



For immediate release

The Canada Council for the Arts Announces the 2020 Winners of the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts

Ottawa, February 19, 2020 – The Canada Council for the Arts today revealed the winners of the 2020 [Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts](#) (GGArts). This year, seven artists and one arts professional are being honoured in recognition of their exceptional careers and their remarkable contributions to the visual arts, media arts and fine craft.

A peer committee selected the winners, who will each receive a \$25,000 prize and a special-edition bronze medallion in recognition of their excellent work. The winners' works will also be displayed at the Art Gallery of Alberta, in Edmonton, in summer 2020. What's more, [original short films](#) featuring each of the artists have been created in their honour.

This year, the Canada Council for the Arts is celebrating the [20th anniversary](#) of the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts. Over the last two decades, a total of 170 contemporary visual and media artists, as well as arts professionals, have been recognized for their excellence.

"The Canada Council is proud to have administered and funded these awards over the last 20 years. Year after year, the winners have demonstrated how dynamic, exciting, and deeply relevant Canada's visual and media arts scene truly is."

— Simon Brault, Director and CEO, Canada Council for the Arts

The winners of the 2020 Governor General's Awards

Saidye Bronfman Award

- **Anna Torma**, Visual Artist, (Baie Verte, New Brunswick)

"Torma has dedicated her professional life to an astonishingly singular studio practice that has emerged from an early, deep understanding of embroidery traditions and their place in global, contemporary visual culture."

- *Textile Museum of Canada*, Sarah Quinton, Curatorial Director (nominator)

Outstanding Contribution Award

- **Zainub Verjee**, Cultural Administrator, Arts Advocate, Art Critic, Art Centre/Gallery Director, Artist (Mississauga, Ontario)

"Through her art practice, critical writings, distribution activities, programming, policy work and leadership, she has taken bold and challenging positions on questions of diversity, access, technology and artist's rights."

- *Niranjan Rajah*, Assistant Professor, School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University, Artist, Theorist, Curator (nominator)

Artistic Achievement Award

- **Deanna Bowen**, Interdisciplinary Artist (Toronto, Ontario)

“With an uncanny ability to discover in an archive the heartbeat of the lives it recounts, its masked agendas, and the implications of decisions taken along the way, Deanna Bowen creates videos, installations and performance works that allow us to experience these grave and startling meanings as if for the first time.”

- Vera Frenkel, FRSC, multidisciplinary artist, GGArts winner, 2006 (nominator)

- **Dana Claxton**, Artist (Vancouver, British Columbia)

“She is a restless artist who continues to expand the representational and relational possibilities of each medium and format that she takes up, as she works to redress, provoke and expand the visual arts landscape of this country—and beyond.”

- *Or Gallery*, Denise Ryner, Director/Curator (nominator)

- **Ruth Cuthand**, Visual Artist (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

“Her influence, mentorship, and support of many, past and present, have been an important component in the building of an infrastructure for contemporary Indigenous art in Canada.”

- Jen Budney, Professional Research Associate at the Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Michelle Lavallee, Director of Indigenous Art Centre at Crown–Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Jake Moore, Director of the University Art Galleries and Collection at the University of Saskatchewan (nominators)

- **Michael Fernandes**, Visual Artist (East Dover, Nova Scotia)

“Always employing incisive humour and serious play, Michael’s work has consistently challenged viewers, critics, peers and students.”

- Craig Leonard, Associate Professor, Foundation/Expanded Media, Nova Scotia College of Art & Design (nominator)

- **Kenneth Robert Lum**, Visual Artist (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

“He is a living national treasure, whose prolific body of work over the last three decades continues to truly reshape the imagination of people in Canada as an uncomfortable nation, fractured by historical trauma and made up of diverse peoples.”

- Brian McBay, Co-Founder and Executive Director 221A (nominator)

- **Jorge Lozano Lorza**, Filmmaker (Toronto, Ontario)

“Jorge Lozano is an artist who continues to reinvent his forms, his ways of living, and his community.”

- Mike Hoolboom, filmmaker, GGArts winner, 2017 (nominator)

Composition of peer assessment committees for 2020

Saidye Bronfman Award

- Susan Edgerley, Glass Artist (Val-Morin, Quebec)
- Leopold Kowolik, Craft Educator (Toronto, Ontario)
- Linda Sormin, Ceramic Artist (New York City, New York)

Artistic Achievement Award and Outstanding Contribution Award

- Mary Anne Barkhouse, Visual Artist (Minden, Ontario)
- Vincent Bonin, Critic (Montréal, Quebec)
- Eleanor King, Visual Artist (Queens, New York)
- Claudie Lévesque, Filmmaker (Montréal, Quebec)
- David Miller, Visual Artist (Lethbridge, Alberta)
- Paul Wong, Independent Media Artist (Vancouver, British Columbia)

Important date

July 3, 2020 – The medallion ceremony for the Governor General’s Awards in Visual and Media Arts will take place in Edmonton, Alberta. Afterwards, a public vernissage of the GGArts exhibition featuring the works of this year’s winners will be held at the [Art Gallery of Alberta](#). The exhibition will be on view until September 27, 2020.

Exhibition curator: Catherine Crowston, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Art Gallery of Alberta

Saidye Bronfman Award

The [Saidye-Bronfman Award](#) is the highest distinction in Canadian fine craft artistry. Created in 1977 by the Bronfman family, the prize is awarded annually to an exceptional fine craft artist. Every year, the [Canadian Museum of History](#) acquires one of the award winner’s works.

Outstanding Contribution

The Outstanding Contribution Award is given to artists who have made an outstanding contribution to the visual arts (including architecture and photography), the media arts, and fine craft, in a volunteer or professional capacity.

Artistic Achievement Award

The Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award is given to artists in recognition of their body of work and their contribution to visual arts (including architecture and photography), the media arts, and contemporary practices in this field.

Short films

You can now watch the original short films focussing on each of the winners. Commissioned by the Canada Council for the Arts in partnership with the [Independent Media Arts Alliance](#) and created by Canadian filmmakers, the shorts are available online and can also be enjoyed on [VIA Rail](#)'s On-Train Entertainment system and on [Air Canada](#) flights in the coming months.

About the Canada Council for the Arts

The [Canada Council for the Arts](#) contributes to the vibrancy of a creative and diverse arts and literary scene that reaches across Canada and around the world. The Council is Canada's public arts funder.

The Council's grants, services, initiatives, prizes, and payments support Canadian artists, authors, and arts groups and organizations. This support allows them to pursue artistic expression, create works of art, and promote and disseminate the arts.

Through its arts funding, communications, research, and promotion activities, the Council fosters ever-growing engagement of Canadians and international audiences in the arts.

The Council's [Public Lending Right \(PLR\) program](#) makes annual payments to creators whose works are held in Canadian public libraries.

The Council's Art Bank provides the broader public with a collection of over 17,000 Canadian contemporary art works to enjoy through its rental, loan, and dissemination programs.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO operates under the authority of the Council. It shares a common history and future with the Council in terms of sustainable development characterized by the arts, science, culture, equality, and peace.

Media contacts

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