

Carole Itter: Please Meet the
Geese Who Have Lived Here
Forever: Set, Properties, and Film

Support Material

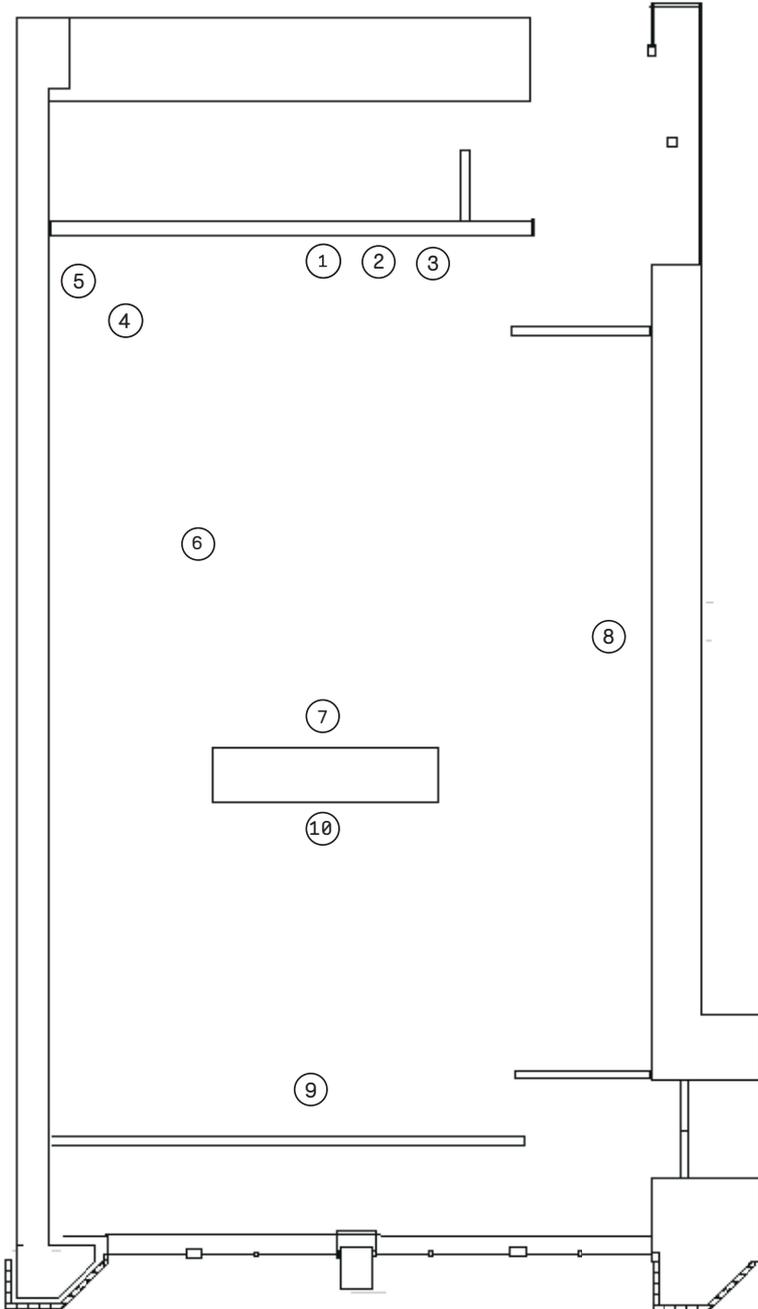
JAN 20 - MAR 11, 2023

AUDAIN GALLERY

List of Works

1.
Act One, Scene 2
pencil crayon, and pen on paper
2.
Act Two, Scene 1/b
pencil crayon, pen, and wire mesh on paper
3.
Act Three, Scene 1
pencil crayon and pen on paper
4.
Ocean in Storage
building tubes, cotton sheeting,
c. 2019
5. *Fake Decoys — Mis-attributed*
painted found objects, c. 2011–2019
6.
Adirondack Chair
wood, brass, n.d.
7.
Spirits Winking
plywood, paint, silver foil, coloured
paper, and coloured pencil, c. 2010
8.
Tanker
bamboo, cloth, cardboard, paint, and
rubber bands, c. 2018
9.
Section C of Theatre Set
cloth, quilts, hardware, and
embroidery thread, c. 2011–2019
10.
*Please Meet the Geese Who Have
Lived Here Forever*, 2019
single-channel video with sound,
10:00min. Camera and editing by
Allison Hrabluik

Exhibition Map



Exhibition Text

Rooted in the collaborative and interdisciplinary energy that burgeoned on the West Coast in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Carole Itter's artistic practice has embraced performance, installation, voice improvisations, video and photography, recordings of oral histories, assemblage, collage, poetry, and prose. The palpable connection between these different expressions is the artist's concern for our social and ecological futures, her insistent humour, and her commitment to community. The focus of this solo exhibition is Itter's most recent major filmic work, *Please Meet the Geese Who Have Lived Here Forever*. A fable of sorts, this single-channel video meditates on the consequences of resource extraction, marine pollution, and ecological extinction. It is narrated by a family of wild geese who seek refuge along the foreshore of Burrard Inlet (səlilwət), a place the artist has observed closely for many years.

Audiences familiar with Itter's performance and sculpture practice — particularly her assemblages of found objects — will recognize similar approaches present in *Please Meet the Geese Who Have Lived Here Forever*. The set is in itself a large-scale assemblage, built entirely from materials salvaged from second-hand shops, alleyways, and backyards from the artist's East Vancouver neighbourhood. As in much of Itter's work, the intentional awkwardness of the film's repurposed and hand-made elements operates as a signal of her irreverence toward conventional "high art" value systems and her repudiation of settler culture's rapacious overconsumption. Her own role in the film as lead goose, performed in an ungainly papier mâché body, suggests just how out of step contemporary human existence is with the natural world. But these material strategies also speak to Itter's profound understanding of the power of shared imagination — particularly evident in how children work together — to transform even the most underwhelming conditions into something magical. It is

another way too, perhaps, in which Itter reminds her audiences that we need not feel alone. In fact when asked why geese have been such an enduring subject of interest to her, Itter has simply stated, “they understand what it means to be a community.”

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A limited-edition colouring book, which involved the artist manually converting the coloured storyboards for her film into black-and-white line drawings, accompanies the exhibition. It is an offering to the artist’s youngest and, in some ways, most important audience community.

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This project has been developed in conversation with another solo exhibition on Carole Itter’s work, to be presented at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, in Fall 2023. Together these exhibitions trace a path backwards in time, from the artist’s most recent to earliest bodies of work.

Curated by Kimberly Phillips

Biography

Exhibition Acknowledgements

An interdisciplinary artist, writer, performer, and filmmaker, Carole Itter was born in Vancouver and has lived on the West Coast for most of her life. She began her studies at the University of British Columbia (1958, 1963), and continued at the Vancouver School of Art (1959–1963), where she learned from Don Jarvis, Bruce Boyd, and, most notably for Itter, Roy Kenzie Kiyooka. Throughout her studies, Itter supported herself by working in Vancouver's only professional theatrical scene shop for several months of each year. This experience made a permanent impression on her artistic practice.

Itter has held solo exhibitions at Western Front (1984), the Vancouver Art Gallery (1991), Or Gallery (1995), grunt gallery (2000, 2007), and the Georgia Art Studio (2022). Her work has been presented in many group exhibitions, including *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2008, which exhibited photographic enlargements from her publication *The Log's Log* (1973).

Itter collaborated with poet and novelist Daphne Marlatt to compile *Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End* (1979), an archive of oral history of Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood, where Itter and Marlatt continue to live and work. She has also produced a book of short stories, *Whistle Daughter Whistle* (1982); and three artist books: *The Log's Log* (1973); *Location: Shack* (1986); and *Western Blue Rampage* (1990). Itter's films include *The Float* (1993) with cinematographers Trudy Rubinfeld and Luke Blackstone; *A Fish Film* (2003), with cinematographer and co-director Bo Myers; *Tarpaulin Pull* (2006), with cinematographer Krista Lomax; *Inlet* (2009), with editor Krista Lomax; *Please*

Meet the Geese Who Have Lived Here Forever (2019), with cinematographer and editor Allison Hrabluik; and *400 Miniature Geese on a Moving Inlet* (2022), with emerging cinematographer Esther Rausenberg and additional support from Allison Hrabluik. Itter collaborated extensively with composer, pianist, and multi-media artist Al Neil from 1979 until he was in his 80s. Neil died in 2017 at age 93.

Itter was honoured with the VIVA Award in 1989 and the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts in 2017.

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The artist extends her gratitude to Allison Hrabluik, Lorene MacDonald, Glenn Alteen, Victor Arcanda, Nora Blanck, Roy Kenzie Kiyooka, Al Neil, Esther Rausenberg, Renee Rodin, Sandy Rodin, Tim Rose, Rhoda Rosenfeld, Trudy Rubinfeld, and SFU Galleries Director Kimberly Phillips.

The curator extends her sincerest thanks to Allison Hrabluik, Glenn Alteen, Debbie Chan, and Victoria Lum. She is grateful above all to Carole Itter, for the many wonderful conversations (as well as sandwiches, tea, and apple slices) that grew into this project.

Events

Opening Reception

WED, JAN 19 / 7 - 9PM

Audain Gallery

The artist will lead a procession through the gallery at 8PM.

Procession crew: Lorene MacDonald, Anna de Courcy, Allison Hrabluik, Tim Sars, Karina Irvine, Pippa Lattey, Odessa Harrison, Karen Kazmer, Juliana Guerreiro, and Nora Blanck.

Sound: Zebuel Early's, *The Lights (feat. CharlesTheFirst)*, 2016

Family Day: Please Meet the Geese with Collage Collage

SAT, FEB 11 / 2 - 5PM

Audain Gallery

Beloved Vancouver art studio and shop Collage Collage will host an experience for children visiting the Audain Gallery with their families.

Inspired by Carole Itter's collection of found and fabricated geese and the environments made for them in her exhibition, gallery visitors with children can create some geese of their own. Materials will emulate those seen in the film, and will allow kids to remember the story of *Please Meet the Geese Who Have Lived Here Forever* for years to come.

FREE EVENT

All materials provided

No RSVP required

On Trying to Be an Artist
SAT, MAR 4 / 2 - 3PM
Audain Gallery

Carole Itter retells anecdotes from her life about “trying to become an artist and then trying not to sometimes too,” which was first orated at a Vancouver Storyteller’s Guild event in 1994.

Tea will be provided.

Bibliography

Texts by the artist

Carole Itter, *The Log's Log* (Vancouver: Intermedia Press), 1973

Carole Itter, *Whistle Daughter Whistle* (Caitlin Press), 1982

Daphne Marlatt and Carole Itter, *Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End* (Vancouver: Harbour Publishing), 2011

Text that informed the artist

Joel Barber, *Wild Fowl Decoys* (Dover Publications, Inc., 1934)

Kit Howard Breen, *The Canada Goose* (Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1990)

James Mitchener, *Chesapeake* (New York: Random House), 1978

Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I* (Vintage; Revised ed. edition), 1968

Texts that informed the curator

Lorna Brown, Greg Gibson, and Jana Tyner eds., *Beginning with the Seventies* (Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery), 2020

Gadwyn Gan, *Effects of Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) and Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) herbivory on tidal marsh recession at the Westham Island marsh* (Thesis Project, M.Sc. SFU), 2021

Lydia Rebecca Harrold, *Identifying conservation priority estuaries in British Columbia with a graph-based measure of landscape connectivity* (Research Project, M.R.M), 2006

Annette Hurtig, "Carole Itter's Uncanny Recuperation of the Meaning of Wood," in *The Capilano Review* 2 (1), 36-42
Carole Itter, "Interview: Carole Itter with Lorna Brown," December 1, 2008, in *Ruins in Process: Vancouver Art in the Sixties*, 38:02: <https://vancouverartinthesixties.com/interviews/carol-itter>

Christina J. Kereki, *Optimal migration routes of Dusky Canada geese: can they indicate estuaries in British Columbia for conservation?* (Research project, M.R.M) SFU, 2007

Jennifer Rae Pierce, *Understanding and Managing Resident Canada Geese in Vancouver: A Report for the Vancouver Park Board and City of Vancouver* (UBC and City of Vancouver), 2016

Jack Denton Scott, *Canada geese* (New York: Putnam), 1976

Arthur E. Smith, *Managing Canada geese in urban environment: a technical guide* (New York (State): Cornell Cooperative Extension), 1999

Situated in Vancouver and Burnaby, SFU Galleries occupies the unceded territories of x̣ṃəθkẉəỵəm, Skwxwú7mesh, Səḷíḷẉətał, and ḳʷiḳʷəχ̣əm Nations. Acknowledging that the activities of SFU Galleries unfold on colonized Indigenous territories is both a recognition that settler colonialism is an ongoing structure and a commitment to support the capacity of art to unsettle these conditions.

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