



MACKENZIE ART GALLERY
MUSÉE D'ART MACKENZIE

MACKENZIE ART GALLERY SCHOOL TOURS

| PRESENTED BY



TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

TOURING 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 – 28 MAY 2023



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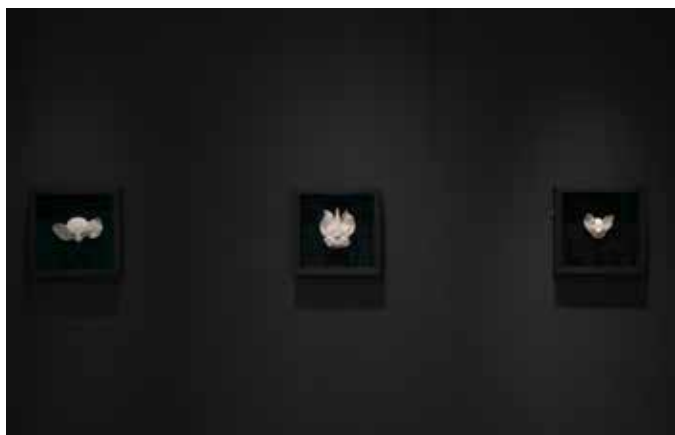
INTRODUCTION

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

Welcome to the MacKenzie Art Gallery's return to in-gallery tours! We are beyond thrilled to see you in-person again this season.

This resource was created to prepare you for your gallery experience. We invite you to take as much time as you can to review the content prior to your visit. You will find interesting information about the exhibition and artists and may want to introduce students to concepts and content prior to your visit, adding richness and meaning to your upcoming experience at the gallery.

Please ensure that students bring indoor shoes for their tour. Masks are encouraged.



Installation views from *The Permanent Collection: What the Bat Knows*, 2022, MacKenzie Art Gallery. Photos: Don Hall.



EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

Some stories live a different life in the dark. *What the Bat Knows* looks at how unexpected and overlooked voices can change our understanding of the stories shared in museums or galleries.

What the Bat Knows is part of a series of Permanent Collection exhibitions that highlight artworks from the MacKenzie Art Gallery's vaults. It takes inspiration from speculative fiction: a genre of storytelling that takes place in a world or reality different than our own. These settings allow the reader or viewer to examine questions in a new way.

In art galleries, we usually assign the role of the narrator to the artist or a curator. How can an artwork perform this role? *What the Bat Knows* re-examines permanent collection artworks from the perspective of three porcelain bat sculptures by artist Shary Boyle. What information can we trust

them to share? What can we learn from what this narrator doesn't know, or what they choose not to tell us?



Installation view from *The Permanent Collection: What the Bat Knows*, 2022, MacKenzie Art Gallery. Photos: Don Hall.

TOUR OUTCOMES

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

THIS EXHIBITION WILL HAVE THREE PHASES

Until 31 October

In the first phase, this exhibition will look at invisible networks, or how things connect in unseen ways. It will focus on networks where humans aren't placed at the centre.

4 November – 5 February 2023

The second phase considers what human activities take from our world. It features works such as George Hunter's look at mining operations.

10 February – 28 May 2023

The last phase looks at theories of an elsewhere. It investigates ideas around the afterlife, dream worlds, and even parts of the real world that are difficult for us to learn about. Some of the works included are Liz Magor's uncanny sculpture, and Leland Bell's painting in which a void, an ocean floor, and a night sky appear to be one and the same.

What the Bat Knows invites visitors to consider how a museum collection is much like a slow-moving story—one that can be reinvented with each retelling. Sometimes a new perspective can turn a story we thought we knew upside-down!

TOUR OUTCOMES

Students will experience the MacKenzie's permanent collection through story and narrative.

Students will examine and celebrate unconventional voices within gallery collection and exhibition practices.

Students will explore the genre of speculative fiction through visual art and think about the impacts of humans on the world.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Artists once known, Allen (Ahmoo) Angecone, Kenojuak Ashevak, Leland Bell, Dominique Blain, Shary Boyle, Deanna Bowen, Lynne Cohen, Colleen Cutschall, Aganetha and Richard Dyck, Marcel Dzama, George Hunter, Kiakshuk, Levi, Ernest Lindner, Liz Magor, Margaret May, Kevin McKenzie, Angelique Merasty, David Milne, Pudlo Pudlat, Sakiassie Ragee, Shequak, Barbara Todd, Martha Townsend, Tim Whiten, Joseph Yoakum



Installation view from *The Permanent Collection: What the Bat Knows*, 2022, MacKenzie Art Gallery. Photos: Don Hall.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

SELECT ARTIST INFORMATION

ARTISTS ONCE KNOWN

This is a term that some galleries have started using instead of “Unknown Artist.” It acknowledges that at some point and time, the artist who made an artwork might have been very well known in their community. Their name may be unknown today for many reasons. Sometimes, the age of the artwork means no record of the artist’s name exists. More problematically, when people from a colonizing country (one that has tried to take over or control another group of people) collect artworks from communities they are trying to control, they often do not see the names of the artists as important. Not recording an artist’s name makes some people think of these artworks more like artefacts that record the past of a culture. Instead, we want to invite you to see these artworks as part of the fine art world, art history and the continued diversity of cultures across the world.

SHARY BOYLE

Shary Boyle was born in Toronto, Ontario in 1972. She works in many different mediums, including sculpture, ceramics, drawing, installation, and performance. Her work often uses images from fairy tales, myths, and stories of the past. Yet she mixes these with both dark humour and surrealism—an art style that distorts reality—to change those images and make us think about the darker stories hidden underneath. Shary’s work is celebrated worldwide; she has even represented Canada at the 2013 Venice Biennale.

Please note, this artist’s website does contain nudity and mature subject matter.

[Shary Boyle | Website](#)

[Shary Boyle | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

ARTISTS RELATED TO THE EXTENSION ACTIVITY

DAVID MILNE

David Milne was born 8 January 1882 in Burgoyne, Ontario. He was a painter, a printmaker, and a writer. He is often thought of in association with the Group of Seven, although he was never formally a member. David studied art in New York City at the Art Students League, but was very proud to be Canadian. He lived both in New York State and in Ontario at various points in his life. His early work was seen as part of the movement to bring modernist art to North America. The landscape works he created during the middle of his life were also influenced by impressionism and fauvism. Towards the end of his life, his work took inspiration from fairy tales and from the bible. David Milne passed away in 1953.

[David Milne | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

David Milne's work was featured in CBC Gem's program Landscape Artist of the Year Canada. Here's a short clip:

[David Milne: an artist driven to paint even when he couldn't afford to | CBC Arts](#)

PUDLO PUDLAT

Pudlo Pudlat was born in 1916 in Kamadjuak Camp, on Baffin Island, in the North West Territories. He is an Inuk artist who spent the first half of his life travelling, hunting and fishing along the south shores of Baffin Island. After recovering from tuberculosis in his forties, he began to focus on making art. His often combined images of technology with the animals, people and landscapes of the North. Pudlo Pudlat travelled the world to be at his art exhibition openings. He passed away in 1992.

[Pudlo Pudlat: Above the Limits | Arctic Arts Summit](#)

[Pudlo Pudlat | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

SAKIASSIE RAGEE

Sakiassie Ragee was an Inuk artist from Tikirak camp near Cape Dorset. He was the second husband of Eegyvudluk Ragee, who was also an artist. The couple adopted four children together, and Eegyvudluk had two children from a previous marriage (one who passed away as a baby). Two of their children, Sorosoluto Onalik and Peter Ragee, also became artists. Sakiassie, Eegyvudluk, and Peter caught tuberculosis in the 1950's and spent three years in Brandon, Manitoba recovering. Sakiassie was inspired by the imagination shown by earlier Inuit artists.

[Saggiassie Ragee - Inuit artist - Cape Dorset | Native Canadian Arts](#)

Information on his wife Eegyvudluk, which helps us learn more about Sakiassie's life as well:

[Eegyvudluk Ragee - Inuk artist - Cape Dorset | Native Canadian Arts](#)

[Canadian Women Artists History Initiative : Artist Database : Artists : RAGEE, Egevadluq \(concordia.ca\)](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

This exhibition connects strongly with literature. It connects closely to the genres of speculative fiction, fables, and mythology. It also examines the idea of the narrator and different perspectives. The following books were recommended by curator Crystal Mowry as extensions of the stories being told in the gallery:

The Bat Poet by Randall Jerrell (Crystal recommends reading it aloud in the dark)

"*The Bat, the Bramble, and the Seagull*," from Aesop's Fables. Available for free online: [The Bat, the Bramble and the Seagull | Aesop's Fables \(fairytales.com\)](#)

Neither Either Nor Or by Joey Dubuc — this is a book in the style of a "choose your own adventure" novel. In one of the "adventures" the reader enters a failed business with a bat and sly echoes of the Aesop fable abound. This book is meant for a teen or adult audience.





EXTENSION ACTIVITY

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

Who's Telling this Story?

A Narrator Analysis

Choose one of these trios of artworks and stories. Think about three related stories, told by three different narrators (storytellers), from three different points of view.

Please note that these artworks are from the first version of *What The Bat Knows*, and may not be up in the gallery when your group comes to visit. However, this activity will still prepare you to think about storytelling through visual art, and can be used before or after your visit to the gallery.

MATERIALS

Writing materials

Images, label text, and video/audio stories for one of the selected artworks

TV/computer/projector/tablet to watch or listen to videos or audio story

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose one of the story bundles from Appendix A to work with as a class or individually. Each bundle contains three versions of a story: one told by the artwork itself, one told by the extended label from the exhibition, and one told as a video or audio story.

PART ONE: PERMANENT COLLECTION ARTWORK

Look at the artwork selected from our permanent collection. As a class or in small groups, ask the following questions:

What story is this artwork telling us?

Who are the story's main characters?

Who is telling this story? What do we know about them?

What knowledge does that person bring with them?

What things might that storyteller not know about?

What do you think this storyteller's relationship to nature is like?

TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

*THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS***Who's Telling this Story?****A Narrator Analysis**

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PART TWO: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

Read the label that accompanies this artwork in the gallery. These labels were written by the exhibition's curator, Crystal Mowry. They tell stories related to the artworks from the viewpoint of a unique storyteller—one of three bat sculptures by Shary Boyle that can be found in our Permanent Collection. Again, as a class or in small groups, ask the same questions as you did in Part 1.

PART THREE: VIDEO/AUDIO STORY

Watch the video or listen to the audio story related to the artwork. Once more, ask the same questions as you did in Part 1.

PART FOUR: WRAP-UP/DISCUSSION

Either as a class, in groups, or on your own, think about some of the following questions:

How were the three stories similar?

How were the three stories different? Why do you think the stories were different when told by different narrators?

Were the storytellers connected to each other in any way?

Which storyteller's relationship to nature was the closest to your own, and why?



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

*THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS***Who's Telling this Story?****A Narrator Analysis**

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ADAPTATIONS

The questions in this activity can be answered either out loud through discussion, or through writing. This work can be done as a class, in small groups, or on your own.

We also recommend reviewing the three stories and choosing the one most appropriate for your class or group. Story Bundle 1- Thunder and Lightning is geared towards the youngest audience, and includes some Plain Language text. The video in Story Bundle 3 is available in French, English, and Inuktitut.



APPENDIX A

*THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS***STORY BUNDLE 1: THUNDER AND LIGHTNING
WHAT THE BAT KNOWS**

I'd like to share a story from Nigeria's Cross River National Park, one of the oldest rainforests in the world. This is a story about thunder and lightning that has been passed on through families and communities over many, many years. It isn't clear who told this story first. Was it the animals the story is shaped around, or the humans who keep passing it on? In the story, Thunder and Lightning are family living on earth. Thunder is a mother sheep, and Lightning her ram son. Hot-tempered and prone to outbursts, the ram left messes and broke things wherever he went. Despite the loud boom of her voice, the mother could do little to change his ways. After one disaster too many, the mother and son were sent away by their community. They were forced to live in the sky where they would cause less damage. To this day, Lightning continues to misbehave, and Thunder's scolding follows.

AUDIO STORY: *Thunder and Lightning* from Circle Round, a podcast by WBUR created by parents for children.

<https://www.wbur.org/circleround/2017/11/14/thunder-and-lightning-circle-round>

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APPENDIX A

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS**STORY BUNDLE 1: THUNDER AND LIGHTNING**

David Milne, *Lightning*, 1936, oil on canvas. MacKenzie Art Gallery Collection, Gift from the Douglas M. Duncan Collection. 1970-18.



APPENDIX A

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS**STORY BUNDLE 2: LEMMINGS**
WHAT THE BAT KNOWS

Bats and rodents may be classified as distinct species by humans, but they share common wisdom that owls are not to be trusted. For my friend, the lemming, its main predator is the Snowy Owl, a creature that has adapted to the long daylight cycles of summer in the north. (Legend has it that lemmings have been known to appeal to the owl's vanity to create a life-saving distraction.) Some humans speculate that lemmings lack self-control and that the depletion of the diet available in their arctic homes is due to their lack of good sense. Other humans, such as the artist Pudlo Pudlat, understood the patterns of animal behaviour through close observation and knowledge of their cycles. In Pudlat's hands, the collared lemming (also known as kilangmiutak or "one who-comes from the sky") stands tall, on alert for avian threats.

VIDEO STORY: *The Big Lemming*. Written, directed and produced by Mosha Folger, the grandson of Pudlo Pudlat as a response to his artwork. Available on IsumaTV.

<http://www.isuma.tv/folger/the-big-lemming>

CONTENT NOTICE

This video does show an abstract image of blood (depicted in pink wool), within a story about one animal hunting another.



APPENDIX A

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS**STORY BUNDLE 2: LEMMINGS**

Pudlo Pudlat, *Avingluk (the Big Lemming)*, 1961, ink on paper. MacKenzie Art Gallery Collection, University of Regina Collection. 1962-010-22

APPENDIX A

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS**STORY BUNDLE 3: SEDNA
WHAT THE BAT KNOWS**

As a creature that rarely visits large bodies of water, let alone more northern regions, I rely heavily on the knowledge of my cousins elsewhere to understand oceanic life. With oceans accounting for over 70% of the earth's surface, I can only imagine how little is known about life therein. In Arctic maritime communities, the goddess Sedna is to thank for the success of the hunt. While her story is one that evolves in the retelling, there seems to be a constant across the variations: as the young human Sedna clings to the edge of the boat in defiance, her fingers (and in some cases, hands and forearms) are severed. She becomes a mother to the seals, the walruses, and the whales who have evolved from these fragments. From the ocean depths, Sedna is said to provide care to underwater life and when pleased, a livelihood for her kin on land.

VIDEO STORY: Stories of our Elders, *Ep. 19 Sedna, the Ruler of the Sea*. Produced by JerryCo Animation and Kingulliit Productions. 2016. Available on IsumaTV.

French version

<http://www.isuma.tv/fr/histoires-de-nos-a%C3%AFeux-stories-of-our-elders/sooeep1929fps-french>

English version

<http://www.isuma.tv/stories-of-our-elders-en/sooeep1929fps-en>

Inuktituk version

<http://www.isuma.tv/iu/stories-of-our-elders-inuktitut/sooeep1929fps-inuk>

CONTENT NOTICE

This video does depict blood and violence (an animated version of a woman having her fingers cut off). This imagery is used in the context of a traditional Inuit story, where removing it would drastically change the story and make it less true to its roots.



APPENDIX A

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION: WHAT THE BAT KNOWS**STORY BUNDLE 3: SEDNA**

Sakiassie Ragee Inuit, *Sea Goddess Feeding Young*, 1961, ink on paper. MacKenzie Art Gallery Collection, University of Regina Collection. 1962-10-37

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