
Shani Mootoo



Shani Mootoo is an accomplished writer, filmmaker, painter and photographer. She earned a BFA from the University of Western Ontario, and an MA in English from the University of Guelph. She currently holds the position of Associated Graduate Faculty at the University of Guelph in support of the Creative Writing program in the School of English and Theatre Studies.

In her artworks, Mootoo explores the idea of dislocation, identity, belonging: "...identity, like perspective, is inevitably shifting and multi-faceted."

Mootoo's paintings have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions locally and internationally, most notably at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Queen's Museum in NYC, the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, and at the Venice Biennale. Her photographs have been exhibited at Maison Depoivre in Prince Edward County, Canada.

Her videos include "English Lesson", "Wild Woman in The Woods" and "Her Sweetness Lingers," and have been screened in film and video festivals and art exhibitions locally and internationally, including at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC. She is the recipient of a Dr. James Duggins Outstanding Mid-Career Novelist Award, the Writers' Trust Engel Findley Award, and has been awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Western University. She lives in Southern Ontario, Canada.

Education

2010	MFA, University of Guelph
1981-82	Emily Carr College of Art and Design
1980	BFA, University of Western Ontario

Selected Visual Art Exhibitions and Video Screenings

- *The Narrative of Objects*, Oeno Gallery, Bloomfield, ON, 2023
- *Negotiating Diaspora: From the Personal to the Universal*, Oeno Gallery, Bloomfield ON, 2021

- *Where We Have Been*, Group show, Surrey Art Gallery, British Columbia, 2020
- QAF/VIVO, Screening of *View*, Sum Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, 2020
- *Salon 44* (group photography exhibition) Gallery 44, Toronto, 2020
- *Portraits of Re-semblance*, Works by Peter Hoffer and Shani Mootoo, Oeno Gallery, Bloomfield, ON, 2020
- Museum of Modern Art, *Transing the Grain* (solo screening of all the videos to date), NYC, New York, USA, 1995
- *Topographies*, The Vancouver Art Gallery, B.C. 1998
- *Transculture*, The Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 1995
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, USA, 1994, 1995
- Queens Museum, New York, USA, 1995

Archives and Collections

- Papers archived at the Bennett Library, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada.
- Visual arts and videos in various private collections, including the collection of the National Gallery, Ottawa Canada, and the Surrey Art Gallery, British Columbia, Canada
- AWARE, Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions, France
<http://www.awarewomenartists.com>

Videos written, directed and filmed by Shani Mootoo

- *View*, 8 mins, 2000
- *Guerita and Prietita*, 23 mins, 1999 with Kath High
- *Her Sweetness Lingers*, 18 mins, 1998
- *The Wild Woman in the Woods*, 12 mins, 1992
- *A Paddle and a Compass*, 8 mins, 1992 with Wendy Oberlander
- *English Lesson*, 5 mins, 1990
- *Lest I Burn*, 8 mins, 1989

Teaching

- Associated Graduate Faculty (includes thesis supervisions), The University of Guelph Creative Writing MFA, 2015-present
- External Examiner for MFA Creative Writing Candidates, Department of Literary, Cultural and Communication Studies, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad, 2015 to present
- Graduate Seminar in Creative Writing, Writer in Residence program, University of Toronto, Winter 2015
- Guest instructor in Creative Writing, Graduate level, The University of The West Indies, Trinidad Campus, February – March, 2011
- Creative Writing Program, The Department of English and Film, The University of Alberta, Canada, 2001-2006

Books:

- *Polar Vortex*, a novel, Book*hug, Canada, 2020.
- *Initiate*, A Poem, DeadCat Press, Canada 2020
- *Moving Forward Sideways Like a Crab*, a novel, Doubleday, Canada, 2014. Longlisted for the Scotia Bank Giller Prize, shortlisted for the Lambda Award.
- *Valmiki's Daughter*, a novel, House of Anansi Press, Canada, 2008. Longlisted for the Scotia Bank Giller Prize.
- *He Drown She in the Sea*, a novel, Mc Clelland and Stewart Publishers, Canada, 2005. Longlisted for the Dublin IMPAC Award.
- *The Predicament of Or*, poetry, Raincoast/Polestar Publishers, Canada, 2002.
- *Cereus Blooms at Night*, a novel, Press Gang Publishers, Canada, 1996 . Shortlisted for the Giller Prize, The Chapters First Novel Award, The Ethel Wilson Book Prize, and longlisted for the Man Booker Prize.
- *Out on Main Street*, short story collection, Press Gang Publishers, Canada, 1992.

Selected Anthologies:

- *The Penguin Book of Migration Literature*, Penguin Classics, Penguin Book, 2019
- *Global Anglophone Indian Poems*, Poetry July/August 2019, Poetry Magazine, Poetry Foundation, USA
- *Trinidad Noir: The Classics*, edited by Earl Lovelace and Robert Antoni, Akashic Press, NYC, 2016
- *Caribbean Ghost Stories*, Edited by Martin Munroe, UWI Press, 2015
- *Trinidad Noir*, Edited By Lisa Agostini and Jeanne Mason, Akashic Press, NYC, 2008
- *Our Caribbean*, Edited by Thomas Glave, Duke University Press, 2008
- *Writing Life, Celebrated Canadian and International Authors on Writing and Life*, Edited By Constance Rooke, Mc Clelland and Stewart Publishers, 2006

Selected International and Local Literary Festivals and Readings:

- A Room of One's Own, Madison, Wisconsin, 2020 (online)
- Book Soup, Los Angeles, California, 2020 (online)
- Bureau of General Services-Queer Divisions, NYC, 2020 (online)
- Toronto International Festival of Authors 2020 (online)
- Kingston WritersFest, 2020 (online)
- Eden Mills Writers' Festival, 2020 (online)
- National Arts Council InstagramLive launch of new novel Polar Vortex (online)
- Miami Book Fair, Florida, 2017
- PEN World Voices Literary Festival, New York City, 2017
- Galle Literary Festival, Sri Lanka 2016
- Kandy Literary Festival, Sri Lanka 2016
- Stratford Festival, CBC Ideas, The Challenge of Words, Stratford, Ontario, 2016
- International Festival of Authors, Toronto, Ontario, 2016
- Trinidad and Tobago NGC Bocas Lit Fest, Trinidad and Tobago 2015
- Perth Literary Festival, Australia 2010
- Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, USA, December, 2010, Reading

- Symposium on *The Fictions of Shani Mootoo in the Context of Caribbean Women's Writings*, The University of The West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, November, 2008
- Sydney Writers Festival, Australia 1999
- Kapittel Stavanger International Festival of Literature and Freedom of Speech, Norway, 1999

Selected Guest Lectures and Keynote addresses:

- Visiting Scholar in the department of English, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern University, Boston, Mass, 2018
- *Untold Stories of the Past 150 Years*, Keynote address, University College Dublin, 2017
- *Bodies, Boundaries & Borders: Conversations of Crossing in Shani Mootoo's Moving Forward Sideways Like a Crab*, Symposium on Mootoo's work, Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA, 2017
- Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (CACLALS), readings, Calgary, 2016
- The Heliconian Literary Lecture Series, The Heliconian Club, Yorkville, Toronto, 2011
- Keynote address, ASNEL Conference Bayreuth, Germany, *Contested Communities, Narration, Imagination*, 2010
- Lecture and Reading, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, USA, 2010
- University of Kansas Distinguished Lecture, February 2010.
- Keynote address, Canadian Studies Conference on Film and Video, The University of Pune, India, 2007
- Keynote address, 10th Anniversary International Conference- *The Caribbean Woman Writer as Scholar-Imagining/Theorizing/Creating*, invited by The Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars, Hollywood, Florida, USA 2006
- 2006 Distinguished Morton President's Lecture- University of Manitoba, Canada
- 2006 Munroe Beattie President's Lecture, Carlton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Awards:

- Dr. James Duggins Outstanding Mid-Career Novelist Award, 2017
- Chalmers Fellowship, 2016
- Canada Council for the Arts for Writing, Visual Arts, and Film and Video 1992- 2013
- K.M. Hunter Artist Award for Literature, 2012
- Ontario Arts Council, Writing and Publishing, 2012

Selected Writings on Shani Mootoo's work

- Journal of West Indian Literature, *Shani Mootoo: Writing, Difference and the Caribbean*, Vol. 19, No. 2, April 2011.
- Brinda Mehta: *Diasporic (Dis)locations, Indo-Caribbean Women Writers Negotiate the Kala Pani*, University of The West Indies Press, 2004
- Gayatri Gopinath: *Impossible Desires- Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*, Duke University Press, 2005
- Richard Fung: *The Videos of Shani Mootoo- Bodies Out of Place , Queer Acts, Women and Performance*, #16, New York University 1996

Invited Residencies

- Jack McClelland Writer in Residence, University of Toronto, 2015
- Writer in Residence, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad, 2011
- Writer in Residence, The University of Guelph, 2010
- Writer in Residence, The University of Alberta, 2001-2002
- Visiting Scholar, Mills College, Oakland, California, USA, 2000
- Writer in Residence-Varuna Writers Retreat, Katoomba, Blue Mountains, Australia, Awarded by Canadian Foreign Affairs, the Canadian High Commission, Australia, 1999
- Artist residency, *Race and the Body Politic*, Banff Center for The Arts, Banff, Alberta, Canada, 1992
- Video residency, Banff Centre for The Arts, Banff, Alberta, Canada 1992

Juror for Grants and Awards, Selected List

- Vine Awards, 2020
- Amazon Canada First Novel Award, 2020
- The Governor General's Fiction Award, Canada, 2018
- Rogers Writers Trust Fiction Prize 2015
- The Writers' Union of Canada Danuta Gleed Award 2015
- Ontario Arts Council Chalmers Arts Fellowships, 2013
- Canada Council for The Arts, writing and publishing, Visual arts, and Film and Video, through the years 1992- 2010.
- Dayne Ogilvie Fiction Award, Canada, 2009.
- The Governor General's Fiction Award, Canada, 2007.