

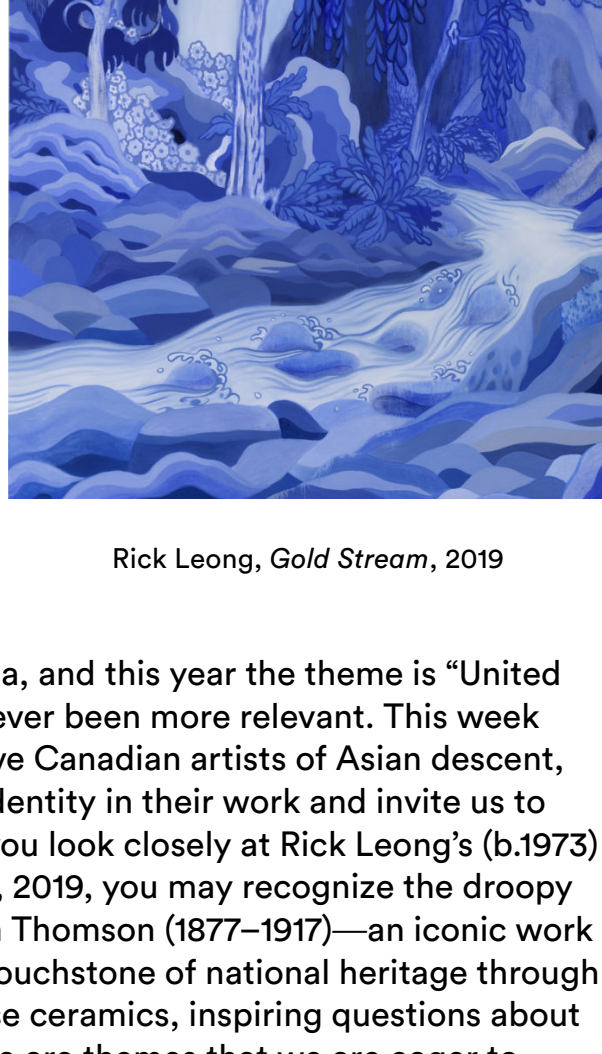
# ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

## LEGACIES OF CULTURE

Explore works by five Asian Canadian artists



Rick Leong, *Wild Willow*, 2019

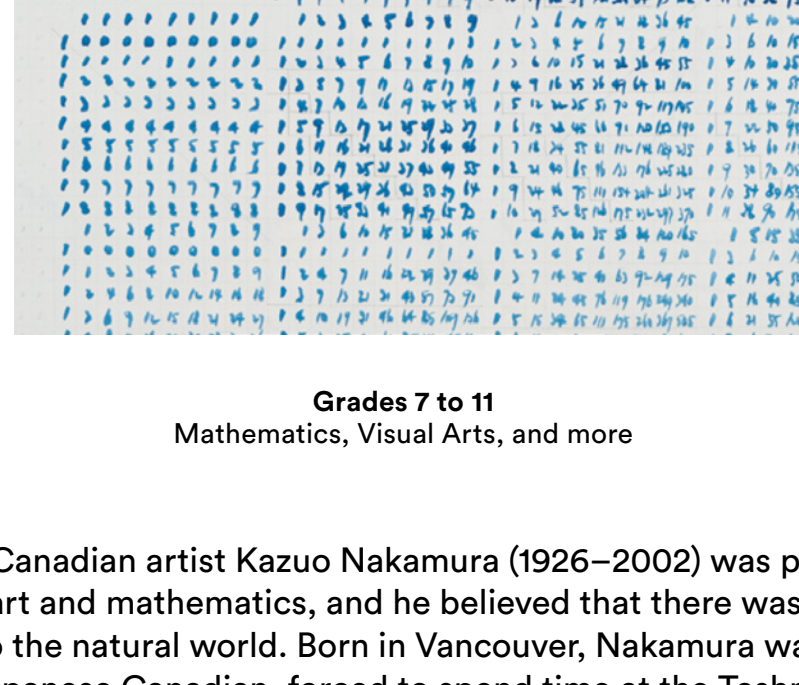


Rick Leong, *Gold Stream*, 2019

May is Asian Heritage Month in Canada, and this year the theme is “United in Diversity”—a sentiment that has never been more relevant. This week we're thrilled to be sharing works by five Canadian artists of Asian descent, extraordinary creators who address identity in their work and invite us to reflect on cross-cultural connections. If you look closely at Rick Leong's (b.1973) paintings *Wild Willow* and *Gold Stream*, 2019, you may recognize the droopy foliage of *The Jack Pine*, 1916–17, by Tom Thomson (1877–1917)—an iconic work in Canadian art. Leong re-imagines this touchstone of national heritage through the aesthetics of blue-and-white Chinese ceramics, inspiring questions about diaspora and multiculturalism. These are themes that we are eager to explore, and we hope that you enjoy this selection of artworks, classroom connections, and curriculum resources.

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

## Explore the Art of Math with Kazuo Nakamura



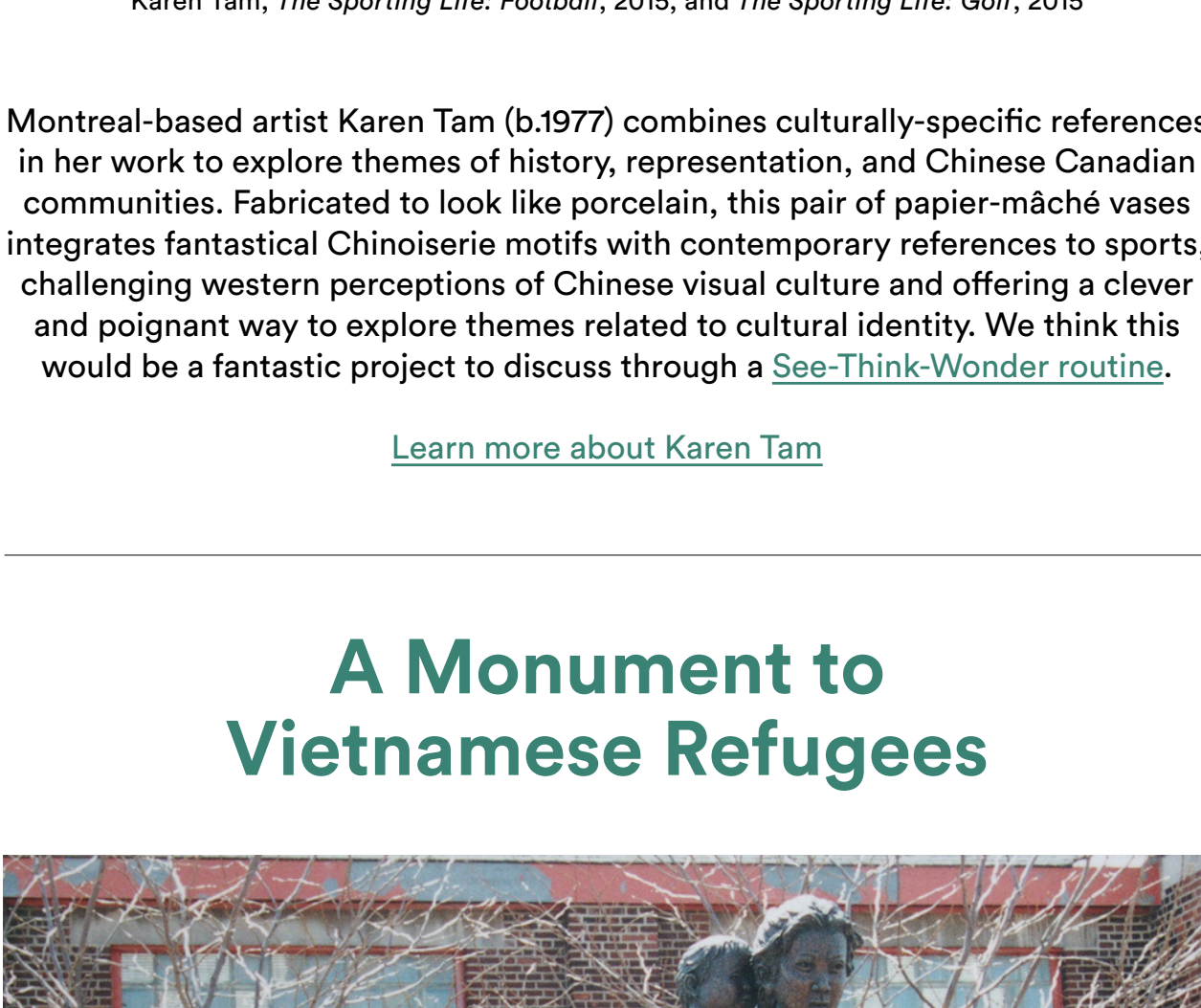
Grades 7 to 11  
Mathematics, Visual Arts, and more

Japanese Canadian artist Kazuo Nakamura (1926–2002) was passionately interested in art and mathematics, and he believed that there was an underlying structure to the natural world. Born in Vancouver, Nakamura was a second-generation Japanese Canadian, forced to spend time at the Tashme Internment Camp in the Fraser Valley in 1942. During his time there, Nakamura continued to study at night and to paint, eventually becoming famous for his radical experiments with abstraction and his landscapes. Our latest Teacher Resource Guide is inspired by Nakamura's deep interest in mathematics, and guides students through creative learning activities connected to understanding the concepts of slope and equations of lines.

[Download the Guide Here](#)

## AVENUES TO EXPLORE

### Karen Tam's Contemporary Twist on Chinese Ceramics



Karen Tam, *The Sporting Life: Football*, 2015, and *The Sporting Life: Golf*, 2015

Montreal-based artist Karen Tam (b.1977) combines culturally-specific references in her work to explore themes of history, representation, and Chinese Canadian communities. Fabricated to look like porcelain, this pair of papier-mâché vases integrates fantastical chinoiserie motifs with contemporary references to sports, challenging western perceptions of Chinese visual culture and offering a clever and poignant way to explore themes related to cultural identity. We think this would be a fantastic project to discuss through a [See-Think-Wonder routine](#).

[Learn more about Karen Tam](#)

## A Monument to Vietnamese Refugees

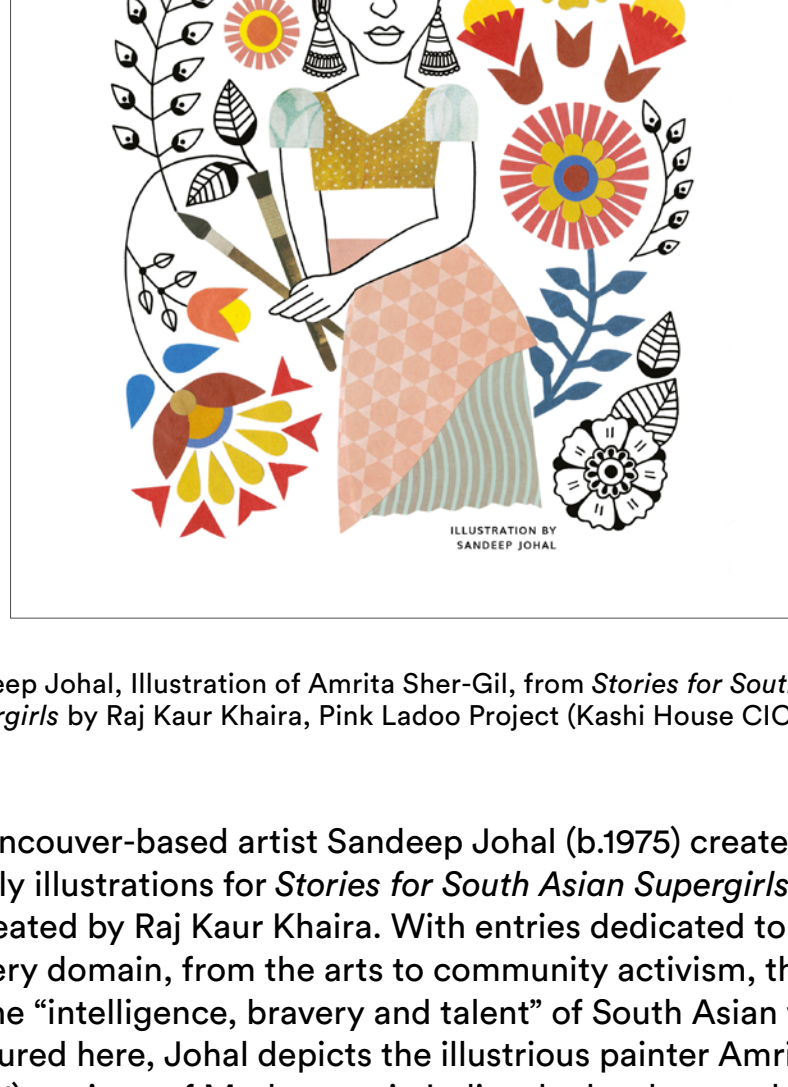


Phạm Thế Trung, *Refugee Mother and Child*, 1995, Ottawa

Sculptor Phạm Thế Trung (b.1955) created the moving and evocative monument *Refugee Mother and Child* to commemorate the tens of thousands of Vietnamese people who came to Canada as refugees in the late 1970s and early 1980s, fleeing the end of the Vietnam War. Phạm won the commission for the project (held jointly by the City of Ottawa and the Vietnamese Canadian Federation) in 1993, and it was officially unveiled on April 30, 1995. The migration and humanitarian crisis is an important chapter in Canada's history, and public monuments like this one are a powerful way to introduce practices of commemoration and remembrance into the classroom.

[Learn more about the artist here](#)

## Stories for South Asian Supergirls

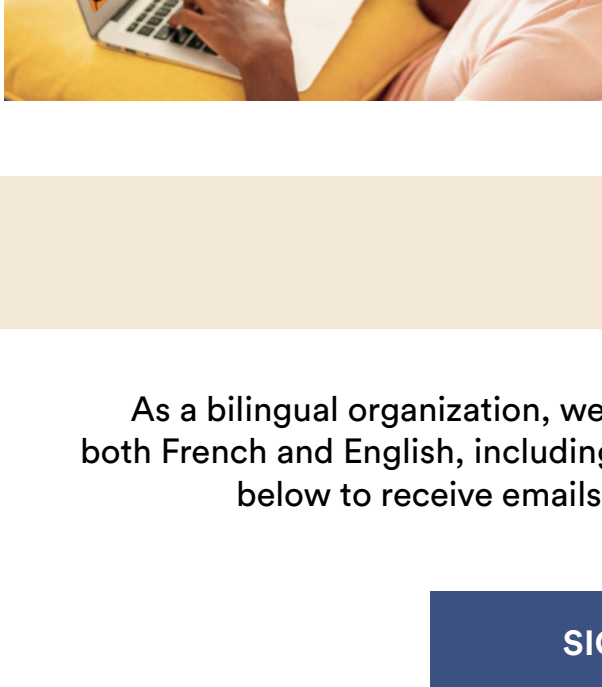


Sandeep Johal, Illustration of Amrita Sher-Gil, from *Stories for South Asian Supergirls* by Raj Kaur Khaira, Pink Ladoo Project (Kashi House CIC, 2019)

In 2019, Vancouver-based artist Sandeep Johal (b.1975) created a series of vibrant, lively illustrations for *Stories for South Asian Supergirls*, an inspiring project created by Raj Kaur Khaira. With entries dedicated to trailblazing women in every domain, from the arts to community activism, this compilation centralizes the “intelligence, bravery and talent” of South Asian women. In the entry pictured here, Johal depicts the illustrious painter Amrita Sher-Gil (1913–1941), an icon of Modern art in India who has been celebrated for her achievements around the world.

[See more of Johal's work](#)

## TAKE OUR SURVEY



As we build our community of teachers and educators, we want to hear from you! The ACI education program team is looking ahead to our future programming, and we would love to hear what topics, themes, and approaches to learning are most valuable to you. Drop us a line and let us know what you think by completing our [online survey](#).

Alternatively, email us at [education@aci-iac.ca](mailto:education@aci-iac.ca).

As a bilingual organization, we are proud to offer our materials in both French and English, including this newsletter. Use the sign up links below to receive emails in your preferred language.

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## About the Art Canada Institute

Launched in 2013, the Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. The ACI works with more than fifty of Canada's leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art and where they are located. By functioning as an online art museum, a [digital library](#), and an interactive Canadian art encyclopedia, the ACI is an indispensable resource on Canada's visual heritage.

Visit us at [aci-iac.ca](http://aci-iac.ca)

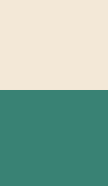
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