

READY PLAYER TWO



TANG / ASSU

thereach

Gallery Museum
Abbotsford



BRENDAN TANG & SONNY ASSU

READY PLAYER TWO

Touring Institution: The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford
Curator: Laura Schneider

This exhibition presents a new, collaborative body of artwork created by British Columbia artists Sonny Assu and Brendan Lee Satish Tang. With a desire to explore shared interests in their work, Assu and Tang incorporate elements of popular culture—in particular science fiction and various comic and gaming cultures—to consider the impact of these forms of visual culture on their respective practices, and to examine how these forms read as symbols of cultural identity and present possibilities for rethinking postcolonial relations in contemporary society.

In their independent practices, the artists frequently combine art historical references and the visual language of popular culture to explore the ongoing implications of colonialism, consumerism, and globalization. Informed by their mixed-race backgrounds and experiences of contemporary Canadian life, the exhibition connects the personal and the political in a critical and highly relatable exploration of 1980s & 1990s youth culture. Building on notions of Afro-futurism and Indigenous-futurism, this exhibition acknowledges and gives shape to concealed and erased Immigrant-Settler (i.e., non-European) and Indigenous histories through the artists' common interests in the future imaginary and what they have collectively referred to as “consumer geek culture.”

The exhibition is organized into three rooms designed by the artists, comprised of found objects to be sourced by each host venue in collaboration with the artists, and new works. The rooms recall the kinds of spaces where the artists, as adolescents, found solace and a sense of belonging.



insert caption for over-
all exhibit



The **first room** mimics a 1980s kitchen and wood paneled basement, furnished with found objects (e.g., an old couch, TV trays, cassettes, video-game cartridges, and a selection of board games like Risk and Monopoly that reference the acquisition of land and wealth) and collaborative artworks inspired by 1980s youth culture.

insert caption



insert caption



insert caption



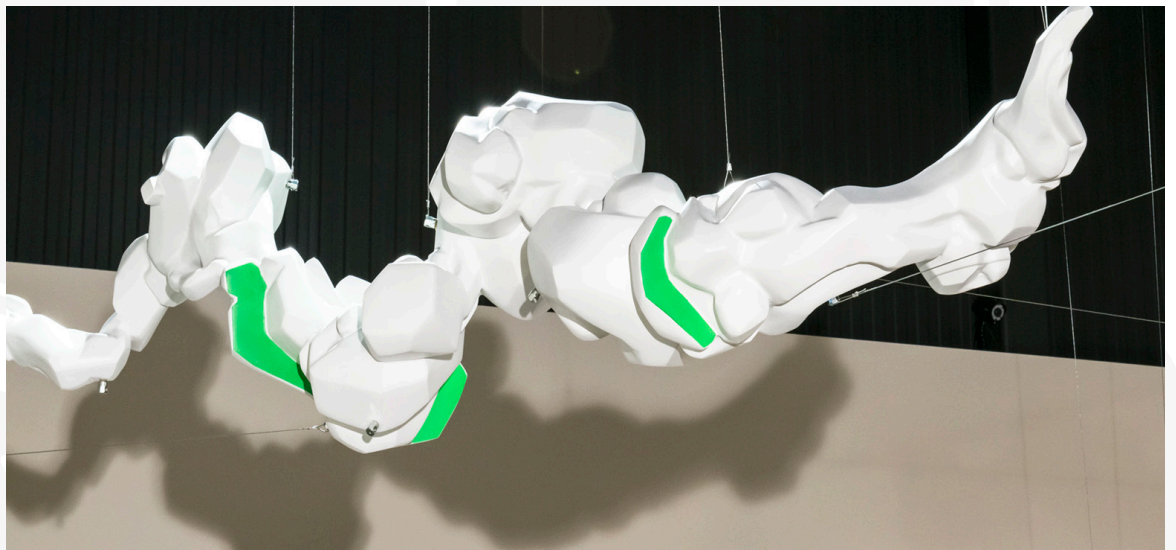
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The **second room** is influenced by the artists' familiarity with 1980–1990s arcades and features custom cedar and copper leaf video-game cabinets, and game-like sculptural polyurethane clouds suspended from the ceiling.



insert caption

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The **third and final room** takes its cues from gaming stores. This room features a display case filled with comic books and collectibles alongside recent works by the artists drawing a parallel between comic book shops and art galleries as sites of fetish and consumption.

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EXHIBITION ELEMENTS

Installation is configured to three spaces, each space roughly 600 sq ft. The exhibition is intended to be adapted according to the found objects sourced in each host community and the spatial constraints of each gallery. Digital files for title vinyl and introductory text are included. Also see attached contents list

The Kitchen & Basement

To control shipping costs and create a unique exhibition at location, we are proposing that host venues source larger found object components and DIY elements for these rooms in collaboration with the artists (e.g., wood paneling, wallpaper, couch, chair, entertainment unit). For example, when the exhibition was shown at The Reach, many of these elements were loaned by the Habitat for Humanity Re-store. The highlighted items on the attached contents list suggests found objects that can be sourced. Depending on the availability of materials/resources in your location, this can be negotiated.

Arcade

This space is comprised of two cedar arcade cabinets, three suspended polyurethane cloud sculptures and several wall-hung works. All tech for the arcade cabinets is included in the exhibition.

Comic Book Store

This space is comprised of 17 several wall-hung works, four sculptures (Punching Clouds includes custom plinth), and a retail display cabinet (included in the exhibition).

Measurements given: please note that height precedes width and all measurements include frame.



insert caption



insert caption

SCHEDULE AND AVAILABILITY

Dates	Available after November 2018.
Schedule	Yukon Arts Centre (Whitehorse, YK) March–May, 2018 Touchstones Gallery (Nelson, BC) June–August, 2018 Niagara Artists Center (St. Catherines, ON) September–November, 2018
Financial	To be negotiated.
Approximate size	200 linear feet/1800 square feet
Publication	A publication is planned for the conclusion of the tour. We hope to include installation images from each presentation, as the exhibition will vary according to the respective found objects at each venue. We are currently seeking co-publication partnerships with host venues in the form of financial and written contributions.
Programming	The artists are available to assist with/participate in programming initiatives. Contact for more details. Travel & accommodation costs are the responsibility of the borrowing institution (additional funding support is being sought to assist with these costs).
Insurance	The exhibition is insured during travel by The Reach. The borrowing institution will provide all-risk insurance coverage while the exhibition is on its premises and provide proof of this coverage prior to receiving the exhibition. Value of exhibition will be confirmed prior to the tour.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Brendan Lee Satish Tang (b.1975)

Brendan Tang was born in Dublin, Ireland of Trinidadian parents and is a naturalized citizen of Canada. He earned his formal art education on both Canadian coasts and the American Midwest, where he learned to appreciate the ceramic medium. Tang has lectured at conferences and academic institutions across the continent, and his professional practice has also taken him to India, Europe and Japan. He has been a resident artist at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts (Helena, MT) and has participated in an international residency at the European Ceramic Work Centre ('s-Hertogenbosch, NL). He has exhibited at the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in QC, and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, and was the recipient of the 2016 Biennale Internationale de Vallauris contemporary ceramic award. He has been profiled by The Knowledge Network, and featured in printed publications including The National Post, Wired (UK and Italy), and ELLE (Canada). Tang's work can be found in such collections as the Seattle Art Museum, the Ariana Muse in Geneva SW, Canada House in London (UK) and the Art Bank of Canada.

<http://www.brendantang.com/>

Sonny Assu (b. 1975)

Sonny Assu was raised in North Delta, BC, over 250 km away from his home ancestral home on Vancouver Island. Having been raised as you "every day average suburban white-kid" it wasn't until he was eight years old that he discovered his Kwakwaka'wakw heritage. Later in life, this discovery would be the conceptual focal point of his contemporary art practice. Having cut his teeth in Vancouver's art scene, Assu packed up and moved to Montreal to be with the love of his life. Five years later, along with his wife and beautiful daughter, Sonny moved back to BC, settling in Surrey's Crescent Park. Having grown tired of the isolation of the area and the ridiculousness of the over-inflated housing market, Assu and his family moved "home" to unceded Liwilda'xw territory (Campbell River, BC.). Assu received his BFA from Emily Carr University (2002) and his MFA candidate from Concordia University (2017). He received the BC Creative Achievement Award in First Nations Art in 2011 and was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award in 2012, 2013 and 2015. His work can be found in numerous has been accepted into the National Gallery of Canada, Seattle Art Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Burke Museum at the University of Washington, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Hydro Quebec, Lotto Quebec and in various other public and private collections across Canada, the United States and the UK.

<http://www.sonnyassu.com/>