

The following are excerpts from the "Project Background" in the book

Johanne Dumas, Executive and Artistic Director of Société francophone de Maillardville approached me in 2006 with an invitation to produce an exhibition for the 2009 Maillardville centennial. Her initial concept was to create 100 black and white portraits.

At that time, in nearly 10 years of an art career developing projects that reveal impressions of places and stories of people as part of BC past, it was the first time a commission for a project of this kind was offered to me in French. Although I have no cultural roots in Maillardville, I hoped to establish contacts and dialogue with people who have the same maternal language as mine and who also live as a linguistic minority. Moreover, my projects have always been about the impact of industry on communities. Maillardville was established because of the lumber industry when the first francophones arrived in 1909 to work at the large Fraser Mills. This additional connection triggered my interest and proclivity to take on this project.

I wanted to interview 100 people who had had a connection with Maillardville at some time, whatever the reason, be it having been born there, having lived or worked there, or having been in regular contact with its organizations or inhabitants. Many group meetings were organized to provide potential participants with an opportunity to learn about my project and process. In no time the list of assenting names surpassed the decided limit of 100 people and the final selection came about quite naturally based on availability. My only criterion: to present a representation of different age groups even if in the end, a majority of participants were elders or in their mid-life due to the local demographic.

From March to the end of September 2008, I met most of the selected participants in the Foyer Maillard's meeting room, which had been graciously provided for my interviews. In general, I questioned one person at a time while taking notes, then recorded their words for about five minutes. Finally I took their portraits at a site of their choosing in connection to Maillardville.