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Highlights from
The Simon Fraser University Art Collection
at SFU Burnaby campus
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The Simon Fraser University Art Collection is a public collection of over 5,500 works, many of which are installed within university buildings and public spaces. Managed by SFU Galleries, the collection was initiated in 1965 with the commission of two tile mosaics by Gordon Smith. The collection has subsequently grown to encompass a diversity of work, with particular strengths in painting, photography, prints and sculpture by British Columbia artists, such as B.C. Binning, Emily Carr, Robert Davidson, Lawren Harris, Roy Kiyooka, Ken Lum, Bill Reid, Jeff Wall and Jin-me Yoon; and Canadian and American modern and contemporary artists, including Marcel Barbeau, Jack Bush, Jules Olitski, Robert Morris, Robert Rauschenberg and Jean Paul Riopelle. The SFU Art Collection also has significant holdings of work by Jack Shadbolt and holds copyright to his work. This guide presents a selection of works in the SFU collection located at the Burnaby campus.

WALK ONE

CENTRAL + WEST CAMPUS

Works sited within the Academic Quadrangle, Convocation Mall and West Campus include some of the earliest works in the SFU Art Collection, as well as our most recent acquisition. This walk is outside and takes approximately 25 minutes.
BRIDGE BEARDSLEE

Energy Alignment Sculpture: Pyramid in the Golden Section, 1976

steel and paint
SFU Art Collection
Gift of Ian Davidson, 1977

Situated within a hedge-lined enclosure, Energy Alignment Sculpture: Pyramid in the Golden Section is a central work in the Academic Quadrangle. Produced for an exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery and installed at SFU in 1977, Beardslee’s pyramid – an open, tubular steel frame painted a vivid shade of cerulean blue – is carefully positioned to align with the rotation of the earth’s axis and the North Star.

In both form and spirit, Energy Alignment Sculpture: Pyramid in the Golden Section is an apt compliment to the adjacent mounded earth pyramid designed by architect Arthur Erickson. Erickson’s pyramid, and Bridge Beardslee’s pyramid – built to the same proportions of the Cheops pyramid in Egypt – both speak to a heightened interest at the time in the monumental works of ancient peoples.

In its early years, Energy Alignment Sculpture: Pyramid in the Golden Section attracted unlikely controversy. A debate regarding the correct position required to activate the pyramid’s “power” played out in the pages of the student newspaper and students saw fit on several occasions to “realign” the pyramid – setting it on top of the mounded earth pyramid and the student union building for example, before it was cemented in its current location.

Beardslee studied industrial design at the University of Illinois and then moved to California and worked on the Polaris Missile Project at Lockheed, while at the same time developing an innovative casting process he used to produce architectural sculptures.
Within the Academic Quadrangle are two brightly coloured tile mosaics by Gordon Smith, a Vancouver painter who was a friend and sometimes collaborator of SFU architect Arthur Erickson. Though Smith is well known for his abstract expressionist paintings, in the 1960s he began to experiment with op art, flatness and hard-edged line. The tile mosaics were installed when the campus was built in 1965 and were the first two works of art acquired by Simon Fraser University. The organic forms – bold vermilion orbs set against aqueous blue-green backgrounds – are meant to symbolize energy and growth.

Gordon Smith (1919–) was born in England and moved to Canada at the age of 15. He studied at the Vancouver School of Art with notable local artists: Jack Shadbolt, B.C. Binning, Charles H. Scott and Grace Melvin. Best known as a painter and a printmaker he also produced a number of murals for public sites including the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, the MacMillan Bloedel Building and the Vancouver Law Library. He has participated in numerous exhibitions and his work is held in public and private collections including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Gallery of Canada, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Modern Art, the Smithsonian Institute, the Carnegie Institute, the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

North of Convocation Mall outside the Academic Quadrangle is an aluminum sculpture by Jacques Huet. The rough, abstracted figure suggests the blockish form of a horse and rider. Given the title of the work, it is a reference perhaps to the tradition of equestrian sculptures monumentalizing important men, or more specifically, the low relief carvings on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

Huet (1932–2009) was a self-taught Montreal sculptor who worked in wood, aluminum, bronze and plexiglass. Over the course of his career he participated in many exhibitions and produced public works for sites including Orford Arts Centre, Ministère des Travaux Publics du Québec, Henri-Bourassa subway station in Montreal, Centre hospitalier Côte-des-Neiges in Montreal, and Maison des Arts de Laval.
South of Convocation Mall outside the Academic Quadrangle is a small, bronze sculpture by Elza Mayhew. Born in Victoria, Mayhew travelled extensively and her modernist sculptures often recall the ancient architectural and monumental forms that she’d seen in Asia, Europe and Central America. The incised lines and recessed, geometric sections of Guardian II for example, reflect interests in hieroglyphics, the bas-relief carving of the ancient Assyrians, and most notably in this case, Mayan stelae.

Mayhew (1916–) studied French and Latin at the University of British Columbia and returned to a career in art later in life, completing her MFA at the University of Oregon in 1963. She has shown her work internationally and was selected to represent Canada at the 1964 Venice Biennale. Her work is held in the collections of the University of Victoria, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the National Gallery of Canada, Brock University and Confederation Centre.

In the lobby of the Simon Fraser University Theatre are two murals by Chicago artist Buell Mullen. Mullen developed a method of working on stainless steel – roughing up the surface with a wire brush and then painting with a specially ground epoxy paint – and produced a number of stainless steel murals for private and public buildings. The Theatres of the World murals were created during the construction of the theatre in 1964, a gift to the University from the International Nickel Company (Inco). Notwithstanding forms on the outer edges evoking the open curtains of a stage, the murals are brightly-coloured, abstract works encrusted with quartz, gold nuggets and other minerals indigenous to the area.

Mullen (1901–1986) was born in Chicago and studied at the British Academy. Best-known as a muralist she also exhibited work at Salon, Gruppo Moderno and the Chicago Art Institute.
**PETER HIDE**  
North Face, 1989–1990

*welded steel, stained, varnished*  
*SFU Art Collection*  
*Gift of David M. Campbell, 1982*

*North Face* is a large welded steel sculpture installed in the courtyard of West Mall Centre by Peter Hide. Born in Surrey England, Hide (1944–) undertook studies at the Crodon College of Art and St Martin’s School of Art, where he was a pupil of Anthony Caro, before relocating to Edmonton in 1977 to teach at the University of Alberta. Working in the modernist tradition of welding scrap steel, his works are distinguished by their emphasis on weight, mass and monumental vertical form.

Hide’s work can be found in the collections of the Edmonton Art Gallery, Glenbow Institute, Mendel Art Gallery, MacDonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph, Agnes Etherington Art Gallery, Kitchener Art Gallery, and the Tate.

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**DAMIAN MOPPETT**

Large Painting and Caryatid Maquette in Studio at Night (Sculpture Version), 2012

*aluminum and paint*  
*SFU Art Collection*  
*Gift of the artist, 2013*

Installed on the south side of the SFU Residences Dining Hall, is Damian Moppett’s *Large Painting and Caryatid Maquette in Studio at Night (Sculpture Version)*. In this work the artist has transformed a painting of his studio into a three-dimensional space, taking abstracted shapes of canvases, lights and sculptures-in-progress and reproducing them as large-scale cutouts in painted aluminum, such that the final work presents the artist’s studio as a stage set. Originally commissioned by the Vancouver Art Gallery for their OFFSITE space, the work has been reconfigured for SFU.

Moppett is a Vancouver based artist who studied at Emily Carr College of Art and Design (now University) and received his MFA from Concordia University. His work has been exhibited at Carleton University Art Gallery, Temple Gallery, Tyler School of Art, Contemporary Art Gallery, National Gallery of Canada, Witte de With, Vancouver Art Gallery, The Power Plant, Rennie Collection and the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, among others.
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The title in this case suggests a reimagining of natural phenomena, generally distilled through the production of torn edges. Born in Lancashire, England, Wood (1935–) moved to Vancouver in 1974. He’s had an active practice from the 1960s through to the present and his work is held in numerous private and public collections.

In the 1980s, Wood began working with a wide variety of materials and subjects, including landscapes and still lifes. His work from this period is characterized by its attention to detail and its use of light and shadow. In the 1990s, Wood began to work with more abstract forms, including large-scale sculptures and installations. His work from this period is characterized by its use of repetition and symmetry.

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Installed in the atrium at the northeast corner of the Academic Quadrangle is *Written in the Earth*, four aluminum and cedar works by Susan Point. The designs, featuring faces flanked by animals, represent the diversity of world cultures. *Blue Herons* (2008), a series of carved wooden panels installed in the Technology & Science Complex I, are also by Point.

Point (1952–) is a Coast Salish artist from Musqueam Nation. She’s produced a number of prominent works for public sites including *Musqueam Welcome Figures* (1996) and *Flight (Spindle Whorl)* (1995) at the Vancouver International Airport and *People Amongst the People* (2008) at Brockton Point in Stanley Park. Her work is held in many public and private collections and she has been the recipient of numerous honours and awards including an honorary degree from Simon Fraser University.

Outside the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography is *Frog Constellation*, a large cedar carving by Jim Hart depicting a man and a woman on the back of a giant frog. As a creature that moves between worlds, the frog is a powerful symbol for the Haida and a family crest of the Eagle clan. The work was inspired by a smaller shamanic object, carved by an unknown Haida artist in the 1870s, that the artist saw in a photograph. In 2007 *Frog Constellation* was acquired by the Bill Reid Foundation and the Bill Reid Centre for Northwest Coast Art Studies at SFU.

Hart (1952–) was born in Massett and currently lives and works in Vancouver and Haida Gwaii. He began carving in the late 1970s, apprenticing first with Robert Davidson and then with Bill Reid in the early 1980s. An established Haida artist, Hart has produced a number of significant commissions and his work can be found in public collections around the world.
In the reflecting pool outside the north concourse of the Academic Quadrangle is a pinkish form that at first glance, appears to be a rock, but is in fact a polyester resin sculpture by Vancouver artist Lynn Vardeman. Known primarily as a filmmaker and photographer, Vardeman began to work with sculpture in the early 1980s. She was particularly interested in experimenting with resin casting and the capacity of resin to transmit light and reflect colour.

Born in Chicago, Vardeman studied art in San Francisco before moving to Vancouver in 1968 to do graduate work at the Vancouver School of Art (now Emily Carr University of Art and Design). Vardeman taught for many years in the department of visual arts at SFU.

**LYNN VARDEMAN**  
Northern Light, 1983  
polyester resin  
SFU Art Collection  
Purchase, 1984

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John Innes (1863–1941) was born in London, Ontario but moved West, working as a surveyor for CP Rail in the 1870s and settling in Vancouver in the early 1880s. He worked largely as a commercial illustrator, depicting Western landscapes and scenes derived from his personal experiences as a frontiersman and cattle wrangler. In 1924 Innes was commissioned by the Native Sons of British Columbia, a fraternal organization that worked to promote local histories, to produce a series of eight paintings depicting historical events in British Columbia. These paintings were acquired by SFU in 2004 and hung in the north concourse of the Academic Quadrangle. The works, which in many cases presented European explorers as sovereign authority figures, reflected ways of thinking about history and the settlement of British Columbia that were out of step with contemporary views of colonization. Students and faculty successfully lobbied university administration to remove *Alexander Mackenzie Recording His Arrival at the Pacific, A.D. 1793* and *James Douglas Building the Hudson’s Bay Post at Victoria, A.D. 1843*, two of the more controversial paintings. The Innes paintings continue to hang in the north concourse as a reminder of these layered histories and the lessons these histories bear.

**JOHN INNES**  
Six Paintings  

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*John Innes (1863–1941)*
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British Columbia Pageant is a 21-metre long mural depicting events and narratives within the founding and settlement of the province. Originally commissioned by the TD Bank for their branch at the corner of Granville and Pender, the mural shows a meeting between Spanish explorers and Nootka Chief Maquinna, the arrival of Captain Vancouver, and artist Emily Carr, against a backdrop of images of exploration, logging, and a modern city skyline.

Comfort (1900–1994) was a Canadian artist who was active in the 1930s and 1940s. He developed a reputation as a painter of murals, producing panoramic paintings and carved friezes for the Arts & Letters Club in Toronto, The Toronto Stock Exchange, and Central Station in Montreal.

When British Columbia Pageant was installed at SFU in 2004 it met with controversy for its depiction of a history that begins with the arrival of Europeans and its promotion of industry. Some referred to British Columbia Pageant as “monumental kitsch” while others suggested the mural promoted a “retrograde history.” Student-led efforts to formulate a response to the Comfort mural are evident in “anti-colonial” artworks installed opposite the painting.

 Below British Columbia Pageant is [Negative #1] Adam/Eve, a minimal black sculpture of a large circular form, split and divided in the middle, by D’arcy Henderson. Henderson began his career as a photographer whose interest in illuminating textured surfaces – fiberglass and flaked glass for example – led him to produce three-dimensional forms. Taking leave of photographic ends, sculptural works such as [Negative #1] Adam/Eve were designed to be defined and shaped by light.

Henderson (1940–2002) was born in Princeton, BC and studied at the Vancouver School of Art. He was an active member of the Vancouver arts community in the 1960s and 1970s, teaching at Emily Carr College of Art, Capilano College and the University of British Columbia, and participating in exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Burnaby Art Gallery, Surrey Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. His work is held in the collections of Vancouver Art Gallery and University of British Columbia.
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As conveyed in the adjacent wall text, this grouping of works installed in the north concourse of the Academic Quadrangle stemmed from the efforts of SFU student groups who protested the public installation of other works in the hallway: namely the John Innes paintings and the Charles Comfort mural. Between September 2004 and February 2005 students organized a number of panel discussions, lectures and performances and hosted a contest for Anti-Colonial Art, the winners of which were displayed in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

Teen BC by Nate Woodbury was selected as one of the winning works. The rough-hewn mask is adorned with salvaged wood, bullets and a rail tie and painted with a minimal formline design. The back of the mask however has been collaged with photographs of faces and intercut with bars, effectively preventing the mask from being worn.
Edgar Heap of Birds (1954–) is an internationally recognized Cheyenne artist who gained attention for a number of political, site-specific public signage projects in the 1980s and 1990s. Native Hosts (1991–2007), a series of signs installed at the University of British Columbia campus for example, is also by Heap of Birds. Heap of Birds participated in the Cedar Table series of panel discussions, organized by SFU students in response to the installation of the Charles Comfort mural.

Insurgent Message for Canada was part of a series of works produced for Grunt Gallery, a Vancouver artist-run centre, and Nuit Blanche, Toronto. The work was installed on billboards and bus stops throughout Vancouver and Toronto.

A.S. Matta’s comic-inspired work was selected as a winning entry in an Anti-Colonial Art Contest, organized by students in response to the installation of the Charles Comfort mural and the John Innes paintings. The drawings and photographs portrayed in the black and white lithograph juxtapose monumental statuary, colonial soldiers and royal monarchs, with images of machines and modern cities. Matta’s imagery directly mirrors the subject matter of the Comfort mural and the Innes paintings, but the handwritten narrative and graphic style – resembling a page torn from an anarchist zine perhaps – assert a critical revisioning of these histories, and oppose the grandness of the historical painting tradition, with a countertradition of creative political writing, commentary and satire.
This walk winds through a number of buildings and courtyards on the east side of campus including the Djavad Mowafaghian Court and courtyards located outside of the Academic Quadrangle. This walk takes approximately 25 minutes.
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The three bronze statues installed in Saywell Courtyard are by Sorel Etrog, a Romanian-Canadian artist known for his large, abstract sculptures. Commencing his studies in Israel in the early 1950s and subsequently moving to New York, Etrog’s visual language was forged through interests in Surrealism and close study of anthropological collections held in New York museums. Etrog moved to Toronto in 1963 where he established himself as a prominent figure within Canadian modern art. His forms register as levers, hinges and blades, but also resonate as limbs and lobes – articulating correlations between body and machine, but also mind and matter, memory and language.

Etrog (1933–2014) represented Canada at the 1966 Venice Biennale and his work has been included in shows at Carnegie International, Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim and Centre Pompidou. Another public work by Etrog entitled King and Queen is permanently installed at Harbour Green Park in Coal Harbour.
Michael Dennis’s *Man* is a large sculpture of a hammer situated outside the Technology & Science Complex I. The artist often produced large forms from wood left behind by loggers that in some cases are carved to suggest anthropomorphic forms. *Reclining Woman* (1992) for example, is another work by Dennis situated outside the southeast corner of the Academic Quadrangle, that’s been lightly shaped to suggest a human form. Some have speculated that *Reclining Woman* is a mate to another work by Dennis located in a Mount Pleasant park. In 2013, the park took the vernacular title of that sculpture as its name, and is now affectionately known as Dude Chilling Park.

Dennis (1941–) was born in Los Angeles and was a professor of neurophysiology at the University of California at Berkeley before turning to art in the 1980s. Dennis has lived on Denman Island for many years and his sculptures are made with wood sourced on Vancouver Island.

Known in Vancouver for his outdoor sculptures *Monument to George Vancouver* (1980) in Vanier Park and *Red Spring* (1981) at Robson Square, Alan Chung Hung created this piece for a 1982 exhibition at the Charles H. Scott Gallery called *Infinity vs. Limit A Non-mathematical Dialogue of Self-Identity*. Installed in an exterior courtyard off the south concourse of the AQ, *The Faces vs Edges Series* documents what happens to the cube as the square edges are successively rounded off and the six faces are reduced to two, the twelve edges to one.

Chung Hung (1946–1994) was born in Canton, China and studied civil engineering at Chu Hai University in Hong Kong. He moved to Vancouver in 1969 and studied at the Vancouver School of Art.
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Outside of the south concourse of the Academic Quadrangle, in Simon Fraser Peace Square, is a bust of Mahatma Gandhi that was donated to SFU in 1970. Each year on his birthday, October 2, the Gandhi Jayanti celebration brings together members of the local Indo-Canadian community and others who wish to honour Gandhi’s memory. Since 1991, the university has also presented the Thakore Visiting Scholar Award to outstanding individuals who have made the well-being of society their life’s work.