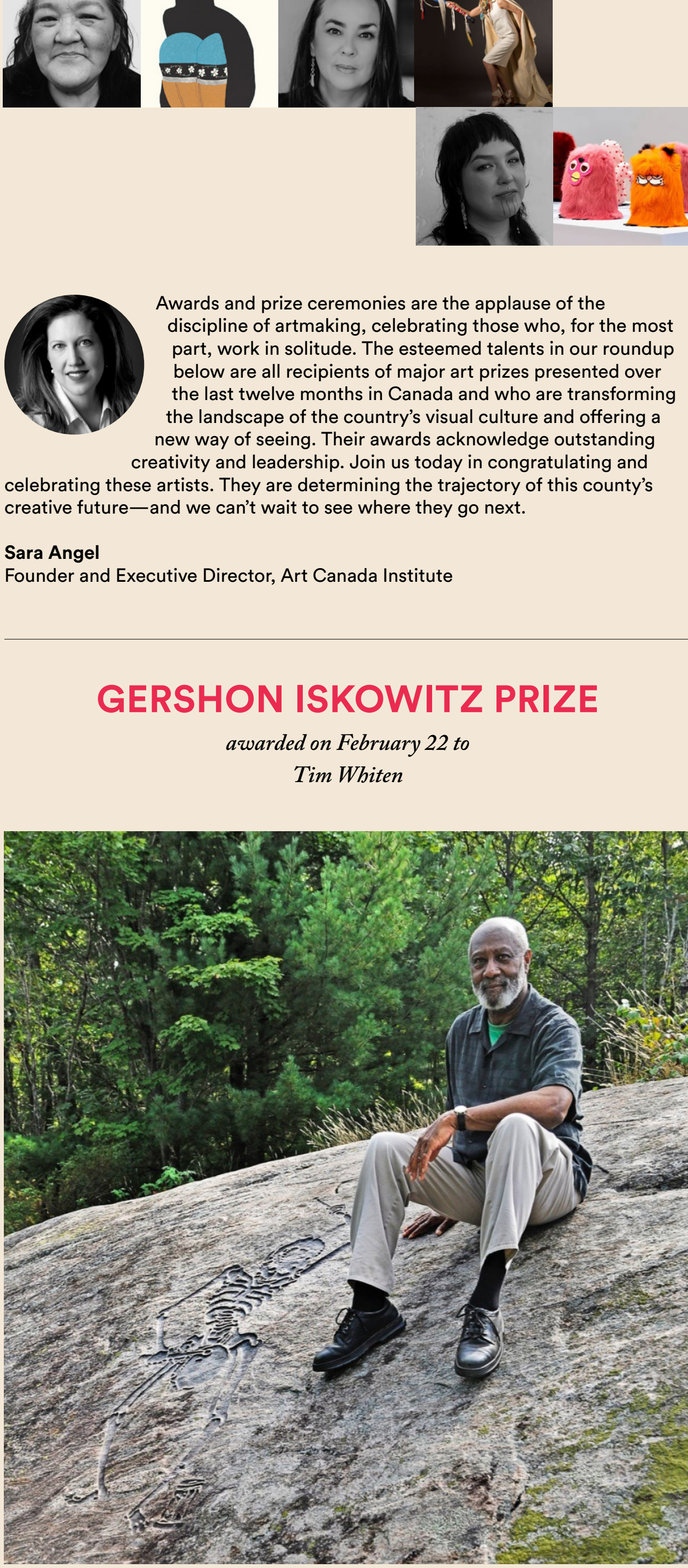


DECEMBER 1, 2023

TAKING THE PRIZE 2023 CANADIAN ART AWARD WINNERS

*Who in Canada won this year's most prestigious art prizes?
Here's a look at the talents defining and shaping this country's
art with their groundbreaking work.*



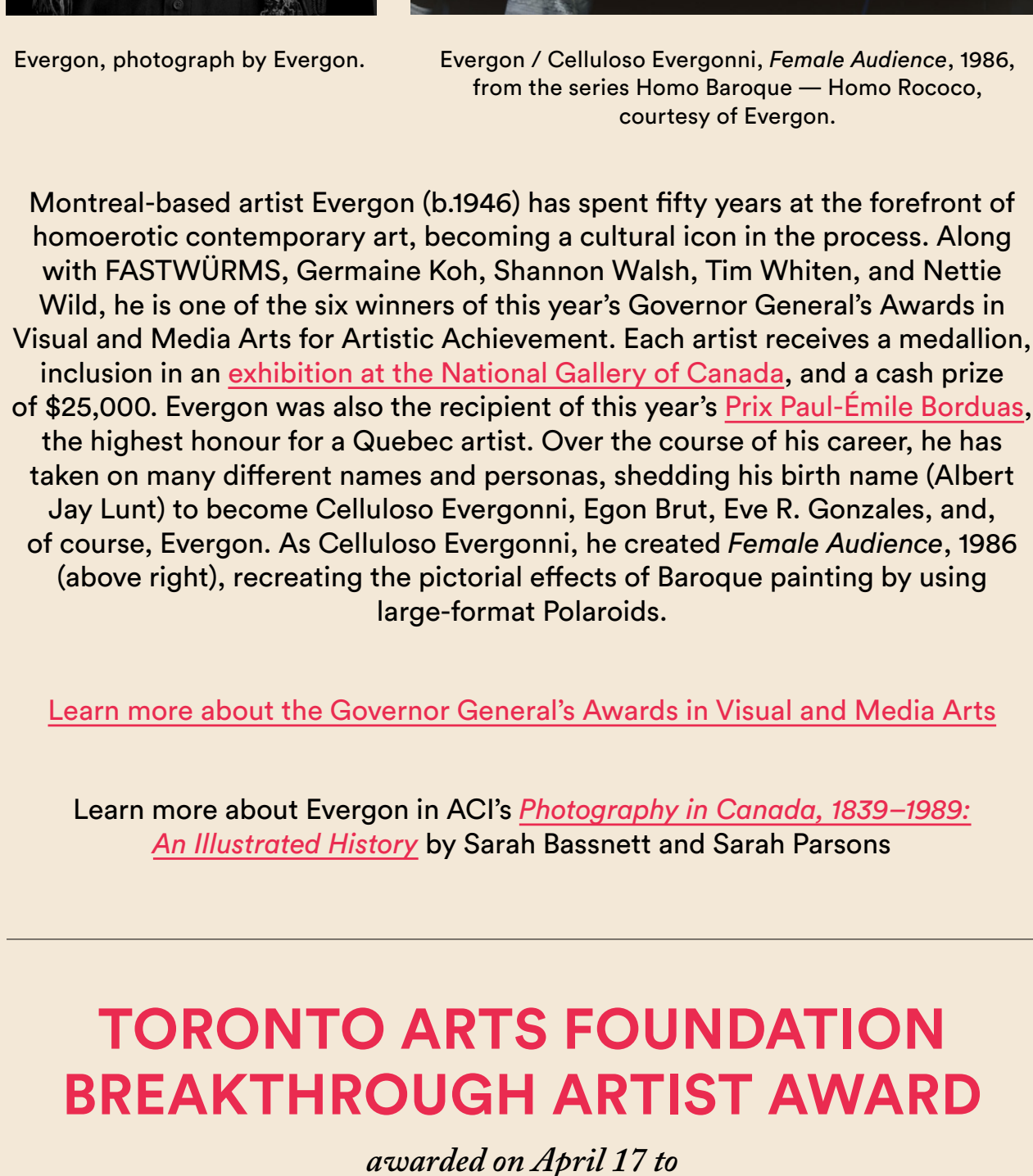
Awards and prize ceremonies are the applause of the discipline of artmaking, celebrating those who, for the most part, work in solitude. The esteemed talents in our roundup below are all recipients of major art prizes presented over the last twelve months in Canada and who are transforming the landscape of the country's visual culture and offering a new way of seeing. Their awards acknowledge outstanding creativity and leadership. Join us today in congratulating and celebrating these artists. They are determining the trajectory of this country's creative future—and we can't wait to see where they go next.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

GERSHON ISKOWITZ PRIZE

awarded on February 22 to

Tim Whiten



Tim Whiten, courtesy of Mehraban Mehrabani.

Using glass and non-traditional sculptural materials such as leather, chewing gum, and skulls, Toronto-based artist Tim Whiten (b.1941) explores the nature of myth, spirituality, and transcendence. As the winner of the 2022 Gershon Iskowitz Prize, which celebrates outstanding contributions to visual art, Whiten will have a solo exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2025. The annual prize was launched in 1986 by Canadian painter and Holocaust survivor [Gershon Iskowitz](#) (1919–1988), who wanted to pay the favour forward after winning a 1967 Canada Council travel grant. Whiten is a senior artist represented by Toronto's Olga Korper Gallery, professor emeritus at York University, and the subject of the upcoming Art Canada Institute publication *Tim Whiten: Life & Work* (2025) by Carolyn Bell Farrell.

[Learn more about the Gershon Iskowitz Prize](#)

[Learn more about Tim Whiten](#)

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

awarded on March 28 to

*Evergon, FASTWÜRMS, Germaine Koh,
Shannon Walsh, Tim Whiten, and Nettie Wild*



Evergon, photograph by Evergon.

Evergon / Celluloso Evergonni, *Female Audience*, 1986, from the series *Homo Baroque* — Homo Rocco, courtesy of Evergon.

Montreal-based artist Evergon (b.1946) has spent fifty years at the forefront of homoerotic contemporary art, becoming a cultural icon in the process. Along with FASTWÜRMS, Germaine Koh, Shannon Walsh, Tim Whiten, and Nettie Wild, he is one of the six winners of this year's Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts for Artistic Achievement. Each artist receives a medallion, inclusion in an [exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada](#), and a cash prize of \$25,000. Evergon was also the recipient of this year's [Prix Paul-Émile Borduas](#), the highest honour for a Quebec artist. Over the course of his career, he has taken on many different names and personas, shedding his birth name (Albert Jay Lumt) to become Celluloso Evergonni, Egon Brut, Eve K. Gonzales, and, of course, Evergon. As Celluloso Evergonni, he created *Female Audience*, 1986 (above right), recreating the pictorial effects of Baroque painting by using large-format Polaroids.

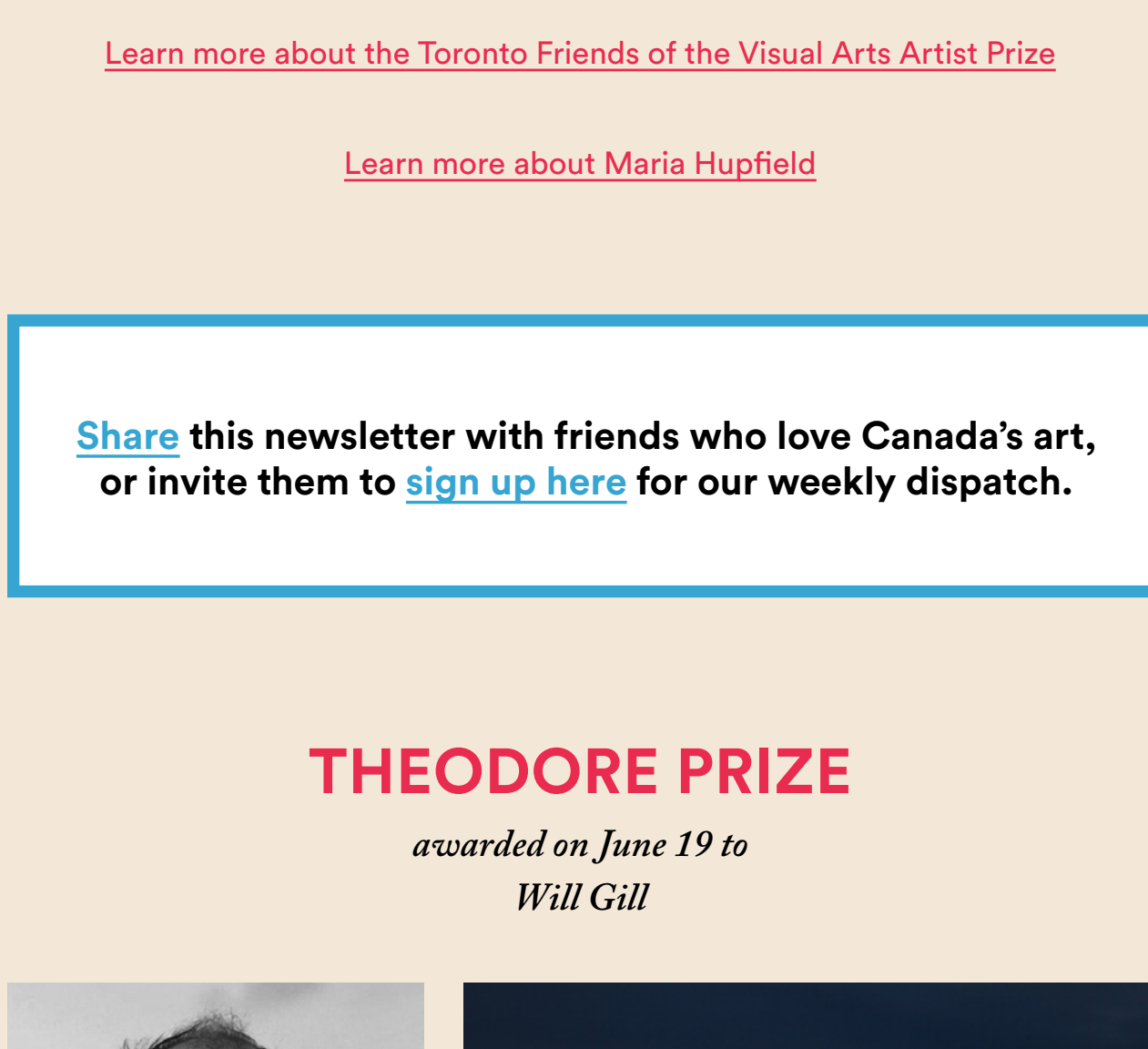
[Learn more about the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts](#)

Learn more about Evergon in ACI's [Photography in Canada, 1839–1989: An Illustrated History](#) by Sarah Bassnett and Sarah Parsons

TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION BREAKTHROUGH ARTIST AWARD

awarded on April 17 to

Oluseye Ogunlesi



Oluseye Ogunlesi, courtesy of Oluseye Ogunlesi.

Oluseye Ogunlesi and Toluwase Rufai, *Black Ark*, 2022, courtesy of Oluseye Ogunlesi and Luminato Festival.

Nigerian Canadian multidisciplinary artist Oluseye Ogunlesi (b.1986) uses what he terms "diasporic debris"—found objects from his travels across the Atlantic Ocean—to explore Black identities through time, geographies, and earthly and spiritual realms. Ogunlesi is this year's winner of the Toronto Arts Foundation Breakthrough Artist Award, which grants a cash prize of \$10,000. Pictured here is his and Toluwase Rufai's experiential sculpture *Black Ark*, 2022 (above right), whose shape resembles the nose of a slave ship. It is a monument to the 1792 exodus of approximately 1,200 formerly enslaved Black Nova Scotian settlers from Halifax to Sierra Leone. The work speaks to a dual migration—of Africans forcibly brought to the Americas and of their descendants returning to Africa for a new beginning.

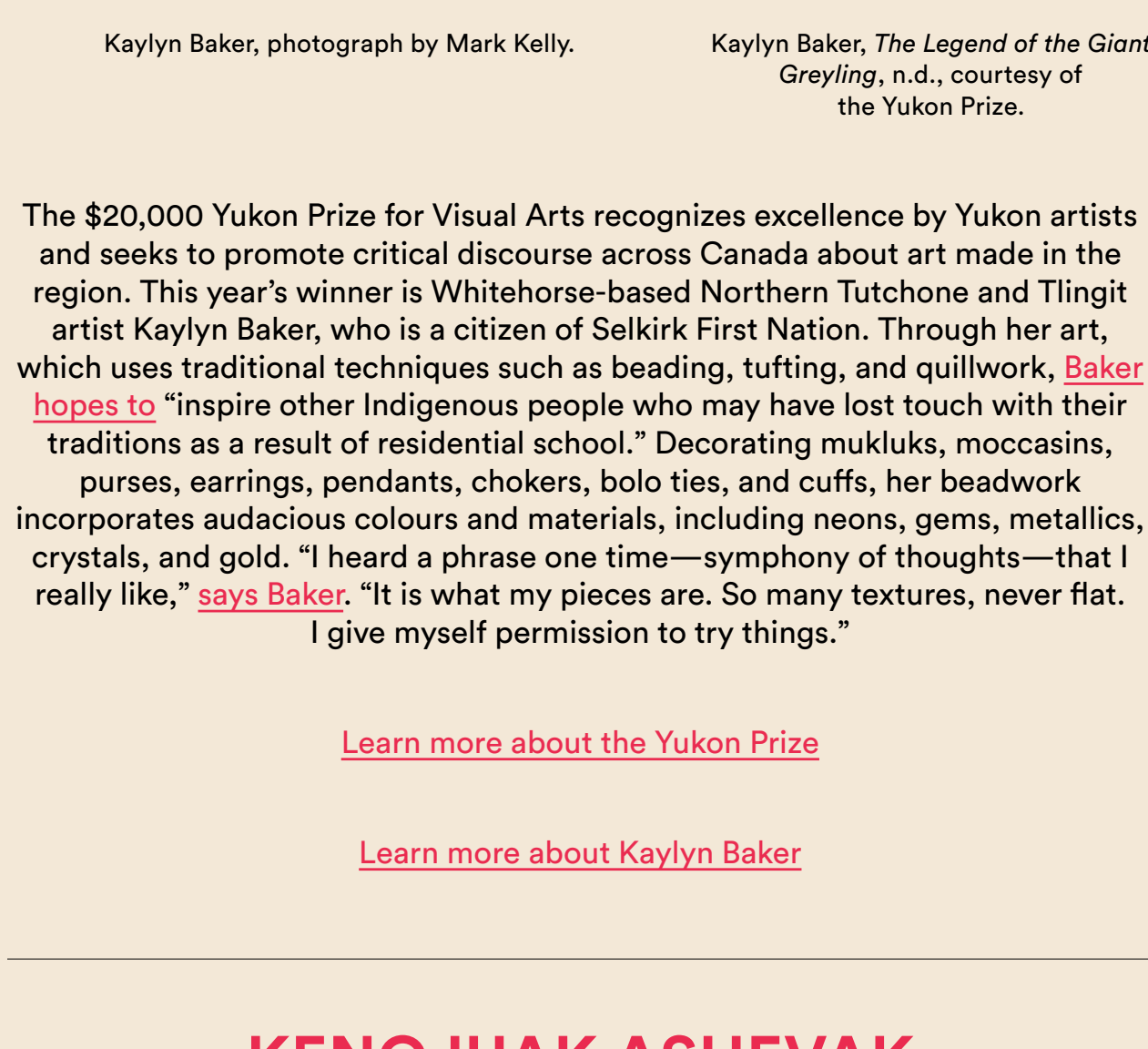
[Learn more about the Toronto Arts Foundation Breakthrough Artist Award](#)

[Learn more about Oluseye Ogunlesi](#)

SCOTIABANK NEW GENERATION PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

awarded on April 19 to

Hannah Doucet, Wynne Neilly, and Gonzalo Reyes Rodriguez



Wynne Neilly, photograph by Wynne Neilly.

Wynne Neilly, *Tabletop Portrait (Jules)*, 2021, courtesy of Wynne Neilly.

As one of the three winners of the 2023 Scotiabank New Generation Photography Award, Wynne Neilly (b.1990), a queer and trans artist based in Toronto, receives \$10,000 and is being featured in an [exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada](#) until January 7, 2024. In his practice, Neilly seeks to reveal and support the notion of individuality and non-normative presentations of gender identity as political liberation and personal healing.^[1] He tenderly documents members and locales that form his community, as in *Tabletop Portrait (Jules)*, 2021 (above right), which records a friend in a moment of repose and contemplation. Represented by [Stephen Bulger Gallery](#) in Toronto, Neilly also photographed actor Elliot Page for a much-publicized 2021 cover of *TIME* magazine.

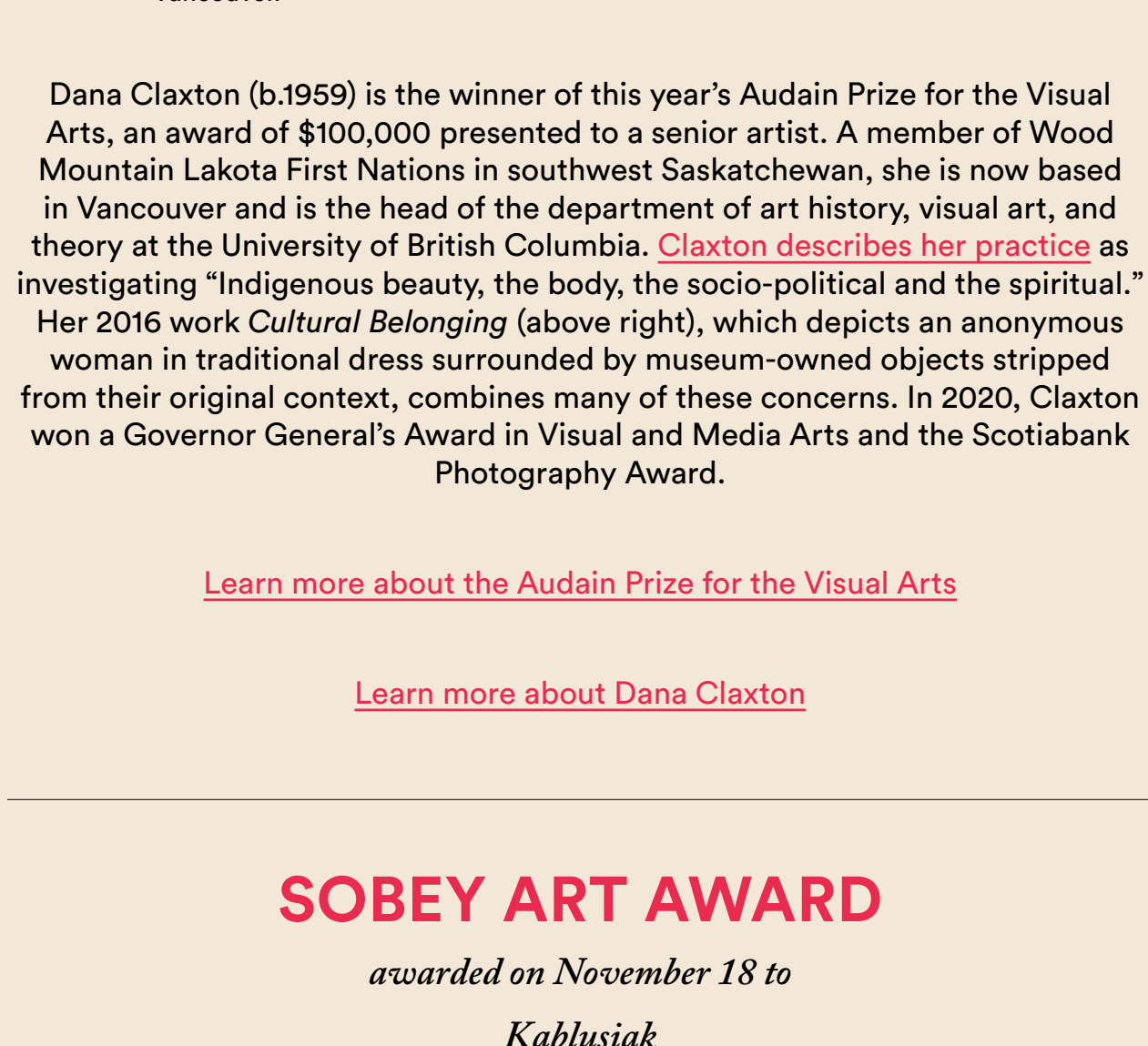
[Learn more about the New Generation Photography Award](#)

[Learn more about Wynne Neilly](#)

SCOTIABANK PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

awarded on May 4 to

Ken Lum



Ken Lum, courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Ken Lum, *Melly Shum HATES Her Job*, 1989, courtesy of Ken Lum.

"MELLY SHUM HATES HER JOB," proclaims this image (above right) from the Portrait-Logo series by Vancouver-born Ken Lum (b.1956), winner of the 2023 Scotiabank Photography Award. The cult artwork was installed on the exterior of a museum in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and became such a beloved monument for disillusioned professionals that the museum was officially renamed Kunststituut Melly in 2021. Active since the 1990s, Lum is known around the world for his photography and installations. Currently chair of fine arts at the University of Pennsylvania's Weitzman School of Design in Philadelphia, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2017 and was the recipient of a Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2020. For winning the Scotiabank Photography Award, Lum receives a \$50,000 cash prize; he will also have a solo exhibition at the 2024 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival and see his work published in a book by Steidl.

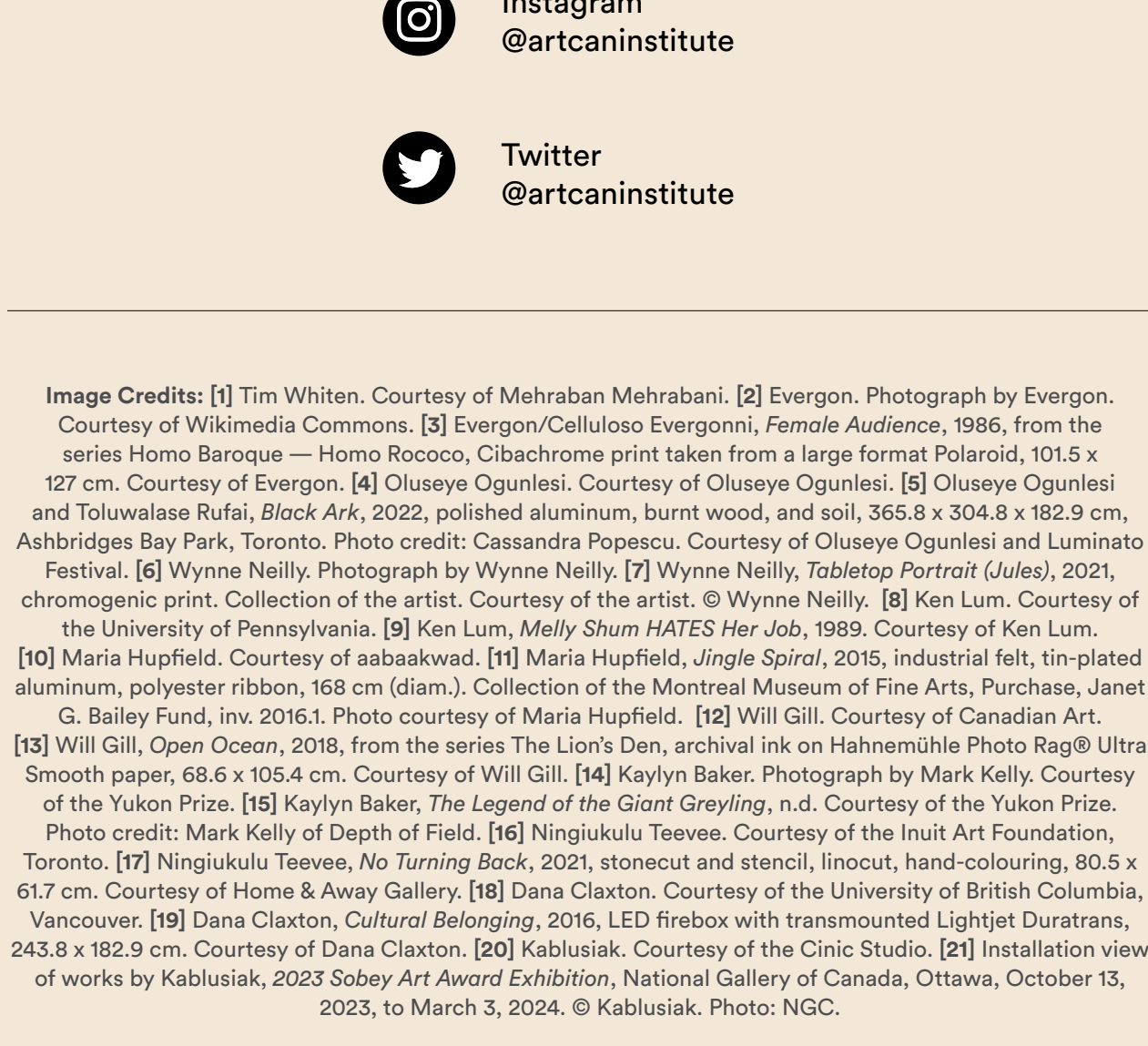
[Learn more about the Scotiabank Photography Award](#)

[Learn more about Ken Lum](#)

TORONTO FRIENDS OF THE VISUAL ARTS ARTIST PRIZE

awarded on May 26 to

Maria Hupfield



Maria Hupfield, courtesy of aabaakwad.

Maria Hupfield, *Jingle Spiral*, 2015, courtesy of Maria Hupfield.

Toronto-based artist Maria Hupfield (b.1975), who describes herself as an "off-rez urban Anishinaabe" and a member of Wasauksing First Nation, Ontario, is the winner of the \$15,000 Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts Artist Prize. She was also recently appointed Canadian Research Chair in Transdisciplinary Indigenous Arts at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Shown here is Hupfield's work *Jingle Spiral*, 2015 (above right), a circular piece of grey industrial felt embellished with tin cones that is also an object of clothing. Its ornaments, which produce sounds as the wearer moves their body, can live, Hupfield incorporates her handmade felt creations, such as *Jingle Spiral*, into live performances that reference Anishinaabeg oral history and feminism.

[Learn more about the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts Artist Prize](#)

[Learn more about Maria Hupfield](#)

THEODORE PRIZE

awarded on June 19 to

Will Gill

Will Gill, courtesy of Canadian Art.

Will Gill, *Open Ocean*, 2018, from the series *The Lion's Den*, courtesy of Will Gill.

There is a new player on this year's roster of awards: the Theodore Prize, led by the Throop Family Foundation and administered by the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, which presents \$20,000 annually to an esteemed Atlantic Canadian artist. Will Gill (b.1969), a long-time resident of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, is the prize's inaugural recipient. Gill was longlisted for a 2021 Scotiabank Photography Award and 2023 Sobey Art Award, and had a solo exhibition, *From The Lion's Den*, at Grenfell Art Gallery in 2020. The fluorescent-pink boat scene seen here, *Open Ocean*, 2018 (above right), was created in 2017 during Gill's residency at Fogo Island Arts.

[Learn more about the Theodore Prize](#)

[Learn more about Will Gill](#)

YUKON PRIZE FOR VISUAL ARTS

awarded on September 16 to

Kaylyn Baker

Kaylyn Baker, photograph by Mark Kelly.

Kaylyn Baker, *The Legend of the Giant Greyling*, n.d., courtesy of the Yukon Prize.

The \$20,000 Yukon Prize for Visual Arts recognizes excellence by Yukon artists and seeks to promote critical discourse across Canada about art made in the region. This year's winner is Whitehorse-based Northern Tutchone and Tlingit artist Kaylyn Baker, who is a citizen of Selkirk First Nation. Through her art, which uses traditional techniques such as beading, tufting, and quillwork, [Baker hopes to](#) "inspire other Indigenous people who may have lost touch with their traditions as a result of residential school." Decorating mukluks, moccasins, purses, earrings, pendants, chokers, bolo ties, and cuffs, her beadwork incorporates audacious colours and materials, including neons, gems, metallics, crystals, and gold. "I heard a phrase one time—symphony of thoughts—that I really like," [says Baker](#). "It is what my pieces are. So many textures, never flat. I give myself permission to try things."

[Learn more about the Yukon Prize](#)

[Learn more about Kaylyn Baker](#)

KENOJUAK ASHEVAK MEMORIAL AWARD

awarded on September 22 to

Ningiukulu Teevee

Ningiukulu Teevee, courtesy of the Inuit Art Foundation, Toronto.

Ningiukulu Teevee, *No Turning Back*, 2021, courtesy of Home & Away Gallery.

Based in Kinnegait (Cape Dorset), Ningiukulu Teevee is the winner of the Kenjuak Ashevak Memorial Award, a \$20,000 biennial prize granted by the Inuit Art Foundation and supported by RBC Emerging Artists. At a ceremony held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery-Gaumjuq, it was announced that Teevee will have a solo exhibition there in 2025, as well as a dedicated residency, catalogue, and acquisition over the next two years. Teevee is known for her vibrant, playful depictions of animals and people in the Arctic, such as this piece (above right) portraying a human-bird in glorious colour and detail. The third recipient of the prize since its inauguration, Teevee has had work featured in every Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection since 2004 and been included in more than forty exhibitions around the world.

[Learn more about the Kenjuak Ashevak Memorial Award](#)

[Learn more about Ningiukulu Teevee](#)

AUDAIN PRIZE FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

awarded on September 25 to

Dana Claxton

Dana Claxton, courtesy of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Dana Claxton, *Cultural Belonging*, 2016, courtesy of Dana Claxton.

Dana Claxton (b.1959) is the winner of this year's Audain Prize for the Visual Arts, an award of \$100,000 presented to a senior artist. A member of Mountain Lakota First Nations in southwest Saskatchewan, she is now based in Vancouver and is the head of the department of art history, visual art, and theory at the University of British Columbia. [Claxton describes her practice as](#) investigating "Indigenous beauty, the body, the socio-political and the spiritual." Her 2016 work *Cultural Belonging* (above right), which depicts an anonymous woman in traditional dress surrounded by museum-owned objects stripped from their original context, combines many of these concerns. In 2020, Claxton won a Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and the Scotiabank Photography Award.

[Learn more about the Audain Prize for the Visual Arts](#)

[Learn more about Dana Claxton](#)

SOBEY ART AWARD

awarded on November 18 to

Kablusiak

Kablusiak, courtesy of Clinic Studio.

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

Kablusiak (b.1993), a Yellowknife-born, Calgary-based Inuvialuk artist, [received the prestigious \\$100,000 Sobeay Art Award](#) at an evening gala in Ottawa held by the National Gallery of Canada and the Sobeay Art Foundation. From carvings of condom wrappers and tampons to plush figures inspired by traditional Ojipiks (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 Sobeay 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—Séamus Gallagher, Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill, Anahita Norouzi, and Michèle Pearson Clarke—each received \$25,000.

[Learn more about the Sobeay Art Award](#)

[Learn more about Kablusiak](#)

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Image Credits: [1] Tim Whiten, Courtesy of Mehraban Mehrabani. [2] Evergon, Photograph by Evergon. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. [3] Evergon/Celluloso Evergonni, *Female Audience*, 1986, from the series *Homo Baroque* — Homo Rocco, Clichéchrome print taken from a large format Polaroid, 101.5 x 127 cm. Courtesy of Evergon. [4] Oluseye Ogunlesi. Courtesy of Oluseye Ogunlesi. [5] Ken Lum, Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania. [6] Ken Lum, *Melly Shum HATES Her Job*, 1989. Courtesy of Ken Lum. [7] Ningiukulu Teevee, *No Turning Back*, 2021, stonecut and stencil, linocut, hand-colouring, 80.5 x 61.7 cm. Courtesy of Home & Away Gallery. [8] Dana Claxton. Courtesy of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. [9] Dana Claxton, *Cultural Belonging*, 2016, LED firebox with translucent Lightpit Duratrans, 243.8 x 162.9 cm. Courtesy of Dana Claxton. [10] Kablusiak. Courtesy of the Clinic Studio. [21] Installation view of works by Kablusiak, 2023 Sobeay Art Award Exhibition, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, October 13, 2023, to March 3, 2024. © Kablusiak. Photo: NSC.