



ENTERTAINMENT

Surrey art exhibit marks Komagata Maru's 100th anniversary



Ali Kazimi's Fair Play is one of several pieces at the Ruptures in Arrival exhibit at the Surrey Art Gallery, marking the 100th anniversary of the Komagata Maru's landing off the coast of B.C. Below is artist Jarnail Singh's Saga of the Komagata Maru. — *Image Credit: Submitted*

by [Evan Seal - Surrey North Delta Leader](#)
posted Apr 16, 2014 at 9:00 AM

The Surrey Art Gallery (SAG) is marking the 100-year anniversary of the arrival of the Komagata Maru by showcasing the work of visual artists from across Canada and India.

Ruptures in Arrival, Art in the Wake of the Komagata Maru, features painting, conceptual photography, and photo collage imagery – as well as archival images of the Komagata Maru.

The Komagata Maru arrived in Vancouver in 1914 carrying 376 passengers from the Punjab. Due to Canadian immigration laws at the time, only 20 of the passengers were allowed entry into Canada. After two months of detention in Vancouver Harbour, the ship was forced to sail back to India.

Through their imagery, 10 artists have explored the incident and aim to create discussion about Canadian history, discrimination, identity and citizenship.

Portland-based artist Avantika Bawa uses a large-scale drawing and sculpture to represent the route travelled by the ship and the barriers faced by the passengers.

"I really wanted to look at the route since everything was about this journey and what happened because of the journey," said Bawa.

The single lines drawn on canvas represent both the arrival and return routes taken by the Komagata Maru. The canvas then cascades onto a barricade, giving a sense of the symbolic barriers faced by the passengers.

"I also wanted to address the barriers we face at the Canadian and American borders," Bawa said.

Toronto-based artist Ali Kazimi used three-dimensional video and stereoscopic images to show the lives of early South Asian migrants and the issues and conditions in which they lived.

"I really wanted to turn our gaze away from the ship and to remind us that there were people on shore as well," Kazimi said.

"I used the work of American painter Edward Hopper as a point of reference for my work, showing people who are alone. This sense of alienation is very much a part of the immigration experience."

Surrey artist Jarnail Singh depicts the plight of the passengers through a large scale four-panel painting.

The SAG exhibition is part of the "Komagata Maru 100," a combined exhibit located at [various locations](#) around the Lower Mainland to mark the centennial.

Ruptures in Arrival runs until June 15 at the [Surrey Art Gallery](#), 13570 88 Ave.