



DEFINING MOMENTS Art Installation opens on June 17

New exhibition at The ACT Art Gallery concludes a year-long process of engagement

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| Show dates: | Saturday, June 17 - Saturday, July 15, 2017 |
| Opening Reception: | Saturday, June 17 - 2-4pm; The Artists will be present Opening receptions are generously sponsored by Thrifty Foods. |
| Artist talk/show tour: | Saturday, January 21, 1-2pm (free) |
| Regular Gallery hours: | Tuesday - Saturday, 10am - 4pm and select evenings |
| Location: | The ACT Art Gallery, (at The ACT Arts Centre) 11944 Haney Place, Maple Ridge, BC, V2X 6G1 |

Maple Ridge, May 24 / Opening Saturday June 17, a new exhibition at The ACT Art Gallery marks the completion a remarkable collaborative public art project called *Defining Moments*. Over the last 10 months, artists Wan-Yi Lin and Roger Chen asked members of the public to consider and respond anonymously to the question, *What Moments have Shaped You?* Some 250 responses have been carefully mounted and installed on individual parchment panels, suspended within eight archival units that were designed and built by the artists. An initial encounter with this exhibition evokes a sense of purity and reserve, and, with further investigation, it quickly becomes clear that the responses come from a place of deep personal reflection and authenticity. The stories are brief but strangely all-encompassing, often carrying the imprimatur of loss, grief or some profound realization.

In an introductory statement on the project, artist Roger Chen states, *"People are like trees. We all started from a seed with an intention so pure and perfect. We adapt to our constantly changing world. As time goes by, these moments in our environment are indefinitely and permanently recorded. Layer by layer, like the growth rings on a tree, they are preserved like letters in a diary. An archive chronicles what shaped us in our life."*

The project, which is jointly funded by the Maple Ridge Public Art Steering Committee and The ACT Arts Council, fully upholds the collaborative intentions of the artists in inviting the public to participate. For while Wan-Yi and Roger (known collectively as *Mizzonk*) spent many hours providing the framework for both the engagement and the exhibition, they have been fastidious in ensuring that project is shaped by the participants' stories, which provide the 'content' for the project. This level of engagement does not emerge without thoughtful preparation, as the participants must not only feel welcome, but safe. Clearly, the artists have succeeded in that goal, as the display resonates with a context of respectful sanctuary.

Roger Chen and Wan-Yi Lin, who are originally from Taiwan, have maintained an art practice from their studio in Whonnock, B.C. since 2002. Prior to that they established a personal and professional duo after meeting at the distinguished Pratt Institute in New York, where Wan-Yi was awarded an MFA in Sculpture and Roger Chen, a Bachelor of Architecture. Since that time they have created numerous art and design pieces, and have recently moved on to up-scaled installation artwork and outdoor sculpture. *Defining Moments* is their first participatory public art project.

The ACT Art Gallery, formerly known as the Maple Ridge Art Gallery, is located inside The ACT Art Centre, and is operated by the Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Arts Council. In fulfilling its mission to broaden and enrich the public's appreciation and understanding of visual culture, it presents stimulating and diverse displays of artwork by local, regional and national artists and artisans. The public are also invited to participate in talks, workshops and other presentations that are held in the gallery on a regular basis.