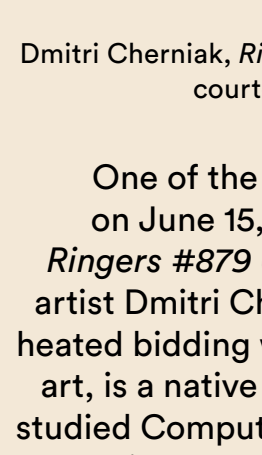


JUNE 30, 2023

IN THE KNOW: 10 NOTABLE STORIES ON ART IN CANADA

Our monthly roundup of news from across the country.

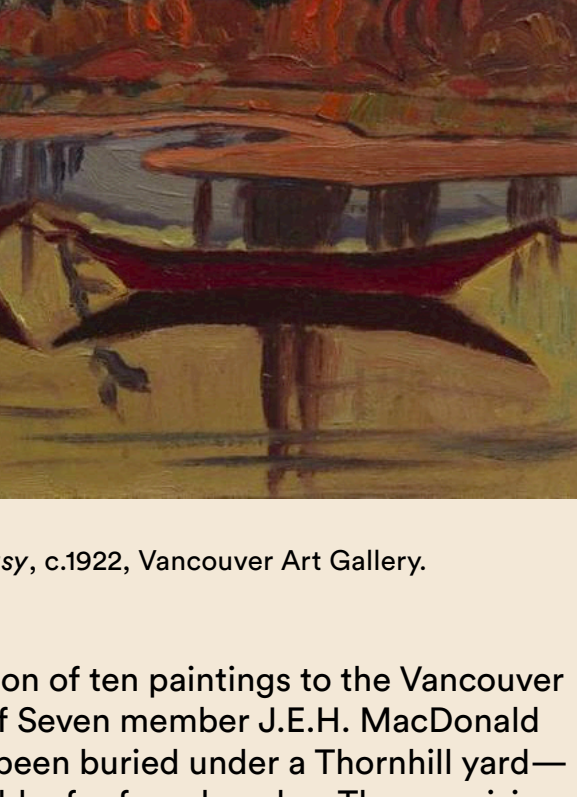


From record-breaking art sales to long-awaited announcements, and from art mysteries to commemorations and milestones, June has been a noteworthy month for news about visual culture in Canada. When we launched the ACI newsletter in 2020, we knew we wanted to focus on the latest developments in Canadian art, explore current events through thought-provoking works, and further engage with you, our readers. Over the past three years, you've sent us many thoughtful comments and suggestions, including a request to increase our news coverage—an idea that has taken off. We are delighted to present to you the third installment of our monthly roundup of the most significant and talked-about stories of the moment.

Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

1. MARKET WATCH

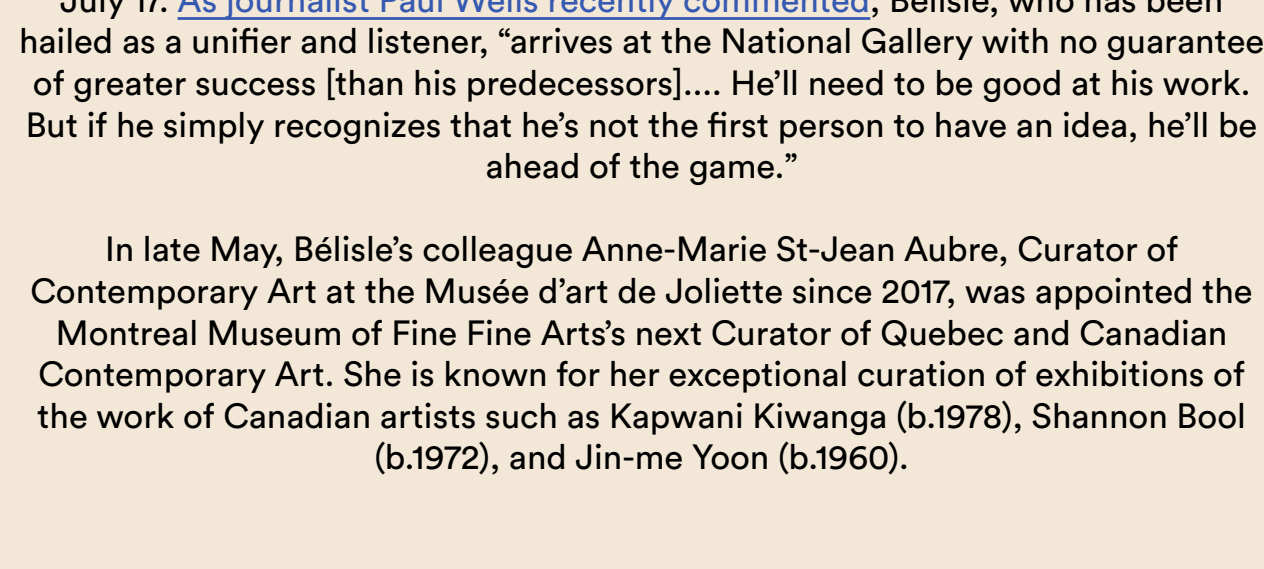


Dmitri Cherniak, *Ringers #879 (The Goose)*, 2021, courtesy of Sotheby's.

Dmitri Cherniak.

One of the highest priced works of art ever created by a Canadian sold on June 15, in New York at Sotheby's GRAILS Collection Part II auction. *Ringers #879 (The Goose)*, 2021, a non-fungible token (NFT) by the Canadian artist Dmitri Cherniak (b.1988), was purchased for \$6.2 million USD following a heated bidding war. Cherniak, who continues to dominate the field of generative art, is a native of Toronto who lives in New York City. [As Sotheby's reports](#), he studied Computer Science and Physiology at McGill University, where "he began creating art using algorithms and code." The procedurally generated *Ringers #879 (The Goose)* had gained infamy from its previous purchases, first by crypto enthusiast pixelpete, then by Singapore-based cryptocurrency hedge fund Three Arrows Capital, who rebuffed numerous offers from major NFT collectors.

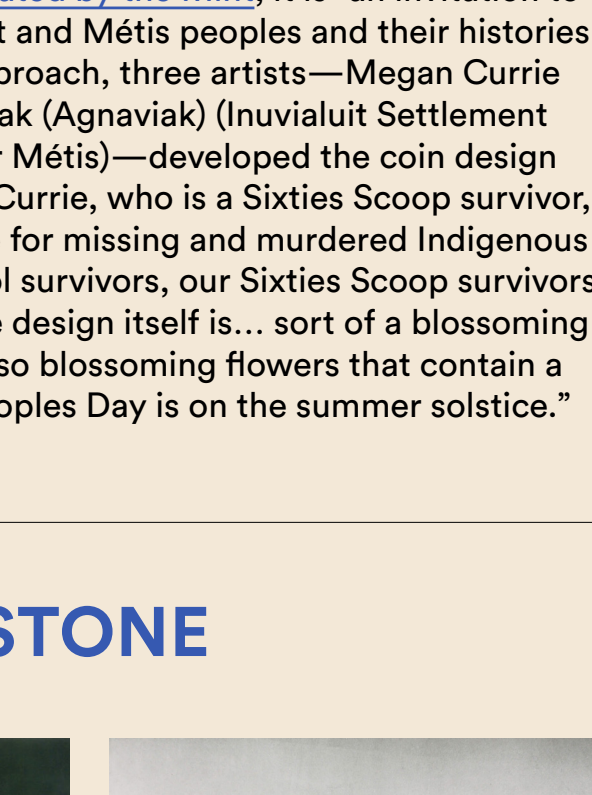
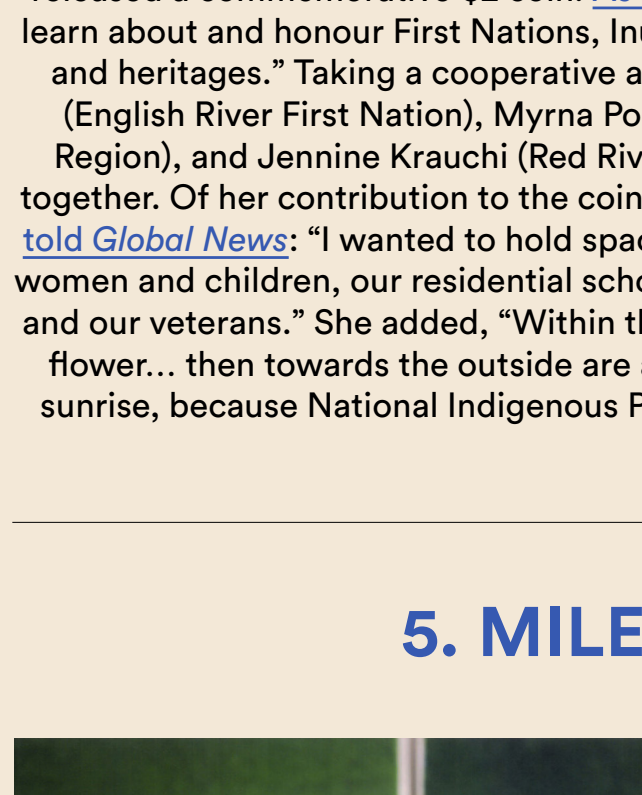
2. TRUE OR FALSE?



J.E.H. MacDonald, *Sketch for Mist Fantasy*, c.1922, Vancouver Art Gallery.

In 2015 a Toronto family donated a collection of ten paintings to the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG). Attributed to Group of Seven member J.E.H. MacDonald (1873–1932), the paintings had apparently been buried under a Thornhill yard—where they had been placed by MacDonald—for four decades. The surprising story seemed too good to be true. And quite possibly, as the *Globe and Mail* has recently reported, [that may have been the case](#). Experts raised concerns about the authenticity of the art and an investigation into its provenance was launched. Now, almost nine years later, the VAG has announced that this December it will present an exhibition in which the results of the Canadian Conservation Institute's scientific investigation into the works will be revealed.

3. APPOINTMENTS



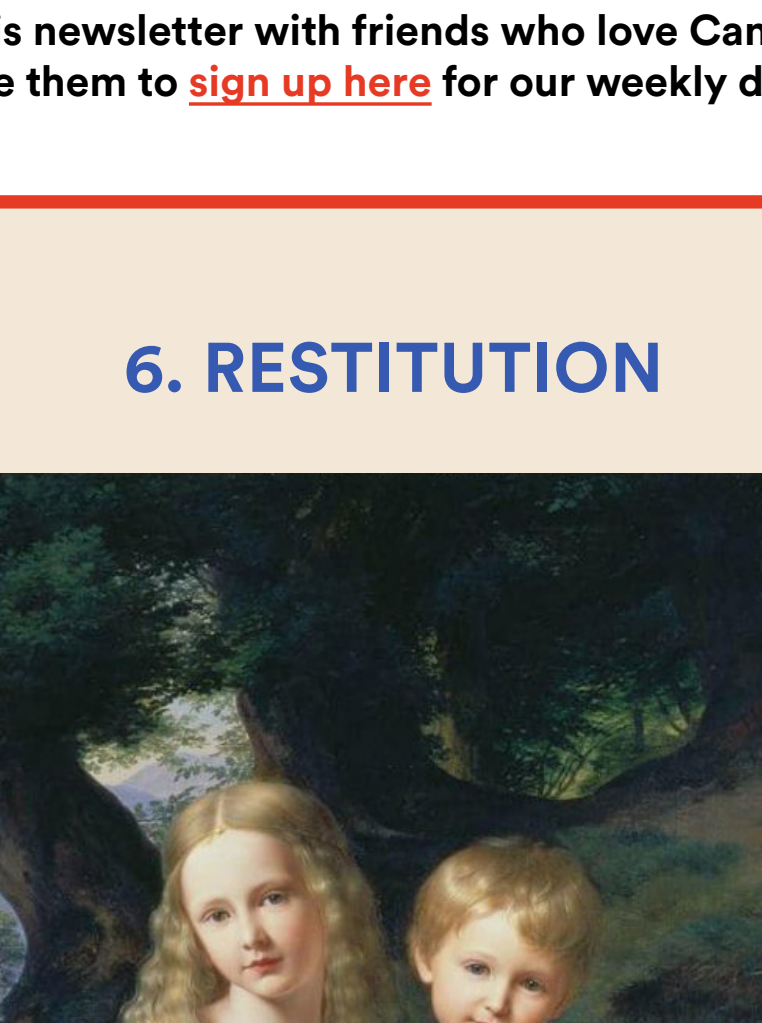
Jean-François Bélisle.

Anne-Marie St-Jean Aubre.

The Musée d'art de Joliette, just outside of Montreal, could be this country's most significant generator of visual arts administrative and curatorial talent. Earlier this month [it was announced](#) that its executive director, Jean-François Bélisle, will lead the National Gallery of Canada as Director and CEO starting July 17. [As journalist Paul Wells recently commented](#), Bélisle, who has been hailed as a unifier and listener, "arrives at the National Gallery with no guarantee of greater success [than his predecessors].... He'll need to be good at his work. But if he simply recognizes that he's not the first person to have an idea, he'll be ahead of the game."

In late May, Bélisle's colleague Anne-Marie St-Jean Aubre, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Musée d'art de Joliette since 2017, was appointed the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts's next Curator of Quebec and Canadian Contemporary Art. She is known for her exceptional curation of exhibitions of the work of Canadian artists such as Kapwani Kiwanga (b.1978), Shannon Bool (b.1972), and Jin-me Yoon (b.1960).

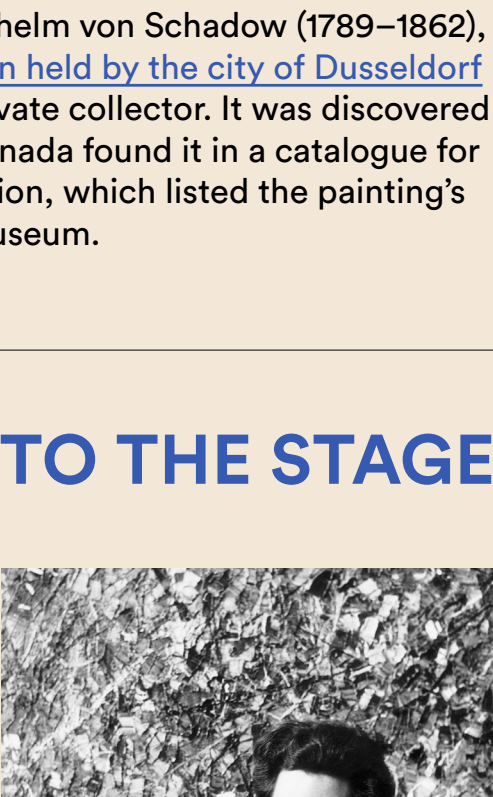
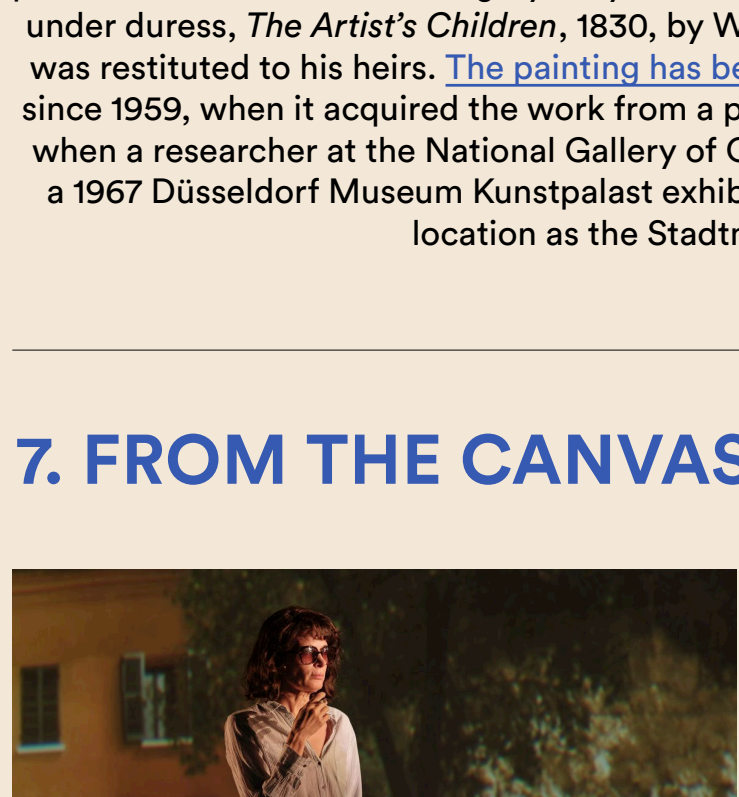
4. COMMEMORATION AND CURRENCY



National Indigenous Peoples Day \$2 commemorative circulation coin, 2023, courtesy of the Royal Canadian Mint.

On June 21, to mark National Indigenous Peoples Day, the Royal Canadian Mint released a commemorative \$2 coin. [As stated by the Mint](#), it is "an invitation to learn about and honour First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their histories and heritages." Taking a cooperative approach, three artists—Megan Currie (English River First Nation), Myrna Pokiak (Agnaviak) (Inuvialuit Settlement Region), and Jennine Krauchi (Red River Métis)—developed the coin design together. Of her contribution to the coin, Currie, who is a Sixties Scoop survivor, [told *Global News*](#): "I wanted to hold space for missing and murdered Indigenous women and children, our residential school survivors, our Sixties Scoop survivors and our veterans." She added, "Within the design itself is... sort of a blossoming flower... then towards the outside are also blossoming flowers that contain a sunrise, because National Indigenous Peoples Day is on the summer solstice."

5. MILESTONE



Françoise Sullivan in her studio, 2007, photograph by François Lafrance, archive of the artist.

Françoise Sullivan, *Dance in the Snow (Danse dans la neige)*, 1948, from the album *Danse dans la neige* (1977).

Legendary Montreal artist Françoise Sullivan (b.1923) turned 100 years old on June 10, marking over eight decades of groundbreaking creative output. A founding member of the Automatistes movement in 1940s Quebec, Sullivan initially trained as a dancer before finding herself drawn to Fauvism and Cubism, writing about the intersections of the visual arts and dance in the manifesto *Refus global*. Her extensive career—which has encompassed sculpture, painting, photography, and dance—shows no signs of slowing down. On May 10, Galerie de l'UQAM in Montreal [launched an online exhibition](#) of Sullivan's work. Another show will open at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in the fall. "My painting has changed a bit from what it was before," the ever-inventive [Sullivan told the *Globe and Mail*](#). "I'm just hoping that it will be refreshing for people to see something different from me." A large-scale mural is being organized by MU in Sullivan's honour on the wall of the Hyatt Place hotel at Place Dupuis in Montreal, to be completed by summer's end. To learn more about Sullivan and her remarkably accomplished career, read the Art Canada Institute publication [Françoise Sullivan: Life & Work](#) by Annie Gérin.

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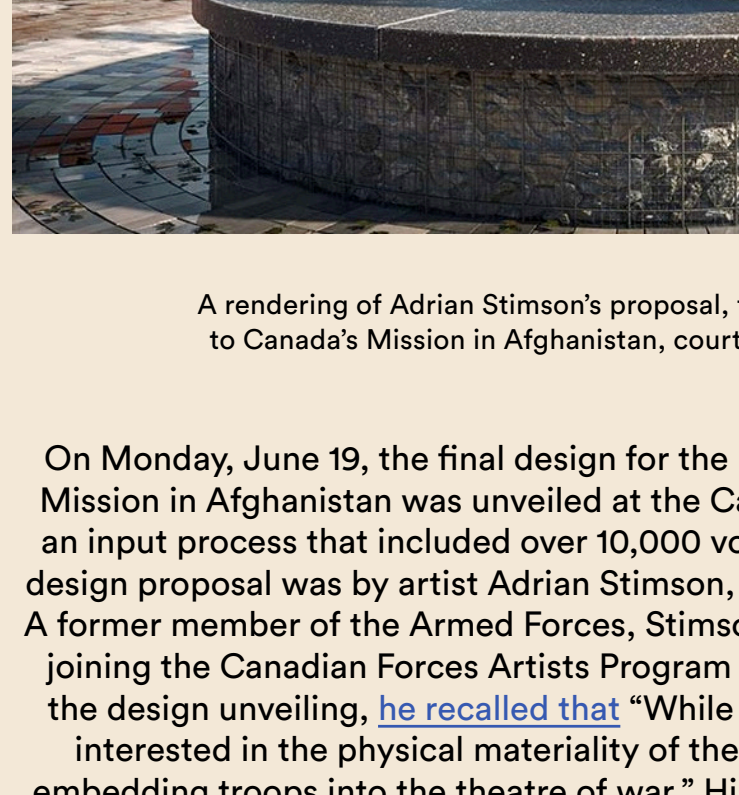
6. RESTITUTION



Wilhelm von Schadow, *The Artist's Children / Bildnis der Kinder des Künstlers*, 1830, courtesy of ArtNet News.

In 1937, under Gestapo order, Düsseldorf-born Max Stern was forced to liquidate over 300 works in a forced auction. After Stern escaped Nazi Germany, he built a new life for himself in Montreal, where he became the owner of the Dominion Gallery, Emily Carr's (1871–1945) representative, and one of the country's most prominent art dealers. Now eighty-six years later, one of the works that Stern lost under duress, *The Artist's Children*, 1830, by Wilhelm von Schadow (1789–1862), was restituted to his heirs. [The painting has been held by the city of Düsseldorf](#) since 1959, when it acquired the work from a private collector. It was discovered when a researcher at the National Gallery of Canada found it in a catalogue for a 1967 Düsseldorf Museum Kunstpalast exhibition, which listed the painting's location as the Stadtmuseum.

7. FROM THE CANVAS TO THE STAGE

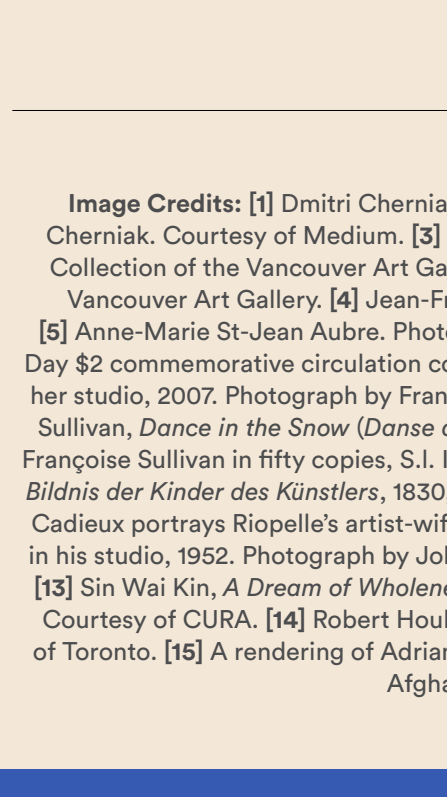


Anne-Marie Cadieux portrays Jean Paul Riopelle's artist-wife Joan Mitchell, courtesy of the *Globe and Mail*.

Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio, 1952, photograph by John Craven.

In the year of the centenary of Jean Paul Riopelle's (1923–2002) birth, *Le projet Riopelle*, a new play by Quebec-based director Robert Lépage, has opened to positive reviews in Quebec City, with plans to tour to Ottawa this December. [According to the National Arts Centre](#), the production's focal point is the artist's *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg*, 1992, "which he began the day after the announcement of the death of his soulmate, painter Joan Mitchell." Offering a deep dive into the archives and life of Riopelle, the theatrical production also includes projections of paintings by lesser-known contemporaries of the Quebec giant. Reviews have particularly focused on the show's honest biography of the Automatistes co-founder, [with the *Globe and Mail*](#) noting its reasoned critique of the great Canadian painter.

8. AN ARTIST YOU WANT TO KNOW



Sin Wai Kin.



Sin Wai Kin, *A Dream of Wholeness in Parts* (still), 2021, courtesy of CURA.

The thirty-two-year-old artist [Sin Wai Kin](#) (b.1991), who uses speculative fiction within drag performance, moving image, writing, and print to refigure attitudes towards gender, sexuality, and historical discourses of identity, has won (alongside American filmmaker Sky Hopinka [b.1984]) this year's prestigious Baloise Art Prize at the Swiss iteration of Art Basel. The \$44,000 award is granted to emerging artists, and represents a commitment on behalf of the European insurance giant to purchase works by Sin and Hopinka. Born in Toronto, Sin now works in London, and was previously a 2022 Turner Prize nominee.

9. IN HONOUR

Robert Houle receiving an honorary doctorate this spring, courtesy of University of Toronto.

Robert Houle (b.1947), the seventy-six-year-old Saulteaux First Nations artist, curator, critic, and educator, [was recently awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Toronto](#). This accolade follows the opening of Houle's touring exhibition, *Red is Beautiful*, at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. One of Houle's first major international retrospectives, *Red is Beautiful* celebrates fifty years of breaking barriers in his career. Houle previously served as the first Indigenous curator of contemporary Indigenous art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, now known as the Canadian Museum of History, and as a professor of Indigenous Studies at OCAD University, where he mentored artists including Bonnie Davine (b.1952) and Michael Belmore (b.1971). Read more about Houle in the Art Canada Institute publication [Robert Houle: Life & Work](#) by Shirley Madill.

10. PUBLIC MONUMENT

A rendering of Adrian Stimson's proposal for the National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan, courtesy of Canadian Heritage.

On Monday, June 19, the final design for the National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan was unveiled at the Canadian War Museum. Following an input process that included over 10,000 votes from the public, the winning design proposal was by artist Adrian Stimson, a member of Siksika First Nation. A former member of the Armed Forces, Stimson spent time in Afghanistan after joining the Canadian Forces Artists Program as a civilian in 2010. Speaking at the design unveiling, [he recalled that](#) "While I was [in Afghanistan], I became interested in the physical materiality of the bases, the industrial nature of embedding troops into the theatre of war." His circular design is inspired by an Indigenous medicine wheel and is sectioned into four quadrants, each with a bronze flak jacket and helmet hanging from a cross.

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Image Credits: [1] Dmitri Cherniak, *Ringers #879 (The Goose)*, 2021. Courtesy of Sotheby's. [2] Dmitri Cherniak. Courtesy of Medium. [3] J.E.H. MacDonald, *Sketch for Mist Fantasy*, c.1922, oil on paperboard. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Ephry and Melvin Merkur. Photo credit: Rachel Topham / Vancouver Art Gallery. [4] Jean-François Bélisle. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [5] Anne-Marie St-Jean Aubre. Photo credit: MMFA, Jean-François Brière. [6] National Indigenous Peoples Day \$2 commemorative circulation coin, 2023. Courtesy of the Royal Canadian Mint. [7] Françoise Sullivan in her studio, 2007. Photograph by François Lafrance. Archive of the artist. Courtesy of the artist. [8] Françoise Sullivan, *Dance in the Snow (Danse dans la neige)*, 1948, from the album *Danse dans la neige*. Published by Françoise Sullivan in fifty copies, S.I. Images Ouverture 1977. [9] Wilhelm von Schadow, *The Artist's Children / Bildnis der Kinder des Künstlers*, 1830, oil on canvas, 138 x 110 cm. Courtesy of ArtNet News. [10] Anne-Marie Cadieux portrays Riopelle's artist-wife Joan Mitchell, courtesy of the *Globe and Mail*. [11] Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio, 1952. Photograph by John Craven. Photo © John Craven. [12] Sin Wai Kin. Courtesy of Baloise. [13] Sin Wai Kin, *A Dream of Wholeness in Parts* (still), 2021, single-channel video, 4K, colour sound, 23 min. Courtesy of CURA. [14] Robert Houle receiving an honorary doctorate this spring. Courtesy of University of Toronto. [15] A rendering of Adrian Stimson's proposal for the National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan. Courtesy of Canadian Heritage.