



BACKGROUND: TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION AWARDS AND 2020 FINALISTS

ABOUT – TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION AWARDS

Toronto Arts Foundation Awards are presented to artists, cultural leaders and businesses in recognition of artistic excellence, cultural leadership and contribution to the arts. Financial support of the annual Toronto Arts Foundation Awards is provided through a combination of legacies and annual donations from private and corporate donors. The awards are presented annually at the Mayor's Arts Lunch.

ABOUT – ARTS FOR YOUTH AWARD

The Arts for Youth Award was established in 2007 by Martha Burns, Jim Fleck and Sandra and Jim Pitblado. The award celebrates an individual, collective or organization that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to engaging Toronto's youth through the arts and artistic creation. The winner of the award receives a \$20,000 cash prize, with each finalist receiving \$2,000. The finalist awards are supported by a generous donation from Diana Bennett and Spencer Lanthier.

FINALISTS – ARTS FOR YOUTH AWARD

JAYU

JAYU is a charity committed to sharing human rights stories through the arts. Their year-round programming includes the Human Rights Film Festival, Last Tuesdays Virtual Screening Series, The Hum podcast, and iAM, an arts & social-justice training program for underserved youth in Toronto which leads to exhibition opportunities, employment, peer-to-peer leadership and more.

Nia Centre for the Arts

Nia Centre for the Arts is a charitable organization that supports, showcases and promotes an appreciation of arts from across the Afro-Diaspora. They strive to build the creative capacities and support the development of healthy identity in Black youth by connecting them to mentorship, employment opportunities and artistic experiences.

The Truth & Dare Project

The Truth & Dare Project provides free visual art workshops, self-care retreats, pop-ups, and an annual exhibit for young Muslim women in the GTA. They offer safe spaces for participants to: collaborate with others who have faced similar adversities, learn individually and collectively, and explore the visual arts as a creative outlet.

ABOUT – CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL LIFE AWARDS

The Celebration of Cultural Life Awards recognize excellence in Toronto's senior arts practitioners. The awards, which embrace the spirit of Toronto Arts Council founding president William Kilbourn, celebrates an individual performer, teacher, administrator and/or creator in any arts discipline, including architecture and design, whose work is a celebration of life through the arts. The recipient will receive a \$10,000 cash prize and two finalists will each receive a \$2,000 cash prize. The Celebration of Cultural Life Awards are presented every two years. Established in 2017, these awards are generously sponsored by Arthur Dalfen.

FINALISTS – CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL LIFE AWARDS

Karen & Allen Kaeja

Co-Artistic Directors of Kaeja d'Dance for over 30 years, Karen and Allen Kaeja are choreographers, performers and idea originators. They create and tour contemporary dance performances for stage and film throughout the world, as well as collaborate with and celebrate artists and everyday people of all ages and practices. They present local and international dance artists in Toronto through festival platforms, commissions and mentorships. Passionate engagers of professional and community dance art bridging, they create acclaimed performance forums outside of the box, such as Porch View Dances. Kaeja has received 40+ awards & nominations.

Sandra Laronde

Arts innovator and leader Sandra Laronde has conceived, produced and disseminated programming that is Indigenous, multi-national, multi-and-interdisciplinary and intergenerational in scope. She is the Executive and Artistic Director of Red Sky Performance, a Toronto-based company that is a leader of contemporary Indigenous performance in Canada and worldwide.

Ryan Rice

Ryan Rice, Kanien'kehá:ka, is an independent curator and an Associate Dean at OCAD University. His career spans 25 years in the curatorial field. Recent curated projects include; "raise a flag: work from the Indigenous Art Collection 2000-2015," You're Welcome, Listen to the Land, and BAIT: Work by Couzyn van Heuvelen.

ABOUT – COMMUNITY ARTS AWARD

The Community Arts Award is a \$10,000 cash prize celebrating an individual artist or organization that has made a significant contribution by working collaboratively with culturally diverse communities and creating access to arts and culture. Finalists receive \$1,000 each. Established in 2013 as the Diversity Award, the award was re-named the Community Arts Award in 2018. This award is generously sponsored by MOD Developments Inc, and is administered by the Foundation's Neighbourhood Arts Network.

FINALISTS – COMMUNITY ARTS AWARD

Jamii

Since 2011, The Esplanade – one of downtown Toronto's most diverse communities – has been enlivened by the local arts group Jamii (Swahili for "community"). Through the production of

over 120 memorable arts-based experiences that recognize and celebrate all people and genders while nurturing female leadership, Jamii strengthens community and lifts spirits.

MUSE ARTS

MUSE ARTS (a.k.a Sick Muse Art Projects) works to increase support, access and visibility to immigrant, refugee and newcomer artists and their communities. They develop community art programs that integrate arts and social justice, including HAPPENING Multicultural, the annual Multi-Arts Festival, the creation of community murals, and their international Community Arts Residence and Cultural Exchange Program.

Unit 2

Unit 2 is an arts and community space that is run by a collective of artist-activists whose affiliations span the QT2S (Queer, Trans, Two-Spirit), BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), mad, and crip communities. They centre and serve artists-activists with any or all of these affiliations, thus supporting and investing in their core community with a “for us, by us” approach.

ABOUT – EMERGING ARTIST AWARD

The Emerging Artist Award is a \$10,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$2,000. The award celebrates the accomplishments and future potential of an emerging Toronto artist working in any discipline. Established in 2006, the award is generously sponsored by Susan Crocker and John Hunkin to support the development or completion of new work. The award given to finalist honourees was established in 2014 through the generous donation of the Bulmash-Siegel Fund.

FINALISTS – EMERGING ARTIST AWARD

Britta B.

Britta B. is a Kingston-born, Toronto-based poet, spoken word performer, emcee and artist educator. Her works have featured in print, in sound and onstage across North America. She is an alumna of the Toronto Arts Council Leaders Lab and Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity Spoken Word Residency. Britta is currently a Creative Writing MFA candidate at University of Guelph.

Leila Fatemi

Leila Fatemi is an emerging artist, curator and community arts worker based in Tkaronto/Toronto. Living between cultures, her work and curatorial endeavours stem from her daily experiences as a visible minority and her perspective as a practicing Muslim woman artist. Fatemi aims to provide platforms and contribute alternative narratives to conversations of ethnic representation with a focus on the experience of Muslim women & women from the MENA region as well as to create a better understanding and appreciation for Islamic culture and traditions.

jes sachse

Presently living in Tkaronto, jes sachse is an artist, writer and choreographer who addresses the negotiations of bodies moving in public/private space and the work of their care. Often found marrying poetry with large scale sculptural forms, their work has been presented and supported

by 7a*11d Performance Art Festival, Dancemakers, the Centre de Création et Recherche O Vertigo, Musagetes, Harbourfront Centre, among other centres.

ABOUT – EMERGING JAZZ ARTIST AWARD

The Emerging Jazz Artist Award is a \$10,000 cash prize with finalists receiving \$1,000. The award furthers the career of an outstanding emerging jazz artist and is intended to support the pre-production, production, and/or recording of original music composed by the recipient. Established in 2014, the award is supported by Cheryl and Manuel Buchwald.

FINALISTS – EMERGING JAZZ ARTIST AWARD

Lauren Falls

Canadian bassist Lauren Falls has made a big impact on the Toronto and New York jazz scenes. She has performed at numerous jazz festivals and staple Toronto venues. An accomplished composer, she has released a debut album of original music called *The Quiet Fight* and is currently working on her second album *A Little Louder Now* to be released in 2021. Lauren holds a master's degree in Jazz Performance from Manhattan School of Music as well as a bachelor's degree in jazz performance from Humber College in Toronto.

Matt Lagan

Saxophonist, composer and bandleader Matt Lagan is one of the most up-and coming saxophonists in Canada. He has toured to 12 countries with the iconic Shuffle Demons and is featured on their 2020 release *Crazy Time*. He is currently working on his debut album with the Matt Lagan Band.

Jesse Ryan

Trinidadian-born saxophonist and composer Jesse Ryan has been praised as a fresh new voice, with a unique perspective on the music of today. His Bridges project is an emerging, eclectic quintet that bridges both the jazz and Afro-Caribbean traditions - A true celebration of the cultural, rhythmic and expressive connections between North America and the islands.

ABOUT – ROY THOMSON HALL AWARD OF RECOGNITION

The Roy Thomson Hall Award of Recognition is a \$10,000 cash prize presented to an individual, ensemble or organization to recognize creative, performing, administrative, volunteer or philanthropic contributions to Toronto's musical life. This award was established by the Volunteer Committee of Roy Thomson Hall in 1984 to recognize and thank the community that supported the conception, building and establishment of the new concert hall. Toronto Arts Foundation has managed the award since 2002 on behalf of the Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall. It is presented every two years.

FINALISTS – ROY THOMSON HALL AWARD OF RECOGNITION

Murray Foster

Murray Foster, a Juno-nominated former member of Moxy Fruvous and Great Big Sea, is Professor of Music at Seneca College and the founder of Toronto Songwriting School, The

Urban Orchestra, and Choir Nation. He wrote and directed 2015's *The Cocksure Lads Movie* and is writing the musical *Chelsea Sunrise* through Sheridan College.

Nagata Shachu

Nagata Shachu is a Japanese taiko drumming and music group that has performed throughout Canada and abroad. The ensemble's aim is to create original and innovative music that seeks to create a new voice for the taiko. Their performances aspire to build meaningful human connection and inclusiveness with their audiences.

Phem Phat Entertainment Group

PhemPhat Entertainment Group produces the Honey Jam programme for young female artists of all cultures and musical genres that provides promotional, mentoring, networking, educational and performance opportunities. It is a welcoming, supportive sisterhood and a safe space for young women to be vulnerable, to learn, to build self esteem and long-lasting relationships. The initiative was started in 1995 by Ebonnie Rowe.

ABOUT – TORONTO ARTS AND BUSINESS AWARD

Every year at the Mayor's Arts Lunch, a local business that has made an important contribution to the arts in Toronto, through innovative and transformational partnerships, is recognized with the Toronto Arts & Business Award. Winners range from national financial institutions and real estate development to small design firms and local businesses. Presented in partnership with Toronto Arts Foundation, Business/Arts, and the Toronto Star, this award was established in 2006.

FINALISTS – TORONTO ARTS AND BUSINESS AWARD

A committee has selected one recipient for the Toronto Arts and Business Award. The winner will be announced at the Mayor's Arts Lunch on September 24, 2020.

APPOINTMENT OF PEER ASSESSORS

Each year, a panel of up to 10 members reviews candidate profiles and makes finalist and recipient recommendations for each award, excepting the Toronto Arts and Business Award, to Toronto Arts Foundation's Board of Directors, which approves final determinations. Peer Assessors must have recognized expertise, prestige, credibility and experience, along with a sense of history and perspective. Each panel is comprised of participants who are practitioners of the arts, organizers, programmers, producers, curators, critics, commentators and lay specialists.

The 2020 peer assessors for the Arts For Youth Award, Celebration of Cultural Life Awards, Emerging Artist Award and Roy Thomson Hall Award of Recognition were: **Aida Aydinyan, Annalie Bonda, Cyn Rozeboom, Julian Sleath, Raoul Olou, and Régine Cadet**

The 2020 peer assessors for the Emerging Jazz Artist Award were: **Elizabeth Rodriguez, Jeremy Ledbetter, Joy Lapps-Lewis, and Josh Grossman**

The 2020 peer assessors for the Community Arts Award were: **Collette Murray, Anique Jordan, Julian Carvajal, Kristina McMullin, and Mahad Shoab aka "arXade"**

The 2020 peer assessors for the Toronto Arts and Business Award were: **Gillian Smith, Nichole Anderson Bergeron, Leen Al Zaibak, Shawn Micallef, and Rebecca Carbin**