


Loretta Paoli
Migration, Inclusion and Visual Art



Prairie Metropolis Regina Research Node Conference
Sept. 24, 2010

note

This version of the PowerPoint presentation does not include video and audio excerpts, which were part of the original presentation.

Although the spoken word audio contains the translations and conversations that form the basis of my artwork, hopefully the visuals also convey some of the message and intent.

today...

- Immigration and language-crossing experiences as subject matter in contemporary art
 - the role of the artist
 - “ non-immigrant artist
 - artistic practice as research
- Samples of my work
 - Language, translation, collaboration
- A look at some other artists
- 2011 Symposium:
SHIFT: dialogues of migration in contemporary art



Language Crossings, 2007-2008, University of Regina

Why migration and art?

And how does this contribute to inclusion?

As a discipline, Visual Art offers its ability to speak to the whole person: engaging the heart, soul and body as well as the mind.

When we're talking about questions of social inclusion, the heart, soul and body need to be included in any effort to build understandings across differences.

Here is where art can contribute to our understandings and perceptions of the continuous transformations that are occurring all around us.



This Space of Translation, video still, 2008, media installation

My Work

Having worked for 17 years in the immigrant services field (ESL instruction, employment readiness, language assessment), I've been affected by my experiences of cross-cultural and cross-language interactions.

These experiences leave me with a sense that the transit place between two (or more) languages can be a potent space of transition, border crossing, and paradox, similar to the spaces between cultures and places experienced by immigrants.

My position as an artist concerned with immigration:

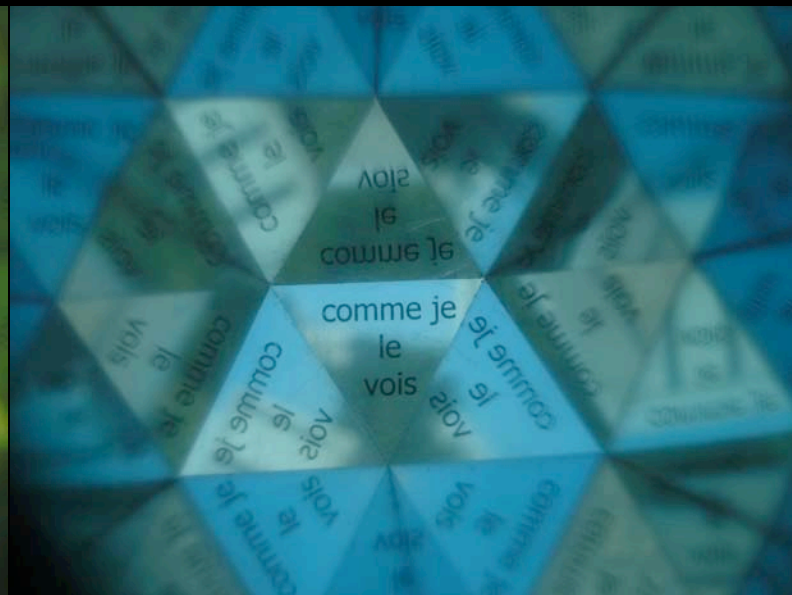
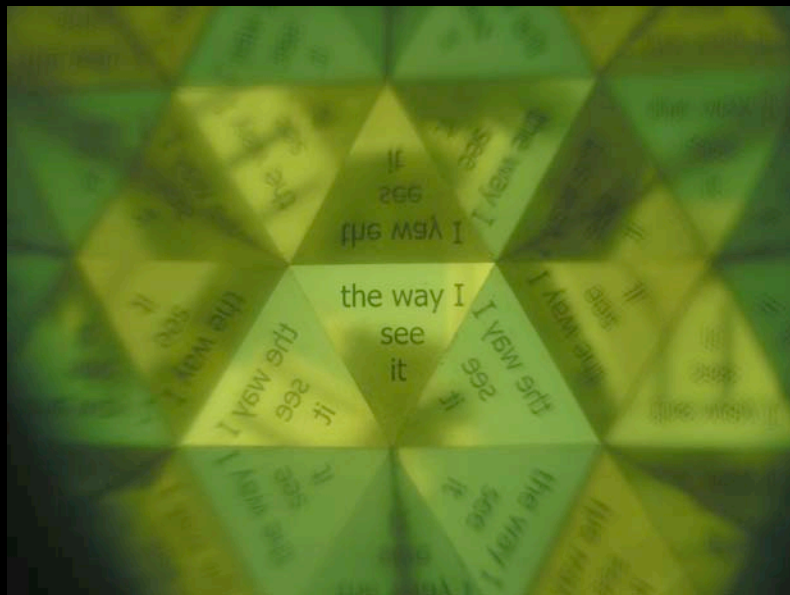
- as a non-immigrant, I work as a collaborator with friends who have immigrated
- I work in dialogue 'with' (rather than 'about')
- as Trinh T. Minh Ha wrote: "I don't speak *about*; I speak *alongside*."
- as artists we respond to/reflect on/interpret what inspires us in the world
- for me, the people I meet are more than my work; this interaction changes me as a human being and influences my work as an artist
- ethics and power relations: I work with non-clients only, with people with the fluency in English and knowledge of the arts to ensure their comprehension of what their contribution and representation will mean, ensuring voluntary participation



This Space of Translation, video still, 2008, media installation

My work seeks to engage the concept of
'the space between', through looking at
boundary-crossing between:

- » first language <> other language
- » interior <> exterior
- » left eye <> right eye
- » right ear <> left ear
- » self <> other



Bilingual Kaleidoscope, 2005 (detail)

Much of my work is structured around
connections between:

- » vision,
- » language,
- » perspective, and
- » place

'Seeing the entire world as a foreign land' makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions.

Edward Said
Orientalisms



This Space of Translation, video still, 2008, media installation

This Space of Translation

هذه مساحة ترجمة

2008

with contributions by Hala Elkarib

This project was a media-based gallery installation using audio, video projection, mirrors, and screen-objects in an interdisciplinary artistic exploration of language, place, and intercultural relations.

A translation dialogue forms the basis for the aesthetic experience of a multi-layered space of translation, where 'translation' refers to transformative shifts between languages, cultures, places, and subjects. Through visual interpretation of the dialogue, the interactive media installation offers a transformative multidimensional space that is activated and completed by the participant.



This Space of Translation, 2008, MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina
media installation with stereo audio, 6 video projections, mirrors and slide projection



This Space of Translation, 2008, media installation

This Space of Translation, original text by Hala Elkarib

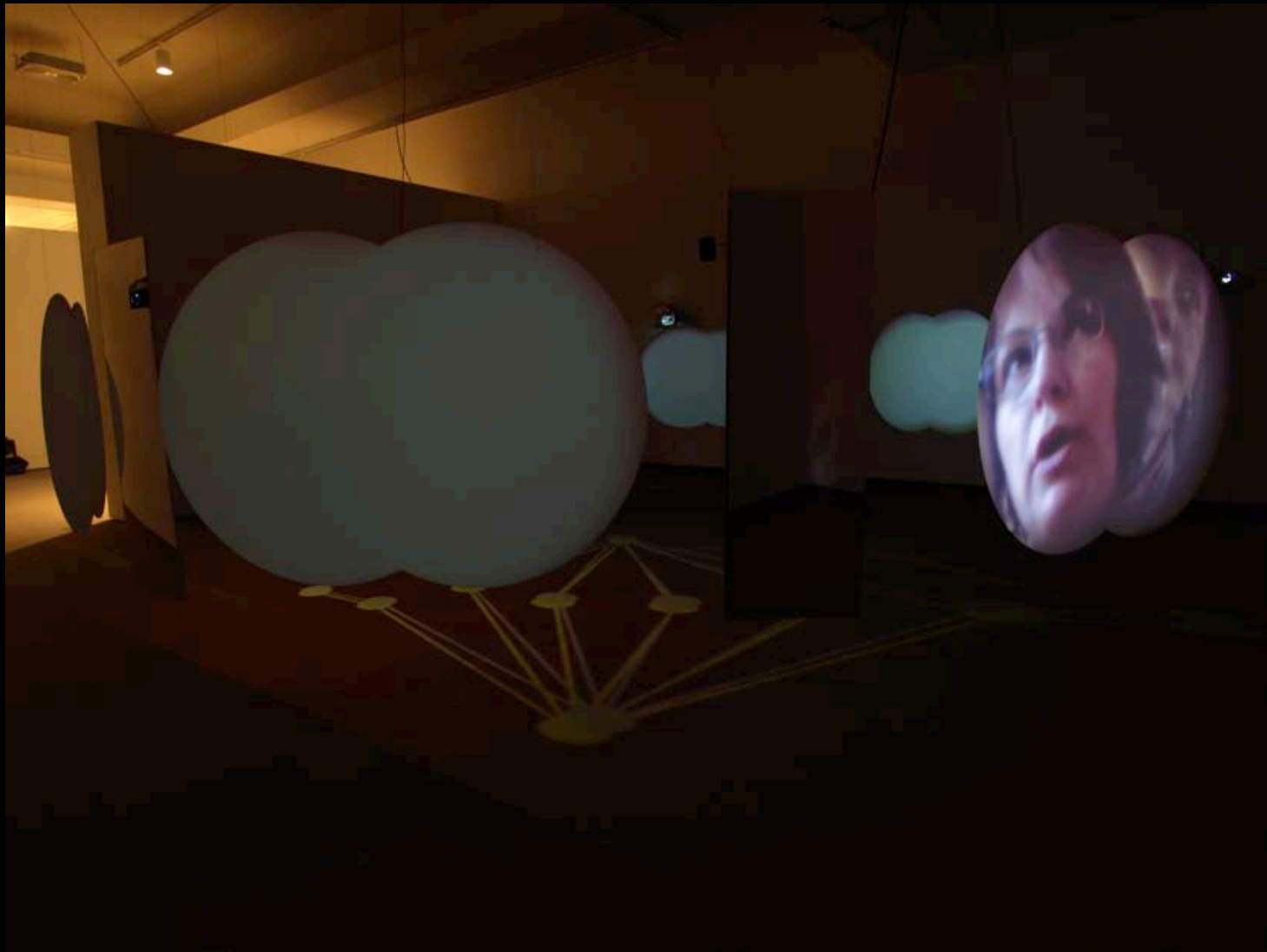
إقود سبّارتي في اتجاه الشارع الرابع في ريجانبا او في الخرطوم في السودان. لحظة هي و انا مئاكة انا في الخرطوم و الرجل في الدراجة معلق الجردل على جانب الدراجة انا في الخرطوم لا مجال. و مع اول دوران للشارع اجدنى في ريجانبا مرة اخرى. الغرباء هم من يتحركون عبر الامكئة في ثوانى هل صرت منهم.

I drive my car in 4th Avenue in Regina, or, in Khartoum. A moment, and I'm sure that I'm in Khartoum. The street scene, the man on the bikes, the buckets hanging from the sides of his bikes: I'm certainly in Khartoum. There is no doubt. With the first -- second turn, I find myself in Regina again. Only strangers who can move through places in seconds, and I am one of them.

Hala Elkarib, November 2007

“The word ‘translation’ comes, etymologically, from the Latin for ‘bearing across’. Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.”

Salman Rushdie
Imaginary Homelands



This Space of Translation, 2008, media installation



Video excerpt: *This Space of Translation*, "a moment"



Video excerpt: *This Space of Translation, "Khartoum"*



Video excerpt: *This Space of Translation*, “the man on the bike”



Video excerpt: *This Space of Translation*, “the man on the bike”



Video excerpt: *This Space of Translation*, “move through places”

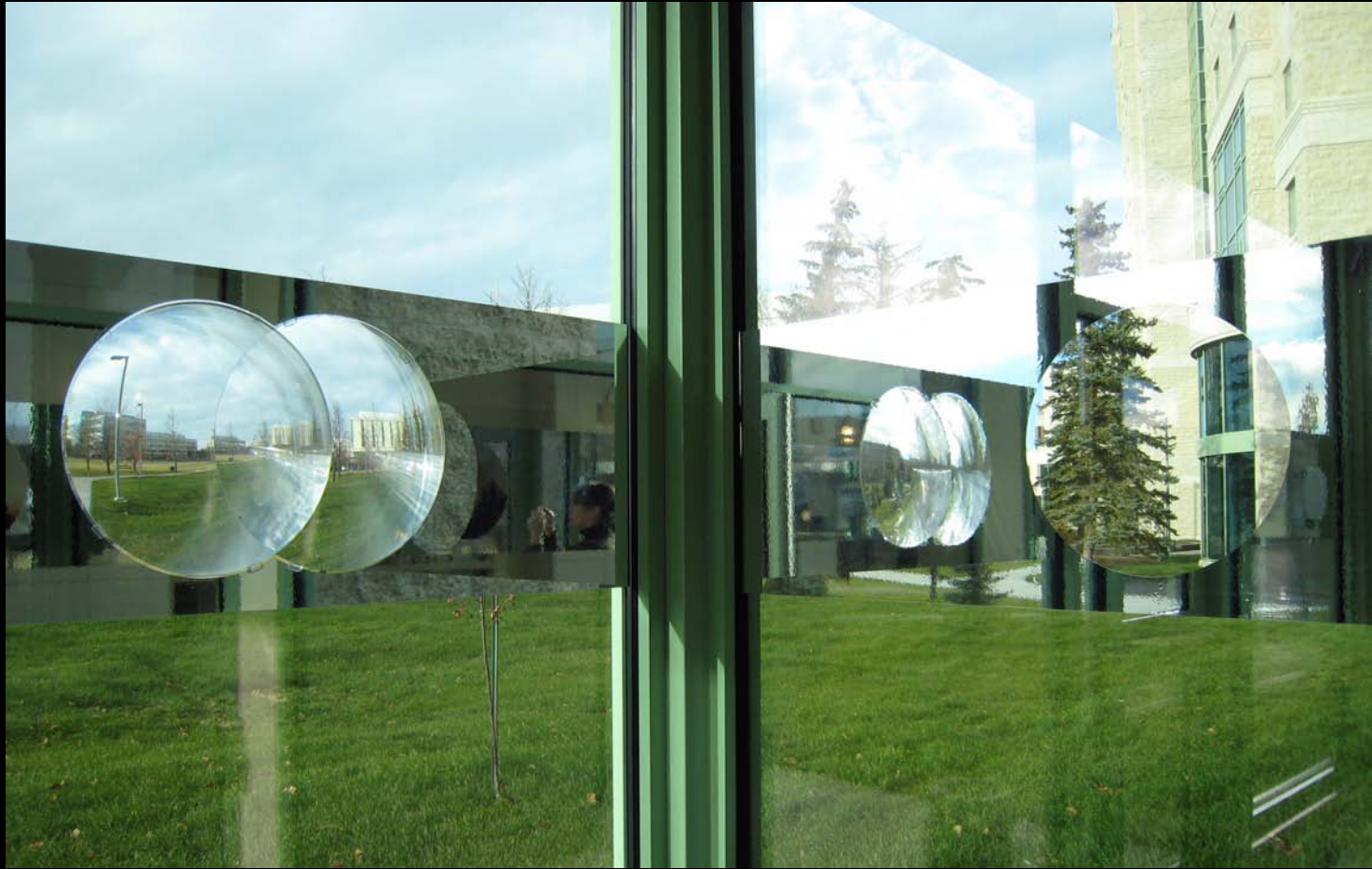


Video excerpt: *This Space of Translation*, "stranger"



language crossings, University of Regina, 2007-2008
(South Residence entrance across from ESL Centre)
site-specific installation with audio, fresnel lenses, transparent photos, and chrome vinyl

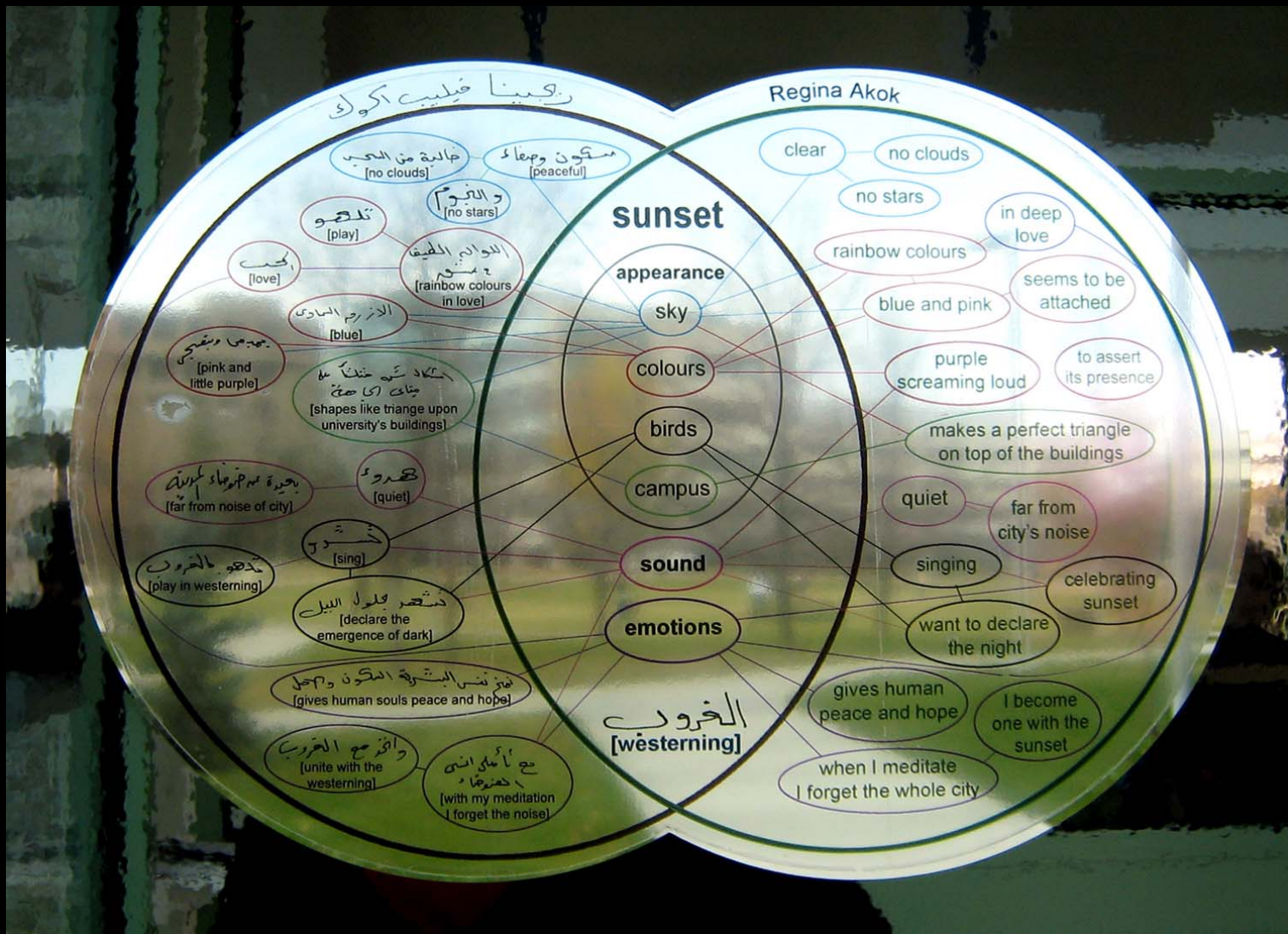
Other recent work



language crossings, University of Regina, 2007-2008
detail with fresnel lenses and chrome vinyl



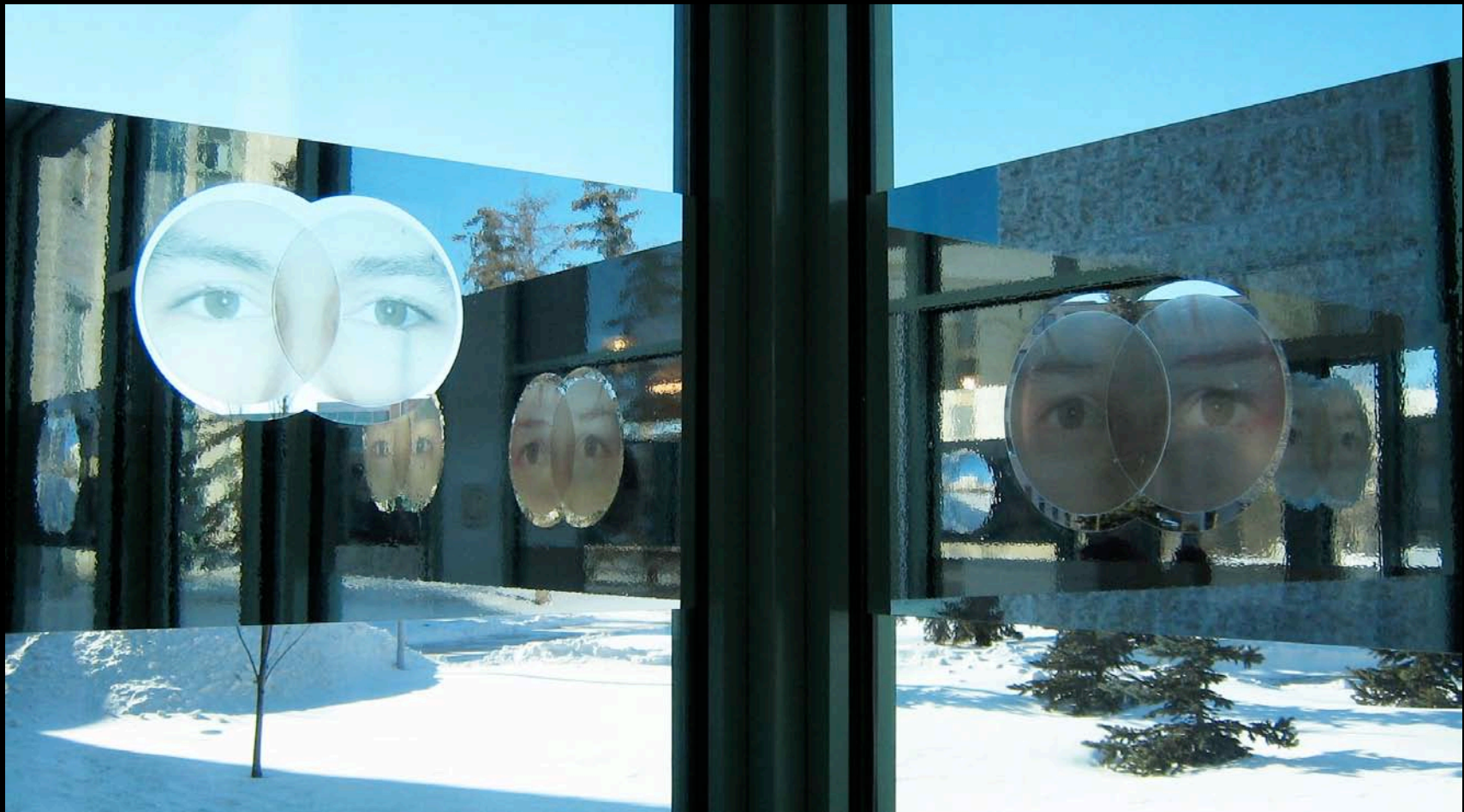
language crossings, University of Regina, 2007-2008
“part 1: sunset, July 21” detail with transparent photo and chrome vinyl
spoken descriptions and translations by Regina Akok, Kazuaki Chiku and Shine Zhao Yao



language crossings, University of Regina, 2007-2008

"part 1: sunset, July 21" detail

cognitive frame diagram with description and Arabic-English translation by Regina Akok



language crossings, University of Regina, 2007-2008
“part 2: student exchange” detail with transparent photos and chrome vinyl
audio conversation with Panout Chulkaratana, John Hampton, Anna Hansen and Jialing Ye



language crossings, University of Regina, 2007-2008
“part 3: *¿Adónde van? (Where do they go?)*”, translation and singing by Norma Palomino
detail with transparent photo and chrome vinyl



Outlook, 2007, site-specific audio installation with lenses, Novia Café, Regina
spoken Cantonese-English translations by Rebecca Lau



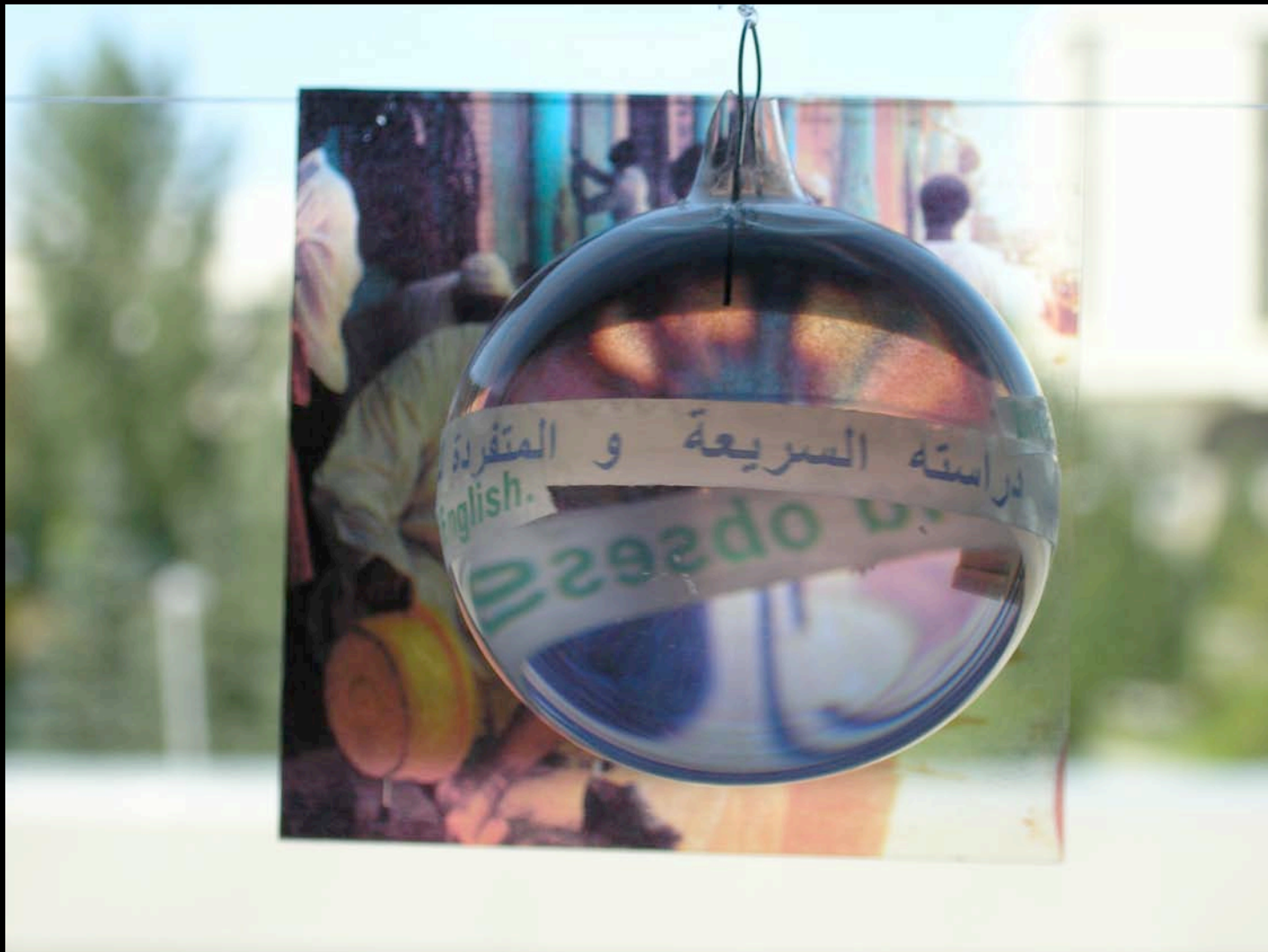
Outlook, 2007, lens detail



Outlook, 2007, Nova Café, Regina



Bilingual Viewmaster, 2005
English-Japanese translation by Gail Chin



Translation Dreams, 2005, (detail)
installation with glass balls, water, rotating motors, text, transparent photos.
English-Arabic translation by Manal Allagabo

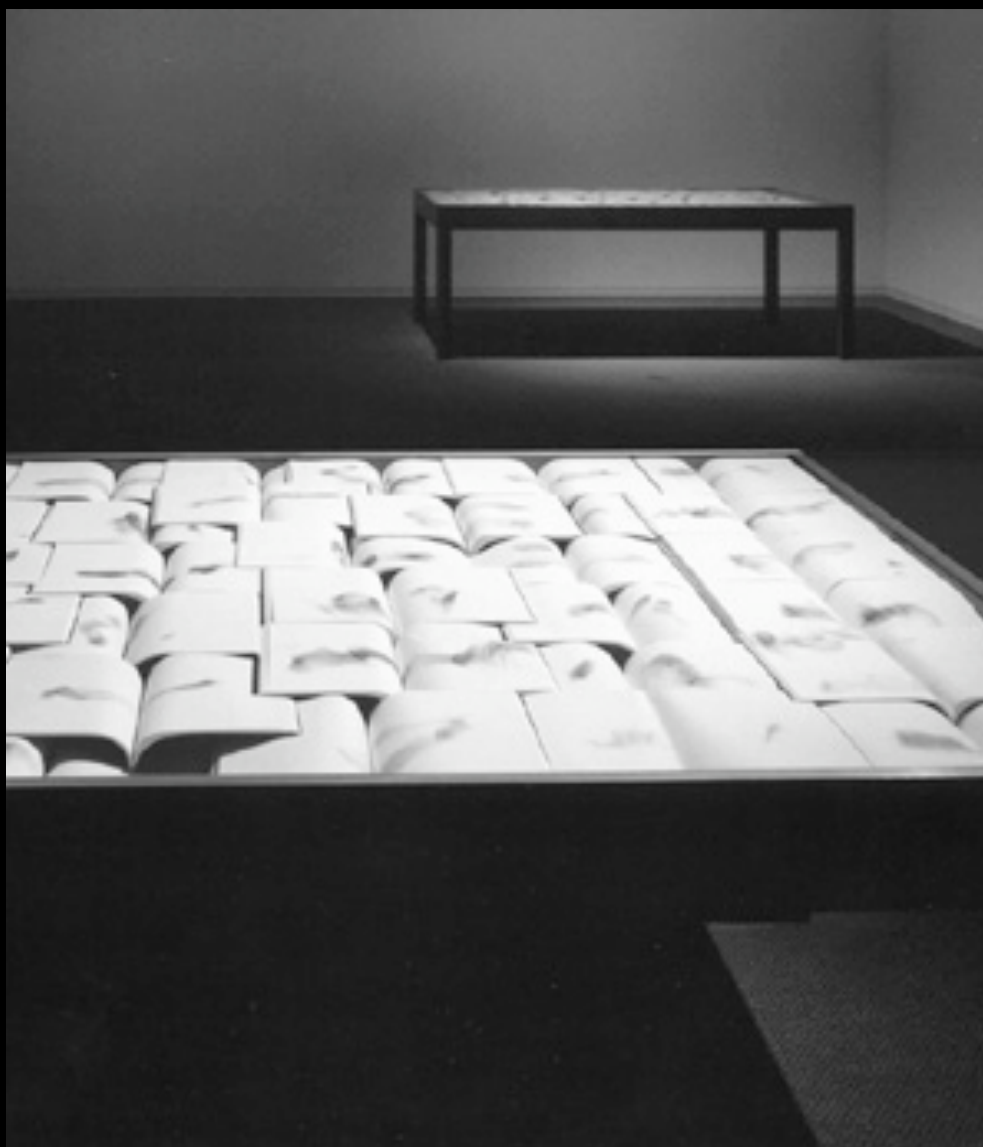


Translation Dreams, 2005

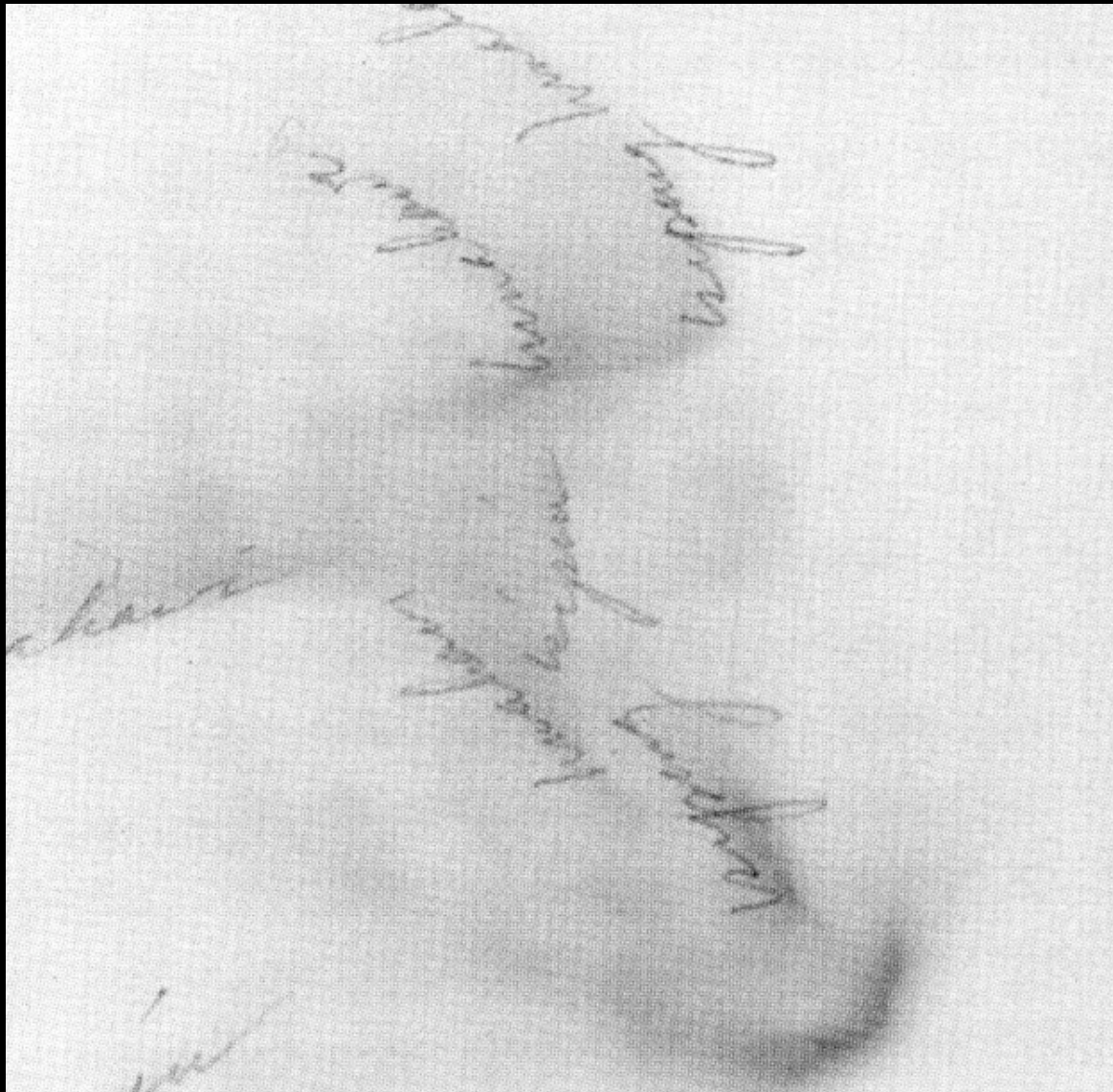
During this time in the Sault he had translation dreams – because of his fast and obsessive studying of English. In the dreams trees changed not just their names but their looks and character. Men started answering in falsetto. Dogs spoke out fast to him as they passed him on the street.

(Michael Ondaatje, The Skin of a Lion, 1987)

Selected works by other visual artists



Lani Maestro, *Tulalá*, 2001
installation with books, text, drawings, vitrines



Lani Maestro, *Tulalá* (detail)



Lani Maestro, *Cradle*, 1998
installation with net tents and audio



Soheila Esfahani, *The Vagireh Pattern* (detail)
sculpture with shipping pallets



Brendan Fernandes, *Future ...---... Perfect*, 2008
installation with shipping containers and SOS flashing lights



Brendan Fernandes, *Performing Foe*, 2010, performance and video



Sylvie Blocher, *Je et Nous*, 2004, collaborative photographic project



Jayce Salloum, *everything and nothing and other works from the ongoing videotape, untitled*, 2010, video installation



Shelley Bahl, *House of the Rising Sun*, 2008
video installation

emily a le regard long.
elle regarde les gens
dans les yeux lorsqu'elle
les rencontre. elle
déconstruit avant de
reconstruire. elle est
patiente, un peu absurde,
mais songée.
elle ne fait rien pour rien.

emily is more thoughtful than
you would think. she knows how
to prioritize and takes responsibility
for her decisions. she is sensitive
and does not like to be left out
of a conversation. she likes to do
the opposite of what she was
asked to do. she likes provoking
people if she feels something good
will ~~happen~~ come out of it. when
travelling, she does not like to
decide when she should return.
there is a place she would
prefer never to visit again.
she always tries even when
she ~~feels~~ feels it's not
worth it.

Anne-Marie Proulx, *(im)probable encounters/rencontres (im)probables*, 2009
interactive text-based translation project (detail)



Srimoyee Mitra, *Good Citizenship - the duty to integrate*, performance, 2010

SHIFT:
dialogues of migration in contemporary art

MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina

April 8-10, 2011

www.shiftsymposium.ca

Presented by Strandline Curatorial Collective
in partnership with the MacKenzie Art Gallery
Co-curated by Elizabeth Matheson and Loretta Paoli

This symposium will bring artists, curators, and communities together to discuss how contemporary artists, institutions and audiences are responding in new ways to complex issues of indigenous and non-indigenous migrations of people.

Presentations, panel discussions, workshops and artists' projects will address questions related to immigration; effects of historical North American indigenous migrations and displacements; cultural translation; language crossings; concepts of 'belonging', transcultural collaboration, and others.

The dialogue will be framed around the following thematics:

*Transformative Creativity >
Participatory Practices, Galleries and Groups*

*New Practices >
Nomadic Artists, Cultural Translation*

*Making the Connection >
Borderless Technologies, Mobilization and Interactivity*

*Positioning >
Local and Global Narratives, Story-telling and Language Crossings*

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