

## **Rewrite the History of 2011 until January 15**

Rewrite the Year artwork invites the public to re-imagine 2011 as part of Electric Speed exhibition at Surrey Urban Screen

At the beginning of each new year, we reflect on the events of the past and plan goals for the one ahead. It isn't often that we're offered the opportunity to change our past, in order to affect our future. An interactive artwork currently on display in Surrey invites everyone to participate in this creative act.

Year 2011 saw an extraordinary wave of protests sweep across the world, from the desert of Yemen, to the urban centres of New Delhi, Athens and London, to cities across North America. Everywhere people took to the streets calling for change, reclaiming their right to express themselves and refusing the status quo. Until January 15, a large scale urban screen at Surrey's Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre invites local residents and online viewers to a collective review of 2011 and change how the past might be remembered.

Rewrite the Year revisits 365 key headlines of 2011. From protests, elections, conflicts, change, victories and other events – local and international – the year is re-broadcast one headline at a time. Citizens are invited to consider what worked and what didn't, collectively rewriting history by creating different stories about the year that has just passed. Rewrite the Year invites participants to not only view a headline but also to change one of its keywords using text messages sent from their phones.

Surrey Art Gallery is premiering the artwork Rewrite the Year at Surrey Urban Screen. Created by artists Melissa Mongiat & Mouna Andraos this project is part of the Electric Speed exhibition project curated by Malcolm Levy and Kate Armstrong for New Forms Media Society. Electric Speed is organized as part of the international celebration of Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan's centenary, and recognizes the legacy of this important figure to critical thinking about mass media and the influence it continues to have on contemporary life. As McLuhan said, "Art at its most significant is a Distant Early Warning System that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it."

The Montreal-based artist team of Mongiat & Andraos say, "We believe in participation – empowering people to have a place in the stories that are told around them." Their combined background in interactive design and technology serves them in exploring new ways to tell stories. The intention of their work is to "bring magic to everyday places, behaviours and objects, inviting the public to become active contributors in the process and surrounding environments."

For Rewrite the Year, the artists have designed a system that invites people to use text messaging to rewrite headlines one word at a time. Sometimes comical, sometimes serious, sometimes dark and sometimes visionary, these contributions create new headlines that are as varied as the people who participate in the project. Everyone's words count, but only one at a time. This ensures a diverse series of collectively created headlines.

Curator Kate Armstrong says, “For Melissa Mongiat and Mouna Andraos, the public screen is a site for public debate that addresses the screen as a networked phenomenon, and which echoes the global #Occupy movement, inviting a measured re-conception of news headlines.”

Headlines used for this project are drawn from five sources including local and international newspapers: Surrey Now, the Vancouver Sun, The Globe and Mail, The New York Times and The Guardian. Transformed headlines are collected and archived. Citizens will have the opportunity to rewrite history, deciding how it should be told, and how it can be transformed into a hopeful message for the future.

Rewrite the Year is the first part of Electric Speed, and marks the world premiere of the project. The second part of Electric Speed starts January 27, 2012, and includes works by Canadian media artists Jeremy Bailey, Will Gill, Jillian McDonald, and Jon Sasaki. More information about Electric Speed is available at [www.electricspeed.ca](http://www.electricspeed.ca).

Surrey Urban Screen exhibitions begin 30 minutes after sunset, and conclude at midnight. More information about Surrey Urban Screen is available at [www.surreyurbanscreen.ca](http://www.surreyurbanscreen.ca).

More information about Rewrite the Year can be found at [www.rewritetheyear.com](http://www.rewritetheyear.com).

More information about the artists: <http://www.livingwithourtime.com/>

Melissa Mongiat: <http://www.livingwithourtime.com/whoweare/melissa-mongiat/>

Mouna Andraos: <http://www.livingwithourtime.com/whoweare/mouna-andraos/>

### **Related Events**

**Conversation with Electric Speed Part Two Artists | Saturday, January 28, 2012 3:30pm  
Part Two Opening Reception and Publication Launch to follow at 5pm**

These events are held at Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre (13458 - 107A Avenue Surrey, BC V3T 0G4).

### **Public Inquiries**

[artgallery@surrey.ca](mailto:artgallery@surrey.ca)

Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre 604-598-5898

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To receive announcements about exhibitions and related events, sign up for e-bulletins at [www.surrey.ca/arts](http://www.surrey.ca/arts).

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