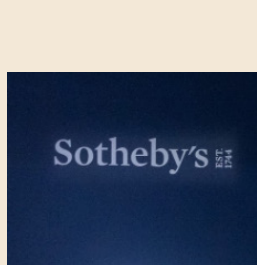


NOVEMBER 24, 2023

# IN THE KNOW: NOVEMBER 8 STORIES ON ART IN CANADA

*Our monthly roundup of the top headlines and most talked about stories from the Canadian art world.*

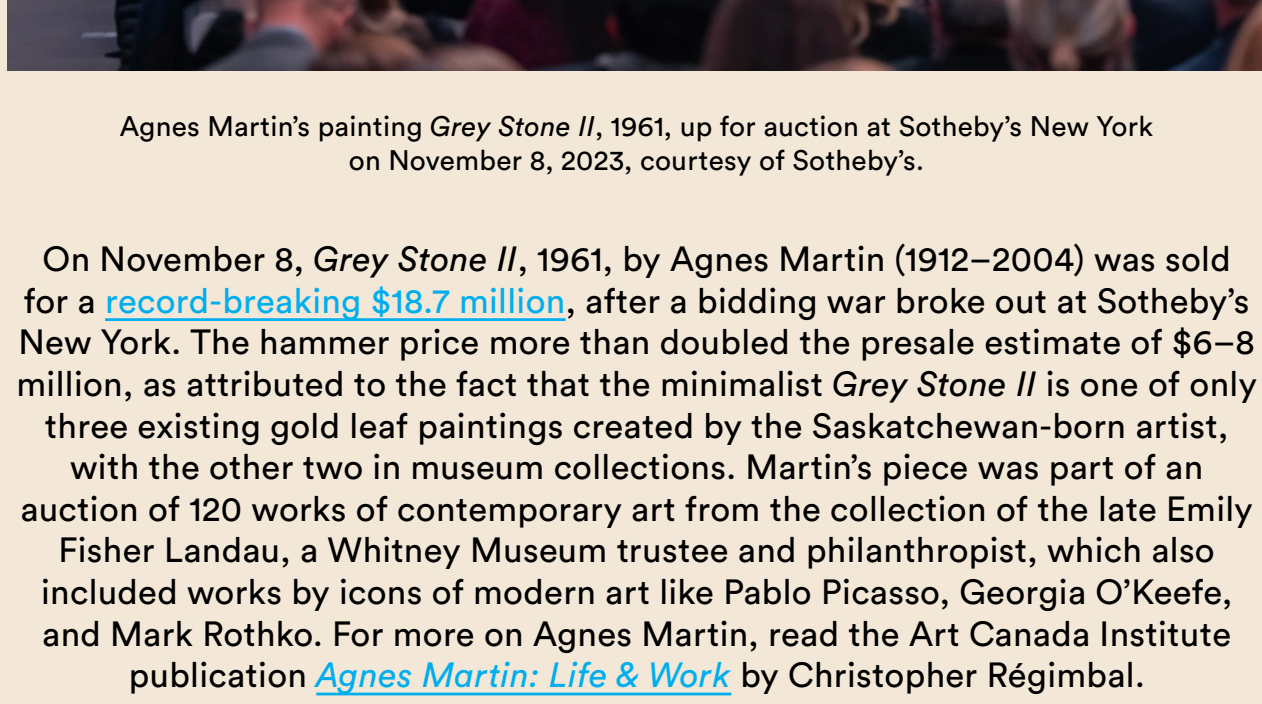


As we head into the holiday season, we bring you the latest stories and major developments from the Canadian art world. This month's news roundup covers a range of notable events, from record-breaking auction sales to the long-awaited announcement of the Sobey Art Award winner, and from the opening of Nia Centre's new Black-focused arts space in Toronto to a multi-million-dollar art donation that will transform the Cowichan Public Art Gallery's permanent collection.

**Sara Angel**  
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

## ART MARKET

*Record sale for Agnes Martin*

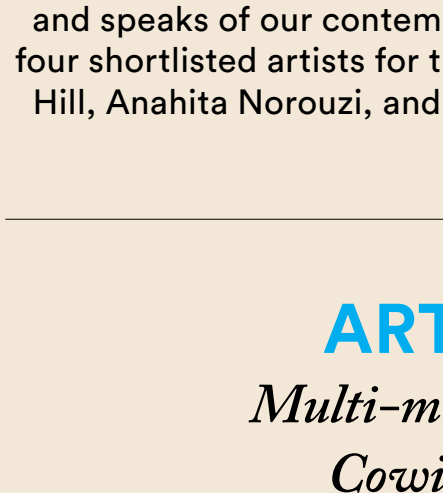


Agnes Martin's painting *Grey Stone II*, 1961, up for auction at Sotheby's New York on November 8, 2023, courtesy of Sotheby's.

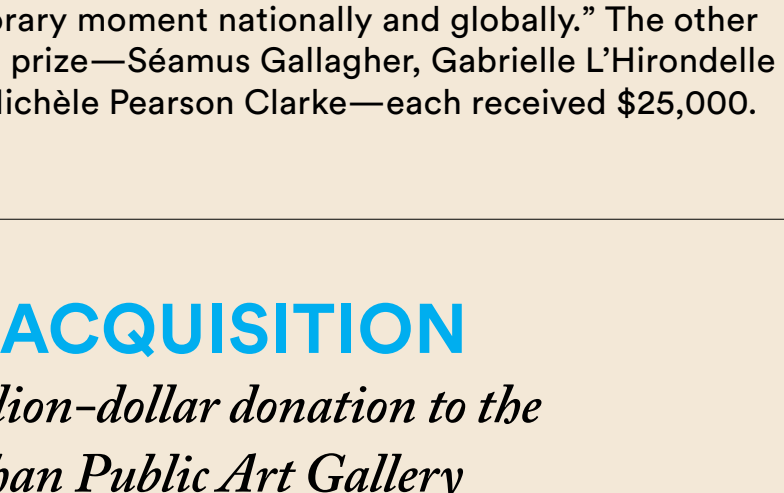
On November 8, *Grey Stone II*, 1961, by Agnes Martin (1912–2004) was sold for a **record-breaking \$18.7 million**, after a bidding war broke out at Sotheby's New York. The hammer price more than doubled the presale estimate of \$6–8 million, as attributed to the fact that the minimalist *Grey Stone II* is one of only three existing gold leaf paintings created by the Saskatchewan-born artist, with the other two in museum collections. Martin's piece was part of an auction of 120 works of contemporary art from the collection of the late Emily Fisher Landau, a Whitney Museum trustee and philanthropist, which also included works by icons of modern art like Pablo Picasso, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Mark Rothko. For more on Agnes Martin, read the Art Canada Institute publication [Agnes Martin: Life & Work](#) by Christopher Régimbal.

## PRIZES

*Kablusiak wins the Sobey Art Award*



Kablusiak, courtesy of the Cinic Studio.



Installation view of works by Kablusiak, 2023 Sobey Art Award Exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, October 13, 2023, to March 3, 2024.

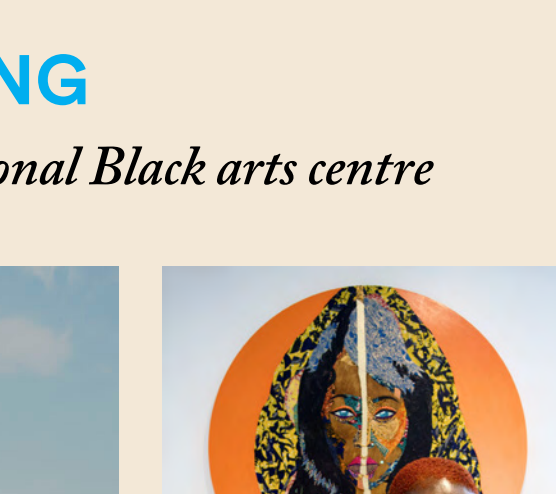
On November 18, the prestigious \$100,000 [Sobey Art Award](#) was presented to [Kablusiak](#) (b.1993), a Yellowknife-born, Calgary-based Inuvialuk artist, at an evening gala in Ottawa held by the National Gallery of Canada and the Sobey Art Foundation. From carvings of condom wrappers and tampons to plush figures inspired by traditional Ookpik (Inuit toy owls), works by the multidisciplinary artist fuse elements of pop and Inuit culture, combining humour and a camp aesthetic to, in their words, "express and situate myself as a person who was born up north and lives down south." The annual Sobey Art Award recognizes Canadian contemporary artists "whose work reflects upon and speaks of our contemporary moment nationally and globally." The other four shortlisted artists for the prize—Seamus Gallagher, Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill, Anahita Norouzi, and Michèle Pearson Clarke—each received \$25,000.

## ART ACQUISITION

*Multi-million-dollar donation to the Cowichan Public Art Gallery*



A.Y. Jackson, *Spring Hillside/Ojibway Graveyard*, 1949, collection of Dr. Fred and Ann Wurlitzer.

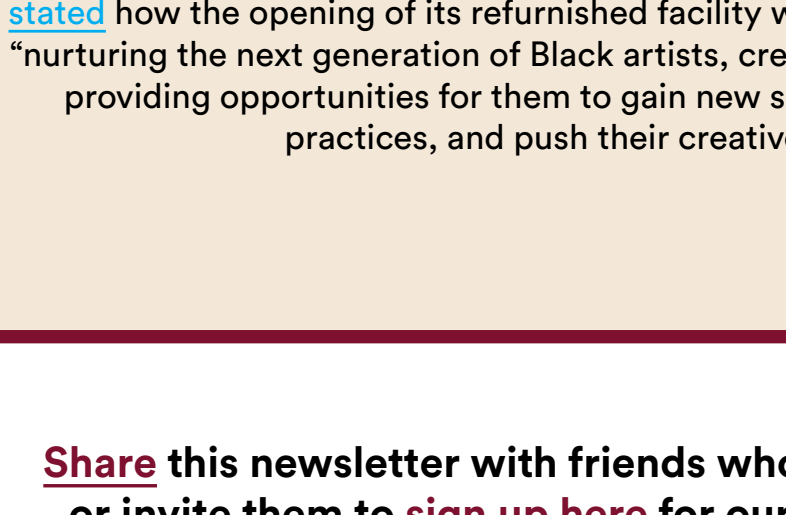


Cowichan Public Art Gallery in Duncan, British Columbia.

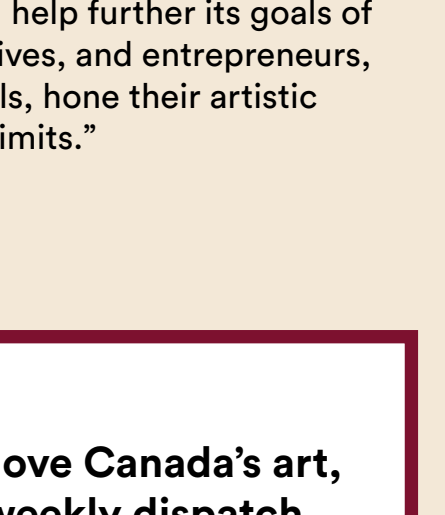
A **multi-million-dollar art donation** by Dr. Fred and Ann Wurlitzer—including thirty-two paintings by the Group of Seven—will transform the holdings of the Cowichan Public Art Gallery in the city of Duncan, British Columbia, and cement its reputation as a top cultural destination in the region. Announced on November 10, the donation is one of the largest ever made in Western Canada. Dr. Fred Wurlitzer, a retired surgeon, and his wife, Ann Wurlitzer, have long shared a deep passion and appreciation for collecting, preserving, and promoting Canadian art and culture.

## OPENING

*Canada's first-ever professional Black arts centre*



Nia Centre for the Arts, located at 524 Oakwood Avenue in Toronto, photograph by Robert Okine.



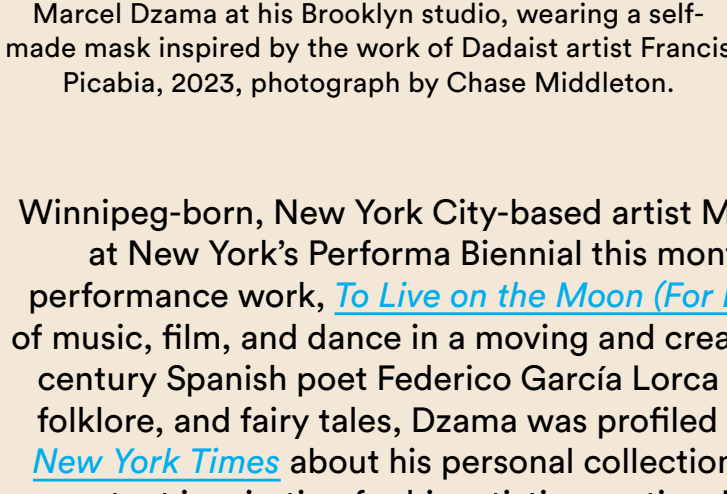
Apanaki Temitayo Minerve, Fall Artist in Residence at Nia Centre, photograph by Zahra Siddiqui.

Fifteen years in the making, Canada's first-ever professional Black arts centre officially opened its 14,000-square-foot renovated space in Toronto's Little Jamaica neighbourhood on November 2. [Nia Centre for the Arts](#) features a contemporary art gallery, a digital media hub, youth and artist zones, and multi-use event and exhibition spaces dedicated to promoting and showcasing multidisciplinary art by and for African Canadian and Afro-diasporic communities. Founded in 2008 as a not-for-profit organization, [Nia Centre](#) stated how the opening of its refurbished facility will help further its goals of "nurturing the next generation of Black artists, creatives, and entrepreneurs, providing opportunities for them to gain new skills, hone their artistic practices, and push their creative limits."

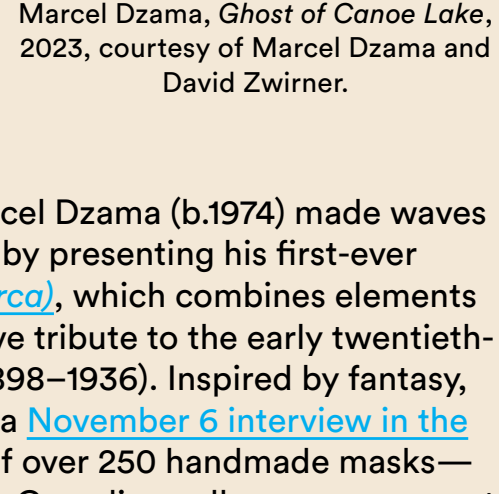
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## ARTIST TO KNOW: MARCEL DZAMA

*From Winnipeg to New York to Canada's McMichael*



Marcel Dzama at his Brooklyn studio, wearing a self-made mask inspired by the work of Dadaist artist Francis Picabia, 2023, photograph by Chase Middleton.

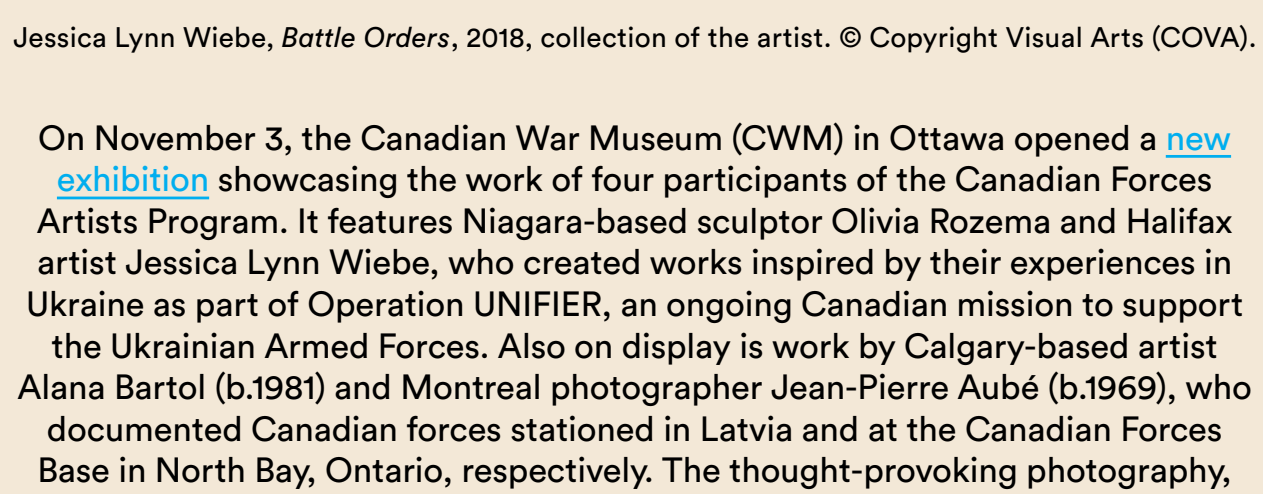


Marcel Dzama, *Ghost of Canoe Lake*, 2023, courtesy of Marcel Dzama and David Zwirner.

Winnipeg-born, New York City-based artist Marcel Dzama (b.1974) made waves at New York's Performa Biennial last year, presenting his first-ever performance work, *To Live on the Moon (For Lorca)*, which combines elements of music, film, and dance in a moving and creative tribute to the early twentieth-century Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898–1936). Inspired by fantasy, folklore, and fairy tales, Dzama was profiled in a [November 6 interview in the New York Times](#) about his personal collection of over 250 handmade masks—a constant inspiration for his artistic practice. For Canadian gallery-goers, recent paintings, installations, and video works by this fascinating multimedia artist will be on view as part of the exhibition [Ghosts of Canoe Lake: New Work by Marcel Dzama](#) at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario, on view from December 9 through June 9, 2024.

## ART OF REMEMBRANCE

*Works inspired by experiences in Ukraine*

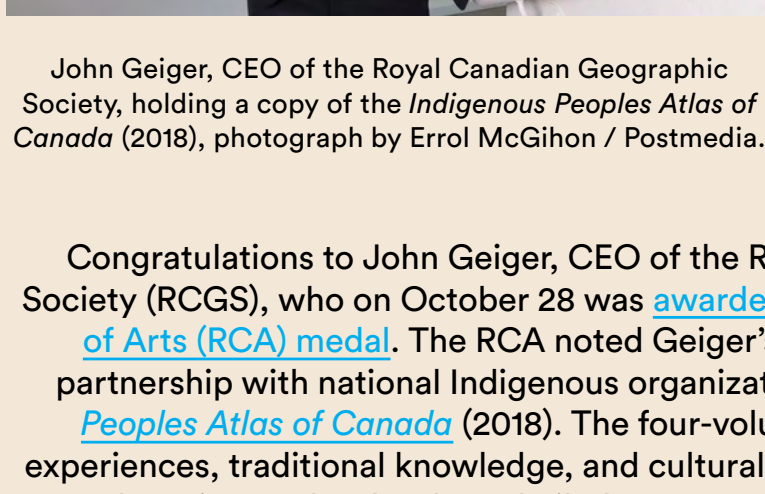


Jessica Lynn Wiebe, *Battle Orders*, 2018, collection of the artist. © Copyright Visual Arts (COVA).

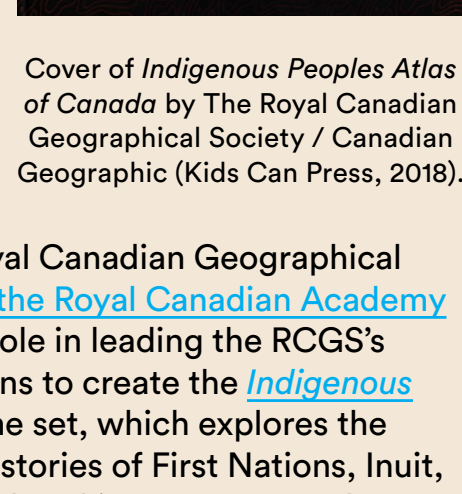
On November 3, the Canadian War Museum (CWM) in Ottawa opened a [new exhibition](#) showcasing the work of four participants of the Canadian Forces Artists Program. It features Niagara-based sculptor Olivia Rozema and Halifax artist Jessica Lynn Wiebe, who created works inspired by their experiences in Ukraine as part of Operation UNIFIER, an ongoing Canadian mission to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Also on display is Calgary-based artist Alana Bartol (b.1981) and Montreal photographer Jean-Pierre Aubé (b.1969), who documented Canadian forces stationed in Latvia and at the Canadian Forces Base in North Bay, Ontario, respectively. The thought-provoking photography, video, and installation works in the exhibition "[highlight] the significance and role of Canada's military operations," [said CWM Director General James Whittham](#).

## HONOURS

*John Geiger receives Royal Canadian Academy of Arts Medal*



John Geiger, CEO of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society, holding a copy of the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada* (2018), photograph by Errol McGihon / Postmedia.



Cover of *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada* by The Royal Canadian Geographical Society / Canadian Geographic (Kids Can Press, 2018).

Congratulations to John Geiger, CEO of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, who on October 28 was [awarded the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts \(RCA\) medal](#). The RCA noted Geiger's role in leading the RCGS's partnership with national Indigenous organizations to create the [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#) (2018). The four-volume set, which explores the experiences, traditional knowledge, and cultural histories of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, has been hailed as a ground-breaking resource and an important move towards reconciliation. The RCA medal, the organization's highest honour, recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the social, financial, or professional standing of visual artists in Canada.

## IN MEMORIAM

*Ronald Malcolm Lambert (1927–2023)*



Ronald Malcolm Lambert in his basement studio with his work in 2017, photograph by Jason Liebrechts / Metroland.

[Ronald Malcolm Lambert](#) (1927–2023), an Abstract Expressionist painter and prominent Oshawa commercial artist, passed away on October 29 at the age of ninety-six. Lambert was one of the first artists to introduce abstract painting to his hometown of Oshawa in the 1940s and 1950s. He was a friend of Painters Eleven member Alexandra Luke (1901–1967), who in 1952 [included his work](#) in the groundbreaking Canadian Abstract Exhibition she organized in Oshawa—the earliest exhibition of exclusively abstract art ever held in the country. Lambert is also known for designing the 1992 New Brunswick 25-cent coin commemorating the 125th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. In 2018, he received the professional artist award from the City of Oshawa in recognition of his leadership within the artistic and cultural community.

## THANK YOU TO OUR BENEFACTORS

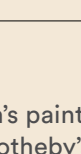
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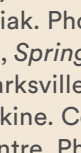
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