



Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts

Announcement of laureates

Ottawa, March 4 2003 - The Canada Council for the Arts today announced the names of the seven winners of the fourth annual Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts.

Artists Robert Archambeau, Alex Colville, Gathie Falk, Betty Goodwin, Walter Harris and Takao Tanabe, as well as arts educator and administrator Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne, will be presented with their awards by Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, and Canada Council Chairman Jean-Louis Roux at a ceremony at Rideau Hall on Monday, March 17.

"The laureates of this year's Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts brilliantly exemplify the quality and texture of artistic contribution at its highest level. They come from all over the country and for years they have enlightened and delighted us with their dynamic and provocative ideas," said the Governor General. "We know and cherish the varied pieces they have created, in different media. Through their work, we have learned to see our world with new eyes."

Canada Council Chairman Jean-Louis Roux pointed out that this year's laureates have not only been major figures in the flourishing of the visual arts in Canada, they have also made their mark internationally.

"All of the winning artists have had significant exposure outside Canada, he said. "Through their work, they bring Canada to the world and demonstrate Canadian creativity in a particularly tangible way, projecting their unique visions of our land, our people and our way of life."

The annual awards, funded and administered by the Canada Council for the Arts, were created in June 1999 and presented for the first time in March 2000. The awards recognize distinguished career achievement in the visual and media arts by Canadian artists, as well as outstanding contributions to the visual and media arts through voluntarism, philanthropy, board governance, community outreach or professional activities.

In addition to a \$15,000 prize, each laureate will be presented with an original artwork created by one of last year's Governor General's Award winners, AA Bronson.

Biographical notes and jury citations for the seven laureates follow below. The six artists are listed in alphabetical order, followed by the winner in the "Outstanding Contribution" category.

Robert Archambeau

Manitoba artist Robert Archambeau has been internationally recognized for excellence in woodfired ceramics. Born and educated in Toledo, Ohio, he moved to Winnipeg in 1968 to become a professor in the School of Art at the University of Manitoba, where he taught for 23 years before retiring in 1991.

As a senior artist and influential teacher, Archambeau has inspired students and remains an active figure in the provincial arts scene. He has exhibited in Canada, the United States, Australia, Korea, Japan and the Czech Republic, and his work can be found in major collections including the Glenbow Museum, the Archie Bray Foundation, the Toledo Museum of Art, the Canadian Clay and Glass Museum, the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art and the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Jury citation: "Robert Archambeau is an acknowledged master in the field of ceramics, with a national and international reputation. His craft includes pottery, sculpture, photography, drawing and printmaking. His award-winning ceramic work is a subtle blend of the traditional and the contemporary. While functional and strongly rooted in their earthly origins, his ceramic pieces achieve a quiet serenity of breathtaking and timeless beauty. Archambeau has also distinguished himself as a teacher, mentor and collector."

Alex Colville

Alex Colville is one of Canada's most celebrated artists, whose paintings and prints are in public and private collections across Canada and around the world. Born in Toronto, he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. He was an official war artist during World War II, then became a professor of art at Mount Allison, retiring in 1963 to devote himself full-time to his art. In 1965, he was awarded a commission from the Canadian government to design coins commemorating Canada's centennial year, and, in 1966, he represented Canada at the Venice Biennale, the world's oldest and most prestigious exhibition of visual art. He won the Canada Council Molson Prize in 1975 and is a Companion of the Order of Canada. Colville has lived and worked in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, for the past 30 years.

Jury citation: "Over more than 60 years, Alex Colville's works of art have quietly but convincingly become Canadian icons. His exposure abroad helped put Canadian art on the international map. His measured and ordered realism conveys intimacy, mystery and, at times, danger. Colville has pursued a consistent, clear-sighted and metaphysical vision that has been an inspiration to untold numbers of young artists, students and lovers of art. His paintings reverberate with universal meaning."

Gathie Falk

Gathie Falk is best known as a painter, sculptor and performance artist whose work reflects the objects and activities of everyday life. Born in Alexander, Manitoba, she moved to Vancouver as a teenager and was working as an elementary school teacher when she began her formal education in art at the University of British Columbia. In 1962, she began exhibiting her paintings in group shows and, in 1965, she had her first solo exhibition in Vancouver. In the late 1960s, Falk switched from painting to ceramic sculpture and was introduced to performance art, creating and performing 15 works between 1968 and 1977. Her paintings and sculptures have been exhibited in numerous venues and are in many public collections. A retrospective exhibition of her work, organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada, toured to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina and the National Gallery in 2002. She is a Member of the Order of Canada.

Jury citation: "Gathie Falk is one of the most innovative and versatile artists to have emerged on the Canadian art scene in the last 30 years. Her body of work - sculpture, painting, ceramics, installation and performance - shows remarkable breadth and diversity. Many of her objects of everyday life, whether shoes, apples or dresses, have entered the public imagination. Her loving focus on the ordinary is suffused with a sense of loss, of irony and of impermanence, and also with a terrible beauty."

Betty Goodwin

Montreal artist Betty Goodwin has been a dominant figure in Canadian art for the past 35 years. A creator whose art has delved into diverse fields of interest - printmaking, drawing, collage, photography, sculpture and installation - she continues to have an influence in Canada and abroad. Largely self-taught, Goodwin developed her work during the 1950s and 1960s, and briefly studied printmaking with Yves Gaucher at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia). In 1976, her first major exhibition was held at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. In 1989, Goodwin represented Canada at the Sao Paulo International Biennial, and her work was included in the international section of the 1995 Venice Biennale. She has won several awards, including the Prix Paul-Émile Borduas (1986) and the Gershon Iskowitz Prize (1995).

Jury citation: "Betty Goodwin's determined embrace of drawing has left an indelible mark on the Canadian art scene. Her trademark images of vests, shirts, gloves, various industrial artifacts and the human body speak of longing, loss, tragedy, memory and the struggle of hope and resilience. From the raw and seemingly unremarkable detritus of human living and dying, Goodwin has fashioned a ghostly but triumphant vision. Her work has inspired a generation of artists."

Walter Harris

Walter Harris is a hereditary Gitksan chief whose totem poles and carved sculptures are well-known across Canada and around the world. Born and raised in the Kispiox area of northern British Columbia, Harris worked as a miner, sawmill owner/operator, carpenter and commercial fisherman before enrolling in the Gitanmaax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art in 1969, where he later served as a senior art instructor. He has received dozens of commissions from government and the private sector and has created works for, among others, the Vancouver International Airport, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, Victoria Island in Ottawa, the Westar Sawmill office in Japan, the Canadian Embassy in Paris and the House of Commons.

Jury citation: "Walter Harris is one of the foremost exponents of Northwest Coast art. For more than 40 years, he has created a great body of work, including masks, totem poles, housefront paintings, sculptures and jewelry. Through his teaching, his nurturing of other artists and his personal example, he has been at the forefront of the revival of an art form that was under serious threat. His commitment to the traditions and symbolism of an ancient art has ensured him a place of honour among future generations."

Takao Tanabe

Since the early 1950s, Takao Tanabe has been a respected and influential artist and educator. Born in Prince Rupert, BC, he attended the Winnipeg School of Art, the Brooklyn Museum Art School and the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London; he also studied with Hans Hoffman in New York and Isao Hirayama at the Tokyo University of Fine Arts. Tanabe was at the forefront of non-objective painting in the 1950s and was included in numerous international exhibitions as well as solo and group exhibitions in Canada. While head of the Art Department at the Banff School of Fine Arts between 1973 and 1980, he began to paint the landscapes for which he is best known. Tanabe's work is represented in more than 50 public collections in Canada and 120 corporate collections internationally. Mr. Tanabe currently divides his time between Vancouver and Errington, near Parksville on Vancouver Island. He is a Member of the Order of Canada.

Jury citation: "Takao Tanabe was among the first Canadian artists to receive wide international recognition. He has followed a path that has taken him, almost seamlessly, from abstraction to landscape painting. His work speaks of tension, the force of nature and reconciliation. Tanabe's lifetime achievements also include his unwavering commitment to and encouragement of other

artists - as teacher, mentor, friend and adviser, notably at the Banff Centre for the Arts. He has, for years, been a tireless defender of the arts."

Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne

Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne began her career as a painter but is best known as an arts educator and the driving force behind the creation of the Canada Council Art Bank. Born in Quebec City, she obtained her diploma at Quebec's École des beaux-arts in 1950; four years later, she started teaching at l'École des beaux-arts de Montréal, where her students included Pierre Ayot, Yves Gaucher, Roland Poulin and Henri Saxe. She came to Ottawa in the 1960s, where she worked for the Arts and Culture Division of the Department of the Secretary of State and was head of visual arts for the Canada Council, where she spearheaded the Art Bank's creation in 1972. Between 1974 and 1982, she headed the Department of Visual Arts and Theatre at the University of Ottawa. She currently lives in Montreal.

Jury citation: "Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne occupies a unique place in the development of Canadian artistic life. Inspired by her own love and practice of art, she was, above all, dedicated to the artists. This was evident in her role as creator and instigator of the Canada Council Art Bank, in her encouragement of artist-run centres and in her career as a teacher and arts administrator. Throughout, she showed the imagination, perseverance and vision of a true artist, and in the process has left an enduring legacy for the arts and Canadian culture."

Selection of laureates

The winners of the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts were chosen by an independent peer jury of artists and visual and media arts professionals from across Canada.

To be nominated for one of the six artistic awards, candidates must have created an outstanding body of work and have made a significant contribution to the development of the visual or media arts over a significant period of time. Professional artists are eligible for nominations in the following four categories: fine arts (painting and drawing, photography and print-making, and sculpture, including installation and other three-dimensional work); applied arts (architecture and fine crafts); independent film and video; and audio and new media. The laureates are selected from among the nominees by a jury of artists and visual and media arts professionals from across Canada.

The members of this year's jury were: Carl Beam (artist, M'Chigeeng, ON), Hank Bull (arts administrator, Vancouver), Jacques Hurtubise (artist, Margaree Harbour, NS), Jean Johnson, (arts administrator, Toronto), Wanda Koop (artist, Winnipeg), Claude Mongrain (artist and professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal) and Tim Whiten (artist and educator, Toronto).

Awards ceremony - March 17

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada will present the awards on Monday, March 17 at 4:00 p.m. in the Ballroom of Rideau Hall (the residence of the Governor General in Ottawa), One Sussex Drive. Media wishing to cover the ceremony should contact the Press Office at Rideau Hall, (613) 998-0287.

Exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada - March 18

The National Gallery of Canada will open an exhibition in celebration of the laureates and their work on Tuesday, March 18. Media representatives are invited to attend the official opening of the

exhibition, which will take place from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of the National Gallery, 380 Sussex Drive, Ottawa.

Journalists wishing to preview the exhibition can do so the previous day, Monday, March 17, at 10:00 a.m. Those interested in attending the media preview should contact Lana Crossman at the National Gallery of Canada, (613) 991-4793.

Special recognition

The Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honourable Peter Milliken, will recognize the laureates in the House of Commons on Tuesday, March 18, immediately following Question Period.

For more information

Downloadable images of the artists and selected works are available on the Canada Council web site: www.canadacouncil.ca/prizes/ggvma.

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