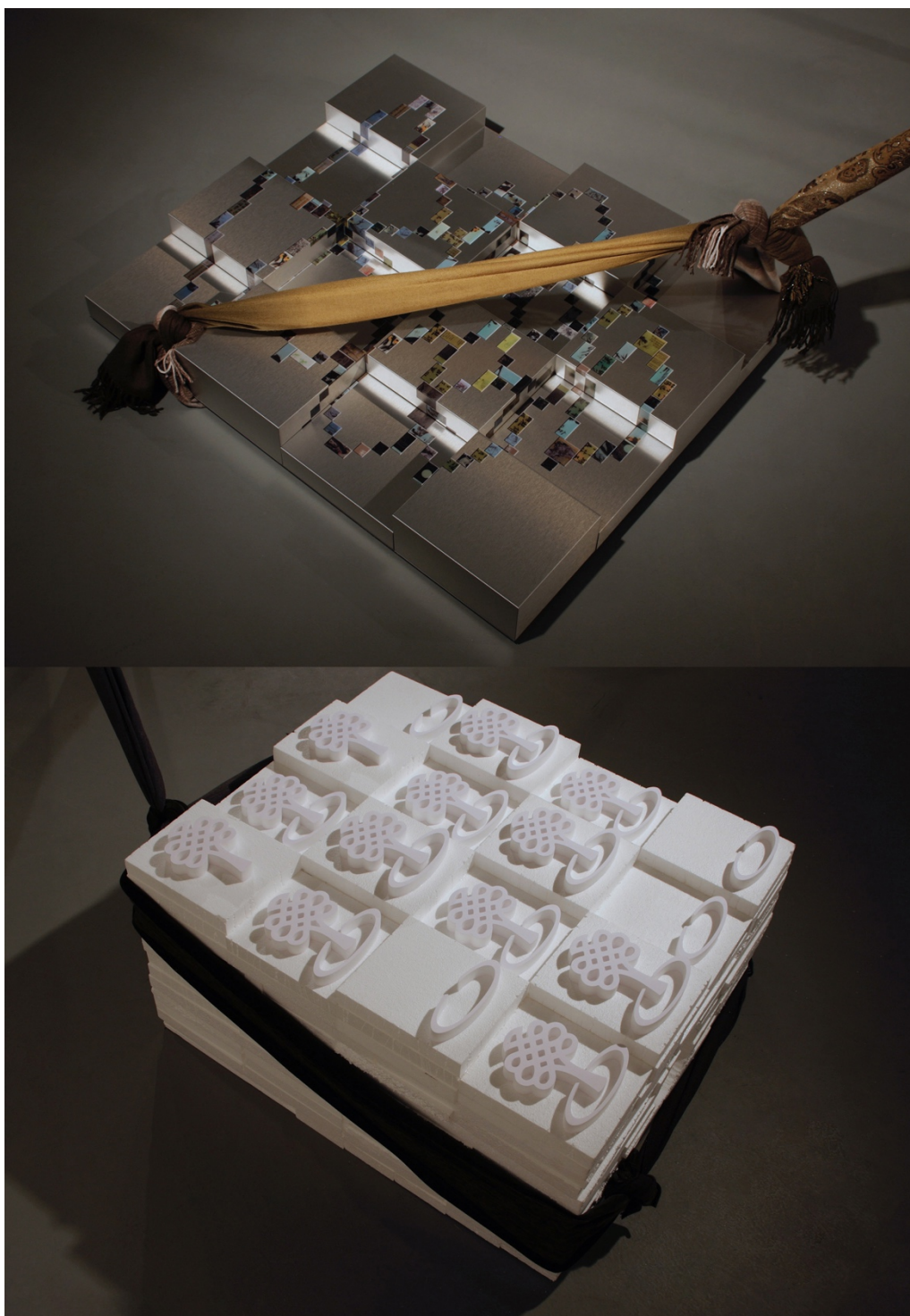


Kim Huynh, *If I Had a Hammer* (Detail)

Mixed Media and Print-Installation, 621 Gallery, Department of Art, University of Calgary,
May 15-May 20, 2016, *Us-Them-Us* Exhibition. Collection of the artist.



Kim Huynh, *If I Had a Hammer* (Detail)

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Artist Statement

If I Had a Hammer represents the Canadian society's progress in social justice. This public narrative, as depicted in the larger installation, relies on the simple motifs of a wooden file cabinet and the dynamic motion of a horse striving forwards. The work focuses on four pivotal years, which have shaped Canadian society, namely: 1854; 1947; 1960 and 2016. These years with their associated narratives/stories correspond, respectively, with the following: the abolition of the feudal system in Canada; the abolition of the Chinese head tax; the establishment of the Canadian Bill of Rights, and the beginning of the reconciliation process with Canada's indigenous communities.

In the installation, the image of the horse is significant as it embodies the connections between the four stories. It emulates the progression of Canadian history and the continued challenges between diversity and inequality. Pulsating and shaking, the wooden file cabinet riddled with hundreds of holes represents the artist's emotional response to the struggles these cultural groups have had, and continue to have, in the face of the Canadian government's tacit policies of inequality.

The meat tenderizer (in the second photo) represents the under-representation that the Asian art community has received in Canadian cultural institutions. The piece as a whole demonstrates that Canadian institutional policies have failed to keep pace with the development of a plural society, experiencing rapid demographic and socio-cultural diversification. Going beyond simple acknowledgement of the situation, my work acts as a catalyst for a positive dialogue around ways of recalibrating and building on Canadian multiculturalism and the policies that define it.

(For more detailed and explicit views of the installation, please see Kim Huynh, CPI, Fall 2016).