

# TEACHERS' GUIDE

for Elementary Grades

## Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image



Khan Lee, *Millenium Line (detail)*, 2011. Backlit photographic transparency. Image courtesy of the artist.

## DEAR TEACHERS

This guide has been developed for elementary teachers as a classroom resource in relation to the exhibition, *Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image*, which can be visited at the Surrey Art Gallery from January 14 – March 18, 2012. The guide contains information about the exhibition and activities that will help you prepare for and follow-up your visit to the Surrey Art Gallery. Engaging in the activities before and/or after your visit will reinforce ideas and processes explored in the exhibition, and provide continuity between the gallery visit and classroom. The activities require a minimum of materials and are adaptable to different grade levels. The guide also contains curriculum links, vocabulary and resource sections.

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

### **Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image** **January 14 – March 18, 2012**

A city offers both beauty and banality. It is repetitious and dynamic; it can appear to stay the same, yet change drastically over a short period of time. Surrey Art Gallery's newest exhibition, *Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image*, shows many sides to cities, especially Metro Vancouver's. The ambitious, and in many cases large-scale, artworks include a grid of shimmering graphite rubbings of eroded date-stamped sidewalks in Vancouver's Westside, a 109 foot long light box presenting a panorama of Metro Vancouver as seen from a moving SkyTrain, and an interactive photographic database of every bus stop in Surrey. Through photography, painting, drawing, and video, artists have used the strategy of multiple images to create compelling ways of representing experiences of the city. The artists in the exhibition are Sylvia Grace Borda, Michael de Courcy, Chris Gergley, Jeremy Herndl, Bill Jeffries, Roy Kiyooka, Owen Kydd, Khan Lee, Helma Sawatzky, Susan Schuppli, Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace, and Neil Wedman.

Many of the images explore urban spaces characterized by vast swaths of street intersections, industrial dead zones, and suburban sprawl. These 'defeatured landscapes', as they came to be known, brought international attention to Vancouver's art scene – particularly photography – in the 1980s and early 1990s. The architect and philosopher Ignasi de Solà-Morales referred to these sorts of urban landscapes as a 'terrain vague'. *Beyond Vague Terrain* brings together works from this historical period, as well as new works. In this exhibition, the multiplicity of images within a single artwork is featured, rather than the individual pictures normally associated with artistic representations of urban landscapes. These serial artworks – both photographic and non-photographic – challenge the notion of the 'city centre', and ask that its margins be re-imagined, just as the idea of the 'generic city' is challenged when a place's specific qualities and histories are revealed.

In addition to the strong sense of realism that runs through much of the art, there is also a keen interest on the part of the artists to capture the dynamic aspects of time related to the modern city. Some artworks seek to collapse time and space. For example, Helma Sawatzky's recombined images of a new building site in South Surrey speak to the rapid development of this part of the Lower Mainland. Other artworks use a fixed frame method to capture the shifting activities of the city and its landscape. Roy Kiyooka's street photographs freeze moving figures and passing vehicles against storefront facades in late-1970s East Vancouver. Owen Kydd's moving-still images of Kingsway convey a complex melancholy and rich fabric of the city, while Jeremy Herndl's series of paintings depict an ever transforming view across a sparsely populated Whalley neighbourhood in North Surrey.

It is often claimed that in the digital era every photograph has been taken countless times over, and therefore every landscape has been documented. Can it similarly be claimed that every series of images or combination of spaces has already been pictured? *Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image* brings together a wide breadth of documentary approaches to capturing the dynamics of the city, with an emphasis on picturing its everyday features and overlooked urban forms from 1970 to the present.

*Jordan Strom, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections*

## **ABOUT THE SURREY ART GALLERY**

Surrey Art Gallery is the second largest public art gallery in the Metro Vancouver region. Internationally recognized, the Gallery showcases diverse artistic practices including digital and audio art by local, national and international artists. The Surrey Art Gallery's mission is to engage the public in an ongoing dialogue about issues and ideas that affect our numerous communities as expressed through contemporary art, and to provide opportunities for the public to interact with artists and the artistic process.

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

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Participating in a guided tour, studio workshop or self-guided tour in conjunction with the exhibition, *Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image*, supports British Columbia Visual Arts Prescribed Learning Outcomes for elementary grades as outlined below. The exhibition can be used as a touchstone for discussion relating to themes and concepts addressed in a variety of curriculum areas.

### VISUAL ARTS PRESCRIBED LEARNING OUTCOMES

*It is expected that students will:*

#### ***Kindergarten to Grade 1***

- identify a variety of image sources, their own and others
- describe the many forms that images take
- demonstrate an awareness that images come from a variety of contexts
- demonstrate recognition of the expressive qualities of individual visual elements

#### ***Grade 2 to 3***

- suggest purposes for a variety of images
- demonstrate an awareness of a variety of reasons why people make and use art
- identify the expressive qualities of individual visual elements
- demonstrate an awareness that materials, tools, equipment and processes can be used to create particular effects

#### ***Grade 4***

- identify image development and design strategies
- compare images developed for particular purposes
- identify the characteristics of materials, tools, equipment and processes used to create particular effects
- demonstrate an awareness that there are various types of artists in the community

#### ***Grade 5***

- compare the relationship between form and purpose in a variety of images
- identify aspects of selected images that indicate the social, historical, or cultural context in which they were created
- compare a variety of works that emphasize particular elements and principles
- analyse the use of materials, tools, equipment and processes in a variety of artworks

### ***Grade 6***

- demonstrate knowledge of image-development and design strategies used by artists for a variety of purposes
- demonstrate an awareness that images influence and are influenced by their social, historical, and cultural contexts
- identify images that emphasize particular elements (including space) and principles (including rhythm)
- analyse the use of materials, tools, equipment and processes in a variety of artworks

### ***Grade 7***

- analyse image-development and design strategies used by various artists for a variety of purposes
- demonstrate an understanding of the influence of social, historical, and cultural contexts on artists and their images
- analyse how the elements and principles are used to create effects and convey mood and meaning in images
- evaluate the use of materials, tools, equipment and processes in a variety of artworks

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: SERIAL CITY

### Description

In this activity, students will collaborate to create accordion books of urban images.

### Discussion

Inform students that they will be visiting the exhibition, *Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image* at the Surrey Art Gallery. In a guided tour, students will explore how we experience the dynamic and ever-changing urban environment by looking at and talking about photography, video, paintings and drawings by local artists. Many of the artworks are made up of serial images – images that are arranged in a series or sequence. Engage students in a discussion about cities: What is a city? What is a suburb? What does it mean to be a citizen? What elements make up different parts of a city? What things do you find in different areas of a city? (i.e. in the city centre or on the outskirts of the city.) Use the white board to brainstorm and create a list of urban places the students are familiar with. Examples may include: a skyscraper, a park, a mansion, a pet store, a museum, McDonalds, an apartment building, the SkyTrain, etc. Ask students to visualize each place and discuss the physical details that make it distinctive.

### Materials

Heavy drawing paper or watercolour paper; waterproof pens (fine-tip black permanent markers or black ballpoint pens); a variety of coloured felt-tip markers and/or painting media such as watercolour sets or puck tempera; paintbrushes; containers with water; poster-board or card stock; glue sticks; cloth ribbon (optional).

### Process

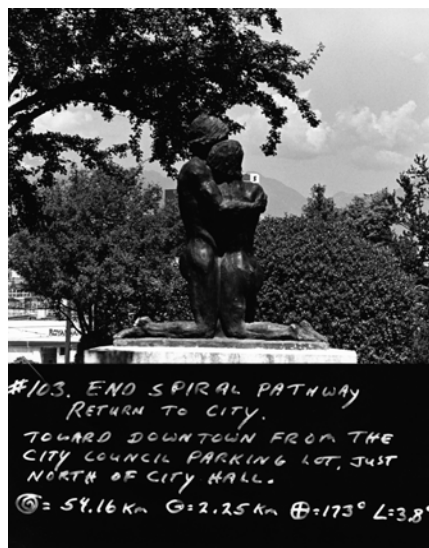
1. Write the names of the listed places on separate pieces of paper. Make sure there is at least one paper per student, if not, make duplicates of some of the places. Put the papers in a bowl.
2. Provide each student with a piece of drawing/watercolour paper. Suggested dimensions: 7.5cm x 60cm. Have students fold the paper into eight equal sections then write their name on the first section.
3. Have each student pull the name of a place from the bowl and then draw from imagination a picture of that place in the first section of their paper with a waterproof pen. When they are finished drawing have them extend a tiny piece of the horizon line just past the fold and onto the next section of paper.

4. Return the names of places to the bowl. Have the students fold their paper so the drawing they have completed is hidden and the next section with the tiny piece of the horizon line is showing. They will then pass their paper to another student.
5. Tell the students “No peeking at the previous drawing! It will make the project more fun”. Suggest that the students extend the tiny piece of the horizon line across their drawing. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until all eight squares have pictures on them.
6. Return the papers to their original owners. Spread them open to see the cities that have been created. Students may then colour their serial city with coloured felt tip markers and/or painting media.
7. When the paint is dry, fold the paper up accordion style. Provide each student with two pieces of poster board or card stock cut just slightly bigger than the size of the folded paper. Glue one piece on each end section to form the covers of the book. If desired for closure, a piece of cloth ribbon approximately 50 cm. long can be placed between the cover and the book when gluing the back cover.
8. When finished, all the accordion books can be opened and displayed together.

## Conclusion

Ask students: How do the booklets use the idea of serial imagery? What makes the booklets different? What makes them similar? What was it like to work collectively? What did they enjoy about the process? How was it different from working individually?

*NOTE: This activity was developed by April Davis, Surrey Art Gallery school program instructor.*



Bill Jeffries, *Panopticon: 103 Views of the Scotia Bank Tower (1978-79)* (detail).  
Silver gelatin emulsion on paper. Collection of the Surrey Art Gallery

## POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: BEYOND VAGUE TERRAIN ARTIST TRADING CARDS

### Description

In this activity students will create and trade their own artist trading cards inspired by the artworks in *Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image*.

### Discussion

Discuss the phenomenon of artist trading cards with the students. An artist trading card, or ATC, is an original miniature artwork that is the same size as a baseball or hockey trading card – exactly 2.5 x 3.5 inches or 64 x 89 mm. ATC's are created to be traded, not sold. Artists can trade their own cards or cards by other artists that they have collected. Sometimes ATC's are created as a series. Usually the artist puts their name, title, date, and sometimes their email address on the back of the card. ATC's can be made using any materials and techniques, including drawing, painting, sewing, collage and photography. Though most trading cards are made on cardstock, the surface can also be made of diverse materials, such as clay, metal, stiffened fabric, canvas and glass. Inform students that they will be creating artist trading cards based on the art they saw in the exhibition. What artworks do they remember? Which artworks did they find the most interesting? Why? To help students recall the artworks, either print out images, or have students research the artists' images and/or websites online. Artist websites are listed in the Online Resources section at the back of this guide. Have each student choose one of the artworks that they found to be interesting in the exhibition to inspire their own artwork.

### Materials

Card stock cut into 2.5 x 3.5 inches or 64 x 89 mm; plastic trading card pockets (optional - these can be purchased at craft supply or sports stores); art materials you have on hand – i.e., markers, pencil crayons, collage materials; glue sticks; scissors.

### Process

1. Pass each student a piece of card stock and a variety of art materials.
2. Instruct students to create an artwork inspired by an artwork in the exhibition. Explain that this does not mean their work needs to look like the original artwork, but instead is a personal, unique response to the work. For example, if the student was to base their artwork on the work by Helma Sawatzky, *Construction Sites Phase II: Phoenix Complex*, (see below p. 9), students could draw their own fantastical construction site. Another example: students who chose to be inspired by Bill Jeffries' series, *Panopticon: 103 Views of the Scotia Bank Tower (1978-79)* (see detail above p. 7), could draw or collage



various city landmarks and juxtapose their own version of a bank tower logo within each image.

3. Encourage students to add interest to their artwork by incorporating text / words and layering materials.
4. Have students use the back of the card to write their name, date and title of the artwork. If the card is part of a series, ensure the cards are numbered in sequence.
5. If there is time, students can create a series of ATC's, each inspired by a different artwork in the exhibition.

### Conclusion

Display completed artist trading cards together on a table. Which artworks do they remind students of in the Beyond Vague Terrain exhibition? Have students negotiate with one another other to trade cards. Check out the website [StudentATC.com](http://StudentATC.com). This website was developed to assist teachers with organizing classroom-to-classroom ATC exchanges around the world.



Helma Sawatzky, *Construction Sites Phase II: Phoenix Complex*, 2009-2011.  
Lightjet print mounted on aluminum dibond. Courtesy of the artist and Elliott Louis Gallery.

## VOCABULARY

**CONTEMPORARY ART:** Art that belongs to the present day. A contemporary artist is an artist who is alive today and who makes works of art to be shown in galleries and public spaces.

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA ART:** Electronic art is a form of art that makes use of electronic media or, more broadly, refers to technology and/or electronic media. It is related to information art, new media art, video art, digital art, interactive art, internet art and electronic music.

**INSTALLATION ART:** Art that has been created by the artist in a given or chosen space. An installation is a site-specific, three-dimensional work which incorporates any media, including the physical features of the site, and is designed to transform the perception of a particular environment.

**PANORAMA:** An unbroken view of the whole region surrounding an observer; a picture or photograph containing a wide view.

**REPETITION:** The act of doing or performing again; the repeated use of the same word or pattern.

**SCALE:** The ratio between the size of something and a representation of it.

**SERIAL:** Of, relating to, consisting of, or arranged in a series, rank, or row; appearing in successive parts or numbers.

**SYMBOL:** Something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention, especially a material object used to represent something invisible.

**URBAN LANDSCAPE:** The traits, patterns and structure of a city's specific geographic area, including its biological composition, its physical environment and its social patterns.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### Articles about the exhibition

**gallerieswest Review, "Beyond Vague Terrain: The City and the Serial Image"** (Feb 1, 2012)

[www.gallerieswest.ca/topics/bill\\_jeffries](http://www.gallerieswest.ca/topics/bill_jeffries)

**Runner Magazine "Local Eyes: Beyond Vague Terrain"** (Jan 10, 2012)

[www.runnermag.ca/tag](http://www.runnermag.ca/tag)

**Surrey Leader, "How do artists picture the city?"** (Jan 13, 2012)  
[www.surreyleader.com/entertainment/137221628.html?mobile=true](http://www.surreyleader.com/entertainment/137221628.html?mobile=true)

### **Cities of Today, Cities of Tomorrow**

[www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/habitat/units/un01txt.asp](http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/habitat/units/un01txt.asp)

United Nations education website unit: What is a City? - The objectives of the unit are to introduce students to: the various definitions of the city; the concepts of "urbanization" and "urban growth"; the complexity of cities and their significance at the end of the 20th century; the fact that by the 21st century over half the world population will be living in cities.

### **Cities of Canada**

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_cities\\_in\\_Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_in_Canada)

List and information of incorporated cities of Canada in alphabetical order categorized by province.

### **City of Surrey**

[www.surrey.ca](http://www.surrey.ca)

Official site. Includes information about city government, economic development, and city services.

### **Student Artist Trading Cards**

[www.StudentATC.com](http://www.StudentATC.com)

A free website dedicated to assisting teachers organize classroom-to-classroom ATC exchanges across the hall, across the country or across the world.

## **ARTIST WEBSITES**

### **Sylvia Grace Borda**

[www.sylviagraceborda.com](http://www.sylviagraceborda.com)

### **Micheal de Courcy**

[www.michaeldecourcy.com](http://www.michaeldecourcy.com)

### **Chris Gergley**

[www.artfacts.net/en/artist/chris-gergley-22199/profile.html](http://www.artfacts.net/en/artist/chris-gergley-22199/profile.html)

### **Jeremy Herndl**

[www.ecuad.ca/people/profile/19055](http://www.ecuad.ca/people/profile/19055)

### **Bill Jeffries**

[www.discovernikkei.org/en/events/2010/01/28/2222](http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/events/2010/01/28/2222)

**Roy Kiyooka**

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy\\_Kiyooka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Kiyooka)

**Owen Kydd**

[www.owenkydd.com](http://www.owenkydd.com)

**Khan Lee**

[www.casv.ca/studio-visit/khan-lee](http://www.casv.ca/studio-visit/khan-lee)

**Helma Sawatzky**

[www.helmasawatzky.com](http://www.helmasawatzky.com)

**Susan Schuppli**

[www.uwo.ca/visarts/faculty/schuppli/schuppli.html](http://www.uwo.ca/visarts/faculty/schuppli/schuppli.html)

**Jeff Wall**

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff\\_Wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Wall)

**Ian Wallace**

[www.ian-wallace.com](http://www.ian-wallace.com)

**Neil Wedman**

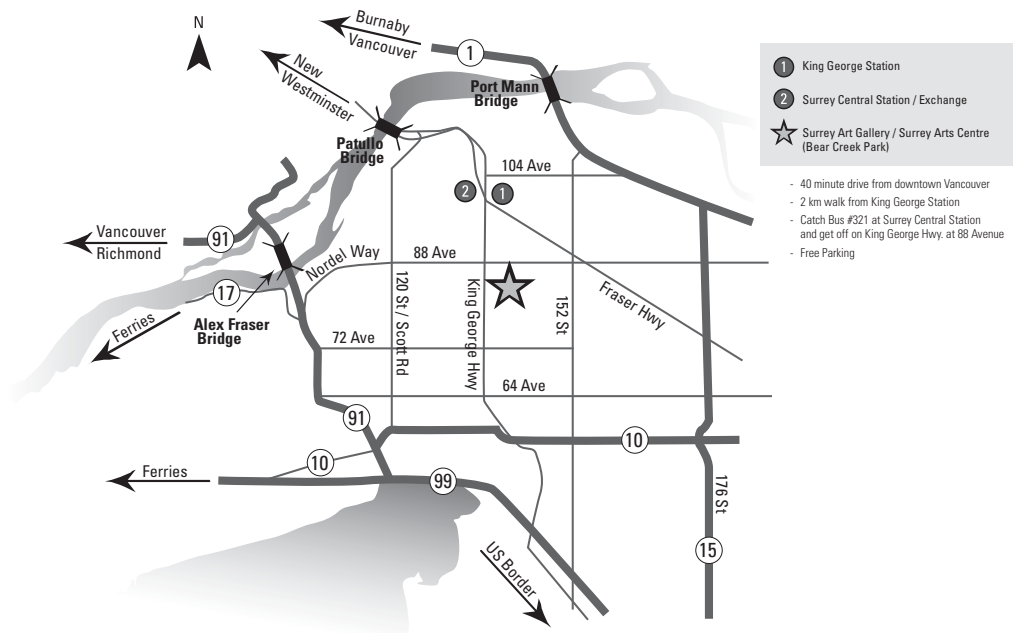
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## **TEACHER GUIDE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Teacher Guide prepared by Surrey Art Gallery Interpretive Programmer, Pamela Tarlow-Calder.  
Exhibition description text by Jordan Strom, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections. Serial City  
lesson plan developed by April Davis, Surrey Art Gallery school programs instructor.

## SURREY ART GALLERY INFORMATION



13750 – 88 Avenue – Surrey, BC  
 604-501-5566 / [artgallery@surrey.ca](mailto:artgallery@surrey.ca)  
[www.surrey.ca/arts](http://www.surrey.ca/arts)



**Gallery hours:**  
 Mon & Fri: 9am – 5pm  
 Tues, Wed & Thurs: 9am – 9pm  
 Sat: 10am – 5pm  
 Sun: Noon – 5pm  
 Closed holidays / Admission by donation

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



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