



Announcing 2021 Awards Finalists

This year we received more nominations than ever before, reflecting the strength and diversity of our beautiful city. Nominators took the opportunity to highlight the work of both emerging and established artists from every neighbourhood, practicing in all arts disciplines.

Award recipients will be announced at the 16th annual **Mayor's Arts Lunch** (at home) on **May 11**. In addition to Toronto's Mayor, John Tory, those attending the lunch will include federal, provincial and municipal politicians, artists, civic leaders as well as our generous award donors and lunch sponsors, without whom this celebration would not be possible. A total of \$72,000 will be distributed in awards to recipients and finalists.

"It is heartening to see the amazing talents of our Award Finalists highlighted during this difficult time when artistic output exists primarily in virtual space," said **Claire Hopkinson, Director & CEO, Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation**. "Our artists are a symbol of the resilience of our incredible city. Every day I am uplifted by the innovation and creativity they continue to show. On behalf of the 2021 Finalists I want to thank our donors for supporting them during these unprecedented times."

We invite you to learn more about each of the finalists listed below and celebrate their contributions to Toronto. Among them are familiar names as well as those less known, artists who have performed before thousands, organizations making vital contributions to our communities and individuals who are just emerging onto our stages. Our peer assessors responsible for the selection were incredibly impressed with the numbers and strength of the nominations.

THE MARGO BINDHARDT AND RITA DAVIES CULTURAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Del Mahabadi – Founder and Chief Executive Director of Waveland, a non-profit music organization

Denise Bolduc – an established creative director and producer who programs to transform perspectives and activate change

Dwayne Morgan – spoken word artist, author of 13 books and nine audio collections

EMERGING ARTIST AWARD

Britta B. – a poet, performer, emcee, voice actor, and educator

Irma Villafuerte - dancer and educator

Olivia Shortt – transdisciplinary performing artist and musician

EMERGING JAZZ ARTIST AWARD

Joanna Majoko – vocalist, composer and bandleader

Sarah Thawer – a JUNO-Award nominated drummer and recording artist

Virginia MacDonald – clarinetist and educator

THE MURIEL SHERRIN AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN DANCE

Emily Cheung – a leader in cross-cultural exchange and liaison with foreign artists practicing traditional and contemporary Chinese dance in Toronto

Mi Young Kim – Founder & Artistic Director of the Korean Dance Studies Society of Canada, Soo Ryu Dance Festival, Soo Ryu School for the Dance and Drum and Mi Young Kim Dance Company from 1979 to present

Vivine Scarlett – Executive Director and Curator for dance Immersion, an organization that supports dancers and dances of the African Diaspora

ARTS FOR YOUTH AWARD

BAM Collective – a youth-led collective aiming to empower equity-seeking young individuals through art and community engagement

Paprika Festival – a youth-led professional performing arts organization providing year-round theatre training and mentorship programs that culminate in a festival of new work by young artists

Xpace – a not-for-profit artist-run centre dedicated to providing emerging and student artists, designers, curators and writers with opportunities to showcase their work in a professional setting

The recipient of the **Toronto Arts and Business Award** will be announced at the Mayor's Arts Lunch.

Hear from **Joanna Majoko, Emerging Jazz Artist Award Finalist**:

"When I received the call that I had been selected to be one of the finalists, I was actually brought to tears. This accolade comes at a time where life has felt more and more difficult as a musician in our current climate. This achievement has brought me a lot of joy."

For more details about the finalists (including interviews and portraits of each finalist), please [click here](#).

The event will be hosted by the celebrated **Jesse Wente**, a cultural leader in Canada's film industry and Chair of the Board of Canada Council for the Arts. **Denise Fujiwara**, dancer, educator, and a recipient of our Muriel Sherrin Award in 2017 will provide entertainment for the event.

About Toronto Arts Foundation

Toronto Arts Foundation is a charitable organization that sparks creative connections, spotlights artistic excellence, and supports vibrant cultural growth throughout our diverse city through private-sector investment. To learn more or to make a donation, visit torontoartsfoundation.org.

Contact information

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