

Ken Lum

Four Boats Stranded: Red and Yellow, Black and White, 2001

Four Boats Stranded is a sculptural installation commissioned by the Vancouver Art Gallery and installed on the roof of the Gallery in 2001.

The installation is made up of four stylized boats that occupy the corners of the Vancouver Art Gallery's roof. The boats are scaled down versions of a First Nations longboat, a cargo ship that carried migrants from China's Fujian Province to Vancouver in the late 1990s, the Komagata Maru (the infamous 1914 Indian immigrant ship) and Captain Vancouver's ship.

Lum's public artwork serves as a cultural, geographical and historical marker. The work recognizes Vancouver as a port city, a place of arrival from sea, and as a city of layered histories. The elegantly simplified boats are each painted a single colour that speaks to a colonial stereotyping of cultural, racial and historical identification. The First Nations boat is red, the Fujian ghost ship is yellow, the Komagata Maru is black and Captain Vancouver's ship is white. The boats point north, south, east and west as a directional compass, asking viewers to situate themselves within a larger geography.

Ken Lum was born in 1956 and is internationally known for his photo-based and mixed media works. Lum has exhibited widely, including São Paulo Biennial (1998), Shanghai Biennale (2000), Documenta 11 (2002), the Istanbul Biennial (2007), and the Gwangju Biennale (2008) and produced numerous public art projects.

From 2000 to 2006 Ken Lum was head of the graduate program in studio art at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, where he taught from 1990 until 2006. Lum joined the faculty of Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, in 2005 and worked there until 2007. He has been an invited professor at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, the Akademie der Bildenden Kunst, Munich, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, and the China Art Academy, Hangzhou. Lum is co-founder and founding editor of *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*. He has published extensively, and a book of Lum's writings, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist, is forthcoming from Walter Koenig Books. In addition he recently completed an artists' book project with philosopher Hubert Damisch that was launched with Three Star Press, Paris. Lum was Project Manager for Okwui Enwezor's *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 - 1994* (2001). He was also co-curator of the 7th Sharjah Biennial (2005), and *Shanghai Modern: 1919 - 1945* (2005). Lum is currently a Professor and the Director of the Undergraduate Fine Arts Program at the University of Pennsylvania.