

# Haruko Okano

## Artists Statement

### Llama Project

My career as an artist has for the last 20 years combined my political and cultural activism within both the process and production of my artwork. I may have started with the traditional straight forward strategy of political protest but found that the very people I wanted to listen and understand the issues, simple dismissed me as just another irate individual. If art was not to be separate from my activism than I needed to come up with different and diverse approaches that combined the two.

My kit of skills has grown since the early days and I have tucked into my virtual obi (cummerbund) community engagement, experiential learning modalities, better communication skills and an emphasis on creative process and have become interdisciplinary. My artwork ceases to position the viewer as mere observer and now incorporates various modes of interactivity. The audience is now integral to the concept and design of installations and as unintentional performers, animate and add to the kinetic components of my work. I create environments that include as much of a full sensory load combined with an understanding of how imagery, symbolism and materials inject into the human subconscious a memory and meaning that carries both personal and cultural significance. My process and end result are now both experimental and experiential developed through a combination of pre- meditated and spontaneous response to a theme or specific site.

I often work in partnership or collaborate with community groups such as my present participation in Flesh Mapping: Vancouver Markets Pacific Women, an abolitionist multi faceted project whose end product combines new media, exhibitions, dialogue with Pacific Rim women and will occupy for 16 days Gallery Gachet, the Wack exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery and culminate with a special event at Centre A, in Vancouver.

### The LLAMA Project

My participation in the Voz/Voices: the arts of resistance from tundra to tropics, will include collaboration with Joyce Majiski on developing interactive standing prayer wheels, and an installation of cast animal tracks (tundra to tropics). I will create work that reflect my interest in food security, the environment and the impact of globalization specific to human trafficking. In going to Mexico and the Yukon, I am open to potential collaborations with the other LLAMA artists.