

CAROLE SABISTON, VHS 1957



CAROLE SABISTON Obituary

Carole Sabiston, OBC, RCA, DFA(Hon), October 1, 1939 (London, England) – January 26, 2026 (Victoria, BC). Carole Sabiston, luminous artist and loving and beloved partner, mother, stepmother, grandmother and friend, died peacefully, in the early hours of January 26, 2026, at the age of 86. Her artistic inspiration and enduring creative drive were inseparable from her life and intrinsic to her being. Born to George and Doris Slater on October 1, 1939, one month after the start of WWII, in London, England, Carole knew only her mother's care until 1945. Having joined the RAF, her father was gone for the entirety of the war – three years posted to Pune, India, followed by three years in Patricia Bay, Victoria, British Columbia, where he fell in love with Canada and vowed to make a new life with his wife and daughter after the war. On January 1, 1948, the family boarded the Empress of Canada at Liverpool and sailed across the winter-tossed Atlantic to Halifax, disembarking at Pier 21. They stepped right onto a train, traversing Canada's Maritimes, prairies and mountains. Carole's memories of the constant yet ever-changing horizon, at sea and aboard that train, would form the thematic heart of her work as a visual artist. Settling first in Vancouver, then Victoria, Carole loved her new country, traded in her British accent, and chose to become a Canadian citizen on her 18th birthday. Her artistic talent was recognized in high school, and led her to study Fine Art at the University of Victoria and the University of British Columbia before becoming a high school art teacher in Vancouver and Victoria in her early 20s. In 1970, she moved to Ibiza, taking a year off to focus on her art, a story she recounted in her lyrical essay, *Conjuring Up a New Life*, included in the book *Dropped Threads 2* (Vintage Canada, 2003). Her early works, created in the town of Santa Eulalia, Ibiza, were sought after and launched her career as an artist. Although she began as a painter, her studies and early artistic development in the 1960s ultimately led her towards working with fabric. A Canadian artistic treasure, Carole Sabiston has been nationally and internationally acclaimed. Her unique textile assemblage works, filled with rich colours, layered textures and movement, are imaginative and immediately engaging. She conveys fantasy, humour and aspects of forgotten histories in her visual explorations of serious environmental concerns. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in every part of our country. It is included in major Canadian public collections and in private collections at home and abroad. Her art has been published widely in Canada, the US and Europe. Throughout her career, she received numerous national and international public and corporate commissions. She also designed sets and costumes for opera and theatre. Carole was a veritable pillar of Victoria's art scene – a member of the Limner Society, a longtime member of the Board of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, chair of its Building Committee and Works of Art Committee, and a

keen supporter of Pacific Opera. A Distinguished Alumna of Victoria High School, she was honoured at a special event last November celebrating her donation of her major work, Everything Below All of the Above. Always supportive of her former students, she celebrated their achievements just as they did hers. Among her many accolades, Carole was elected a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1987, the same year she received the prestigious Saidye Bronfman Award (now one of the Governor General's Visual Arts Awards). She received the Order of British Columbia in 1992, the Canada 125 Medal, the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, the University of Victoria's Distinguished Alumni Award and, in 1995, was bestowed an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Victoria. Carole is survived by her loving partner, Geoffrey; son, Andrew (Stephanie); stepdaughters, Andrea, Jenny (Dave), and Sheila; and grandchildren, Oliver, Charlie, Felix, James and Thomas. She was predeceased by first husband, Brian Sabiston; and second husband, Jim Munro. A celebration of Carole's remarkable life will be held at a later date.

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Published by The Globe and Mail from Jan. 31 to Feb. 4, 2026.



Pat Bovey, L, and Carole in front of Carole's extraordinary donation to Vic High, her iconic textile collage Everything Below All Of the Above, now permanently installed in the Vic High Learning Commons (library). Pat was Carole's lifelong friend and curator of Carole's work for the 2014 Art Gallery of Greater Victoria retrospective, named after this same collage. Friends, staff, alumni, students were all privileged to be part of the November 17, 2025 donation reception thanking Carole for her donation.(story and photos [Carole Sabiston Donation Invites Contemplation - Victoria High School Alumni Association](#). Carole was inducted as a celebrated alumna into the school's Black & Gold Honour Roll (link to the video about her ([Celebrating Alumni - Victoria High School Alumni Association](#))).

Vic High and the Alumni Association are forever grateful for her spirit, her influence, and her everlasting presence at Vic High.