

# University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

## Finding Aid - Ulli Steltzer photograph collection (RBSC- ARC-1823)

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# Ulli Steltzer photograph collection

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections
<b>Title:</b>	Ulli Steltzer photograph collection
<b>Reference code:</b>	RBSC-ARC-1823
<b>Date:</b>	1960-1979 (date of creation)
<b>Physical description:</b>	67 photographs: black and white
<b>Dates of creation, revision and deletion:</b>	

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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

Born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1923, Ulli Steltzer emigrated to the United States in 1953 with her two children. After teaching music and developing photographs in Massachusetts and New York, Steltzer moved to Princeton in 1957 to accept a job as a professional photographer for the Princeton Packet, whose Tulane Street studio she worked from for much of the next two decades. In addition to taking portraits of many prominent Princeton intellectuals and visitors from the late 1950s through the early 1970s, she also made frequent trips across the United States in her red Volkswagen to photograph and interview African American families in the South, as well as Hopi, Navajo, and Pueblo peoples in New Mexico and Arizona. In 1972, Steltzer permanently relocated her studio and home to Vancouver, British Columbia, where she befriended several prominent Haida artists, including carvers Robert Davidson and Bill Reid, who would become her frequent collaborators. Steltzer documented the art, culture, and traditions of the Haida and other coastal communities, as well as the Inuit, with whom she lived for several months. She used an unobtrusive hand-held Rollei camera to seek out Indigenous artists and peoples in their traditional territories, meet them informally and record their lives and work. Traveling widely throughout the Americas and Asia during her long career, Steltzer also documented life in Southern California, Guatemala, Cuba, China, and India, with a recurrent focus on immigrant communities and Indigenous peoples. Her photographs have been exhibited widely in the United States, Canada, and Europe, and have appeared in many photographic books and collaborations.

Steltzer's numerous publications of her photographic collections, include:

- Indian Artists at Work, University of Washington Press, 1976.
- (With Catherine Kerr) Coast of Many Faces, University of Washington Press, 1979.
- Building an Igloo, (juvenile), Douglas & McIntyre, 1981.
- Inuit of Canada's Arctic, Douglas & McIntyre, 1982.
- (With Elisabeth Behrhorst and Carroll Behrhorst) Chimaltenango, University of Washington Press, 1982.
- Inuit: The North in Transition, University of Washington Press, (Seattle, WA), 1982.

- Health in the Guatemalan Highlands, introduction by Carroll Behrhorst, University of Washington Press, (Seattle, WA), 1983.
- A Haida Potlatch, foreword by Marjorie Halpin, University of Washington Press, (Seattle, WA), 1984.
- The New Americans: Immigrant Life in Southern California, introduction by Peter Marin, NewSage Press, (Pasadena, CA), 1988.
- (Coauthor with Robert Bringham) The Black Canoe: Bill Reid and the Spirit of Haida Gwaii, 2nd edition, University of Washington Press, 1992.
- Robert Davidson, Eagle Transforming: The Art of Robert Davidson, , University of Washington Press, (Seattle, WA), 1994.
- The Spirit of Haida Gwaii: Bill Reid's Masterpiece, foreword by Bill Reid, introduction by Robin Laurence, University of Washington Press, (Seattle, WA), 1997.

Steltzer's work has been recognized by a number of honours and awards. She received multiple Canada Council for the Arts grants to support her work (1975, 1978, 1980 and 1985), and won BC Book Awards for Coast of Many Faces, The Black Canoe: Bill Reid and the Spirit of Haida Gwaii, and for Eagle Transforming: The Art of Robert Davidson. In 1997 she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Victoria.

Ulli Steltzer died in Vancouver on July 27, 2018 at age 94.

## Custodial history

The photographs were gifted to and purchased by Dr. Thomas Edgar Blom directly from Ulli Steltzer. Blom became friends with Steltzer in Vancouver in the early 1970s, shortly after Steltzer settled in Vancouver. Dr. Blom was a strong supporter and advocate for Ulli's photographic work, and did a great deal to help his friend, including editorial assistance with her books, starting with Indian Artists at Work (1976) and continuing through Sight and Insight – Life in Lijiang, Faidi, and Yongniing (2001). Steltzer gave Blom two or three photographs as a gift for his editorial work on her first book. As well, Dr. Blom purchased many of Steltzer's photographs in order to provide her with financial assistance. The photograph collection moved with Blom, when he married Dr. Sharon Kahn in 1984. Dr. Blom passed away in 2003, and the photographs remained with Dr. Kahn until she donated a selection from this collection to UBC in 2021.

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## Scope and content

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The collection consists of 67 black and white photographs of various sizes taken by Ulli Steltzer in the 1960s and 1970s. Subjects include Northwest Coast Indigenous peoples and artists, Black, LatinX and Indigenous peoples in the USA and Guatemala, and a small number of portraits and still-life. Specifically, the collection contains seven original prints from her important book Indian Artists at Work, including the iconic cover image of Mabel Taylor of Port Alberni weaving a basket, a beautiful portrait of Dempsey Bob carving a human figure, and Haida basket maker Florence Davidson gathering spruce roots, among others. It also contains 14 original prints from her book Coast of Many Faces, including the cover image (Sam Webber and his daughter Laura from Kingcome Inlet), and photos from the Nass River, Alert Bay, Port Neville, Ahouset, Massett and other coastal places. There are eight 1967 - 1968 photographs of Black Americans in the Mississippi Delta, Georgia, and Alabama as well as images of LatinX Americans and Vietnam War widows, as well as photographs of the Maya in Guatemala.

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## Notes

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### Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on creator of the collection.

### Immediate source of acquisition

The collection was donated by Dr. Sharon Kahn in 2021.

### Conditions governing use

The Trustees of Princeton University hold the copyright for materials donated to Princeton, which may include prints and negatives of images found in the UBC collection. Otherwise, copyright rests with the Steltzer estate.

### Finding aids

A detailed item level inventory is available.

### Related material

The Ulli Steltzer papers, the full and extensive archive of Ulli Steltzer, is held by The Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library (Princeton, New Jersey). <https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/C1454>

### Other notes

- **Publication status:** published
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## Access points

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- Photographic material (documentary form)
  - Arts and culture (subject)
  - Cultural groups (subject)
  - First Nations (subject)
  - Women (subject)
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## Series descriptions

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Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-01	Item - Flower 1	[between 1960 and 1979]		

RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-02	Item - Flower 2	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-03	Item - Tom and Margaret Blom 2	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-04	Item - Tom Blom & Sharon Kahn	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-05	Item - Birch Forest	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-06	Item - Lady	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-07	Item - Queen Charlotte Islands, 78	1978
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-08	Item - Snow Lake	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-09	Item - Port Nevil	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-10	Item - Grave	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-11	Item - Tasu	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-12	Item - Old Masset	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-13	Item - Soul Roots Festival, Atlanta, Georgia 1967, Lady Singing	1967
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-14	Item - Soul Roots Festival, Atlanta, Georgia 1967, Choir	1967
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-15	Item - Man with Guitar with Child	1967
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-16	Item - SoinTula	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-17	Item - James Adams, Ahousat, B.C. 1977	1977
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-18	Item - Chief Maquinna	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-19	Item - Sam Webber and Laura, Kingcome Village, BC, 1978	1978
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-20	Item - Birch Bark	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-21	Item - Hopi, 1969	1969
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-22	Item - Magdealena Herhahdez Macalajau, Guatemala, 1971	1971
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-23	Item - Mississippi Delta 1968	1968
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-24	Item - Panola, Alabama 1968	1968
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-25	Item - Jesse Poola, Hopi 1970	1970
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-26	Item - Camden, New Jersey 1971	1971
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-27	Item - Migrant Woman New Jersey, 1968	1968
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-28	Item - Liberty County, Georgia. 1968	1968

RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-29	Item - Marks, Mississippi 1968	1968
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-30	Item - Vietnam War Widow Columbus, Ohio 1970	1970
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-31	Item - Southern New Jersey 1968	1968
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-32	Item - Man	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-33	Item - Road	1968
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-34	Item - Children	1977
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-35	Item - Girl	1978
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-36	Item - Carving	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-37	Item - Lady Weaving	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-38	Item - Soul Roots Festival, Atlanta, Georgia 1967, Audience	1967
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-39	Item - Forest??	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-40	Item - Lady	1967 & 1968
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-41	Item - Captain Gregorio Fuente	1969
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-42	Item - Man	1966
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-43	Item - Joe Moreau	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-44	Item - Hat	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-45	Item - Girl Basket	1977
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-46	Item - Weaving Chicken	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-47	Item - Carving	1977
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-48	Item - Wool	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-49	Item - Smile	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-50	Item - Pots	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-51	Item - Interior	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-52	Item - Weaving (no chicken?)	1977
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-53	Item - River Fishing SE Asia	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-54	Item - Dancers	1969
RBSC-ARC-1823-PH-55	Item - Rivers Inlet	[between 1960 and 1979]

RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-56	Item - Baby	1970
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-57	Item - Irene and Dempsey Collinson	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-58	Item - Hill with Sheep	1969
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-59	Item - Workers Nets	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-60	Item - Kingcome Inlet	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-61	Item - Nass River	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-62	Item - Waterfall	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-63	Item - Tunnel	[between 1960 and 1979]
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-64	Item - Man hat	1970
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-65	Item - Woman and Child	1977
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-66	Item - Tortilla	1977
RBSC-ARC-1823- PH-67	Item - Clayoquot Sound	[between 1960 and 1979]