ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

DECEMBER 10, 2021

TAKING THE PRIZE
2021 ART AWARD WINNERS

Who won this year's most prestigious art prizes honouring the outstanding achievements of leading Canadian creators? Here's a round-up of the voices who are shaping the future of contemporary art.

Awards and prize ceremonies are the applause of the discipline of artmaking, a recognition to creators who, for the most part, work alone and in solitude. Canada gives out numerous art prizes every year to both rising and established talents in recognition of those who are transforming the landscape of the country's visual culture and offering a new way of seeing. Over the last twelve months we have witnessed the acknowledgement of outstanding creativity and leadership—a list that we are sharing with you today. Awards can be transformative, especially in how they spark attention to and intensified exploration of an artist's body of work. At the Art Canada Institute, we are delighted to congratulate all the recipients of this year's art awards and prizes—we can't wait to see where the future takes them.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

YUKON PRIZE FOR VISUAL ARTS

Joseph Tisiga

Joseph Tisiga, *In Lieu of Monuments Honour*, 2020, Courtesy of Joseph Tisiga and Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal.

A highly dramatic image of a whale being roasted in suspension before a rainbow, *In Lieu of Monuments Honour*, 2020, is part of a recent body of work by Whitehorse-based Joseph Tisiga (b.1984). He created it as a reflection on his move from the Yukon to Montreal in 2019, and the isolation, fear, and uncertainty that followed on both a personal and global scale during the pandemic. In November, Tisiga was announced as the winner of the inaugural Yukon Prize for Visual Arts, a biennial $20,000 award established by Whitehorse couple Julie Jai and David Trick in recognition of excellence by Yukon visual artists. A member of the Kaska Dena Nation, Tisiga is acclaimed for his enigmatic, narrative-based art that blends together elements of material reality, the metaphysical, and the mythological, and *In Lieu of Monuments Honour* is characteristic of his depictions of lone figures situated in scenes of "supernatural banality."

Learn more about the Yukon Prize for Visual Arts

Learn more about Joseph Tisiga

SCOTIABANK PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

Deanna Bowen

Installation view of the exhibition *Black Drones in the Hive* at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 2020.

A descendent of two Albertan Black Prairie pioneer families hailing from Alabama and Kentucky, Oakland-born, Montreal-based Deanna Bowen (b.1969) has examined Black presence in Canada and the United States in her interdisciplinary works since the 1990s. In June, she won the eleventh annual $50,000 Scotiabank Photography Award, which honours the achievements of mid- to late-career artists. Shown here is an installation view of her recent exhibition *Black Drones in the Hive* (2020–21) at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, curated by Crystal Mowry and winner of an Exhibition of the Year prize from Galeries Ontario Galleries. For this display, Bowen arranged archival materials into configurations that reveal the erasure of Black presence in the Kitchener-Waterloo region in the early twentieth century. “[Bowen’s] solo Primary Exhibition during the 2022 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival should not be missed,” said Edward Burtynsky, co-founder of the Scotiabank Photography Award and Chair of the jury.

Learn more about the Scotiabank Photography Award

Learn more about Deanna Bowen

SOBEY ART AWARD

Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory

Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, *Nannuppugut!*, 2021, Collection of the artist.

For the first time this year, the annual Sobey Art Award, Canada's most prestigious competition for emerging artists, was open to applicants of all ages, and six weeks ago, kalaaleq (Greenlandic Inuk) performance artist, poet, actor, storyteller, and writer Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory (b.1979) was named the winner. Featured in the Sobey Art Award exhibition (on view at the National Gallery of Canada until February 22, 2022) is her work *Nannuppugut!*, 2021, in which a video of her dancing is projected onto a polar bear hide. Commenting on the prize, Williamson Bathory noted, "This is a big deal for us as Inuit, because there are so few of us in the world….We really work very hard to make room for ourselves, for our community, in a very colonized environment."

Learn more about the Sobey Art Award

Learn more about Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory

HNATYSHYN FOUNDATION VISUAL ARTS AWARD

Isabelle Hayeur

Isabelle Hayeur, *L'anémone (Devil's Punch Bowl, Oregon)*, from the Underworlds series, 2019–20, Courtesy of Isabelle Hayeur.

Since the late 1990s, Montreal-based Isabelle Hayeur (b.1969) has developed a lens-based practice offering critical commentary on environmental degradation, urban development, and social conditions, and this year she received the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Award for outstanding achievement by a mid-career artist. *L'anémone (Devil's Punch Bowl, Oregon)*, 2019–20, belongs to Hayeur's major series Underworlds, 2008–ongoing, which documents the human impacts on aquatic ecosystems that are largely hidden beneath the surface of the water. By partially submerging her camera, Hayeur offers us striking and immersive views of what lies above and below the surface of troubled waters. "My art practice is in complete effervescence at the moment and this award from the Hnatyshyn Foundation will allow me to continue to build on this creative momentum," said Hayeur.

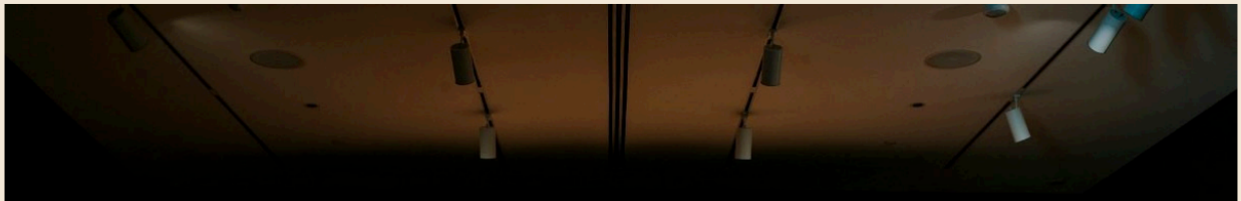
Learn more about the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Award

Learn more about Isabelle Hayeur

Share this newsletter with friends who love Canada's art, or invite them to sign up here for our weekly dispatch.

AUDAIN PRIZE FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN THE VISUAL ARTS

James Hart



James Hart, *The Dance Screen (The Scream Too)*, 2010–13, Audain Art Museum, Whistler.

A descendent of master carver Charles Edenshaw (Da.a xiigang) (1839–1920), leading Northwest Coast artist and hereditary Haida chief James Hart (7idansuu) (b.1952) apprenticed with Iljuwas Bill Reid (1920–1998). He has since had an extraordinary career, recently celebrated by the annual Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts. Hart's masterpiece *The Dance Screen (The Scream Too)*, 2010–13, is the world's first freestanding dance screen and the only one to display carving of such depth. The monumental red cedar sculpture depicts Haida beings surrounded by a border of salmon. Some of the figures are open-mouthed, expressing concern for the endangerment of salmon while also referencing the iconic painting *The Scream*, 1893, by Edvard Munch (1862–1944). Hart's work exemplifies his innovative approach to traditional Haida forms to address contemporary Indigenous issues.

Learn more about the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts

Learn more about James Hart

TORONTO FRIENDS OF THE VISUAL ARTS

Jen Aitken, Rouzbeh Akhbari, Melissa General,

Oreka James, Shellie Zhang

Shellie Zhang, *Still Life with Citrus*, from the Offerings to Both Past and Future Series, 2018–19, Courtesy of Shellie Zhang.

In the past, the annual Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts Prize was awarded to one late-emerging to early mid-career Toronto artist; this year, a $5,000 prize was offered to each of the five finalists, who include Jen Aitken (b.1985), Rouzbeh Akhbari (b.1992), Melissa General, Oreka James (b.1991), and Shellie Zhang (b.1991), whose work *Still Life with Citrus* from her Offerings to Both Past and Future Series, 2018–19, is shown here. Peeled fruits are delicately arranged in a Chinese blue-and-white ceramic bowl—a family heirloom—recalling still life paintings, offerings at shrines and temples, and the ancient tradition of gifting this food. Zhang's work reflects on the cultural and ritual significance of fruit, as well as the processes involved in its cultivation, transportation, and consumption.

Learn more about the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts Prize

Learn more about Shellie Zhang

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARDS IN VISUAL AND MEDIA ARTS – ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Germaine Arnaktauyok, Bonnie Devine, Luc Courchesne, Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Lori Blondeau, Dempsey Bob

Germaine Arnaktauyok, *Sedna, Ruler of All Sea Animals*, 1994, Winnipeg Art Gallery.

The Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts for Artistic Achievement are presented annually to six recipients, and this year they are Bonnie Devine (b.1952), Luc Courchesne (b.1952), Cheryl L'Hirondelle (b.1958), Lori Blondeau (b.1964), Dempsey Bob (b.1948), and Germaine Arnaktauyok (b.1946), whose captivating print *Sedna, Ruler of All Sea Animals*, 1994, is pictured here. According to Inuit mythology, when Sedna was a young human woman, her father chopped off her fingers while she hung onto the side of a boat. Her fingers became whales, walruses, and seals, and as Arnaktauyok's dramatic work illustrates, they occasionally become entangled in the great sea goddess's long, flowing hair. Born in Igloolik, Nunavut, and based in Yellowknife, Arnaktauyok is internationally recognized for her vivid drawings, paintings, and prints inspired by Inuit legends and traditions.

Learn more about the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts

Learn more about Germaine Arnaktauyok

PRIX PAUL-ÉMILE-BORDUAS

André Fournelle

André Fournelle, *States of Shock (États de choc)*, 1985, Parc Summerlea, Montreal.

In October, internationally recognized sculptor André Fournelle (b.1939) was announced as the winner of the Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas, the highest distinction awarded to individuals in the visual arts in Quebec. Fournelle's nearly sixty-year career began in 1963 when he took a job at an industrial foundry in Montreal and developed an interest in sculpture and working with molten metal. *States of Shock (États de choc)*, 1985, simultaneously evokes imprisonment and liberation. It was inspired by a 1979 trip to England—the country where he was born and became a war orphan at the age of one before being adopted in Canada. In addition to addressing contemporary social and political issues, Fournelle's works display his enduring fascination with different manifestations of light (such as laser, neon, and optical fibre) and the four natural elements (earth, air, water, and fire).

Learn more about the Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas

Learn more about André Fournelle

NEW GENERATION PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

Dustin Brons, Dainesha Nugent-Palache, and Chris Donovan

Chris Donovan, *Dog with Pipeline*, 2019, Courtesy of Chris Donovan.

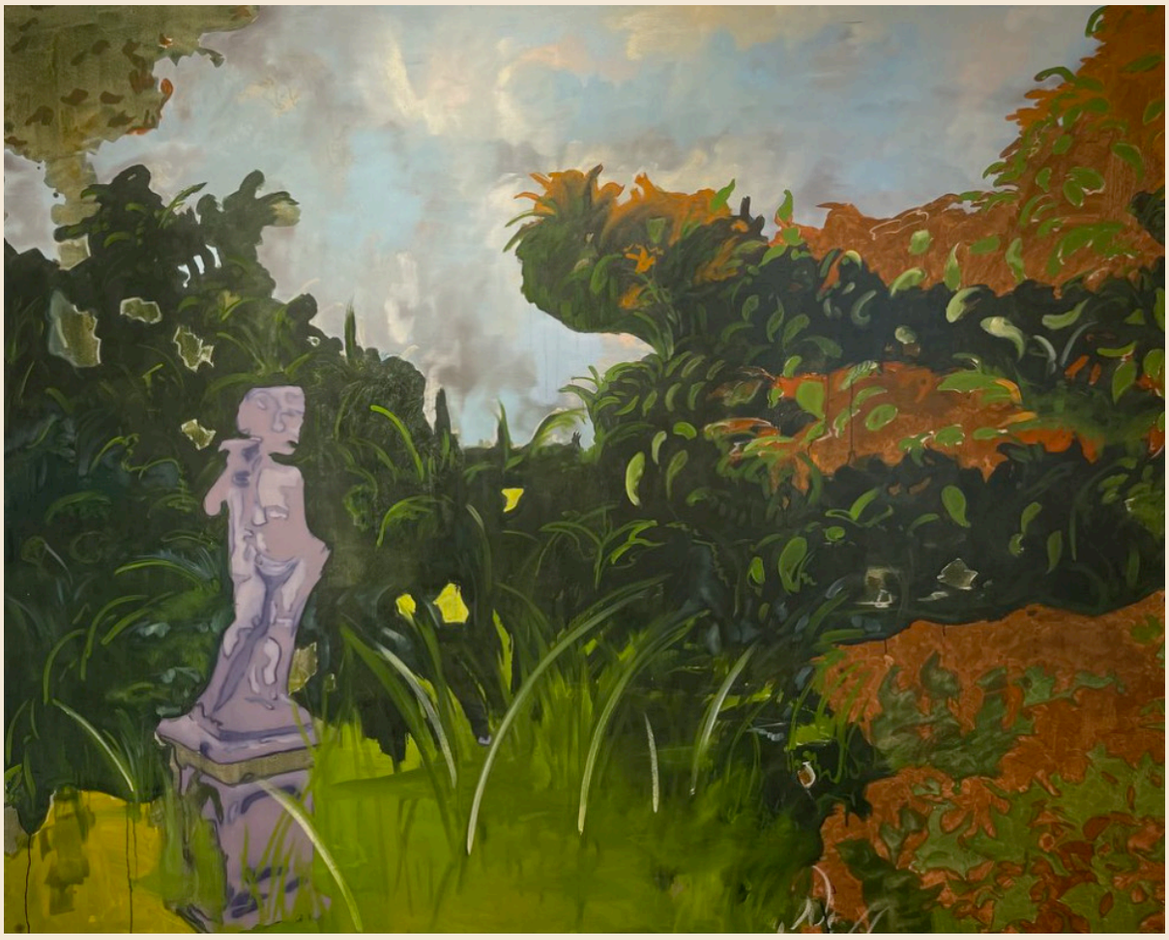
The three winners of this year's annual $10,000 New Generation Photography Award are Dustin Brons (b.1991), Dainesha Nugent-Palache, and Chris Donovan (b.1997). Presented by the National Gallery of Canada in collaboration with Scotiabank, the award recognizes some of the most promising artists creating camera-based work today. This haunting black and white photograph of a lone dog roaming an industrial area in winter is part of Donovan's Cloud Factory project. Begun in 2012, it documents the effects of industry on local residents in Saint John, New Brunswick, home to both the largest oil refinery and the highest rate of child poverty in Canada. With this series, Donovan addresses issues of economic inequality, censorship, and environmental classism in his hometown.

Learn more about the New Generation Photography Award

Learn more about Chris Donovan

JOSEPH PLASKETT AWARD

Emmanuel Osahor



Emmanuel Osahor, *Glory days*, 2021, Courtesy of Emmanuel Osahor, Galerie Nicolas Robert, Toronto, and BAND Gallery, Toronto.

This September Nigerian-born Emmanuel Osahor won the Joseph Plaskett Award, which grants $30,000 to an emerging Canadian painter to work in Europe for a minimum of six months. Currently completing his MFA at the University of Guelph, Osahor examines the connections between private garden spaces and histories of colonialism, inequality, and marginalization. In evocative paintings like *Glory days*, 2021, the artist depicts lush and imaginary settings that are based on collaged photographic snapshots of gardens. As the recipient of the Plaskett Award, Osahor plans to study the historical intersections of colonization and English garden design, which will serve as the basis of a new series of paintings.

Learn more about the Joseph Plaskett Award

Learn more about Emmanuel Osahor

Our entire collection of newsletters can be found on the ACI website, for you to read, share, and enjoy.

PAST NEWSLETTERS

THANK YOU TO OUR BENEFACTORS

The ACI is a not-for-profit educational charity that receives no government financing or public support. Our work is made possible by an important circle of friends, patrons, and benefactors.

If you would like to support our important work, please see this page.

Follow us on social media

Facebook
artcaninstitute/

Instagram
@artcaninstitute

Twitter
@artcaninstitute

Visit us at aci-iac.ca for more content on Canadian art and artists

Canadian Online Art Book Project

Purchase Available Print Books

Canadian Schools Art Education Program

Art Lecture Videos

Image Credits: **[1]** Joseph Tisiga, *In Lieu of Monuments Honour*, 2020, watercolour on paper, 70 x 70 cm. Courtesy of Joseph Tisiga and Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal. Photo credit: Paul Litherland. **[2]** Installation view of the exhibition *Black Drones in the Hive* at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 2020. Courtesy of Deanna Bowen. **[3]** Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, *Nannuppugut!*, 2021, polar bear skin, wooden frame, elasticated rope and projected video. Collection of the artist. © Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory. **[4]** Isabelle Hayeur, *L'anémone (Devil's Punch Bowl, Oregon)*, from the Underworlds series, 2019–20, digital photography (inkjet printing on photographic paper). Courtesy of Isabelle Hayeur. **[5]** James Hart, *The Dance Screen (The Scream Too)*, 2010–13, red cedar panel with abalone, mica, acrylic, wire and yew wood, 477.52 x 322.58 cm. Audain Art Museum Collection, Gift of Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa. Photo credit: Darby Magill Photography. **[6]** Shellie Zhang, *Still Life with Citrus*, from the Offerings to Both Past and Future Series, 2018–19. Courtesy of Shellie Zhang. **[7]** Germaine Arnaktauyok, *Sedna, Ruler of All Sea Animals*, 1994, etching, aquatint on paper, 18/50, 48.2 x 56.2 cm. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Gift of Moira Swinton and Bernard Léveillé (2019-316). Courtesy of Germaine Arnaktauyok. **[8]** André Fournelle, *États de choc (States of Shock)*, 1985, steel, brick, mortar, cement, paint, 15.51 m, Parc Summerlea, Montreal. Courtesy of Art Public Ville de Montréal. Photo credit: Guy L'Heureux. **[9]** Chris Donovan, *Dog with Pipeline*, 2019, inkjet print. Collection of the artist. © Chris Donovan. **[10]** Emmanuel Osahor, *Glory days*, 2021, oil and acrylic on canvas, 182.88 x 228.6 cm. Courtesy of Emmanuel Osahor, Galerie Nicolas Robert, Toronto, and BAND Gallery, Toronto.