

Creative Access Audio Tour: Kay Slater responds to the exhibition *Carole Itter: Only when I'm hauling water do I wonder if I'm getting any stronger* (5 Sep-10 Dec 2023)

Welcome to the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery's creative access audio tour of Carole Itter's exhibition *Only when I'm hauling water do I wonder if I'm getting any stronger*, curated by Melanie O'Brian.

My name is Kay Slater, and I am an artist and arts worker, and I am a queer and hard-of-hearing white settler working on occupied Coast Salish territory. I'll be narrating this audio tour today. I am also the author of this text. As such, I acknowledge that my perspective may not match the artist's, and I may point out and describe things differently than someone else. If you have questions about the content beyond the creative access tour, I encourage you to ask questions of the docents and support staff at the gallery! This is part of the fun of creative access-narrated tours. If you are sighted or can see, you can see through someone else's eyes. For non-sighted, low-vision and Blind visitors, I will do my best to paint a picture of the exhibition as I see it and am always open to any feedback on how I can improve. Please share your thoughts and opinions with the gallery staff, and I welcome the gift of your feedback.

This audio tour allows you to walk with me as I navigate and describe what I see in the show. If you are walking through the gallery at your own pace and don't want to see through my eyes, feel free to jump around and experience the show this way.

As I transition to new works or topics in this audio tour, you will hear the following sound: [Goose Sound]

Let's start with some information about the show.

The gallery and lands you are standing on are situated on the occupied, stolen and ancestral territory of the hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm̓-speaking peoples, specifically the land of the x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm peoples and families.

You entered from the west and should now be standing in front of the information desk.

The show's title is installed on the wall behind the information desk: *Carole Itter: Only when I'm hauling water do I wonder if I'm getting any stronger*. The desk is engraved with a land acknowledgement naming that the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery is situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

The ceilings are very tall in this building, and most of the architecture is stone and metal. Behind the desk to the east is a rotating door where light from the outside courtyard streams in. We will move south or right if you are facing those rotating doors or left if you are facing the information desk. As you walk down this corridor, we will pass a substantial open doorway that leads into a vast gallery room, but we will bypass that for now and start with the introduction text installed on the wall to the right of this doorway, in black matte vinyl.

In large title text, it reads:

Carole Itter: Only when I'm hauling water do I wonder if I'm getting any stronger

In medium-sized text, it reads:

This exhibition brings together a selection of Carole Itter's multi-disciplinary works and archival materials from the 1960s to the present. Revealing her attention to locality, language and choreography, the title references Itter's writing and points to her self-reflexive labour as an artist, as a woman and as an inhabitant of shacks, old houses and cooperatives on the West Coast.

Itter's artistic ethos is evident in her consideration of the places and communities that have framed her life, in her written, drawn and material expression, and in her practice of designing conditions for performance. The artist's focus on the local was part of a shared sensibility in Vancouver and beyond in the 1960s that has found renewed urgency and wisdom in the context of the climate crisis. Itter's hand-hewn work reasserts the presence of the body through ecological, feminist and anti-capitalist lenses, and offers insight into how humans see themselves in relation to each other and other beings in the world.

Posing questions around social and ecological choreography, Itter's work asks: What are our collective and individual gestures of understanding and being with a place? For the artist, these gestures occur over time, with responsibility, with others (people,

birds, water) and in threshold spaces. She inhabits sites, forms and figures with a unique vision and material force that highlights the illusion of permanency. In the film Tarpaulin Pull she rows a small boat, pulling a field of blue made from disintegrated plastic tarps that rests on the surface of the ocean. She methodically lands the tarp, folds it up and deposits it in a dumpster. Whether performing in or out of costume, she inhabits a singular perspective of understanding that repudiates her refusal of expertise. Itter admits that she's "an expert at looking at water" and the strength of her work is in how she has carried the load.

At the bottom, in a slightly smaller font, it reads:

Carole Itter: Only when I'm hauling water do I wonder if I'm getting any stronger is curated by Melanie O'Brian and made possible with the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and our Belkin Curator's Forum members.

On both sides of the neutral-coloured wall are bare concrete stone anchors from which metal posts ascend up and outward in an inverse triangle up to the tall ceiling. Walls hang between these stone and metal fixtures and stick out about a foot at the base and two to three feet at eye level into the corridor. It creates a series of little alcoves in which a vitrine or encased glass table encloses a collection of objects. There are five of these alcoves. Let's walk to the first alcove, right of the didactic or wall text.

[Goose Sound]

The didactic or information panel here introduces the objects in this hallway. It reads:

Early Drawings and Publications

Itter's use of text, drawing and word play emphasizes language and form as building blocks for the creation of meaning. Her explorations include early ink studies that connect patterns and the alphabet, her engagement with visual poetry and her prose writing practice that has resulted in numerous publications. These publications include the log's log (1973) that documents a work in which Itter took a yellow cedar log from a beach on the Sunshine Coast, sawed it into lengths, put handles on each segment, wrapped each in canvas, and then took the entire log with her to Halifax on the train as baggage where she reassembled the log on a beach in Nova Scotia; Whistle Daughter Whistle (1982) that uses storytelling, poetry and alphabet drawings to convey ideas of inheritance and motherhood; Location: Shack (1986) and Word Work (1974) that blur the boundaries between visual art and poetry. Like poet Judith Copithorne, a colleague of Itter's in Vancouver, Itter turned away from the more mechanical or male-dominated forms of writing – especially in concrete poetry – to use handwriting (and the hand-hewn) as a counter-strategy.

The works on the wall are all framed in beech or light-coloured wood, the colour of honey.

This nook has five works on the wall, all of which are ink drawings on paper and are not titled. They are repeated and dense patterns, each trying out a different shape. The first two are

chaotic, but moving right, they become more uniform and contained.

The vitrine has a sketchbook open to a light pencil drawing on the left and a water-coloured sketch of an outdoor scene with fall-coloured trees lining a double parallel walking path on the right. The didactic says this sketchbook contains work from 1958-1959. To the right of this is a book with a dark leather cover bound by a black cord. It's titled *Word Work* and was published in 1974. Six pages have been ripped out of a sketchbook, the perforation of a coil-bound book visible along one side of each page. These sketches contain soft bubble letters of all capital words, mainly the word *Work* repeated in a vertical column. One page has a big question mark, and another shows the letters W - O and then two Rs and then D and K. This makes a forking image that reads Word and Work with the W and O shared across both words. Another one reads *Well, What Would Work Well with Wood*, contained in a drawing that looks like a vast canyon. The Word Wood drips tears into the gorge below.

Let's move to the next alcove to the right.

[Goose Sound]

There are six framed works on the wall; the two in the middle are horizontal, with two works stacked vertically on the left and right. These are more examples of Carole's early pattern sketches in ink on paper, similar to the first alcove with no titles attached. The four left works are dense patterns, but when viewed in total, the repeated patterns start to look like shapes themselves. I read

these as a fat-bottomed triangle, a thick-mouthed bottle, a leaf and a beer bottle. This might not be what Carole intended, but I can't help but see these shapes. The two right works are lines of repeating patterns in thick, smudged ink crammed into rectangles. They almost read like weavings to me if they were rendered in textile.

The vitrine contains more sketchbook pages ripped from a coil-bound book, each turning yellow with time. These pages have titles! In the upper left corner, *Where Are Your Words* (1960) has a vertical line of Rs in bubble letters repeating from the top to the bottom of the page. The R in *Where, Are (a-r-e), Your, and Words* are written horizontally, forming an acrostic.

Three smaller sketchbook pages, titled *Name Game*, *Word Play Around Ding Dong*, and *Name Game Word Work Block Name Play* are all from the 1960s. *Name Game* shows the words "name" and "same" in outlined lowercase letters, with the word "game" pencilled below like a shadow to the outlined letters. *Word Play Around Ding Dong* features these words with *Word* in black and *play around ding dong* in outlined letters where the background is half-coloured in black as if filling up from the bottom. *Name Game Word Work Block Name Play* shows these words in bubble letters with shapes contained around the words that look like they could be letters but are abstract forms.

The next object is another sketchbook, but these pages are lined. Titled *how? Out. oops!* sketchbook 1971, Carole plays with a rubberstamp to show these words jumping across and down the page.

A metal coil-bound sketchbook open to a single page shows the sketch *Restless with the Heat Electricity Everywhere*, 1970.

These words are at the top of the page, and more bubble letters follow to read: *Static on machines on phone calls. Wait Out*

Another Day. An isolated page called *Marking Time*, ripped from a coil-bound sketchbook, has Carole's familiar bubble text written diagonally from top right to bottom left in a column of text that reads: *Marking Time in my house in my head in my body wanting to put everything together then enjoying these separations why should read things equal unreal things*.

The last object is a plastic-covered page showing *Reaching for things unreachable nothing touching*, from the 1960s. This is a photocopy. The text is the title written in letters contained within a square. Each square shows the letter in either negative or positive with a vice-versa background. It looks like the lines of a puzzle.

Let's keep going to the next alcove!

[Goose Sound]

This alcove's wall features a series of works that span the following three sections. Still framed in light brown beech wood, this series is called *Diminishing Alphabet Set*, from 1971, an ink-on-paper series that explores a different letter from the 26 English letters of that alphabet. Each frame contains two letters, and this nook features four frames with eight works featuring the letters A-B, C-D, E-F, and G-H.

Each alphabet set shows a vertical portrait on paper similar to the sketchbook papers contained within the vitrines so far. The letters are contained in the middle and centre of the page by a black, organic-shaped background. The black background follows and encases the letters, giving it an organic appearance. In these eight prints, there is one large capital version of the letters A through H in the background and many different versions of the letter in upper and lower-case float in the foreground.

The vitrine contains a series of black and white photographs. They are titled *Zoë Druick and Lara Gilbert with alphabet drawings*, and *Carole Itter at the Alphabet Drawings exhibition* from 1976. The first two images on the left show a youth holding square pieces of paper on stylized English alphabet blocks. The youth's face is not visible, and these do not appear to be posed shots. The third or middle image shows Carole seated in a shadowed corner of a room. To their immediate left (but seen right from my perspective) are giant versions of the alphabet blocks images from A-F. Each image is approximately 30 by 30 cm, if not larger. To the seated figure's right (my left) is a fireplace. Above the mantle are smaller versions of the letter blocks X, Y, and Z, perhaps 20 cm wide. Along the top of this wall near the ceiling is a line of laminated alphabet letters similar to what would be seen in a classroom. The final two images are similar to the first two images, where a youth is handling the images of the alphabet blocks shot from above and behind without revealing their face.

Three ink drawings titled *Alphabet drawings climbing the page (A, B and C)* from the 1970s are placed below the photographs.

These two images are similar in that the image looks like a sizeable triangular pile of forms that end in a soft peak. However, the soft objects at the top quickly turn from a macaroni-shaped blob into the triangular structure of a capital A in the first pile, the mirrored half-circle shapes of a capital B in the second pile, and a defined capital C in the third.

The last work in this vitrine is a coil-bound sketchbook showing a single work in black ink called *View from Myra's Window*, from 1970. Here, a body of text is written in two mirrored half circles with a column of space bisecting the page. It is a lot of text. What is striking to me is that the text lacks punctuation and blends capitals with lowercase letters in a style similar to my own writing. It flows like a run-on sentence exploring automated writing and reads like a journal reflection. I was going to give you an excerpt, but why not read it all to you? If you want to continue the tour, skip to the next alcove.

The left shape reads:

Brings some fresh air in my head and tells about mountain ranges and meadows and little flowers and glaciers and forces and hay stacks and fresh salmon from the ocean and log cabins and blue jays that fly in and out of his van and a silence he has never heard before and the norther lights which must be the greatest light show on earth... Its such a gas that naturel phenomena is still more thrilling than anything man can do there is so much room for wonder its just a matter of opening up the sense a little bit father and right now I have been blaming this city for closing me off to the sky and the stars and the ocean's tide and the

sounds of the earth and my inside sounds and it seems that i stay in the city in order to see other people to hear them talk and to talk

The right shape reads:

*Myself which makes it all a rather verbal occasion and words really do wear me out very quickly like language has taken over our other senses so totally that **description of** a thing replaces the **experience of** that thing so that we live vicariously, separating our mind from our body in a blissful schizzy state until death **SHUTS US UP**.....*

The Christian saying “rest in peace” possibly implies that we “live in anxiety,” so like nows your chance baby to get some peace you sure as hell won’t find it here “life is a time for suffering, lets have another war.....” And in his freshness he writes about rebirth - only the word on the page nothing else about it. It happened to him in his search who else can really know what it is to him.

Deep breath.

Let’s keep going!

[Goose Sound]

The alphabet series, *Diminishing Alphabet Set*, continues on the wall with letters I through P. The series continues similarly to the first eight letters, but I notice a trend towards roundness with the black background containing fewer letters within a round shape

rather than the sizeable amorphous blob and exploration happening at the start. Twenty-six letters is a lot!

The vitrine includes four objects, all of them books. On the left is *the log's log* sketchbook with the dates 1972–73. The sketchbook pages are black and appear like the stick-and-place photobooks I remember from my youth. The two open pages show a newspaper article clipping with the headline *Halifax-bound artists not travelling light*, to the left of an image that looks like a long row of substantial briefcase-style portfolio cases on a luggage cart. Below this is an archived image whose text reads *Image Loss Event from February 20th, 1972*, with a blurry slide showing what might be a central human figure with a bearded figure off in the background to the left. A similar style of image is to the right with a smiling figure. This looks to me like it might be a picture of Carole. The bottom page shows four rectangular images in a row. The left image shows a human looking down at rolls of luggage contained in white fabric on a dolly. The following two photos are of the dolly with nine cylindrical containers in cloth, and then those nine containers peaking out of a white cargo van on a winter's day, the surrounding ground covered in dirty snow. The final image is text. It reads: *The Log Arrived at the Halifax CN Train Station on March 1. It was loaded by dolly to a GMC Van. Until it is reassembled on a beach outside of Halifax, it will be on display in the mezzanine gallery of the Nova Scotia College of Art.*

The centre object is a published version of the objects from *the log's log* sketchbook, now in a bound book on textured kraft paper. There are two versions of the book opened to different pages. The top book is open to a spread which reads (page left):

The Log's Log - 1,000 copies printed, of which 50 are bound in plywood, signed and numbered. 1972-73. The right page has an image of a beachfront, deciduous trees in the background and handwritten text that reads: When you go visiting, it is always nice to take something with you. I spend as much time as possible walking on the logs piled on the beaches of the west coast. I was walking along the logs one day wondering what I should take to halifax. And it seemed sensible to take a log. I inquired at the train station to see if I could put a log in the box car as part of my personal baggage. They said no. So I went to the hardware store and purchased ten chrome handles, 100 screws, and a 40 degree blade for the shede saw and then to the fabric store and purchahsed ten yards of unbleached cotton and ten yards of drawstring.

The next book continues the story; the pages open to a new spread showing a picture of people gathered around the log and cutting it into sections. One vertical image shows the uncut log, and then a cut image of the log is placed in series at the bottom of the page to reflect the ultimate result. The text reads: *The log was fitted into its sections and all the handles were removed. The repair plates were screwed onto the seams. The wind was blowing hard and it was 25 degrees. On the end of the log, the inscription "From Roberts Creek BC to Lockeford, N.S, March 1972" was lettered.* To the right of this is another newspaper clipping with an image of a few sections of logs on a rocky beach and a title that reads *On the Wings of Poetry.*

On the right inside the vitrine are two plastic-covered folders. The top object is titled *Western Blue Rampage, 1990*, a book

published by the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver. The cover is a cloudy grey evening blue with a photocopied image of stacks of metal objects. I can make out some string of metal beads, keys, handles, rods, flat lengths and – I think – a spoon. It's a jumble of objects.

Below this is a green plastic-covered folder that contains *Location: Shack*, a self-published book from 1986. The cover shows a photocopied picture of a wooden shack, below which the title *Location dash Shack* is handwritten in upper case letters.

Let's move to the last alcove in the hallway along this west section of walls, heading south.

[Goose Sound]

The subsequent eight letters of the *Diminishing Alphabet Set*, Q through X, are on the wall here, and the roundness and shrinking in size are very prominent here. The X work has a cluster of six or seven letters within a 7-10cm circle of background black, filling up 1/8th of the page, whereas the first letter, A, took up 9/10s of the page.

The vitrine contains more books! In the upper left corner are two copies of *Whistle Daughter Whistle*, a softcover book showing a sepia or monochrome colour of four feminine youths in black dresses with white collars in a posed portrait. Two are standing, and two are seated in front. The image has handwritten annotation on both left and right sides by two sets of handwriting.

Leader lines connect the comments to different sections of the image.

This is what I can make out:

In a cursive font: *This is your great grand – something – she’s still alive – will be 89 next month.* This annotation points to the seated child on the right.

In a block handwriting: *How come none of them are smiling?*

In cursive: *This is your great grand aunt, and she was considered the most beautiful.* It points to one of the children in the front with white ties in her hair.

In block writing: *They sure had to wear fancy shoes.*

In cursive: *One of these two is my great aunt Augusta, but I don’t think I – something – mother.* In block writing just below, it says: *Oh!*

In cursive again: *This little girl grew up and had a baby girl who grew up and had a baby girl who is me.* It points to the seated child in the front on the right.

Again in block writing: *Then we are all related by mothers?*

The second copy of this book is open to pages 74-75. I won’t read you the text, but a new chapter starts on page 75 with the title “Remember to Say Please.”

To the right of this, still at the top of the vitrine, is a colouring book called *Please Meet the Geese*, published in 2023 by SFU Galleries Burnaby. The full title of the book reads: *Please Meet the Geese Who Have Lived Here Forever*, besides which is a hand-drawn image. The image to me looks like a gallery or room with curtains hung along the walls and a wooden slat floor. The text and drawing are white in high contrast to the cover page's dark, deep-water blue.

Below this is a cream or off-white piece of paper with a handwritten note in blue ink that reads: *The levelling of a horizon is in itself a fluctuating figment of the imagination*. The didactic says Carole provided this to include with these works in this vitrine.

In the bottom left corner of the vitrine are two editions of a book titled *Opening Doors*. The authors are Carole Itter and Daphne Marlatt and the subtitled on the left version of the book reads *Vancouver's East End*, published in 1979. The front cover looks like a white-washed two-panel front door. A collage of different buildings from East Vancouver fills the top square panel. The text between the two panels is *Sound Heritage Volume Eight* with the *Numbers one and two* (written in Roman numeral).

The second *Opening Doors* book is again edited by Carole and Daphne, with the subtitle *In Vancouver's East End: Strathcona*. This cover features a bright, perky yellow painted house with a bold primary-red trim around a flat black, two-panelled, windowed

front door. A porch and steps lead up to the door. This edition is from 2011.

The final object in this vitrine is a folded yellowing newspaper article titled *Opening Doors Revives Strathcona's Rich Past* and subtitled: *A new publishing project brings back a classic collection of oral histories about the neighbourhood's century-old vices and virtues*. The article was published by the *Georgia Straight* in 2011 and features a black and white image from 1904 of what was then Dupont Street and is now East Pender. The image features horse-drawn carriages and wooden, flat-faced buildings.

As we move right, we stand in front of another sizeable open doorway that leads into the vast gallery room beyond. You might hear some sounds from this echoey room where a video plays. The shadows in this room are deep enough to seep into the hallway where we stand. However, before you enter this big room, there is one more alcove at the end of this hall, perpendicular to where we are standing. Let's move to this last section of the hallway.

[Goose Sound]

When you face the south wall, a large-screen TV is tucked into a small space, perhaps eight feet wide. Here, you can pull on a set of headphones installed to the right of the TV and listen to the audio of the film that plays. I will be honest; I didn't put them on. I am hard of hearing and don't typically pick up headphones in any gallery. I encourage you to contact the gallery docent for more details on any of the video works with sound! I stood back and

watched some of the video without audio because it had captions. It's titled *Inlet, 2009*, and the didactic tells us that it was formally titled *Up InLet Down*, with *In-Let*, a portmanteau of In and Let written in camel case. The video is 14 minutes and 40 seconds long. I stayed and watched a section of the video where the water flowed, and the choppy waves hypnotized me into taking a few deep breaths and a moment of rest.

Turning back again 90 degrees left and crammed into a little wall section is the final print in the *Diminishing Alphabet Set*, letters Y and Z. Now the letters are compressed into a five cm circle, taking up only a tiny portion of the page. I like how both the images cram the letters together, now compressed into a little circle, while the framed prints are also tucked into this tiny section of wall, hidden and almost unnoticeable unless you have walked the series and wondered where the Y and Z ended up.

Now I'm ready to take you into the large gallery. Let's take a few steps back into the hallway (north), face east, and step through the wide doorway into the ample gallery space, casting shadows occasionally interrupted by a few flickering screens.

[Goose Sound]

The vast room spans the entire length of the hallway with Carole's early patterns and books, and is two-thirds as wide as that hallway. Two diagonal walls partition the room into three sections, causing us to stand mainly in shadow. This shadowy section is the southernmost end of the gallery, whose back south-facing wall has five television screens mounted. A large projection plays on a

facing diagonal wall to the north. The room is made even darker and provides high contrast to the ever-playing media due to the dark blue painted walls, similar to the colour of the cold bottom of a deep river at dusk. The otherwise pale concrete floor becomes a shadowy grey. Be advised that some benches in this dark area might be perceivable by their beech wood undercarriage, but they are not fully cane detectable as they are long with skinny legs on the short edges. Two benches face the south wall near the screens, and one bench is in the centre of the space, parallel to the north diagonal wall. Follow the exterior walls if you cannot detect them or you're moving in the area alone!

When you enter the space, the didactic that gives context to this area is to the left of where you walk in, on the west wall. The didactic reads:

Films and Videos

Itter's interest in assemblage, performance, poetry, music and ecological concerns are interwoven through her films and videos. The films document performances, gatherings and site-specific installations, with the camera focused on Itter's (and her collaborators') engagement with the water, land and collections of found materials. The Float (1993), A Fish Film (2003), Tarpaulin Pull (2006) and Inlet (2009) extend Itter's concern for installation and performance into Burrard Inlet. The Float, for example, follows a group of women as they orchestrate a "spill" of wooden materials on the surface of the tidal waters. The jostling of wooden objects against one another as they move with the water share aural qualities with Itter's rattles that received their name

from the sound they create when shaken, and is a process that, she observes, “sometimes... sounds like water running.”

Itter's films are exhibited alongside short documentary films that follow her in the studio, as well as while she is installing two of her assemblages. The first is Michael Smart and Tom Chartrand's documentation of Itter making Untitled (long assemblage) (1988) in her Strathcona attic studio. The second is David Rimmer's film of Itter's work Where the Streets are Paved with Gold (1991) which shows its production and installation at the Vancouver Art Gallery, as well as the opening reception in which Itter is wearing a vest she made that connects to the work. The films link Itter's processes of production – from spillages of found materials that she arranges on the floors of gallery spaces to ocean assemblages – to reflect an ongoing connection between context, materiality and performance.

Moving along the south wall, the first TV features a three-channel video, or three blocks of media playing simultaneously on the same screen. The didactic info panel reads *The Float, a video from 1993 with a duration of 15 minutes 19 seconds with camera work by Luke Blackstone and Trudy Rubenfeld.*

This work also has a long list of contributor names on the didactic. I will list them and apologize in advance if I mispronounce any names with my Western bias! They are Dominique Fraikin, Jill Fraser, Maxine Gadd, Madonna Hamel, Esther Rausenberg, Jehanne Rogowski, Rhoda Rosenfeld, Trudy Rubenfeld, Beatrix

Schalk, Aki Yakimoto and Helen Yeomans, with special thanks to Shawn Chappelle and Al Neil.

There is a mounted set of headphones to the right of the TV. Step back about three steps to take a seat and watch. The headphone cord is quite long.

Moving left along this wall are two more TVs, each with a headset.

Moving right to left, the first TV hosts the video *Carole Itter: Where the Streets are Paved with Gold*, by David Rimmer from 1991 with a duration of 28 minutes ten seconds.

The second TV on the left hosts the video *Carole Itter: Untitled (long assemblage)*, by Tom Chartrand and Michael Smart 1988 with a duration of eight minutes 42 seconds.

The video projection shows *A Fish Film, 2003*, 16 mm film that has been transferred to video and was formerly titled *Metallic: A Fish Film* with a duration of five minutes 11 seconds. Bo Myers was the co-director and camera person.

Tarpaulin Pull, from 2006, with a duration of five minutes 56 seconds, follows this film. Krista Lomax was responsible for the camera and editing of this film. These videos make ambient noise in the space, and there are two mounted speakers on the left and right of the projection on the diagonal floating wall.

[Goose Sound]

Let's walk along the west wall in this room. It's painted white and features many framed images associated with her *Float* video.

First is an image titled *Beach Assemblage* from 2011, a collage of four colour photographs cut and layered on each other to form a larger picture than any of the single images captured. The collage's outline is like a three-pronged leaf in a white photo mat behind glass. The title of the work is written in pencil below the collage. This work is credited to Carole Itter and Al Neil.

The following three images are all titled *The Float* from 1993, and the photo credits are by otherwise unnamed participants from the project.

The first shows two stacked, wide images of people working in the water on a rocky beach. The top picture has eight people in various positions in the water, the furthest out waist deep, surrounded by medium-sized floating objects. The lower image is of three people, two above water and one in the water waist deep, with fewer objects floating along the start of the waterline. I would say it's midday in both images.

The second one is called *The Float #4* and shows a close-up of the objects floating in the water near large barnacled rocks at the shore. Many of the objects are a copper or red metal colour, like a circular pot lid or coils of cylindrical beads on a line, a large black gear, some boxes, and other objects I can't quite make out. The

water is relatively calm, and there is a rope or net that contains the objects in the area and keeps them within the photo's frame.

The third photo is called *The Float #1* and shows a similar scene to *Float #4*, but now I can make out a cradle or a wooden basket, some squash-shaped serving bowls, and a box, as well as the floating beads and cylindrical objects on a line.

[Goose Sound]

Continuing along the west wall, midway along, and now near the large installation work in the centre of the space are two framed works called *The Inlet: Photocollage, 2012-2018*, and *The Inlet: Drawings for Silver Quilt on Lashed Screen, 2012*.

Photocollage shows a black-framed colour photograph with a professional white mat. However, a piece of paper has been placed between the glass and the mat, cropping part of the image. Carole continues the image and traces the cropped mat in graphite pencil. The area that covers the photo has handwriting which reads "*Crop Here.*" The uncovered photograph is that of a rocky beach at low tide. Two graphic objects have been placed digitally on the beach. These are two rectangular panels with cut-outs in the shapes of rock repeated along the length and which allow the rocks on the beach to peek through the overlaid form.

Drawing for a Silver Quilt is a multimedia planning image showing a photocopied or digital image of a quilt where the dimensions 64" and 104" are handwritten along its perimeter. The photocopied quilt is pasted on a rectangle of canvas with 80" written along its

width. Behind this, a piece of paper shows a graphite or pencil drawing of a large metal frame with L-shaped brackets at its corners and zig-zagged stitching mounting the photocopied canvas onto the outer frame.

[Goose Sound]

Along the west wall on its northern end and approaching the large gallery's exit back towards the front entrance and information desk is a series of four photo collages.

Each are titled *Haida Gwaii Photocollage*. They are numbered 1-4, with the first two showing the dates 1989 and 2011 and the last two showing only 2011.

These abstract photo collages form a shiny sea of metallic objects and textures as if silver, copper and aquamarine minerals were liquified and melted into an image. At times, silver shapes, which are in higher contrast, look like they could be objects underwater covered by silver materials or a reflective safety blanket. Other times, the shapes mimic underwater life, like shiny metal jellyfish or crunchy shiny stones on the sea floor.

[Goose Sound]

When you reach the end of the west wall, you are next to the large doorway leading back to the hallway and front entrance. Pivot 180 degrees from this wall and doorway, and you face the middle of the gallery sandwiched between the two diagonal walls that break up the ample gallery space into three sections. We will

now check out the large installation in the centre of this room, called *The Inlet*.

The informational didactic for *The Inlet* reads:

The Inlet (2011-ongoing) is an installation that brings together multiple dimensions of Itter's practice – projection, collage, found-material and textiles – around one locale: Burrard Inlet. Itter lived on the shores of the inlet from the late 1970s until 2013, where she and her late partner Al Neil resided in the Blue Cabin, an original squatter's cabin dating to the 1920s. Coinciding with Itter's interest in the repurposing of materials, the cabin is now a floating artist residency currently located in Steveston, BC. Connected to her long-time residency at this site, and at Roberts Creek on the Sunshine Coast, much of Itter's practice interrogates how settlers connect with, and impact, the land and waterways that sustain and shape our lives.

*Like Itter's floating assemblages documented in her films *The Float* (1993) and *Tarpaulin Pull* (2006), *The Inlet*, installed here for the first time, speaks to Itter's experience living, learning and creating in response to the immediate environment of Burrard Inlet. From water sparkle and tide markers to non-human inhabitants, *The Inlet* reveals the artist's relation to the water and foreshore, turning to the geese that call the inlet home as referents for living consciously and in community. Robin Laurence reflects on Itter's 2022 exhibition at Creative Cultural Collaborations Society and Georgia Art Studios: "While symbolizing a time before the environmental ravages of settler culture, the geese become one with the alternative art-making*

lter undertook at the Blue Cabin... They become one with her finding a creative way of 'fitting' somewhere, of finding art's true shape and purpose while living in a quiet, observant and resourceful harmony with the world." This installation shares the same title as the film Inlet (2009).

My visual summary of this large, long rectangular installation that spans the gallery's width is that of a textured creek brimming with life and visual drama. The installation comprises four smaller rectangular sections, each using different media and materials but still carrying the imagery of water, energy, and active life. You can walk on both sides of the installation following the diagonal walls, but you cannot walk through or across the width of the installation. Choose either the left, near the entrance, or right or south, and follow along as I describe each of the four sections of this spectacular work.

Nearest to where we stand are a series of wooden carved and painted geese, each in different positions as if floating in the water. Each goose swims in the centre of a shiny square of silver metallic materials. These are placed like a quilt in a four by four grid with a small gutter of floor space peeking out between each square. Below some geese are materials, text, sewn buttons, or picture frames like nests or tangled flotsam caught below the swimming creatures. Some geese are realistic, with feathers and markings true to life. Other geese are more abstract or commercial objects, such as a goose-shaped wicker basket whose front is painted quite true to life but whose body is a concave container or a piggy bank where the goose's belly is made of clear plexiglass to show the contents of the bank. Carole

has filled in one of these with either the nest from a hornet or barnacles from a rock. Of the 16 geese, six of these have numbers and text written in the centre of their silver square water beds. Since these are more distinctive, I'll describe them.

Number one has obscured any text besides the number by the body of the life-like goose sculpture, its wings tucked tightly against its oval floating body. A smaller S-necked goose shows the words *Mid Ocean* and the number two. Number three is a pretty goose whose chest rises up as if kicking widely below the surface, perhaps about to spread its wings, with the text reading *Fore (f-o-r-e) shore*. Number four is a very lifelike goose with a position that looks more like it's walking or standing, so let's assume it's right at the shore with its feet touching the ground, which matches the text that reads *Water's Edge*. Number 5, whose chest is also rising above the water, shows a note perhaps left for the project installers, which reads: *Separating, clip pull wrench with hands*. Number six is the wicker basket duck, whose extended wings make it appear as if about to ascend out of the water, and whose text reads *hand-painted collection of GEESE*.

Moving to the next section of *The Inlet* is a busy churn of metallic fabric pouring over the side of angled and textured boards, flowing into the water below the geese grid. The material mimics a waterfall pouring from an adjacent angled panel where cut-outs of rock shapes repeat, making it appear like a rocky creek with choppy water approaching an edge. Near the outer edges where you walk are a spray of silver metal coils hollow and capped in copper threading, giving the appearance of spraying and churning water near the shoreline before it settles beyond the waterfall.

Here and there, the silver material is tied with a gem green-coloured strip of fabric, breaking the illusion of water and reinforcing it as if the little dots of colour are peek-a-boo rocks, fish, and greenery that the water's churn otherwise obscures. Moving up the waterfall and peering between the cut-outs in the propped panels, you see cut-outs and collaged reflective materials that appear as shiny river rocks and shells. On top of the panel are stuffed waves, each a half-almond-shaped pillow, adding dimension to the active water moving towards the waterfall beyond.

The next section of the installation is calmer water away from the waterfall's edge and made up of four long parallel slats of dark, painted wood. They all run perpendicular to us, standing on the water's edge, and follow the waterway's flow. From above, a projection of shimmering blues, browns and oranges undulate along and atop the slats. I feel like the tide may be low here, or the riverbed is more dry because I read a wet rocky shore here. As if we now climb out of the water, a lashed quilted canvas on a 30-degree diagonal frame, its taller side marks the end of the work. A quilt made of shiny triangle and square shapes is projected onto the stretched canvas, a similar colour to the rocky waterbed that preceded it. I like to think of this as a wet expanse of rock or shore with exposed shells and stones or perhaps a collection of Carole's floating objects contained within a net about to be collected and reused in another project. But this is me projecting meaning, and I invite you to consider what this section of *The Inlet* means to you. What do you think the stretched canvas, lashed in a zig-zagged threading to a slanted metal

frame, its quilt projected onto its surface from a ceiling-mounted projector, means?

[Goose Sound]

As you step away from the end of *The Inlet* installation, near the quilted canvas, the east wall supports a series of seven framed works that lead back towards the media area of the large gallery room. Each is titled *Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest*, followed by an identifying number. They are dated 1992.

As a multimedia illustrator, these are some of my favourite 2D images in the show. Each of these images shows distinct sections made from a centre image or photo, but the images blend through the use of ink and watercolour to both extend the printed photographs out onto the page and with marks between each section, creating a cohesive collage. The watercolours are muted and blend well with the ink, giving the entire work an organic and natural feel. I love them.

Moving left to right, we begin with *Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest number 1*. The collage includes photocopies, ink, written annotation and coloured photographs. The top left section shows rows of cut logs, with scribbling in green crayon around the edge to form an active frame. Handwritten and contained within an arrow reads: *fallen house beams at abandoned Haida village of Tanu*. The centre of the image shows a monotone or greyscale image of a carved log whose image is cut off and then continued in ink graphite and charcoal. To the right, it reads *Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest Coast*. Below and to the left, also contained within an arrow pointing to the middle log, it reads *drift*

log abandoned from logging industry at Roberts Creek, BC. The bottom of the image is a photograph of a false log made from various materials and covered in sections of canvas containing pictures of trees. This photo continues onto the page beneath, the rest of the log imagined in ink, graphite and a yellow pigment. It is annotated with a text-filled arrow: *facsimile of log in paper mache with paper images, glue, and bamboo supports.*

Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest Number two is a similar multimedia image and hand-drawn mark collage. The top middle has a greyscale image of a row of downed logs, with thin naked standing trees dotting the background. An annotated text in an arrow points to this and reads: *fallen housebeams of the abandoned Haida village, Tanu.* This image is extended in ink and blends into a crooked, pasted-in photo to the right, showing more logs, now facing them lengthwise, with shredded bark and chipped wood filling in the spaces between each parallel log. The note reads *Abandoned logs at the sandy beach, Robert's Creek, BC.* Below and to the left of these, the hand-drawn marks blend into a colour image and drawing of a similar texture to the shredded wood but rendered in wool and textiles, stuffed between Carole's handcrafted logs. The note here reads *facsimile of log in paper mache with unwoven sisal.*

Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest Number three is a darker, stacked collage, with two smaller images on the top and bottom of a slightly larger middle image, and with the subtle addition of yellow watercolour to the page below. The top image shows a split and carved pole, and the middle image shows criss-crossed logs and fallen trees, covered in mossy growth. The middle image

has the most hand-drawn additions, and the marks extended out to the right really emphasize the mossy, curling growth. The annotation here reads *fallen houseposts & beams of abandoned village of Tanu*. The bottom image shows the close-up of a smooth but knotted log whose annotation reads *beached log abandoned by forest company, Robert's Creek sandy beach*.

Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest Number four has two images stacked vertically. The top, more prominent image has an annotation that reads: *details of beached logs at Robert's Creek, BC*. These have the dense rough texture of flaking bark. The smaller bottom image is annotated: *details from the underside of a horizontal pole at Ninstints, Haida frog emerging*. The form carved into the wood has a round top extending into two bent appendages from the bottom. Below the base of it is a small, rounded triangle that props up the frog's legs and body.

Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest Number 13 follows next, interrupting the numbered order so far. This collage flows left to right, starting with an ink drawing extending into and from a monochrome image of logs with the annotation *abandoned logs on the beaches at Robert's Creek*. Colour is introduced in the photo of the logs and between it and the rightside picture, which shows a cluster and clutter of wooden objects. The note here reads *assemblage of found wooden objects*.

Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest Number six continues the previous numbering and shows three images stitched together by pen and watercolour marks on the paper below. It is arranged in an inverted L-shape with three annotations in the lower left space.

The annotations read: *fallen house posts & beams at the Haida Village of Tanu, abandoned weathered log from the beach at Robert's Creek, BC, and detail of paper log with hand drawn and laser copy images.*

Log Samplings of the Pacific Northwest Number seven is the final work exhibited at the Belkin in this series. The central pasted image is of abandoned logs, which Carole notes were beached at Robert's Creek. This image blends into a cut-out photocopied picture of jute, ropes, bark strips and cloth that look, at first glance, to be nests or collections of seaweed. Similarly, a copy of found fibres is added on the right, with ink and watercolour added to the edges and onto the page below.

[Goose Sound]

The final third of this big, sectioned gallery room is dedicated to Carole's assemblage sculptures. The didactic panel is to the left of the northwest-wall entrance. It reads:

Rattles

"Assemblage making is a political statement – the artist is conscious of the opulence and overproduction in our First World society as senseless and absurd, and consequently assumes a responsibility to recycle material. The recuperation of wooden products is at once a refusal to participate in the continued production of more stuff and a simultaneous uplifting of discarded objects." –Carole Itter, *On Assemblage* (1989)

Carole Itter's assemblages use humble wooden objects to address concerns around domestic life, resources and capitalism's impact on local and global ecologies. Sharing concerns with performance, land art and feminist practices, Itter's assemblage practice began in the mid-1970s with the works occasionally installed outdoors, returning the materials back to the land. Her work follows on Dadaist practices that rejected dominant bourgeois culture and the violence of World War I by using scavenged and repurposed materials to create collages and assemblages that commented on the absurdity of war. Surrealists continued the practice of assembling found objects in irrational or unsettling configurations to imbue mass-produced items with new meanings, and following World War II, abstract expressionists used similar methods to challenge normative approaches to sculpture.

Itter refers to her scavenged hanging collages as "rattles" after her late partner, artist and jazz musician Al Neil, shook one of the wooden sculptures to find out what it would sound like. Along with the rattles, her assemblage works include boxes, floor spills and floats. Itter's assemblages have assumed many forms: they have been created, taken apart, re-painted and assembled anew in various iterations. For example, Desolate Combination of Objects with Long Assemblage (1994) had Grey Rattle (1994) added as its keystone piece with the latter now being a singular work. Ultimately, Itter's assemblages have an affective dimension with the capacity to inspire collective action, reflecting the larger view of assemblage as a strategy for subverting cultural, political and economic circumstances.

All of Carole's rattles are suspended sculptures, hung by thick chain-linked metal, painted white to blend in with the white walls behind them. The rattle sculptures are predominantly brown and brownish red, in shades that remind me of wet cedar or burnished copper. They are in high contrast in this triangular-shaped and bright white section of the large gallery room and have a presence different from *The Inlet* installation, which shares and is divided by one of the room's large diagonal walls. While *The Inlet* evokes the sublime and nature, these works loom, but also, to me, seem to buzz with a personable presence. I felt like a spectator near *The Inlet*, but here, I feel I am standing amongst adjacent human figures and objects. Let's check out each of the works suspended here.

The first work, following the outside north wall, is titled *Table of Contents*, dated 1977-1978, made of assembled wood, metal, ceramics, and plastics. It is suspended from the ceiling but hangs closely to the wall as if it were installed like a picture. Stepping back, the sculpture looks like a busy tabletop with foosball table-like appendages coming out the side. Stepping closer, the flat, rectangular sculpture reads a bit more like a series of vertical shelves packed full of objects and shapes made of wood. I can see a few wooden letters, square boxes, the latch of a door complete with a sliding chain, a round wooden bowl, the front of a drawer with a filigreed handle in metal, and more. It's a feast for the eye to look at each item simply, but by standing back and taking it in altogether, I love how the title makes me think of the text layout of a *Table of Contents* with each row dedicated to a section or chapter of objects, assembled by the author's creative categorization. A cane-detectable wooden U-shaped barrier

made of two by two lumber delineates a space around the sculpture to keep people from touching or disturbing the work.

Following the north wall to the corner is a significant suspended work called *Grand Piano Rattle: a Bosendorfer for Al Neil*, 1984. It is made of metal, paint and wood, and even without this title, the sculpture does look like a slightly smaller, upright piano, complete with an entire string of white and black piano-like keys running its length near the top of the work. This horizontal line of keys forms a suspension rod of sorts as multiple rectangular collections of assembled wooden objects dangle down towards the floor, forming the body of the piano sculpture. Each rectangular cluster is closely attached to its adjacent neighbour by metal wire, creating a quilt-like base, each section interesting on its own but satisfying as a whole. For example, one of these quilt box rectangles is made of a square frame, like the sides of a drawer partitioned down the middle. Inside these two parallel compartments are many suspended staircase balusters taken from different stairs. I am reminded of a cutlery drawer filled with wooden spoons. Below this is a decorative shelf you would usually install against a wall, which holds a wooden cubby filled with a stack of square wooden drink coasters, the metal from a lamp, a wooden ash or candy tray, and a wood piece with two rusty screws remaining. And so on. Above the piano's keyboard are three metal chains that go up to the ceiling. Along their length is another cluster of long horizontal shapes like the pipes of an organ. One seems to be wooden wind chimes, and another might be an old croquet set. Another cane-detectable line of wood is placed on the floor forming the base of an equilateral triangle from the room's corner and suspended work.

Following that line and to the east wall is another suspended sculpture that juts out about a half metre from the wall, the cane-detectable wood block marking out a one-metre deep by three-metre-long U-shape from the wall. This rattle is called *Grey Rattle*, from *Desolate Combination of Objects with Long Assemblage* 1994. The didactic lists its materials as wood, metal, and paint; the work is indeed long or perhaps better described as wide. The overall front-facing shape feels birdlike, emphasized by several of the suspending objects at the bottom having a rounded shape like feathers, but its overall depth is quite thin, perhaps a $\frac{1}{4}$ to an $\frac{1}{8}$ of a metre. The collected materials at the top form a round head, and then the base softens into a barber's comb or the rounded shoulders of a bird. Many wooden and metal objects are assembled here, like the previous and upcoming rattles I have described, but what is also notable about this sculpture is that the colour green has started to creep into this work. The other works I described were wet cedar or burnished copper. This one feels more copper because the green is mainly at the tips along the base, making me think of the weathered rooftops of copper buildings.

The next rattle hangs in front of the diagonal wall, dividing this space from the rest of the enormous room. This rattle, titled *Rattle*, from *Desolate Combination of Objects with Long Assemblage*, is from 1990. While not as obviously human or figurative as the next and last rattle in this space, I can't help but see this bulky round assemblage like a solid figure at attention and monitoring the room. The top section of this figure is a square shelf whose mounting board juts up in a flat triangular panel,

pierced by a single hole from where the shelf could be otherwise hung from a nail. This reinforces the appearance of a head to me as the white wall peeks through and forms a wide-open eyehole. The shelf, stuffed with different-shaped beads on a thick metal line, sits atop a pair of parallel tabletops that might have once been a wooden desk with a drawer removed, its insides now lined with flat wood slats.

I can't help but see a belt from this shape, and thus the dozens of long suspended objects that dangle from this horizontal line looks like a flowing skirt made of many strips of wood or fabric or dozens of legs like a humanoid octopus. Keep in mind this is my brain reading a fantastical creature from this assemblage of long wooden objects. What do you think after hearing my description of this form?

The final work in this room, *Rattle #4*, 1983, is made of wood, metal and burlap and looks like an abstract wooden doll or articulated humanoid, much more so than *Rattle from Desolate Combination*. A whisk-like cage cinched together form the neck of stacked round, flat wooden circles as the head or top piece. Three softly triangular shapes with circular cut-outs arranged like a pair of eyes and a surprised-looking mouth occupy one side. The shoulders are a flat panel with four holes similar to a drink tray, and the backs of chairs form a pair of forearms that end in a wooden spoon and rolling pin. A pair of round breast-like flat wooden orbs top a set of four abs made of circular forms attached to a square backboard. Below this is a pile of curvy corner-nook shelves to approximate hipbones. The figure's skirt comprises

long wooden objects, knotted canvas material, and a coarse bristle brush.

[Goose Sound]

We've made it through the large gallery, and by passing through the west doorway, we return to the corridor, now right of the show's introduction didactic vinyl text a dozen steps away from the front entrance and information desk. Walk out and right, past the information desk and you arrive at an open area where the corridor continues, but no walls are suspended between these metal and stone pillars that continue north and to the end of the building. However, this corridor layout is reinforced through this exhibition as vitrines and mannequins are placed between the pillars, and one must either walk this corridor to see works against the north wall or move into the open section east through an unoccupied space between the two columns nearest to the information desk. The entire room's perimeter walls form a right trapezoid, with the east wall angled at 45 degrees towards the north wall.

Moving straight down the corridor, along the west wall, perpendicular to the information desk, and about ten to 12 metres towards the north end of the gallery are two vitrines and some mounted works. The two mounted works are multimedia process objects from Carole's *Desolate Combination of Objects* project in 1992. Titled *Central Section of Work-In-Progress*, the first is a collage and ink on paper sketch of the birdlike, wide rattle sculpture from the large gallery room. It is suspended above a stretched canvas projection screen where Carole notes she

wishes to rear-screen project slides from a rainforest. Below this is something Carole calls a “photo-blanket” made of colour laser images and fibres unwoven. At the foot of this suspended collage is a papier mâché log with hand-coloured images wrapped around its surface, which are shown as a four by four series of installed pictures on a grid. Annotated notes and measurements line the right side of the planning document. The entire work is planned at 13 feet eight inches. This document sustained water damage in 1998, per a handwritten note at the bottom of the page, as evidenced by water stains and drops wrinkling the page.

The second is a preliminary drawing of the same structure in ink and graphite, but shows a slightly angled, entirely hand-drawn version of the planned sculpture at a smaller size. A little handwritten note says, “*not to scale.*”

The vitrine shows more process and planning documents for *Desolate Combination of Objects with Long Assemblage* and photo documentation of the completed work along the top. The bottom of the vitrine holds three pages called *Where the Streets are Paved with Gold: A Tribute to an Immigrant Neighbourhood* from 1993. These ink and graphite planning documents show an installation of an organ set at the end of the piece, reminding me of a cathedral where the aisle leads one down towards the chancel or perhaps a throne room where the piano is the throne. Carole notes *1. Determine the location of pump organ for set up. If setting up against an end wall, leave 18-24” clearance and hang rattles prior to positioning organ, see page 2. Follow diagrams by Luke Blackstone for organ setup. 2. Determine and mark out floor area for the wooden objects. Length is about 20 feet, width about*

ten is optimum, but variations are ok. THEN: Light the area before set-up. Use two overhead 450-watt or stage LEKO lamps. Mask the light precisely to the area designated. Simple strips of masking tape can later be removed.

The designated light area forms a rectangle whose longer sides run out and away from the organ. She notes that *“these two procedures take the most time”* and circles and colours it to emphasize this.

The middle drawing shows a close-up of the organ with a giant moving wheel mounted above the instrument's lid. Carole notes, *“Important! Mount Rattles four inches back from Moving Wheel of the Organ.”* Along the right, she shows a side view of the structure with the wide rectangular rattle sculpture behind and half obscured by the wheel's placement if standing in front of the work. She notes: *Methods of support. 1. Use a 1” link chain painted black to the ceiling. Do not use fishing line. 2. Use wood braces and bolt to wall (not shown) to hook rattles onto.*

The final drawing is an onion skin drawing with two images layered on each other. Below is a coloured area showing the lighting and some wooden objects placed within the area splayed out like rays. The top image shows a long perpendicular appendage running from the organ and along the length of the lighted area. The wooden objects originate here and then surround this arm running perpendicular along both sides and stopping at the light's edge. Carole notes: *1. Stack all oversized wooden objects around pump organ and its stool. “Pack” them in close to one another. 2. Layout the wooden ironing board.”* The

wooden ironing boards laid in a line lengthwise form the appendage that run out from the organ. It reminds me of a giant arm of a clock, the organ the centre of a giant timepiece.

Stepping back from this vitrine and turning 90 degrees right, is the second vitrine visible from this area. Here are two photoboards showing Carole's Rattle sculptures. The first is Photoboard #10: Rattle - Assemblage #4 - 1983. The second, Photoboard 11: Details of Piano Rattle: 1985. Both show close ups of the assembled wooden objects used within her sculptures. As I have described both of these rattles where they are installed in the other room, let's continue on to other objects in this area.

From here, we will turn again 90 degrees and return to the info desk along this short corridor. The entrance into the rest of the room requires you to walk through a shallow section between two of the stone and metal pillars that run along the length of this space.

[Goose Sound]

This area shows works from Carole's performances over the years. The information didactic here reads:

Performance

Itter's interest in performance and the choreography of everyday life is linked to her education that included set design in Rome in the early 1960s and experience working summers at a professional scene shop in Vancouver (1958-61), along with UBC

(1958, 1963) and the Vancouver School of Art (1959-62). Whether in the fabrication of costumes, the construction of the rattles and spills, or the sets for her films, theatre has had an expanded influence on her practice. Itter's performances reflect her investment in life on the West Coast, and the various social, political and environmental issues that impact this place.

Costumes are a key part of these performances, made from reused and hand-me-down materials. Some directly connect to work, such as her Raw Egg Costume (c. 1971), the chicken outfit she wore in Tribute to Chickens (1975) and the papier-mâché goose costume she donned most recently for the film Please Meet the Geese Who Have Lived Here Forever (2019). After renting a cabin on a chicken farm in Roberts Creek, BC during the early 1970s, Itter began incorporating chickens, eggs and nests into her collage, sculpture, writing and performance as part of a critique of social and domestic roles. Imbued with humour, her elaborate apparel is a defining part of her performances and films. Included in the exhibition is the vest Itter wore to the opening of her exhibition Where the Streets are Paved with Gold (1991) at the Vancouver Art Gallery, which is covered in found materials painted gold to physically align her to her own installation, her silvery costume for A Fish Film (2003) and Button Vest (c. 1967) which is made from buttons handed down from her grandmother.

Other items include the elaborate motorcycle regalia Itter made and wore as one of the first women in Vancouver to ride a motorcycle. While this costume no longer exists, Motorcycle Maven Reclining in her Lawn Chair (2015) and a documentary photograph show her black seal fur pants (from a deceased

grandmother's coat), an unborn calf leather jacket with long fringes, helmet and gloves. She wore something akin to this for Motorcycle Intervention (c. 1967), a performance at UBC's Fine Arts Gallery (the precursor to the Belkin), in which Itter brought her motorcycle into the low-ceilinged gallery to ride it around the densely columned space. The performance was curtailed when the motorcycle's exhaust forced viewers outside for air.

Upon entering this trapezoid-shaped room, the south wall is a short one featuring three framed stills from performances. The *Raw Egg Costume*, from 1977, is pretty iconic to Carole's practice, and I've seen it several times, either in promotional use or when people write about Carole's work. Carole lays naked on a white background underneath a huge plastic egg sculpture. The white of the egg, circling a bright orange and round yolk, is made of transparent plastic and covers her face and hair, her arms to the wrist, and her legs to the knees. The yolk is opaque and covers her torso and face. The position of her body truly makes her look like she has been crushed by an oversized egg that plummeted to the ground.

The other two are images of Carole's *Motorcycle Outfit* from 1967, a set of leathers laid out on a chair and an image of Carole Itter on a motorcycle from the 1970s, with Carole posed in a parking lot outside of a building, circa appropriate cars parked in rows behind her.

Turning 90 degrees from this wall is the informational didactic I have already read. Let's continue along the east wall.

[Goose Sound]

There is a small tablet screen installed on the wall with a headset. Pick these up and listen to *Tribute to Chickens*, 1975, a video documentation recorded at Western Front – the didactic notes it has been edited for the installation. Please reach out to the docents for more visual information on the video. I'm not one to stick around for an uncaptioned video, and I grinned at the title as I moved past this work.

[Goose Sound]

Moving left along the east wall, we see photos from the work *Motorcycle Maven Reclining in her Lawn Chair*. This is dated 1967 and 2015.

The pictures are close-ups at different angles, some focusing on her torso from the front, some a side portrait view, but all show a figure in white and chequered leathers, topped by a white rounded motorcycle helmet and amber racing goggles. Wrapped and hanging from her left wrist is a thick metal chain from which a bottle is suspended. A rubber nipple caps the bottle, and the base is filled with paper and perhaps wood chips. A text clipping within the bottle reads: *you're up*.

[Goose Sound]

Continuing left along the east wall are two garments suspended from mannequins installed against the wall. The first is a vest

made out of many lines of buttons, crocheted lace, and fluffy pompoms, the colours an autumn vegetable feast of reds, yellows, and browns. This work is titled *Button Vest* from 1967. It looks like it would be heavy to wear.

To the left, a dramatic and heavy vest, strung with round and dense clusters of heavy flat circular beads run the length of the garment. This is Carole's vest from *Where the Streets are Paved with Gold*, from 1991. This piece would fall to your knees if you wore it and introduced more metallic colours, still of an overall fall pallet. The beads are attached to a brown leather vest with furry lining on the inside, peaking out at the armholes.

[Goose Sound]

Facing north is an outfit called *Fish Costume*. It is similar to the vest in that long strips hang from the shoulders, but where the button vest looked heavy, this looks as if made from silver metal fish-scales and sequins and strips of reflective metal tape. A pair of grey leggings are visible from the bottom of the shiny tunic.

[Goose Sound]

Turning 180 from the north wall and fish costume, step eight feet and turn right 90 degrees, and you'll be in front of a white outfit created and worn by Carole to the opening of the Belkin show. The vest is made from layers and layers of white sequins, tied at the neck in an oversized lapel and two-pronged necktie. A soft cotton shirt is decorated in lace along the arms and ends in two wide furry cuffs that go from wrist to elbow. The leggings are rows

of lace, fringe and white patterned fabric sewn onto a brown base. Laid gently over this intricate costume is a cape that ends in rectangular fuzzy cloth, similar to the cuffs but lined in a soft, shiny pink similar to the material of ballet shoes and bedazzled in polished reflective beads the shape of stars and circles. A section of this cape hangs lower still, weighted by metal fixtures, all painted white, but which seem to me to be brackets from shelves and drawers, much like the appendages that hang from Carole's rattles.

[Goose Sound]

Thank you for joining me on this creative access audio tour! I hope you have enjoyed seeing through my eyes as we walked the show together. If you have any questions, please contact the gallery docents and workers – your questions are never silly, and they are here to engage you in conversation. I hope to tour more work with you again in the future.

For details about the exhibition or any of the works that Kay Slater mentions in this tour, email us at belkin.gallery@ubc.ca.