

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver Art Gallery to Present BC's Most Prestigious
Visual Arts Prizes on April 19, 2017

Audain Prize goes to Carole Itter; VIVA Award to Lyse Lemieux; Balkind Prize to
Grant Arnold



Image Credits: (Left): Carole Itter, *Grand Piano Rattle: a Bosendorfer for Al Neil*, 1984, metal, paint, wood, light fixture, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund, VAG 86.34 a-e, Photo: Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery (Bottom Right): Grant Arnold, Audain Curator of British Columbia Art at the Vancouver Art Gallery, giving a guided tour of *Harry Callahan: The Street* (2016), Photo: Pardeep Singh, Vancouver Art Gallery (Top Right): Installation view of Lyse Lemieux, *Ovals for Richmond*, 2016, in *A Girls Gotta Do What A Girls Gotta Do*, Richmond Art Gallery, 2016, Photo: Dennis Ha

When: 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 19, 2017
Where: The Great Hall (BC Law Courts building)
The Ceremony is free and open to the public

April 5, 2017 Vancouver, BC – Three distinguished individuals in the field of visual arts in British Columbia will receive the most prestigious awards in this Province: the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts, the VIVA Awards and the Alvin Balkind Curator's Prize. This year, **Carole Itter** is awarded the fifteenth Audain Prize, supported by the Audain Foundation. **Lyse Lemieux** is the recipient of the 2017 VIVA Award, granted annually by the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation for the Visual Arts. The Foundation will also present the second biannual Alvin Balkind Curator's Prize to **Grant Arnold**, Audain Curator of British Columbia at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

To mark this annual celebration, a free and open to the public ceremony honouring the recipients will be held at **7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 19** in The Great Hall of the BC Law Courts building in downtown Vancouver.

“The Vancouver Art Gallery is immensely honoured once again to present the Province’s most esteemed arts awards. These awards illuminate the rich and accomplished array of artists in British Columbia,” said the Vancouver Art Gallery’s Director Kathleen S. Bartels. “We congratulate this year’s recipients for their extraordinary contribution and their tireless dedication to the field of visual arts. These awards pay tribute to the outstanding work of British Columbian artists and curators, and would not be possible without the generous support of the Audain Foundation and the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation. We are immensely grateful for their continued dedication to the history, beauty and depth of our region.”

About the recipients

An interdisciplinary artist, writer, performer and filmmaker and this year’s Audain Prize recipient, **Carole Itter** was born in Vancouver in 1939 and studied at the University of British Columbia, the Vancouver School of Art and at L’Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome, Italy. Her sculptures, collages and performances, as well as the large-scale assemblages/installations which she is probably best known for, are strongly influenced by the people and places where she has lived and frequently reflect social and political issues. Over the many years she has lived in Vancouver’s Strathcona neighbourhood, Itter has incorporated discarded domestic and industrial items found in attics and basements, lanes and thrift shops, and received objects from friends into her assemblages. These assemblages, such as the one featured in *Paved with Gold: A Tribute to a Canadian Immigrant Neighbourhood* (Vancouver Art Gallery, 1991), have also addressed issues of historical and contemporary immigration to Canada. Other solo exhibitions include *Rattles* (Western Front, 1984), *The Float* (Or Gallery, 1995), *The Pink Room* (Grunt Gallery, 2000), and *Metallic: A Fish Film* (Grunt Gallery, 2007). Her work was also included in *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2008. Along with Daphne Marlatt, she compiled and edited *Opening Doors* (1979), an archive of oral history about Vancouver’s East End as part of the Sound Heritage Series for the British Columbia Provincial Archives. She has also produced a number of short stories and prose pieces, including *Whistle Daughter Whistle* and *The Log’s Log*. Itter’s work is included in the collections of The Canada Council Art Bank, the Vancouver Public Library and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

VIVA Award honouree **Lyse Lemieux** is a Vancouver-based artist whose 39-year art practice has focused primarily on drawing. Her work is almost always referenced to the human body—its strengths and its frailties. Lemieux grew up in Ottawa where she fondly remembers spending countless hours in her Grandmother’s attic and at the National Gallery of Canada. Both seem to have had an equal impact on her as an artist, possibly because of the strange and nostalgic qualities of both the environment and the objects within those spaces. Lemieux went on to first study art at the University of Ottawa and later graduated from University of British Columbia in 1976. Oscillating between representation and abstraction, her mixed-media work has primarily been about the bodily form—whether outlined by black line, filled in with ink wash, fabric or collage, mounted on paper, wood or other supports. For over three decades, she has exhibited her work extensively in public galleries, nationally and internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include: *A Girl’s Gotta Do What a Girl’s Gotta Do* (Richmond Art Gallery, 2016), *Black is the Size of My New Skirt* (Republic Gallery, 2015), *Shaped Drawings: Something Wrong About the Mouth* (Republic Gallery, 2014), *Lyse Lemieux: New Work* (Republic Gallery, 2012). She is also presently featured in *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures*, on view at the Vancouver Art Gallery until April 17, 2017.

Alvin Balkind Curator's Prize recipient **Grant Arnold** is the Audain Curator of British Columbia Art at the Vancouver Art Gallery, where he has contributed to the Gallery's exhibition and collecting activities since 2005. He was previously Senior Curator at the Art Gallery of Windsor and Extension Coordinator at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. Arnold first studied photography in the mid-1970s, a time when the medium had a subordinate status in the art world, at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts and the University of Saskatchewan. He holds a Master's degree in art history from the University of British Columbia. His M.A. thesis, *The Terminal City and the Rhetoric of Utopia*, looked at the photographs of John Vanderpant in relation to specific facets of Modernism and the social history of Vancouver. Over the past thirty years, he has organized more than sixty exhibitions of historical, modern and contemporary art, with photography always holding an especial interest. Arnold has contributed essays and articles to exhibition catalogues and journals. He has taught in the Critical and Curatorial Studies program at the University of British Columbia and lectured on historical and contemporary art at a variety of conferences and institutions. Recent exhibition projects at the Vancouver Art Gallery have included: *Susan Point: Spindle Whorl* (2017); *Harry Callahan: The Street* (2016); *NEXT: Stephen Waddell – Dark Matter Atlas* (2016); *Jerry Pethick: Shooting the Sun/Splitting the Pie* (2015); *Residence: The Persistence of the Real* (2015); *Emily Carr and Landon Mackenzie: Wood Chopper and the Monkey* (2014); *Rodney Graham: Canadian Humourist* (2012) and *SPIRITLANDS:t/HERE: Marian Penner Bancroft Selected Photo Works 1975-2000* (2012).

Established in 2004, **The Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts** has become one of Canada's most prestigious honours. Supported by the Audain Foundation, the Audain Prize grants \$30,000 annually to a senior British Columbia artist selected by an independent jury. Previous winners of the Audain Prize include Paul Wong (2016), Michael Morris (2015), Fred Herzog (2014), Takao Tanabe and Gathie Falk (2013), Marian Penner Bancroft (2012), Rodney Graham (2011), Robert Davidson (2010), Liz Magor (2009), Jeff Wall (2008), Gordon Smith (2007), Eric Metcalfe (2006), E.J. Hughes (2005) and Ann Kipling (2004).

Established in 1988, the **VIVA Awards** are funded by the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation for the Visual Arts. The VIVA Awards were created to nurture the advancement of the visual arts in British Columbia and their appreciation by the public. Providing a minimum of \$12,000 annually, these awards celebrate exemplary achievement by British Columbia artists in mid-career, chosen for outstanding accomplishment and commitment by an independent jury.

Provided through the generosity of the estate of Abraham Rogatnick to honour the memory of renowned Vancouver curator Alvin Balkind, the **Alvin Balkind Curator's Prize** is a biannual award that recognizes outstanding innovation, original research and critical engagement through curatorial work in the visual arts.

The Audain Prize, the VIVA Award and the Balkind Prize will be presented by the Vancouver Art Gallery in The Great Hall of the BC Law Courts at 800 Smithe Street on Wednesday, April 19 at 7:00 p.m. Free and open to the public.

For interviews and photos, please contact Justin Mah.

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About the Vancouver Art Gallery

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most respected and innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's innovative ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on the historical and contemporary art of British Columbia and international centres, with special attention to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists and the art of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art founded in 2014. The Gallery's programs also explore the impacts of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture. www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.