratives. Weekend Leisure's karaoke video, "We Are The Champions," attracted many to belt out in impromptu karaoke (including myself one night, I must admit).

The playful mood of the video program was enhanced by Kliegel's installation, which featured various park benches, tables and logs, gathered from across the city and arranged in front of the screen. As each sitting structure was partially concealed by the raised wooden platform built around them, viewers had to interact with the oddly scaled structures differently; many sat on tabletops or stood on benches. With its emphasis on the viewer's physical encounter with the work, *Walk In* appeared refreshingly less clever than Kliegel's

north shore news

pulse

Crossing Lions
Page 13



look

Denim's new wearable style
Page 19



rev

2010 Acura ZDX
Page 43



Friday, February 12, 2010

West Van: 148 pages North Van: 128 pages

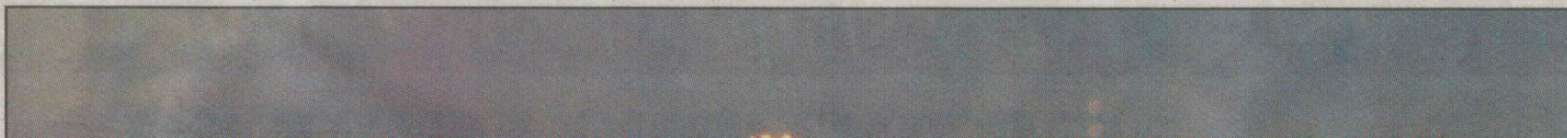
Voted Canada's Best Community Newspaper

0¢

your source for local sports, news, weather and entertainment! www.nsnews.com

Flame arrives on North Shore

Torch travels
by foot, canoe,
gondola



ARTS & CULTURE

The Candahar Bar is open for business



photo submitted

CHRIS Roddy and brother Conor, sons of a longtime Belfast pub owner, will man The Candahar Bar.

'Authentic' Irish pub will host arts events during the Olympics

■ The Candahar Bar, Feb. 12-28, presented with the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad by Presentation House Gallery, at Granville Island's PTC Studio, third floor, 1398 Cartwright St. Hours: noon to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to midnight. A variety of artistic performances are being presented nightly. Admission: Daytime \$5 and evening \$10 (at the door). Schedule and info: www.presentationhousegall.com.

Erin McPhee

emcphee@hotmail.com

A project attempting to challenge and make people think about the assumptions they make in everyday life is being staged by Presentation House Gallery at Granville Island, timed with the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

"We assume a lot about other cultures, races and people," says Theo Sims, the artist behind the project, which opens today at Vancouver's PTC Studio.

The Candahar Bar is Sims' recreation of an Irish pub. A fully operational bar — complete with cold pints and a pair of colourful bartenders from Belfast — the Candahar is part sculpture and part theatrical stage and is intended to spark a dialogue about the concept of authenticity.

"The project was an attempt to try to take on a kind of Disneyfication or a kind of paddywhackery that you would get in Irish bars across the country," says Sims, adding that often Ireland is stereotypically represented through the use of shamrocks, leprechauns and Guinness.

"But it's funny because with the Olympics, that brings a lot of sort of Disneyfication of cultures," he says. For example, many nations and provinces have set up pavilions throughout the city in an attempt to showcase what they're about from a cultural standpoint.

Sims hopes his project is effective in playing against some of these ideas.

In addition to a working pub, the Candahar boasts a full program of evening entertainment, highlighting a diverse group of artists, djs, writers, performers, lecturers and other entertainers nightly until the end of the project's run, Feb. 28. The performances have been programmed by Presentation House board member and acclaimed author Michael Turner, as well as invited guests, including Winnipeg artist Paul Butler. Featured artists include Nardwuar the Human Serviette (Feb. 16 and 23), Nicolaus Schafhausen (Feb. 13), kick evrything (Feb. 18), Skeena Reece (Feb. 19) and the Rodney Graham Band (Feb. 26).

From Brighton, England, Sims moved to Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1992 to begin work on his masters in fine arts. Coming to love the city, he stayed until 1998. The Candahar Bar, modelled after the now-closed Blackthorn Bar in Belfast, takes its name from a street where a group of artists, Sims included, used to hang out, working in their various mediums.

"We noticed that there was a lot of artists making work that directly referenced The Troubles through the iconography of helicopters and guns and balaclavas and all the usual stuff," he says.

Outside media also seemed to cover Ireland only in the context of the conflicts that occurred.

"Living there, certainly there was stuff going on, but also just life was so much more complicated and more rich than that," he says.

Sims was struck by the kindness of the people and the complexity of their society. He and his peers began making work that challenged some of the standard imagery that was being sent around the world and attempted to create alternative projects that would take the art coming out of the country in a new direction.

"There was a sense that if you weren't part of the solution, you were part of the problem and that's how we felt about these artists that were doing more kind of traditional stuff, so we wanted to take that on," he says.

Sims continued exploring this approach when he moved to Canada in 1998, calling Winnipeg and Saskatoon home for a total of 10 years before recently opting to move back to Northern Ireland to live in Derry.

This is the fifth time he's mounted The Candahar Bar. The first time was at the Alberta College of Art and Design, followed by stints at the Montreal Biennale and in Winnipeg, Man. and St. John's, Nfld.

"Each time the context has been quite different and it's

TAKE CHARGE! OSTEOARTHRITIS EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

DATE: 4 CONSECUTIVE MONDAYS
FEBRUARY 22 - MARCH 15, 2010

TIME: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

VENUE: PARKGATE LIBRARY
3675 BANFF COURT
NORTH VANCOUVER

COST: \$40 (comprehensive manual included)

LED BY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

TO REGISTER CALL **604.714.5550**

ARTHRITIS FIGHT IT!
www.arthritis.ca

Learn how to **Take Charge!** of your osteoarthritis so you can slow the disease process, protect your joints and understand and manage your chronic pain.

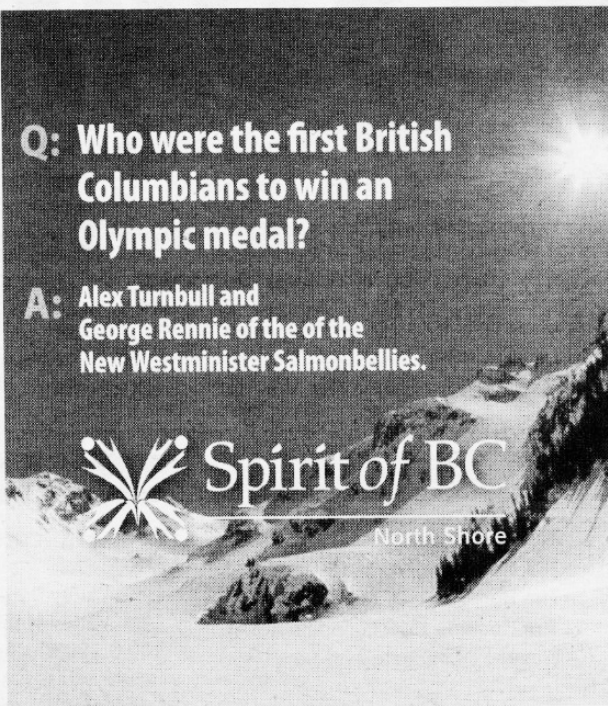


The Arthritis Society of BC & Yukon acknowledges the financial assistance of the Province of BC to support this program.



Q: Who were the first British Columbians to win an Olympic medal?

A: Alex Turnbull and George Rennie of the New Westminster Salmonbellies.



tell your community about
your upcoming events
e-mail editor@nsnews.com



Theatre and bar spaces interact

From page 30

definitely interesting seeing the way different cities and towns kind of negotiate it," he says.

Sims' partnership with Presentation House is as a result of his relationship with director Reid Shier, having come to know him through their involvement in Western Canada's arts community. Over the years, they've discussed the potential of bringing the project to Vancouver.

"This is kind of the perfect opportunity for him and for me," says Sims.

It gives Shier a chance to broaden the scope of the mandate of Presentation House for a one-off event, drawing in lots of artists and sharing the project with a new and diverse audience.

As an artist, Sims is primarily focused on sculpture and installation. In recent years he's focused on social practice as a discipline and the idea of allowing control to be taken away from what he creates and puts in the hands of those who view and interact with the work. That's very much at the heart of the Candahar, the idea that others can have a strong voice in how the project will develop.

To encourage this, he's arranged for two bartenders, Chris and Conor Roddy, the sons of a longtime Belfast pub owner, to man the Candahar. Chris once confided he recalls buying his first pint at the age of 12, Sims laughs. The brothers have owned and run their own establishments as well.

"They're real barmen, but they're sort of unscripted performers playing themselves," says Sims. "If they choose to steer it a certain way, that's their prerogative and they can do that."

Also, some of the performances being held outside the bar in the shared theatre space will intersect with Sims' project. For example, tonight's opening performance features a presentation by artist Rebecca Belmore.

"(It) will be a project that directly subverts or has an intervention aspect to my project," he says.

Other performers on the bill tonight include Ensemble Sisyphe and DJ Jeremy Shaw.

Sims is incredibly pleased with the way this presentation of The Candahar Bar has come together.

"I like the fact that we'll get an arts audience and that we should also draw quite a new audience, a new crowd of curious wanderers on Granville Island here for the Olympics and, hopefully locals," he says.

il McGrath

w Year
ancing

CULTURAL OLYMPIAD | THREE TO SEE

MUSIC

CLUB 2010: ANDRE LACHANCE QUARTET, GORDON GRDINA TRIO

Known as one of the country's best jazz bassists, Andre Lachance will be playing with musicians Brad Turner, Chris Gestrin and Joe Poole. In the second session, Gord Grdina blends mainstream jazz, improvisation and Arabic classical music.

When: This evening at 10 p.m. and 11:45 p.m.

Where: Performance Works, 1218 Cartwright St., Granville Island

Tickets: \$10 for both shows; at the door only.



PERFORMANCE

THE CANDAHAR

The Candahar is an authentic recreation of an Irish pub based on the now closed Blackthorn Bar in Belfast. Inside, the bartenders serve pints and act as unscripted performers.

Performances start with *London: 1969* by David Wisdom, followed by the Three Tadpoles Maximum.

When: Noon to midnight daily to Sunday

Where: Playwrights Theatre Centre, 219 – 1398 Cartwright St., Granville Island

Tickets: \$5 before 7 p.m., \$10 after; available only at the door



TALKING STICK FESTIVAL

A festival celebrating aboriginal culture and performing arts across the country, Talking Stick includes performances such as the Ab-Original Cabaret. Every night, a different group of poets, musicians, multimedia artists, performers and traditional singers take to the stage.

When: this evening at 9 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Where: Roundhouse Community Centre, 181 Roundhouse Mews at Pacific Boulevard

Tickets: \$25/ticketstonight.ca/604-684-2787

kevingriffin@vancouversun.com



ONLINE

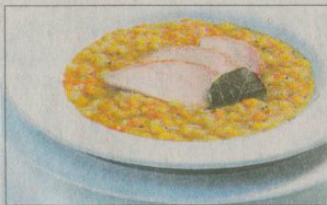
Ready, set, Sun Run

This year's 10k Sun Run takes place on Sunday, May 9. Are you registered? Go to vancouversun.com and join the fun.

INSIDE | F4

Superpower soups

The Sun's Randy Shore is urging Canadian athletes – especially the men's hockey team – to get the soup pot out and enjoy some protein and carbs.



THURSDAY

Plays and playing

Award-winning playwright Kevin Loring has a new career: as a juggler. He's preparing for a tour with his new play while caring for his 13-month-old daughter.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2010

BREAKING NEWS AT VANCOUVERSUN.COM

THU 4
WED 10



WESTCOAST

THE

e

light,
aimed



NATION

Chances
new Audain
ward's.

A PICTURE OF CHINA

Australian photographer William Yang explores his ancestral connections to the old country.

STAGE » D11

ON
N
ME





Chris Connor in Candahar, a meticulously detailed recreation of an Irish public house, which is both an artwork and a functioning pub, at Granville Island, Feb. 12-28, as part of the Cultural Olympiad.

Find Olympic action here

Pavilions and celebration sites abound

2010 Aboriginal Pavilion, Georgia and Hamilton, Feb. 12-28, free.

Abbotsford Live Site 7-32470 Haida Drive, Abbotsford, Feb. 12-28, free.

Alberta House, Robson and Beatty St., Feb. 12-28, free.

Atlantic Canada House, 1585 Johnston Street (Granville Island), Feb. 13 to 28, free.

B.C. Canada Pavilion 750 Hornby St. (Vancouver Art Gallery, 4th floor), Feb. 12-28, March 12-21, free.

Canada's Northern House 602 W. Hastings St (at Seymour), to March 31, free.

Canada Pavilion at LiveCity Cambie and Georgia, Feb. 13-27; March 12-14 and 18-21, free.

The Candahar Playwrights Theatre Centre, Granville Island, Feb. 12-28, free.

Casa Italia Roundhouse Community Centre, Feb. 6-28, free.

Edgewater Celebration Village, Plaza of Nations, Feb. 12-28, free.

French Quarter (Place de la Francophonie) Granville Island. Feb. 11-28, free.

GE Plaza Robson and Howe (Robson Square), ongoing.

German Fanfest 555 West Cordova St. (The Landing, next to Steamworks) Feb. 11-28, free.

German Saxony House 450 Stanley Park Dr. (Vancouver Rowing Club), Feb. 12-28, 12 p.m. to 2 a.m. free.

Holland Heineken House 7551 Minoru Gate (Minoru Arenas) in Richmond Feb. 11-28, free.

House of Switzerland 200-1676 Duranleau St. (Bridges Restaurant), Granville Island Feb. 5-28, free.

Irish House 620 Nelson St. (Doolins Irish Pub) Feb. 8-28, \$10/20.

Kla-How-Ya Aboriginal Village 300-999 Canada Place (Atrium of Pan Pacific Hotel), Feb. 12-28, free.

LiveCity Downtown Georgia and Beatty, Feb. 13-28, 11-12:30 a.m., free.

LiveCity Yaletown David Lam Park Feb. 13-18,

11 a.m. to 11 p.m., free.

Lunarfest Granville St. between Robson and Georgia streets, to Feb. 28, free.

Molson Canadian Hockey House 88 Pacific Blvd. (Concord Place between Science World and BC Place) Feb. 12-28, \$99-450.

Victory Ceremonies 777 Pacific Boulevard (BC Place) Feb. 14-26 Celebration at 6:30, medals presentation at 7 p.m., live concerts at 7:30 p.m. Artists include Nelly Furtado, Barenaked Ladies, INXS. \$22 for assigned seating, \$50 for premium.

O Zone Richmond Minoru Park and surrounding areas in Richmond Feb. 12-28, free.

Ontario Pavilion 88 Pacific Blvd. (Concord Place between Science World and BC Place) Feb. 12-28, free.

Quebec House (Maison Quebec) 50 Pacific Blvd. (Between BC Place and G.M. Place), Feb. 12-28, free.

Saskatchewan Pavilion 88 Pacific Blvd. (Concord Place between Science World and BC Place) Feb. 12-28.

Sochi 2014 House (Russia) Science World Feb. 8-28, March 12-21.

Surrey 2010 Celebration Zone Holland Park, Surrey (Corner of King George Highway and Old Yale Road) Feb. 12-28, free.

Scandinavia House 6540 Thomas St., Burnaby (Scandinavian Community Centre), Feb. 12-28, free.

ValleyFest 1233 Lynn Valley Rd., North Vancouver Feb. 12-28, free.

Vancouver Art Gallery 750 Hornby St., Feb. 12-28, free.

Vancouver House LiveCity Yaletown, Feb. 12-28, free.

Vectorial Elevation English Bay to Feb. 28, dusk to dawn, free.

West Vancouver Spirit Square 2121 Marine Drive, West Vancouver Feb. 12-28, free.

Winterfest at Lonsdale Quay Lonsdale Quay Market, Feb. 12-28, free.

Ziptrek Robson Square Robson between Hornby and Howe Feb. 12-28 free.

Globe Review

★★★★★ "Taking Communion deliciously dramatic." The Globe and Mail
Communion@TARRA

R6 Review

The Globe and Mail, Saturday, March 20, 2010

VANCOUVER 2010

Our choices for gold at the Cultural Olympiad

Eight weeks, 200 offerings and 750,000 attendees later, **Marsha Lederman** recounts Vancouver's exhaustive celebration of the festival.

VANCOUVER

What doesn't kill you makes you more cultured. For eight weeks, Vancouver has been the scene of a frenetic, full-on arts marathon with close to 200 offerings from the Cultural Olympiad. It has been exciting, exhausting, wonderful, disappointing at times, and it has forced some local culture vultures to make some difficult decisions. (Tonight for example: Do you see *Nixon in China*, ARC Ensemble's *Music in Exile*, *Hive 3*, *In Situ*, *India.Arie*, *Configurations*, *Black Grace*, *Rain or Ice Age 2010*?)

The Olympiad's popularity can't be denied. Some 750,000 people will have attended the events and exhibitions by the time it officially wraps up, tomorrow, according to projections from VANOC.

There's a pervasive feeling as the festival draws to a close that this may be like one last lavish vacation before a terminal illness takes hold; the future is uncertain thanks to the state of arts funding in B.C. But before we move forward, a look back. Here are some thoughts on eight weeks of Olympic culture:

GOLD-MEDAL NIGHTS OUT

NIXON IN CHINA

Vancouver Opera's spectacular production of John Adams's modern masterpiece marks a new cultural milestone for this city. Days later, I am still hearing the music.

HIVE 3

Local theatre troupes put on 14 short, intimate shows in constant rotation. Moving from one smart, fun, innovative theatre piece to the next, I marvelled at the talent this city can boast. Bravo.

THE CANDAHAR BAR

An Irish pub with interesting characters and challenging artistic presentations nightly. Can we get this installed here permanently, please?



K'naan impressed with his *Wavin' Flag*. Right, *Hive 3* saw local theatre troupes staging 14 intimate shows in constant rotation. JENNIFER ROBERTS FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL



ALSO ON THE PODIUM

KAMP

One of the most powerful works of Holocaust art I have seen - starring tiny, handmade puppets.

DARK MATTERS

Crystal Pite's dark and whimsical dance masterpiece had the audience enraptured.

K'NAAN

Exhausted though I was toward the end of the Olympics, I wasn't leaving until K'naan did *Wavin' Flag*. It was worth the wait - with many powerful numbers along the way.

SOUVENIR HANKIE REQUIRED

DELUSION

Laurie Anderson's searing, honest work inspired by her mother's death took the audience to some difficult places.

COME-FROM-BEHIND FINISH

BASH'D - A GAY RAP OPERA

The wedding scene in this clever *Romeo and Juliet* take-off was particularly poignant.

ELEPHANT WAKE

Joey Tremblay was perfect as the lonely final inhabitant of a francophone Saskatchewan town in a lovely work that was more about family life than about the two solitudes.

ART OF CRAFT

Not terribly intrigued by the idea of a craft show, I travelled to the Museum of Vancouver anyway and was blown away by the dozens of smart, inventive works.

THE EDWARD CURTIS PROJECT

Anticipating a sort of academic look at the controversial photo-

grapher Edward Curtis, I was moved by Tamara Podemski's strong performance as a Métis journalist.

RICK: THE RICK HANSEN STORY

I saw this multimedia play with a huge group of school kids. Expecting chatter and boredom, I was impressed instead with their engagement. The students responded beautifully to both the humour and the message.

UPSET LOSS

THE BLUE DRAGON

While the spectacle of this work is undeniable (and worth seeing for that alone), the story and its characters were surprisingly thin.

HAL WILLNER'S NEIL YOUNG PROJECT

With the exception of Elvis Costello, who brought the house down, this evening was often tepid and soulless.

CRINGE-WORTHY

UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL

Stumbling over lines and switching accents, Christian Murray seemed disengaged in this one-man play. There was polite laughter from the audience to start, and then a lot of watch-checking.

BODY & SOUL

While the individual stories of these women were fascinating and moving, some of the lines were so hokey, I couldn't believe this play came from the great Judith Thompson.

JUST PLAIN COOL

CODE LIVE 1

Interactive art, show the coolest people in town up to experientive music.

FEAR OF FLIGHT

The a cappella sour this play, set on a t plane, was performed by the actors and was...

THINGS I WISH I'D SE

PHOENIX

When audience members climb onto the stage and dance with the band, you know something is going right.

THE GOLDEN MEAN (

A two-night run was enough for the work of Marie Chouinard.

