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
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 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
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, Novia 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
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.

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
installation with shipping containers and SOS flashing lights
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*
video installation
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*
Loretta Paoli contact information:

Independent Artist ‘hat’: loretta.paoli@yahoo.ca
Conference Curator ‘hat’: strandlinecc@gmail.com
CLB Assessor ‘hat’: loretta.p@rods.sk.ca