



Detail, wrap-around cover of Roy K. Kiyooka, *Transcanada Letters*. Talonbooks, 1975, 28 × 22 cm, closed; 28 × 46 cm, open. With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka. (Photo: author)

Serial Positionings: Roy K. Kiyooka's "Conceptual Art Trips"

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A copy of Roy Kiyooka's *Transcanada Letters* (Talonbooks, 1975) sits in a beam of sunlight upon my desk. Canada Post delivered the book from Vancouver to Montreal after I ordered it from an online bookseller. My desire to own a copy of *Transcanada Letters* arose after a first visit "out West" to the Contemporary Literature Collection at Simon Fraser University, where Kiyooka's papers are housed. My trajectory, moving east to west, echoed the coast-to-coast narrative of Canadian nationhood. In this narrative, Vancouver currently plays the role of a thriving twenty-first century metropolis, which evolved from its earlier image as a "fantasy dream" at the edge of British Dominion and American Western expansion.¹ Since the 1970s, when *Transcanada Letters* was published, Vancouver has increasingly adopted the identity of a Pacific Rim city. In this alternate narrative, the city plays the role of an essential node in global trade routes reaching out to Asia, just as its artists are tangled up in the complex cultural, political, and economic factors folded into the term "globalization."² The imaginary space mapped throughout the pages of *Transcanada Letters*, however, troubles the attempt to link the locality of its narrative, or the identity of its author, to a defined territory.

Roy Kenzie Kiyooka (born in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, 1926; died in Vancouver, 1994) is a nisei, or second-generation, Japanese Canadian artist and poet. His *Transcanada Letters* reproduces a series of approximately 250 items of correspondence addressed from Kiyooka to an array of family, friends, and colleagues between 1966 and 1974. Individual photographs are inserted between the pages of text, notably, family portraits, while there is also a multi-page collection of 576 photographs from his travels that is arranged in a Conceptual grid.³ Within the pages of *Transcanada Letters*, a conceptual "aesthetics of information" pertains to both the inked impressions of linguistic signifiers and to the photographs printed in halftone patterns.⁴

The dates and return addresses included with each letter act as a collection of temporal and geographic coordinates, which track Kiyooka in his travels eastward and westward through multiple geographic locations across Canada, southward into the United States, and westward across the

Pacific Ocean to Japan. The “transcanada” narrative begins with a description of his first visit to Japan, but this experience is conveyed as if the reader were eavesdropping because the text is filtered through an interim report on his activities first sent to the Canada Council for the Arts. His next geographic displacement is signaled by a letter without an addressee, perhaps a draft of a poem, sent from Montreal, Quebec. The final letters of the book are sent from a cabin at Qualicum Beach, British Columbia, where Kiyooka observes “the circling the eddying” of birds between the different environmental conditions of the sea, the earth, and the sky. As if to complement his own body’s movement between complex cultural environments, the visual qualities of the text printed on the pages of *Transcanada Letters* reflect Kiyooka’s attention to the arbitrary and conventional nature of the linguistic sign; notable in the unusual choices he made for word or line breaks in prose, it is also present in pages of concrete poetry, or in his mimesis of the formatting required for project budgets and grant reports. A series of citations throughout *Transcanada Letters* attests to Kiyooka’s eclectic reading habits in which multiple cultural references converge – extracts from biographies of Tom Thomson, citations of Marshall McLuhan’s aphorisms, Herbert Marcuse’s theories, Walt Whitman’s and William Blake’s poetry, are interspersed with reader responses to articles from *artscanada* and *Playboy* magazine, among many other sources. Kiyooka’s colourful language, unusual syntax, and a deliberate disregard for capitalization and other rules of English grammar resonate with deeply personal (and strikingly ambivalent) views upon family matters, aesthetic theories, and shifting political positions. Tangled narrative threads chronicle the collaborative development of several projects with small publishers such as Toronto’s Coach House Press, as well as with respected museum and gallery directors – but also reveal the nomadic conditions imposed by his employment in teaching positions scattered across the country.

Transcanada Letters has led some authors to reflect upon the multi-layered complexities of the Asian diaspora in relation to Canadian citizenship and national culture. Roy Miki has described *Transcanada Letters* as the “contrary geography” of a nisei reading the country from west to east and as a negation of the traditional Euro-Canadian narrative of settlement, east to west.⁵ Responding to Benedict Anderson’s notion of a nation as an “imagined community” constituted through linguistic standardization and the centralized production of printed matter, Smaro Kamboureli has looked to *Transcanada Letters* as an example of how Canadian literature might instead produce an “unimaginable community . . . constituted in excess knowledge of itself, always transitioning.”⁶ For Kamboureli, *Transcanada Letters* is an example of how to take a recognizable symbol of national unity –

the TransCanada Highway – and divert its use value from social, cultural or trade policies enacted by those institutions that regulate identity in a national context.

This article argues that *Transcanada Letters* is a conceptual bookwork that reflexively moves between image and text. I explore how *Transcanada Letters* uses formal strategies to interrogate the book as an object, calling attention to how the book as a material form is imbued with ideological properties, not a neutral carrier of textual content. I also want to explore aspects of the book that are not-so-directly related to questions of Asian Canadian identity. Throughout the period covered in *Transcanada Letters*, Kiyooka's exploration of his Japanese ancestry was doubly bound up with a critique of the consumer economy and the post-war liberal democracy that was the common form of government in Canada and the USA. Kiyooka's reworking of the TransCanada Highway as a symbol of nationhood draws upon visions of "the West" (and the Pacific Rim) as it simultaneously inhabited the countercultural imagination. Caravans of "tripping" mobile travelers (some of them war resisters) engaged with "utopian dreams" in their rejection of the Vietnam War, post-war consumer capitalism, and the technocratic organization of American society.⁷ Canada sometimes occupied an idealized position in this imaginary. Consider, for instance, Allen Ginsberg's comment in 1969 during a visit to Vancouver that "Trudeau is a 'hippie' . . . sort of a hippie, I hear."⁸

This paper situates the development of Kiyooka's practice of conceptual photography and, by extension, his conceptual bookwork, at the overlap between neo-avant-garde and countercultural scenes in Vancouver in the 1960s and 1970s – always keeping in mind that the multiplicity of coordinates mapped throughout *Transcanada Letters* complicates the idea of locality. Curator Grant Arnold has associated the development of conceptual photography in Vancouver with an "anarchic" social scene in which lifestyle politics countered the "culture of the commodity."⁹ Kiyooka left the city in 1964, only to return permanently in 1973 after teaching in multiple locations including Montreal and Halifax; nonetheless, he stayed in touch with local scenes throughout this period through visits with his daughters, letters exchanged with friends and colleagues, and by reading copies of the countercultural newspaper, the *Georgia Straight*. This article also complements existing scholarship from literary studies by foregrounding the visual aspects of book design and by emphasizing that the printing of books is itself a photographic process. Following the Canadian centennial period, books had symbolic value in the consolidation of French and English reading publics, but *also* contributed to the formation of a countercultural readership attracted to open form poetics and intermedial artistic practices, including conceptual photography. In order to address these issues I will focus on a

family portrait inserted by Kiyooka between two pages of letters, which allows me to reflect on his sensitivity to the intricate relationship between print culture, identity, and the nation-state. In contrast, the photographic series *Long Beach BC to Peggy's Cove Nova Scotia* (1971) opens up a discussion about his Conceptual and countercultural affiliations, and I also address the poetics of “localism” in projective verse as it traverses the semantic registers of texts and images.

Intermedial Forms and Altered Consciousness

The front and back covers of *Transcanada Letters* show a multi-coloured illustrated map of the country, overlaid by black and white snapshots of the East and West coasts that are clasped in the left and right hands of the artist (Fig. 1). The map's swirling amorphous shapes hold out the promise of an expansive psychedelic geography, as if one might “trip” through altered states of consciousness into another sense of place. Two snapshots confirm Kiyooka's presence on both edges of the continent at a specific time and location. A tiny figure perched on the craggy rocks directs our gaze towards the crashing waves and swirling tidal pools of the ocean. But the expansive visual field of the photographs is displayed alongside a grid indicating measurements of longitude and latitude. A scattering of notations anchors the meaning of the colours to the “rational” explanation provided by the legend of the geological map. “Cratonic Regions” designate rock formations across the continent, which have been enumerated (and therefore commodified) according to the soil quality and exploitable natural resources contained within Canada's geopolitical borders. But on this book cover Kiyooka has placed this grid between his hands, thereby turning the national territory into a material form that the artist can use to construct an imaginary space. This play between image and text introduces multiple semantic registers and indicates Kiyooka's awareness of how the technologies of book publishing use an invisible typographic grid to structure all visible marks (both text and images) on the printed pages.

Kiyooka designated this, his “book-of-letters,” as a companion to the exhibition catalogue produced the same year for the retrospective exhibition *Roy K. Kiyooka: 25 Years*.¹⁰ The exhibition, organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery, and its two accompanying publications marked his success as an established Canadian artist celebrated for his abstract painting. Kiyooka developed a distinctive hard-edge geometric style by the mid-1960s following his relocation from the Regina College of Art to teach at the Vancouver School of Art in 1959. His arrival in Vancouver had a significant impact upon younger painters in the city, as the hard-edge forms and tendency to work



1 | Wrap-around cover of Roy K. Kiyooka, *Transcanada Letters*. Talonbooks, 1975, 28 × 22 cm, closed; 28 × 46 cm, open. With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka. (Photo: author)

in series differed from the regional style of lyrical abstraction, which artists such as Jack Shadbolt (1909–1998) produced in response to the surrounding coastal landscape. Furthermore, Kiyooka’s take on the New York School of abstract painting was less that of critic Clement Greenberg’s formalism and closer to the ritual ideograms pursued by Barnett Newman.¹¹ On the one hand, as curator Diana Nemiroff notes, a sense of locality can be detected in the urban landmarks that influenced Kiyooka’s compositional forms (such as the elliptical shape of the Granville Street Bridge); on the other, his style of abstraction transforms these signifiers of locality into a transcendent “spiritual confrontation that could take place anywhere.”¹² This spiritual dimension, as it developed from Kiyooka’s forays into painterly abstraction in the 1950s, was congruent with his experience of heightened perceptual states induced through hallucinogens such as peyote.¹³ His exploration of altered consciousness continued throughout the 1960s and 70s, with the use of LSD and marijuana.¹⁴ This detail is significant because it expands our understanding of his “local” reference points in Vancouver: Kiyooka frequented an early bohemian scene that gathered in venues such as the Cellar Club or the Sound Gallery for live performances of jazz, poetry, lightshows,

and dance. In the second half of the 1960s this scene overlapped with a wider countercultural movement that valued nomadic patterns of travel. Thus, the locality of *Transcanada Letters* includes psychedelic tripping as well as multiple, concrete landmarks scattered across several urban and rural sites in North America, Japan, and Europe which he may, or may not, have physically visited.

Kiyooka's engagement with poetry and conceptual photography is sometimes linked to his abandonment of painting in 1969, as if the two modes were incompatible.¹⁵ However, his exploration of printed text and photographic images paralleled his painting practice from the early 1960s onwards, as Kiyooka engaged with intermedial "happenings," recorded sound, and collaged material found in mass media sources. One of his first projects upon arrival in Vancouver was to organize an event with three of his students.¹⁶ Images clipped from old magazines were then projected and combined with a polyphonic arrangement of prerecorded music to produce a multisensory environment. The presence of Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg, and others at the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference has been cited as an important influence on Kiyooka's adoption of open form poetics; also important was his experience of the annual Festival of Contemporary Art, which brought figures of the American neo-avant-garde to the city, such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, Gerd Stern, Stan Brakhage, and Bruce Connor. In 1964 and 1965, the Festival provided a platform for these neo-avant-garde practices to converge with the media theory of Marshall McLuhan, who proposed that the technological environment was an extension of the body's sensorium.¹⁷

Susan Sontag has used the phrase "erotics of art" to describe strategies of the neo-avant-garde which echoed the countercultural desire to reconfigure the body's sensorium through aesthetic experience.¹⁸ In the late 1960s, Vancouver's Intermedia Society was a site where McLuhan's notion of the sensorium could interface with the countercultural idea of altered consciousness. For many of Kiyooka's friends and colleagues in Vancouver, with whom he remained in touch during his absence, the radical potential of *eros* was a powerful means to politicize McLuhan's insight that shifts in communications technologies would affect human spatial awareness, moving away from the linearity of the printed word towards a multisensory, acoustic, collage-like environment.¹⁹ In a letter to his wife Monica, reproduced in *Transcanada Letters*, Kiyooka favourably describes one of their babysitters: "She tells me about her acid trips. She is a friend of the children and very very gentle. I wld [sic] say she was one of the tribe Marcuse talks about in the *Georgia Straight* vol. 3/no. 51 (March 28/April 3rd '69 issue)."²⁰ This reference to theorist Herbert Marcuse and his connection to Vancouver through

Kiyooka's citation is worth noting. When Marcuse lectured at Simon Fraser University in 1969, he argued that *eros*, the Freudian psychological drive for life, was the impulse behind a polymorphous eroticization of the body in relation to the surrounding environment – both the natural and media environment.²¹

Using McLuhan's vocabulary, it could be said that *Transcanada Letters* acts as a "probe."²² The book deliberately uses the "old media" of the printed page to produce a counter-environment to the communications media universe, which Scott Watson has argued was then being adopted as a "national value" in Canada.²³ McLuhan predicted that film, television, and radio would lead to the end of national cultures and the revival of collective identification through a post-national "tribal" affiliation formerly associated with oral cultures. He also believed that due to their attention to form and material processes, artists were in a unique position to reveal this shift to a post-national space. They could produce "counter-environments" as new media technologies replaced older forms that nonetheless remained as residual traces of an older culture. In 1975, the year that *Transcanada Letters* was published, the book form had symbolic value in the building of a national culture. Foreign media had historically dominated Canadian markets, but the debates over Canadian sovereignty in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as heightened opposition to US intervention in Vietnam, foregrounded the ideological role of this imported media; for many commentators, "American" images of the world were inculcating "Canadian" consumers.²⁴ Within *Transcanada Letters*, Kiyooka draws a parallel between the discourse of Canadian cultural nationalism in the period following the First World War and that of the 1970s when he rereads Tom Thomson's serialized approach to painting as "conceptual art trips" akin to his own serial writing and photographic practice.²⁵

Kiyooka's *Transcanada Letters* can be positioned in relation to the many Canadian and international Conceptual Art bookworks where photography and the codex form converge. Exhibitions such as Anne Moeglin-Delcroix's *Esthétique du livre d'artistes, 1960–1980*,²⁶ or Matthew S. Witkovsky's *Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photograph, 1964–1977*,²⁷ and scholarly studies such as essays included in *The Photobook: From Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond*²⁸ have contributed to an understanding of the conceptual bookwork as a genre that combines photographic technologies and the form of the book in a reflexive exploration of the material and metaphorical consequences of reproduction. The ways in which the genre lends itself to the documentation of ephemeral acts or to circulation through unconventional distribution channels has also been foregrounded in exhibitions such as *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s*²⁹ and *Traffic: Conceptual Art in*

Canada, 1965–1980,³⁰ as well as scholarly studies including Johanna Drucker’s *A Century of Artists’ Books*³¹ and Liz Kotz’s *Words to Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art*.³² Furthermore, Moeglin-Delcroix, Drucker, and Kotz all recognize that conceptual bookworks and poetic genres such as concrete poetry and projective verse share a common preoccupation with language and image as material signifiers, just as the distribution networks and readerships for these publications overlap.

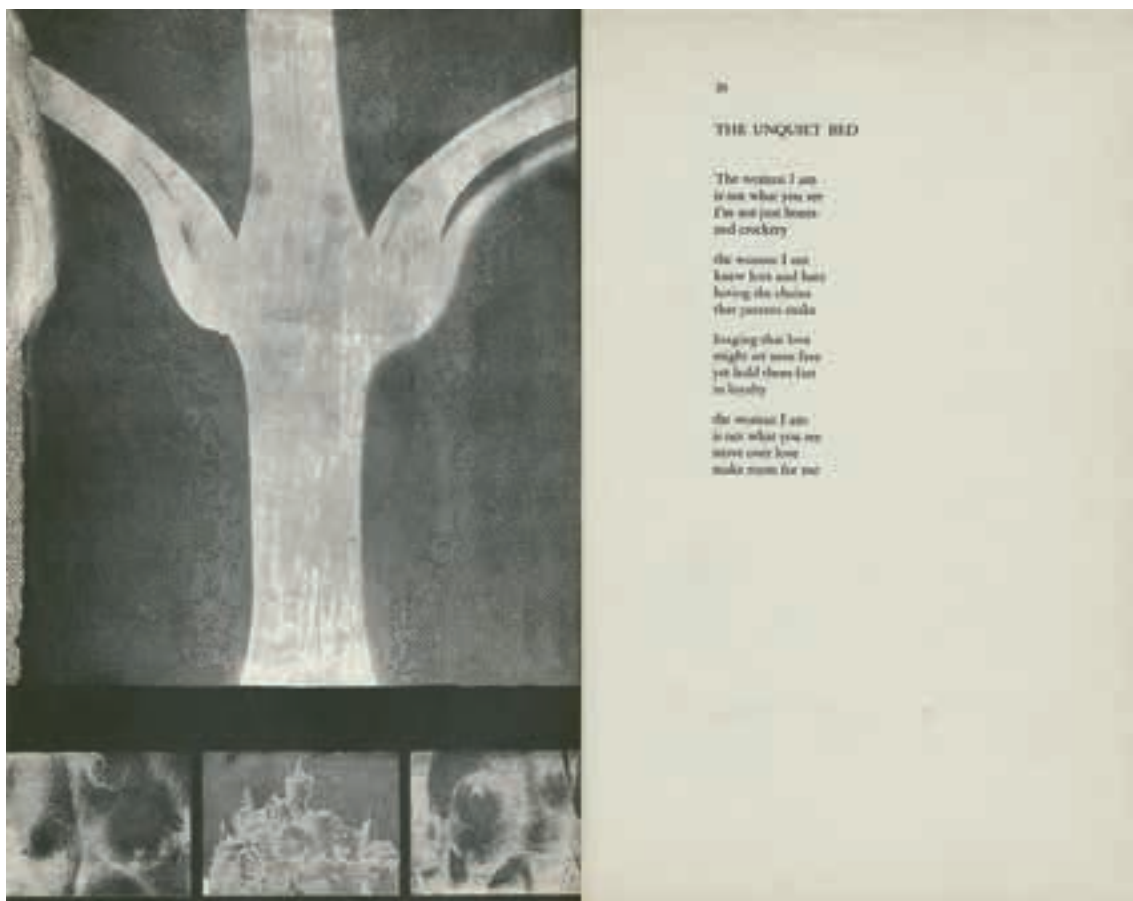
Within this discursive framing, the genre of conceptual bookworks is sometimes described as a “cheaply produced paperback” following the example of Edward Ruscha’s travel narrative, *Twenty Six Gasoline Stations* (1965).³³ As in Ruscha’s travel narratives, the sequencing of the pages in *Transcanada Letters* acts as an ordering system that arranges banal snapshots according to a grid. Theorist Sianne Ngai has observed that in the work of Ruscha, this sequential arrangement produces a minimal affective response in a reader, which reflects the suppression of emotion within the information and communications systems driving post-industrial economies.³⁴ Kiyooka’s approach differs from Ruscha’s analytic conceptualism in that his images are *not* generic or banal; instead they convey what Michael Ondaatje appreciated as an affective excess of “commonplace moods” when he read the book.³⁵ Reconsidering *Transcanada Letters* as a conceptual bookwork rather than a literary work allows for a discussion of excess as an aesthetic strategy that is in keeping with the appearance of low-quality production values, or the misleading “cheap paperback” appearance of this book. The quarto format (22 × 28 cm) of *Transcanada Letters* resembles the exhibition catalogue, which Talonbooks simultaneously printed to accompany *Roy K. Kiyooka: 25 Years*. Despite *Transcanada Letters*’s resemblance to an exhibition catalogue in size, its soft-cover perfect binding, relatively inconsistent print quality, poor contrast between lights and darks in the images, and bleeding ink between pages means that the book appears to have more in common with paperback genres than with high-quality art books. While Talonbooks took on the exhibition catalogue as a commercial print job, it was underwritten and distributed by the publisher, the Vancouver Art Gallery. In contrast, when Talonbooks acted as publisher for *Transcanada Letters*, Kiyooka’s aesthetic choice of a non-standard trim size was incompatible with a vision of the press as a viable contender in a subsidized literary publishing industry.

Talonbooks, the publisher of *Transcanada Letters*, began as a poetry imprint, but also supplemented their funds as the printer for exhibition catalogues and other materials that reflected the interests of overlapping countercultural and avant-garde social milieus in Vancouver. The press was part of a network of physical and imaginary meeting places that included spaces such as the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Intermedia Society, and

the New Era Social Club, bars such as the Cecil Hotel, the pages of *Tish* magazine, and the *Georgia Straight* newspaper.³⁶ *Transcanada Letters* marks a moment of transition for the press, when it consolidated resources in order to become a financially viable business. In this sense, Kiyooka's bookwork was a commodity produced for the literary market and subsidized "with the assistance of the Canada Council," as it states in the colophon. However, Karl Seigler (who joined Talonbooks as business manager in 1974, with the mandate to make the press commercially viable) remembers that *Transcanada Letters* was the last extravagant project that the press undertook: "the project was so expensive that no other publisher wanted to touch it."³⁷ By the standards of the publishing industry, the countercultural attitude assumed by Kiyooka's conceptual bookwork was one of excess.³⁸

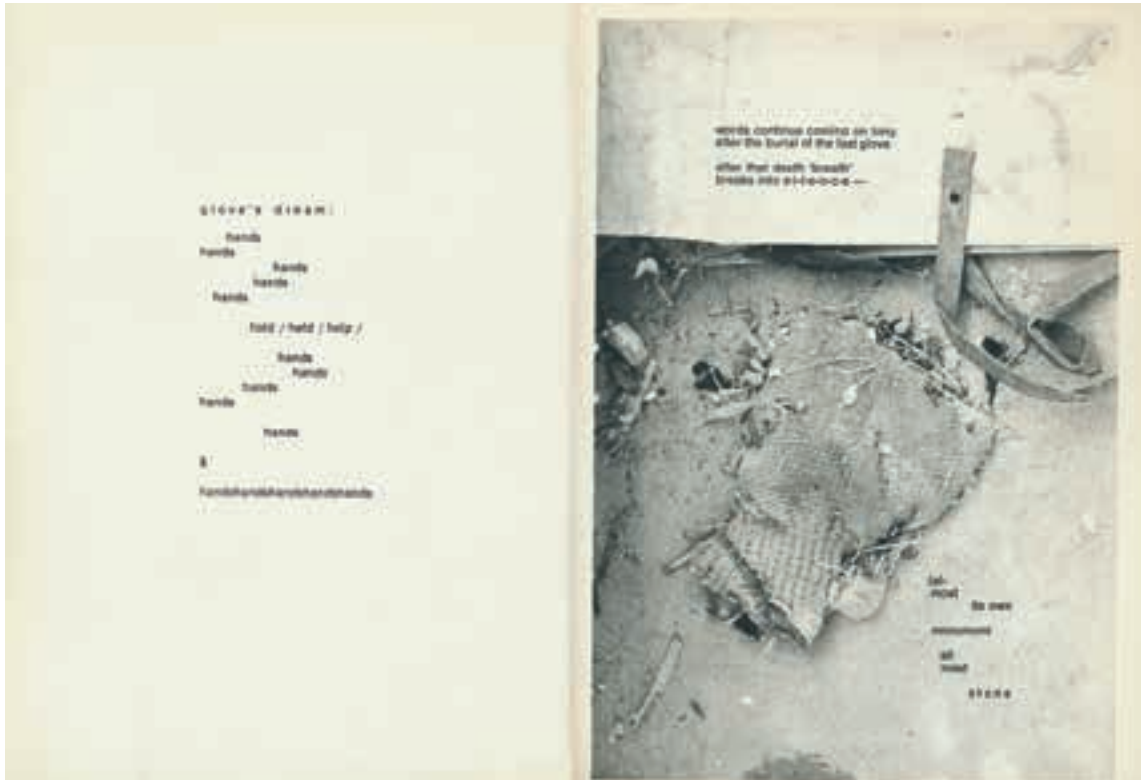
Literary scholars who have engaged with *Transcanada Letters* tend to focus on the textual content of the book, at best treating the pictorial elements as mere illustration, secondary to the text. The 2005 reprint of *Transcanada Letters* has actually done away with the striking cover illustration and the full-bleed images of the title and end pages.³⁹ Intrusive margins have been added around the eighteen-page photographic series, which was originally printed so that the gridded images exceeded the edge of the pages. These cost-saving omissions have consequences for readers' experience of the work in ways that run counter to Kiyooka's earlier aesthetic decisions. Visually, the pages of textual content may at first seem to outnumber the images included in *Transcanada Letters*; however, on a closer reading, the images (over 576) outnumber the pages of text. Furthermore, these images are not subordinate to the letters' contents. Instead, photographic images operate in a complementary relationship to text – what Roland Barthes has described as "relay" as found in cartoons, comic strips and film.⁴⁰ The linguistic message of the text works in parallel to the iconic message conveyed by images, advancing the action, as Barthes explains, "by setting out, in the sequence of messages, meanings that are not to be found in the image itself."⁴¹

As *Transcanada Letters* followed fourteen other printed works, it could be said that Kiyooka's aesthetics of emotional and material excess are informed by a long-term engagement with the material processes of publishing. His previous forays are linked both to poetry and to the circulation of images and text in the visual arts press.⁴² A first book of poetry, *Kyoto Airs* (designed by Takao Tanabe for Periwinkle Press, 1964) received a favourable review in *Tish* 25 (June 1964).⁴³ Kiyooka's "Vancouver Poems" appeared in George Bowering's magazine, *Imago* 11 (1965), the same year he produced a series of collages to illustrate Bowering's *The Man in Yellow Boots/El Hombre de las Botas Amarillas* (1965).⁴⁴ His literary conversations were not restricted to the *Tish* magazine circle, for instance, Kiyooka also produced a dreamily



2 | One of five Xerographic illustrations by Roy K. Kiyooka for Dorothy Livesay's book of poems, *The Unquiet Bed* (Ryerson Press, 1967, 38–39, 23.5 × 16 cm). With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka and with permission from Jay Stewart, literary executrix for the Estate of Dorothy Livesay. (Photo: author)

psychedelic series of Xerographic illustrations to accompany Dorothy Livesay's poems in *The Unquiet Bed* (Ryerson Press, 1967) (Fig. 2). Livesay's book, and Kiyooka's first self-illustrated book of poems, *Nevertheless These Eyes* (Coach House Press, 1967), both share mirror-like reflective dust jackets and textures derived from repeated acts of photo-copying. *StoneDGloves* (Coach House Press, 1970) marks Kiyooka's turn towards the conceptual bookwork combining image and text. Kiyooka's photocollages catalogue the gloves discarded by anonymous workers at the site of Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan.⁴⁵ Scott Toguri McFarland has argued that the photocollages, and the poems which overlay the images, are an "ideogrammatic assemblage" that not only anchor the meaning of the gloves as a sign of labour conditions in a global information economy, but also act as a memory-trace of the vapourized



3 | Double-page spread from Roy K. Kiyooka, *StoneDGloves* (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1970, n.p., 23 × 34 cm, open). With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka. (Photo: author)

bodies of victims of the atomic bomb (Fig. 3).⁴⁶ *The Eye in the Landscape*, Kiyooka's contribution to the *BC Almanac (H)C-B* (National Film Board of Canada, 1970), includes serial images showing sunlight traversing the pages of a monograph on the life of the post-Impressionist Dutch painter, Vincent van Gogh. Kiyooka has inserted his own images between the pages of the book. This photographic series printed on newsprint paper continued his conceptual investigation into authorship, identity, the photographic process, and mass reproduction techniques. The serial poem *letters purporting to be abt Tom Thomson* (1972), published in *artscanada* magazine, again pursues a reflection upon authorship and identity as constructed through images and text circulated in mass cultural forms – this time, inhabiting the pages of a magazine with a mandate to promote national culture.⁴⁷

In the commercial offset photolithographic printing process, image and text are fixed to the printing plate by exposing a film negative derived from photographs taken of pasted-up layouts of elements arranged on a grid. This

common mode of reproduction means, as Kotz has observed, that both open form poetics and conceptual photography share an indexical mode.⁴⁸ Within *Transcanada Letters*, the book form, its textual content, and the photographs work as equalized systems of signification, which gather together images and text as discreet units of relational information. Sheryl Conkelton has similarly described Kiyooka's aesthetic choices as a "personalized formalism" that uses narrative as a grid or ordering system placed over intimate content.⁴⁹ When this cataloguing of emotional space is read through conceptual aesthetics of information, it becomes evident that *Transcanada Letters* plays with the connotative meaning of the photographic "subject."

As Conkelton has also suggested, Kiyooka's *Transcanada Letters* bears comparison with conceptual bookworks produced by his contemporary, Michael Snow. For instance, the bookwork *Michael Snow/A Survey* (1970), was produced as the exhibition catalogue for the artist's solo show at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Regardless of the book's "subject" (which would be Snow himself), the catalogue engages with the limits of representation as determined by the specific qualities of photography and its processes. Alongside the textual accounts of the artist's career, several pages of the catalogue assume the form of a souvenir album, tracing the artist's family lineage back to the 1800s in a series of graphic layout grids. *Transcanada Letters* shares some features with *Michael Snow/A Survey*, including Kiyooka's exploration of the graphic layout of the book as a sequenced narrative structure and his presentation of his family lineage in relation to his status as a "Canadian artist." But there is an important distinction to be made as well. Snow uses the bookwork to show how photography and photo-mechanical reproduction technologies produce flattened representations of entities in the "real" world. In contrast, Kiyooka's photographs engage with the "performativity of documentation" discussed by Phillip Auslander.⁵⁰ His photographs stage identity in an analogous mode to speech acts, which require a reader's reception to complete the event.

Transmissions Across Multifaceted Affective Spaces

Kiyooka includes a series of family portraits in *Transcanada Letters*, the second of which is a snapshot depicting six children posing in a field (Fig. 4). They appear to stand on top of crusty snow. Behind them, leafless trees mark the property line. I imagine the children shivering as they jam their hands into their pockets. The unmistakable icon of a Toronto Maple Leafs hockey club sweater peeks out from the waistband of one of the boy's unseasonably short pants. At first, the relationship of these children to each other, or to Roy Kiyooka, is ambiguous for me, as the image is simply captioned: "Opal, Alberta: Early '40s / left to right: George, Roy, Harry, Joyce, Frank and Irene."



4 | “Opal, Alberta: Early ‘40s,” in Roy K. Kiyooka, *Transcanada Letters* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1975, n.p.). Note the bleeding of ink between pages. With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka. (Photo: author)

This image is inserted between two letters dated to Kiyooka’s 1971 arrival in Calgary to teach for a semester at the Alberta Provincial Institute of Technology and Art. Kiyooka spent most of his childhood in the city, but it was also a site of racially motivated hostilities amplified by national policy enacted in the Second World War.⁵¹ The Kiyooka family was fingerprinted and identified as “enemy aliens” under the War Measures Act, just as the city became a flashpoint for violence. Kiyooka’s schooling was interrupted three weeks into grade eleven when his family made the difficult decision to relocate to a single room cabin in Opal, Alberta, taking up the brutal work of farming life alongside other displaced Japanese Canadian families.⁵² In the photograph, Joyce, Frank, and Irene (the three younger siblings) grin for the camera, but to my eye, George, Roy, and Harry face the camera with expressions of defiance, confusion, and unease. Rather than using a first person pronoun in the caption, Kiyooka has chosen to identify “Roy” in the third person. This suggests an emotional distancing from the photograph, as it fixes the figures portrayed in that time and place.

Kiyooka’s identity formation, as it is shared with us throughout the pages of *Transcanada Letters*, moves between historical episodes and Kiyooka’s later

experiences. These temporal dislocations call attention to the contradiction arising between a racial category that was legally designated as the nation's "other," and Kiyooka's later conflicted desire to contribute images to the symbolic order that defined a national culture. Following the war, Kiyooka returned to Calgary from Opal to study under Illingworth Kerr (1905–1989) and Jock Macdonald (1897–1960) at the same institution in which he would later teach. There he was introduced to the tradition of the Group of Seven painters, and it was then that he articulated his desire to become a Canadian artist: "I remember saying to one of my friends at the time that one of my ambitions was to become a great Canadian painter, that was in my third year of art school."⁵³ Macdonald was a follower of the Group of Seven landscape painters but was also deeply engaged with techniques of Surrealism as a means of unhinging the unconscious from repressive social forces.⁵⁴ While studying alongside veterans who had been trained to kill people who "looked" like him, Kiyooka reflected upon his own wartime experience of conflict between an ethnic ancestry originating "elsewhere" and "Canadian" cultural norms reinforced through government policy, print, and broadcast media.

As *Transcanada Letters* solicits the reader's engagement with Kiyooka's affective relationship to the nation-state and its symbolic order, the bookwork communicates a contradictory state of multiple associative belongings. Literary critic Glen Lowry has observed that Kiyooka's photographs and letters work together to create a kind of bond with the reader that is experienced as a "liminal space of mutual being."⁵⁵ This diffusion of authorship can be understood as a mode of political address with reference to queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz's term "disidentification," which he proposes is an identity formation that occurs as "the enacting of self at precisely the point where the discourses of essentialism and constructivism short-circuit."⁵⁶ According to Muñoz, a moment of conflict supposedly takes place at the threshold between private life and images circulating in the public sphere, just as *Transcanada Letters* transposes the "private" register of letters and family photographs into the "public" pages of the book. For instance, the portrait Kiyooka includes of himself and his siblings transmits two contradicting, yet mutually occurring, affective spaces. The older boys' unease conveys the alienation of children with unstable citizenship status who labour for a subsistence living on their family's farm. But I am simultaneously bemused by the happiness of the three younger siblings huddled around the Maple Leafs sweater.

"Locus" is Media

Transcanada Letters corresponds to a mode of conceptual art in which tension is created between the affective experience of an individual and the discursive



5 | Pages 2 and 3 of the 18-page photoseries, *Long Beach BC to Peggy's Cove Nova Scotia* (1971), in Roy K. Kiyooka, *Transcanada Letters* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1975, n.p., 28 × 46 cm). With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka. (Photo: author)

production of a subject positioned on a grid. Art historian Eve Meltzer has argued that this approach indicates an “antihumanist turn” taken through structuralism during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Meltzer explains that the anticipation of a world managed through information systems meant that the idea of a humanist subject imbued with individual agency and a central substance or “essence” was overlaid by a structuralist understanding of language as a system of imposed grids that discursively produce subjectivity.⁵⁷ Meltzer’s rereading of Conceptual Art in affective terms can be compared to recent discussions of “Romantic Conceptualism” as a variant on the dry, analytic side to the movement.⁵⁸ This variant of conceptualism contrasts the rational process implied by the repetition of serial forms with the messy subject of bodies, emotions, and sensuality. In this sense, it has affinities with countercultural refusals of a public sphere dominated by either corporate or state control of mass media because it works to recover repressed modes of perception and affective sensibility.⁵⁹

Although the structuralist grid is present throughout *Transcanada Letters*, it is most visually striking in *Long Beach BC to Peggy's Cove Nova*



6 | Detail from the photoseries, *Long Beach BC to Peggy's Cove Nova Scotia* (1971), in Roy K. Kiyooka, *Transcanada Letters* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1975). With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka. (Photo: author)

Scotia (1971), a photographic series that unfolds as a travel narrative across eighteen pages that mimic the serial repetition of frames on a contact sheet (Fig. 5).⁶⁰ Pictorial qualities such as horizon lines and point-of-view shift as frequently as modes of transport. Kiyooka's photographs show a group of travellers moving from van to canoe to horse and buggy. Alongside views of wilderness vistas and communications towers, seen through dirty windows or framed in rearview mirrors (Fig. 6), Kiyooka shows us images of himself amidst a busload of longhaired and mustachioed friends. In many images the lighting is atmospheric, imbuing industrial landscapes, domestic scenes, and candid portraits with an ethereal quality. At times the high contrast of these images produces romantic chiaroscuro effects, or overexposes the features of friends who I imagine goofing around as they refuse to pose for the camera. An extended shutter speed creates a disorienting lack of focus in



7 | "Halifax /Vancouver Exchange," in Roy K. Kiyooka, *Transcanada Letters* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1975, n.p., 28 × 22 cm). With permission of Fumiko Kiyooka. (Photo: author)

nighttime scenes, evoking a van bumping along, following the curve of a row of streetlights.

The cross-country photo-series catalogues his move to take up a teaching position at the Nova Scotia College of Art. At the time, the College was a complement to the Conceptual Art movement as it developed in New York City, benefitting from the use these artists made of printed matter to transcend distances. Visiting artists included Lawrence Wiener, Joseph Kosuth, Dan Graham, and Vito Acconci, each of whom published contemporaneous bookworks to Kiyooka's *Transcanada Letters*. This environment prompted Kiyooka's discovery that the quintessential painter of Canadian landscape imagery, Tom Thomson, was a conceptual artist. He was also inspired to organize the *Halifax/Vancouver Exchange*, an event that took place as artists travelled between the cities. Eleven artists from Vancouver visited Halifax between 6 and 11 March 1972 as half of a two-part event.⁶¹ A group portrait featured in *Transcanada Letters* shows this group huddling

together outside the clapboard storefront of the Palm Lunch restaurant while being pelted by wet falling snow (Fig. 7). The caption tells us that this jovial bunch has just eaten a “Big Meal” at the Chinese Canadian restaurant, which acts as a signifier of Asian Canadian community on the East Coast.⁶² Art historian Virginia Solomon has discussed *exchange* as a performative mapping of an alternate space, that of “Canadada,” where the private realm of desire shapes a new experience of public life.⁶³ As several West Coast participants extended their trip to visit with artists they knew in New York, it is also important to recognize how the events Kiyooka initiated from Halifax positioned his affective relationship to Vancouver within a multi-locational conceptual geography.⁶⁴

Long Beach BC to Peggy’s Cove Nova Scotia uses an eclectic grouping of photographic styles to index the experience of Kiyooka’s body as it responded to the locations he travelled through. The camera acts as an extension of his body, recording his sensorial experience of the world and coordinating this emotional space with specific times and environmental conditions. In this way, the coordinating function of conceptual photography maps out a “landscape” in an analogous mode to the principles of projective verse, which inform Kiyooka’s letters and poetic texts. Arnold has noted that the contrast between the mobility captured in the images and the gridded layout is reminiscent of Charles Olson’s poetics of “localism.”⁶⁵ Likewise, Lowry notes a resemblance between the textual content of *Transcanada Letters* and the first volume of Olson’s *Maximus Poems* (1953), which is also composed as a series of letters addressed to the citizens of an imaginary city. “Localism” is the principle in projective verse of writing from one’s “locus” in response to the immediate surrounding. Olson used “proprioceptive,” a physiological term, to describe a process of composition working through responses arising within the body as it moves through space.⁶⁶ A kind of mapping is therefore performed on the page by using the typewriter to transcribe the poet’s breath patterns when speaking the verse out loud. The reader moves across the semantic field of the page, navigating through a multifaceted syntax, multiple voices and polysemous cultural codes experienced through both text and images.

This correspondence between conceptual photography and projective verse illuminates Kiyooka’s complex relationship to Canada, and to a sense of place existing somewhere beyond a print-based national imaginary bounded by the geopolitical entity. In keeping with projective verse, Kiyooka writes *Transcanada Letters* from his “locus.” However, in a letter from Kyoto to Montreal, he reveals that his locus is coordinated in relation to multiple national territories, multiple urban sites, and to communications media, specifically, television:

‘here’ as over ‘there’ or almost ‘anywhere’ theres television—
 you get the so-call’d ‘real world’ comin’ at u via tecni-
 color’d visors: Locus is 2 eyes in affront of a teley screen
 ‘anywhere’ ⁶⁷

NOTES

My thanks go to the reviewers for their comments, which helped to shape this text alongside the editorial direction of Dr. Johanne Sloan and the attentive eye of Karen Elaine Spencer. The conversations I had with Dr. Roy Miki, Daphne Marlatt, Carole Itter, and Henry Tsang were crucial to understanding Roy Kiyooka’s presence in life. Erick Swanick, Head of Special Collections, and Keith Gilbert, Special Collections Assistant, helped me to pull traces of this presence from the Roy Kiyooka Fonds in the Contemporary Literature Collection, W.A.C. Bennett Library, Simon Fraser University.

- 1 Lance BERELOWITZ, *Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2005), 3.
- 2 See, for example, Scott WATSON and Dieter ROELSTRAETE, eds., *Intertidal: Vancouver Art and Artists* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery; Antwerp: Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, 2005) or Reid SHIER, “Vancouver,” in *Art Cities of the Future: 21st Century Avant-Gardes* (London: Phaidon, 2013), 297–319.
- 3 Roy Kiyooka is credited with the design of the book alongside his publisher, David Robinson. Like Coach House Books in Toronto, Talonbooks was known for its unusually close engagement with writers and artists in matters of book design.
- 4 Eve Meltzer’s term, “aesthetics of information” describes a variant of conceptualism in which the rational processes implied by a systems-based approach are disrupted by the fluidity of emotional states and embodied forms, this will be further elaborated below with regards to *Transcanada Letters*. Eve MELTZER, *Systems We Have Loved: Conceptual Art, Affect, and the Antihumanist Turn* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 8–25.
- 5 Roy MIKI, ed., “Tom Thomson as/in Roy Kiyooka,” in *The Artist & The Moose, A Fable of Forget* (Burnaby, BC: Line Books, 2009), 143.
- 6 Smaro KAMBOURELI, “Preface,” in *Trans.Can.Lit: Resituating the Study of Canadian Literature*, ed. Smaro Kamboureli and Roy Miki (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), x.
- 7 Elissa AUTHER and Adam LERNER, ed., *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965–1977* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xxx.
- 8 Allen Ginsberg interviewed by Jack Webster, “Ginsberg and Webster,” *Georgia Straight*, 4–10 April 1969, 9–12. On his first trip to Japan in 1963, Kiyooka met with Allen Ginsberg.

- 9 Grant ARNOLD, "Reference/Cross Reference: Conceptual Art on the West Coast," in *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada, 1965–1980*, eds. Grant Arnold and Karen Henry (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2011), 88.
- 10 Dear Chris, Richmond, B.C., 1974, *Transcanada Letters*, n.p. Roy K. Kiyooka: 25 Years was organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery, showing there from 21 November – 16 December 1975; January 1976 at the University of Calgary; 20 February – 28 March 1976 at the Art Gallery of Windsor; and April 1976 at the Robert McLaughlin Art Gallery (Oshawa).
- 11 For a reading of Newman's painting as an "ideograph of Creation," see Hal FOSTER et al., *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (London: Thames and Hudson, 2014), 403. John O'Brian explores the significance of Newman further in his discussion of Kiyooka's *Hoarfrost* series; see John O'BRIAN, "White Paint, Hoarfrost, and the Cold Shoulder of Neglect," in *Roy Kiyooka* (Vancouver: Artspeak, Or Gallery, 1991), 19–25.
- 12 Diana NEMIROFF, "Geometric Abstraction After 1950," in *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010), 225.
- 13 Dennis REID, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 279.
- 14 *Reed: The Life and Work of Roy Kiyooka*, 93 min., directed by Fumiko Kiyooka, 2010.
- 15 See, for instance, Roy MIKI, ed., "Coruscations, Plangencies and the Sybillant: After Words to Roy Kiyooka's Pacific Windows," in *Pacific Windows* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1997), 315–16.
- 16 I was not able to confirm the date of this event, but Itter remembers it took place before the 1963 Poetry Conference. Telephone interview with Carole Itter, 10 July 2014.
- 17 A press release lists Roy Kiyooka as part of the organizing committee for the 5th Festival of Contemporary Arts (1965), *The Medium is the Message*. Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery Archives, Belkin Art Gallery Fonds, 13.4–5.12. Accessed 14 Oct. 2014, <http://vancouverartinthesixties.com/archive/19>.
- 18 Sontag ends her 1964 essay, "Against Interpretation," with this phrase. My reading of Sontag is further indebted to the work of Craig J. PEARISO, "The 'Counterculture' in Quotation Marks: Sontag and Marcuse on the Work of Revolution," in *The Scandal of Susan Sontag* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 155, 169 n. 19.
- 19 Catherine Rebecca FAIRNBARN, "A Short Trip on Spaceship Earth: Intermedia Society, 1967–1972" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1991), 81–94.
- 20 Dear Monica, 4/8/'69, Montreal, PQ, *Transcanada Letters*, n.p.
- 21 See Herbert MARCUSE, *Essay on Liberation*, rpt. 1969 (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), which includes the ideas he transmitted in a lecture at Simon Fraser University, and in the full transcription printed in the issue of the *Georgia Straight* referenced by Kiyooka. FAIRNBARN, "A Short Trip on Spaceship Earth," 82.
- 22 See Richard CAVELL, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 93, 146.
- 23 Scott WATSON, "Urban Renewal: Ghost Traps, Collage, Condos and Squats (2005)," *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*. Accessed 24 Feb.. 2012, <http://vancouverartinthesixties.com/essays/urban-renewal>.
- 24 Richard CAVELL, "World Famous Across Canada, Or Transnational Localities," in *Trans.Can.Lit: Resituating the Study of Canadian Literature*, ed. Smaro Kamboureli and Roy Miki (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2007), 85–92.

- 25 Dear Bri, Halifax, 1971, *Transcanada Letters*, n.p.
- 26 Anne MOEGLIN-DELCROIX, *Esthétique du livre d'artistes: une introduction à l'art contemporain*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France; Marseille: Le mot et le reste, 2012), exh. cat., *Livres d'artistes: L'invention d'un genre 1960–1980*, 25 May – 12 November 1997, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- 27 Matthew S. WITKOVSKY, ed., *Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photograph, 1964–1977*, (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2011), exh. cat. accompanying an exhibition which took place 13 Dec. 2011 – 11 Mar. 2012, Art Institute of Chicago.
- 28 Patrizia DI BELLO, Collette WILSON, and Shamoos ZAMIR, eds., *The Photobook: From Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).
- 29 Luis CAMNITZER, Jane FARVER, and Rachel WEISS, eds., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), exh. cat. accompanying a travelling exhibition organized by the Queens Museum of Art, 28 April – 29 August 1999, Queens Museum of Art (New York); 19 December 1999 – 5 March 2000, Walker Art Center (Minneapolis); 15 September – 26 November 2000, Miami Art Museum.
- 30 Grant ARNOLD and Karen HENRY, ed., *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada, 1965–1980* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2011), exh. cat. accompanying a travelling exhibition, 11 September – 28 November 2010, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery (Hart House, University of Toronto); University of Toronto Art Centre (Toronto); Blackwood Gallery (University of Toronto, Mississauga, ON); Doris McCarthy Gallery (University of Toronto, Scarborough, ON); 18 March – 8 May 2011, Anna Leonowens Gallery (NSCAD University, Halifax); Dalhousie Art Gallery (Halifax); Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery (Halifax); Saint Mary's University Art Gallery (Halifax); 25 June – 18 September 2011, Art Gallery of Alberta (Edmonton); 13 January – 25 February 2012 (Part 1), 16 March – 28 April 2012 (Part 2), Leonard & Bina Ellen Gallery (Concordia University, Montreal); 29 September 2012 – 20 January 2013, Vancouver Art Gallery (Vancouver); 1 April – 30 June 2013, Badischer Kunstverein (Karlsruhe, Germany).
- 31 Johanna DRUCKER, *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 2004).
- 32 Liz KOTZ, *Words to be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).
- 33 Quoted here is the phrase used in Patrizia Di Bello and Shamoos Zamir's introduction to *The Photobook: From Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond*, 6. See also Matthew S. WITKOVSKY's discussion of Ruscha's appropriation of the "subgenres of literature such as the paperback" in *Light Years*, 18. Johanna DRUCKER goes so far as to lament this tendency as an art historical "cliché" in *The Century of Artists' Books*, 11.
- 34 Sianne NGAI, "Merely Interesting," *Critical Inquiry* 34 (Summer 2008): 777–817.
- 35 Letter from Michael Ondaatje to Roy Kiyooka and Daphne Marlatt, 19 May 1976, Verona, ON. Roy Kiyooka Fonds, MsC 32.6.8 Kiyooka Correspondence, Ondaatje. Contemporary Literature Collection, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.
- 36 Jim Brown and David Robinson have explicitly linked the founding of *Talon* magazine and Talonbooks to the aesthetic and social environment surrounding Intermedia and the Vancouver Art Gallery. Both are interviewed in Kathleen SCHERF, "A Legacy of Canadian Cultural Tradition and the Small Press: The Case of Talonbooks," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 25:1 (2000): 131–49.
- 37 Email to the author from Karl Seigler, 6 June 2014.

- 38 I was unable to access a production docket that would confirm details such as print run, price per unit, or distribution points. Correspondence between Karl Seigler (Talonbooks) and Roy Kiyooka regarding royalties for *Transcanada Letters* show that 384 copies were sold in 1976, and sales steadily declined in subsequent years. Roy Kiyooka Fonds, MSC 32.73 Kiyooka Correspondence, Talonbooks. Contemporary Literature Collection, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.
- 39 Roy KIYOOKA, *Transcanada Letters*, ed. Smaro Kamboureli (Waterloo, ON: New West Press, 2005), 370–77. Scott Toguri McFarland notes a similar shift in aesthetics when *StoneDGloves* was anthologized in *Pacific Windows*, see “Un-Ravelling ‘StoneDGloves’ and the Haunt of the Hibakusha,” in *All Amazed For Roy Kiyooka*, eds. John O’Brian, Naomi Sawada, and Scott Watson (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002), 119.
- 40 Roland BARTHES, “Rhetoric of the Image,” in *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 41.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 A list of “publications” in the exhibition catalogue accompanying *Transcanada Letters* includes his contribution of images and text to art magazines such as *artscanada* or *Studio International* as well as literary magazines such as *BC Monthly* or *Imago*. Roy K. Kiyooka: 25 Years (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1975).
- 43 Bob HOGG, *Tish* 25 (June 1964): 2.
- 44 “The Man in the Yellow Boots/El Hombre de las Botas Amarillas,” *El Corno Emplumado* 16 (October, 1965).
- 45 Kiyooka represented Canada at Expo ‘70; it was while he installed the large-scale industrial sculpture, *Abu Ben Adam’s Vinyl Dream*, that he took the series of photographs for *StoneDGloves*. The title is shared between the bookwork and a series of photographs circulating as a travelling show organized by the National Gallery of Canada’s Extension Services from August 1970 to January 1972. The photographs ranged from 30 × 40 in. to 60 × 40 in and were installed on the floor, walls, and ceilings of a gallery as an environment. The bookwork replaced the standard monographic catalogue that usually accompanied an exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada.
- 46 MACFARLAND, “Un-Ravelling ‘StoneDGloves’ and the Haunt of the Hibakusha,” 119.
- 47 The dedication page of *Transcanada Letters*, states that it was “begun as a book for the G.S.W.S. in Halifax N.S. Sept. 71.” The acronym, which stands for the *Georgia Straight Writing Series*, attests to conflicted ties in the period between writers associated with *Tish* magazine and the newspaper. In 1970, the *Supplement* began issuing books as the Georgia Straight Writing Series (GSWS). Following a split from the *Georgia Straight* in 1972 (which also formed *The Grape* and the “York Street Commune”), the GSWS continued to publish under the imprint Vancouver Community Press.
- 48 Liz KOTZ, *Words To Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 5.
- 49 Sheryl CONKLETON, “Roy Kiyooka: ‘... The Sad and Glad Tidings of the Floating World ...’,” in O’Brian, Sawada, and Watson, eds., *All Amazed For Roy Kiyooka*, 109.
- 50 Philip AUSLANDER, “The Performativity of Performance Documentation,” *PAJ* 84 (2006): 5.

- 51 Roy MIKI, "Inter-Face: Roy Kiyooka's Writing, A Commentary/Interview," in Roy Kiyooka, ed. William Wood (Vancouver: Artspeak Gallery; Or Gallery, 1991), 43.
- 52 *Reed: The Life and Work of Roy Kiyooka*, 93 min., directed by Fumiko Kiyooka, 2010.
- 53 Roy Kiyooka in *ibid.*
- 54 Ron Spikett in *ibid.*
- 55 Glen LOWRY, "Afterword," in *Transcanada Letters*, 2nd ed., Smaro Kamboureli (Waterloo, ON: New West Press, 2005), 376.
- 56 José Esteban MUÑOZ, *Disidentifications: Queers of Colour and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6.
- 57 Eve MELTZER, *Systems We Have Loved*, 8–25.
- 58 See for instance, Jörg HEISER and Ellen SEIFERMANN, *Romantic Conceptualism* (Wien: Kerber, 2007).
- 59 Jörg HEISER, "Moscow, Romantic, Conceptualism and After," *e-flux* 29 (November 2011). Accessed 7 Apr. 2013, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/moscow-romantic-conceptualism-and-after/>.
- 60 *Long Beach BC to Peggy's Cove Nova Scotia*, 1971 (567 silver gelatin prints, 41.5 × 551.25 in. overall) is part of the collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery; however, Kiyooka's decision to reproduce and circulate the work as an integral part of *Transcanada Letters* signals that as a serial medium, the photographic prints exist across multiple places at once: in the institutional gallery space and the mass culture form of the book.
- 61 Due to changes in travel plans, the exchanges between cities took place at the same time. This meant that contrary to Kiyooka's intentions for the artists to be exposed to each other and to their conflicting forms of conceptualism, the participants were not able to meet in person. Telephone interview with Carole Itter, 10 July 2014.
- 62 Vancouver visitors included: Cheryl Druick (now Sourkes), Don Druick, Zoe Druick (their young child), Gathie Falk, Carole Fisher (now Itter), Gerry Gilbert, Garry Lee-Nova, Glenn Lewis, Michael Morris, Vincent Trasov, Dallas Sellman, and Dave Rimmer, alongside other Halifax participants. Halifax residents in the group are Bruce Parsons, Toby MacLennan, Alistair MacLennan, Peter Zimmer, Anita Martin, David Martin, Ellison Robertson, Ian Murray, Doug Waterman, and Charlotte Townsend.
- 63 Virginia SOLOMON, "Conceptualism and Canadada at the Halifax/Vancouver Exchange," in *The Last Art College: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1968–1978*, ed. Gary Neill Kennedy (Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 2012), 153.
- 64 Glenn Lewis presented a performance at the New Food Restaurant in SoHo, 19 March 1972. A photo-essay chronicling the trip to Halifax and New York is published as "National News" in *FILE 1* (April 1972): 6–7.
- 65 ARNOLD, "Reference/Cross Reference," 98.
- 66 See Fred Wah's description of proprioceptive writing in Fred WAH, "Introduction," in *Net Work: Selected Writing*, ed. Daphne Marlatt (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1980), 15–19.
- 67 For Coolhand Luke & Others . . . , 19/10/'69, Kyoto City, Japan, *Transcanada Letters*, n.p.

Positionnement sériel : les « voyages en art conceptuel » de Roy K. Kiyooka

FELICITY TAYLER

Cet article soutient que *Transcanada Letters* est un livre conceptuel qui utilise des stratégies formelles pour attirer l'attention sur le livre non seulement comme vecteur neutre d'un contenu textuel, mais comme forme matérielle imprégnée de propriétés idéologiques. En utilisant le vocabulaire de Marshall McLuhan, on pourrait dire que *Transcanada Letters* joue un rôle de « sonde ». Le livre utilise délibérément l'« ancien média » de la page imprimée pour produire un contre-environnement à l'univers des médias de communication adopté comme « valeur nationale » durant la période post-centenaire au Canada. Roy Kenzie Kiyooka (né à Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, 1926; décédé à Vancouver, 1994) est un artiste et poète nippon-canadien *nisei*, c'est-à-dire de deuxième génération. Son livre *Transcanada Letters* reproduit une série d'environ 250 envois de correspondance de Kiyooka à des parents, amis et collègues entre 1966 et 1974. Des photographies individuelles, surtout des portraits de famille, sont insérées entre des pages de texte, alors qu'une collection de 576 photographies de voyage est aussi disposée en grille conceptuelle. Les dates et adresses de retour incluses avec chaque lettre forment un ensemble de coordonnées temporelles et géographiques qui suivent la trace de Kiyooka dans ses voyages au Canada, d'est en ouest à travers de nombreux sites géographiques, aux États-Unis, au sud, et au Japon, à l'ouest, au-delà de l'océan Pacifique. *Transcanada Letters* a amené certains auteurs à réfléchir sur les nombreux niveaux de complexité de la diaspora asiatique en relation avec la citoyenneté et la culture nationale canadiennes. L'article complète les recherches existantes en mettant de l'avant les aspects visuels de la conception d'un livre et en soulignant que l'impression de livres est en soi un procédé photographique. L'article explore aussi des aspects du livre qui ne sont pas directement liés à la question de l'identité asiatico-canadienne. En présentant la route transcanadienne comme un symbole de la nation, Kiyooka puise dans des visions de l'Ouest (et du pourtour du Pacifique) habitant simultanément l'imaginaire contre-culturel. Dans la période post-centenaire, les livres avaient une valeur symbolique pour la consolidation de publics de lecteurs français et anglais, et contribuaient aussi à la formation d'un lectorat contreculturel attiré par des formes

ouvertes de poésie et des pratiques artistiques intermédiatiques, y compris la photographie conceptuelle. Pour répondre à ces questions, l'article s'intéresse particulièrement à un portrait de famille que Kiyooka a inséré entre deux pages de lettres, ce qui permet de réfléchir sur sa sensibilité à l'égard des relations complexes entre la culture de l'imprimé, l'identité et l'État-nation. Par contre, la série de photographies *Long Beach BC to Peggy's Cove Nova Scotia* (1971) ouvre le débat sur ses affiliations conceptuelles et contreculturelles, alors que l'article aborde la poétique du « localisme » en vers projectifs en tant qu'elle définit un paysage à travers la page dans un mode analogue à la fonction de coordination de la photographie conceptuelle. À travers les pages de *Transcanada Letters*, le lieu de Kiyooka est fait de multiples lieux dans ses transformations en relation à de multiples territoires nationaux, à plusieurs sites urbains et aux médias de communication, plus spécifiquement la télévision.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette