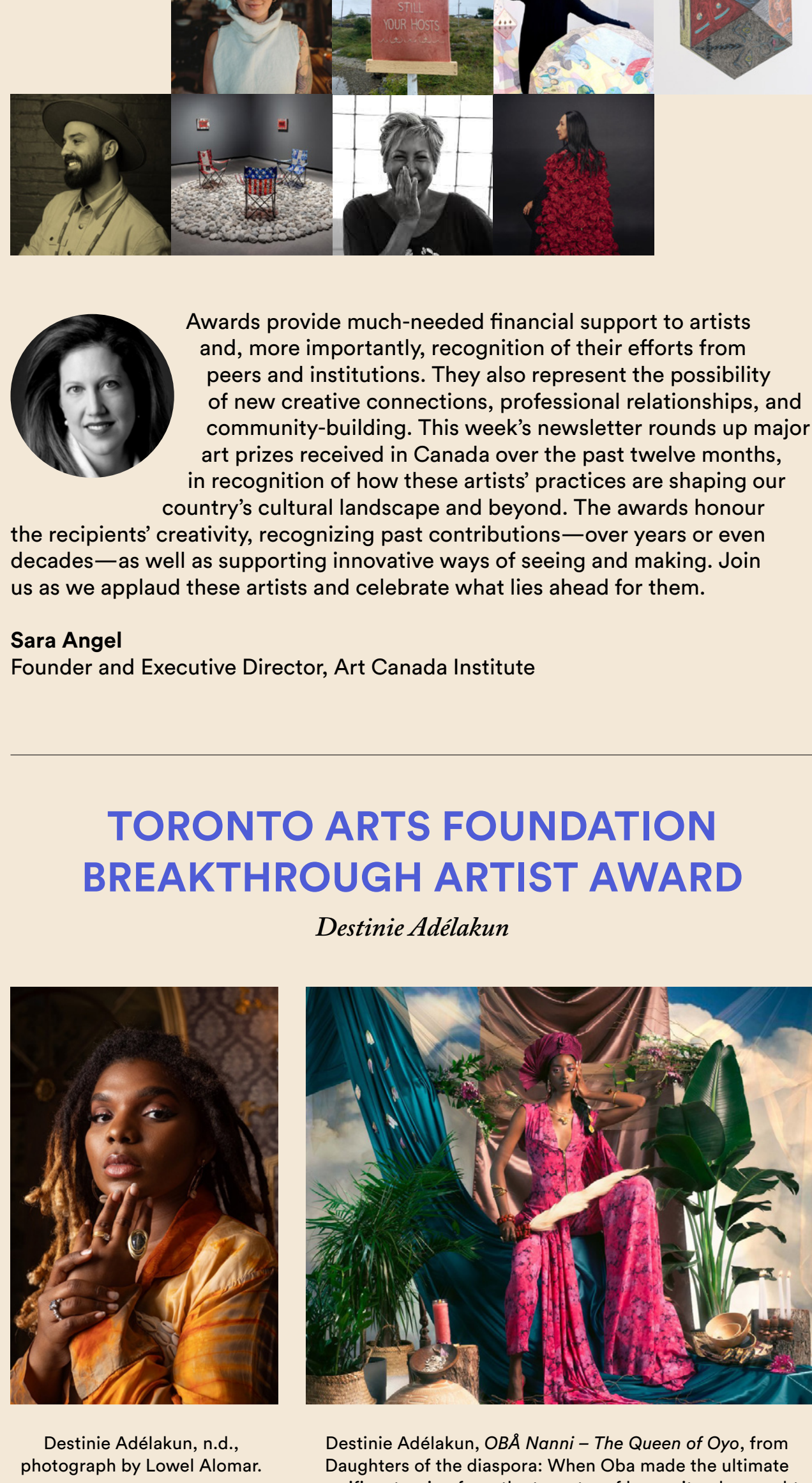


DECEMBER 6, 2024

TAKING THE PRIZE 2024 CANADIAN ART AWARD WINNERS

A look at who won this year's most prestigious Canadian art prizes.

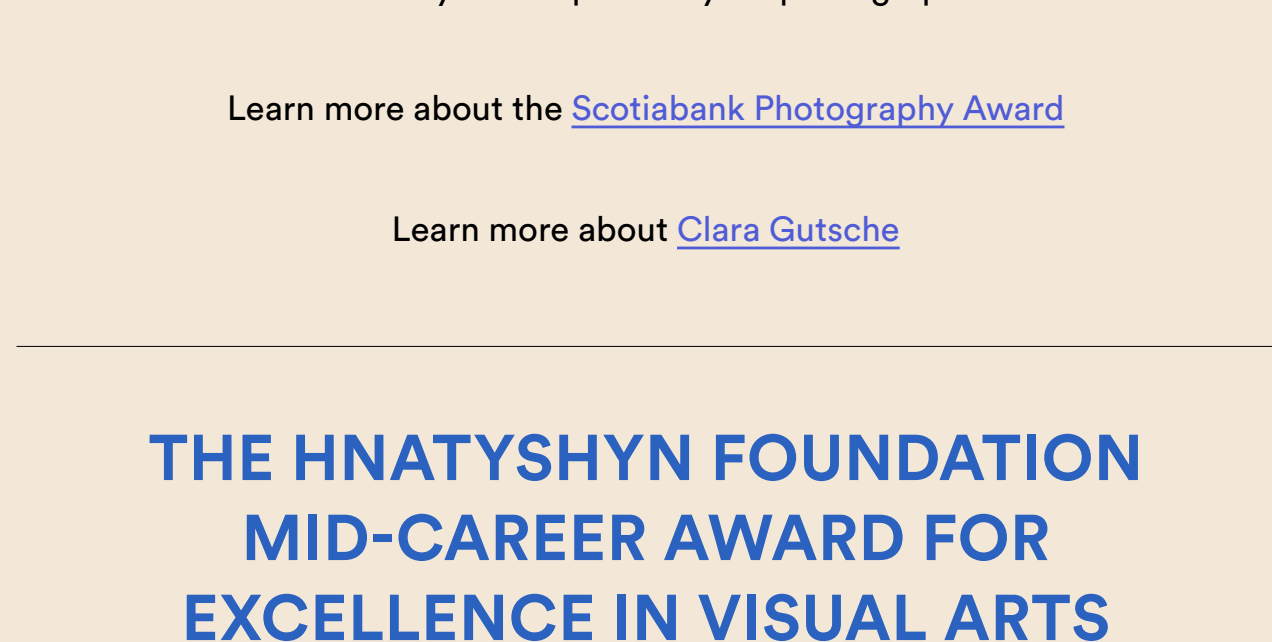


Awards provide much-needed financial support to artists and, more importantly, recognition of their efforts from peers and institutions. They also represent the possibility of new creative connections, professional relationships, and community-building. This week's newsletter rounds up major art prizes received in Canada over the past twelve months, in recognition of how these artists' practices are shaping our country's cultural landscape and beyond. The awards honour the recipients' creativity, recognizing past contributions—over years or even decades—as well as supporting innovative ways of seeing and making. Join us as we applaud these artists and celebrate what lies ahead for them.

Sara Angel
 Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION BREAKTHROUGH ARTIST AWARD

Destinie Adélakun



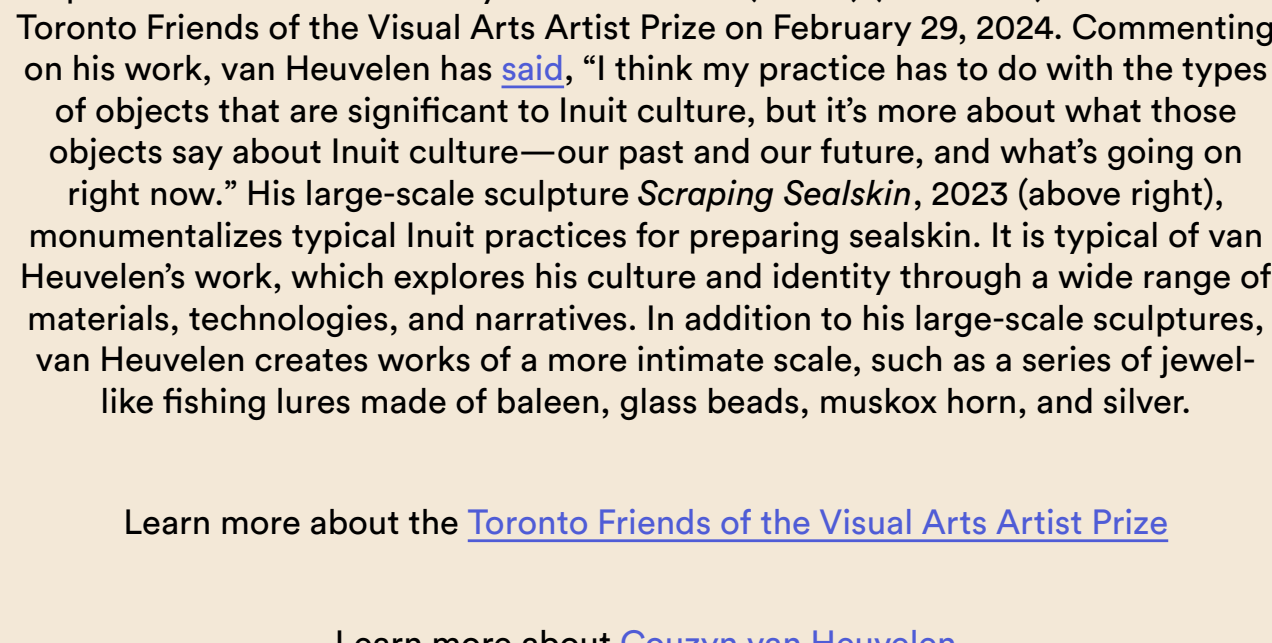
Destinie Adélakun, n.d., photograph by Lowell Alomar. Destinie Adélakun, *OBÀ Nanni – The Queen of Oyo*, from Daughters of the diaspora: When Obá made the ultimate sacrifice, turning from the tapestry of humanity, she sought the forest's embrace, a homeless in solitude's sacred space, 2022, courtesy of the artist.

Lagos-born Destinie Adélakun (b.1990) (above left) received the Toronto Arts Foundation Breakthrough Artist Award on April 16, 2024. Her photographs, such as the series *Adé* (The Crown) and her Daughters of the diaspora series—of which *OBÀ Nanni – The Queen of Oyo*, 2022 (above right), is a part—bring with beauty and power. An artist who works in film, painting, sculpture, and textiles, Adélakun draws on the matriarchal traditions and pre-colonial histories and mythologies of both her West African and South Indian roots. She is a leader among diasporic artists, co-founding the Behind the Arts Collective to promote mental health among BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) and immigrant communities. Previously, Adélakun won the 2020 Canadian Women Artists' Award from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

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

SCOTIABANK PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

Clara Gutsche



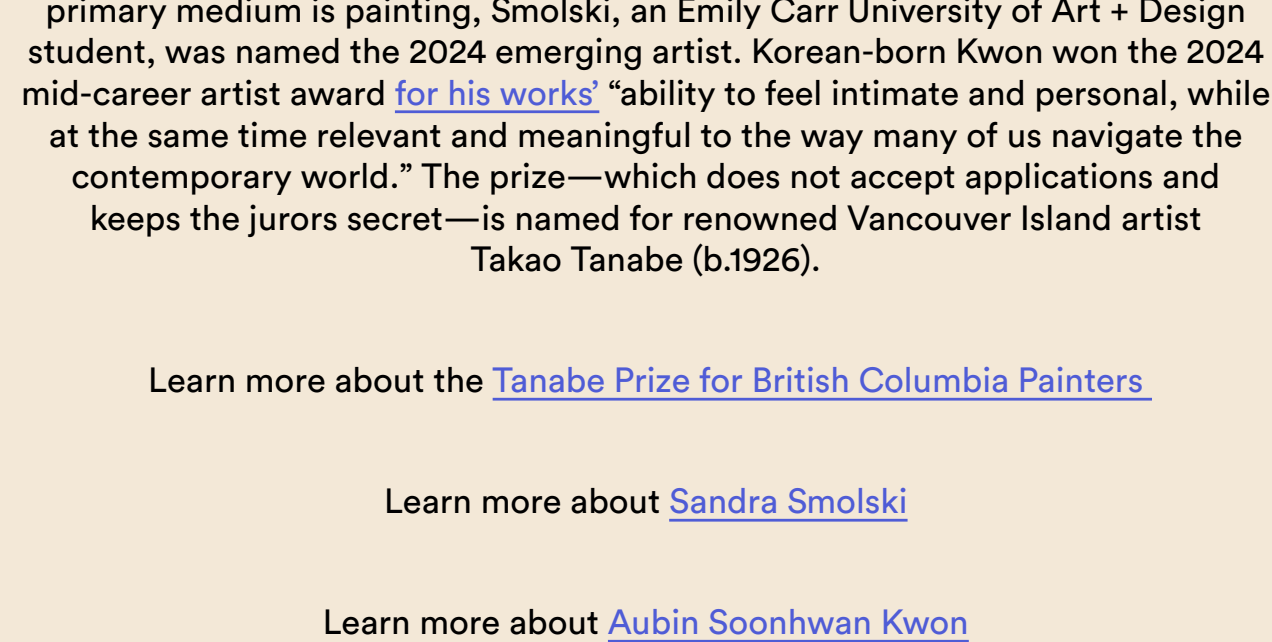
Clara Gutsche, 2024, photograph by David Miller (CNW Group/Scotiabank). Clara Gutsche, *Les Soeurs Adoratrices Du Précieux-Sang, Nicolet*, 1995, The Convent series 1990-1998, courtesy of the artist.

St. Louis-born, Montreal-based artist, educator, and critic Clara Gutsche (b.1949) (above left) received the Scotiabank Photography Award—which recognizes accomplished mid-to late-career photographic artists—on May 30, 2024. Gutsche began taking photographs in 1970, when she moved to Montreal, and is best known for her portraiture, urban landscapes, and architectural interiors, which have been exhibited and published internationally. The photograph *Les Soeurs Adoratrices Du Précieux-Sang, Nicolet*, 1995 (above right), exemplifies Gutsche's singular practice, sensitively examining the tensions between individual and group identity. However, she strives to leave the meaning of her series open-ended. As the artist has [stated](#), "You can't predict how somebody will respond to your photographs."

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

THE HNATYSHYN FOUNDATION MID-CAREER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN VISUAL ARTS

Curtis Talwst Santiago



Curtis Talwst Santiago, n.d., photograph by Luis Mora, JSP Art Photography. Curtis Talwst Santiago, *A lineup for lineups must be Friday. Always that one barber on the damn phone! Bruh, can you please finish my fade!?*, 2022, courtesy of the artist.

Alberta-born, Munich-based, Trinidadian Canadian artist Curtis Talwst Santiago (b.1979) (above left) received The Hnatyshyn Foundation Mid-Career Award for Excellence in Visual Arts on July 30, 2024. Santiago's *A lineup for lineups must be Friday. Always that one barber on the damn phone! Bruh, can you please finish my fade!?*, 2022 (above right), is part of his celebrated Infinity series, which involves staging a wide variety of scenes from everyday life and beyond as extraordinarily detailed miniatures inside antique jewellery boxes. These tiny but potent worlds stand alongside his renowned work in painting and drawing. Commenting on Santiago's work, juror Lindsey Shampans [declared](#) that he plays with history and museology and that his art "expands and collapses scale—time scales and size scales—to rework and rethink monumentality, reality, authority, and control."

Learn more about the [Hnatyshyn Foundation Mid-Career Award](#)
 Learn more about [Curtis Talwst Santiago](#)

TORONTO FRIENDS OF THE VISUAL ARTS ARTIST PRIZE

Couzyn van Heuvelen



Couzyn van Heuvelen, n.d., courtesy of the artist. Couzyn van Heuvelen, *Scraping Sealskin*, 2023, courtesy of the artist.

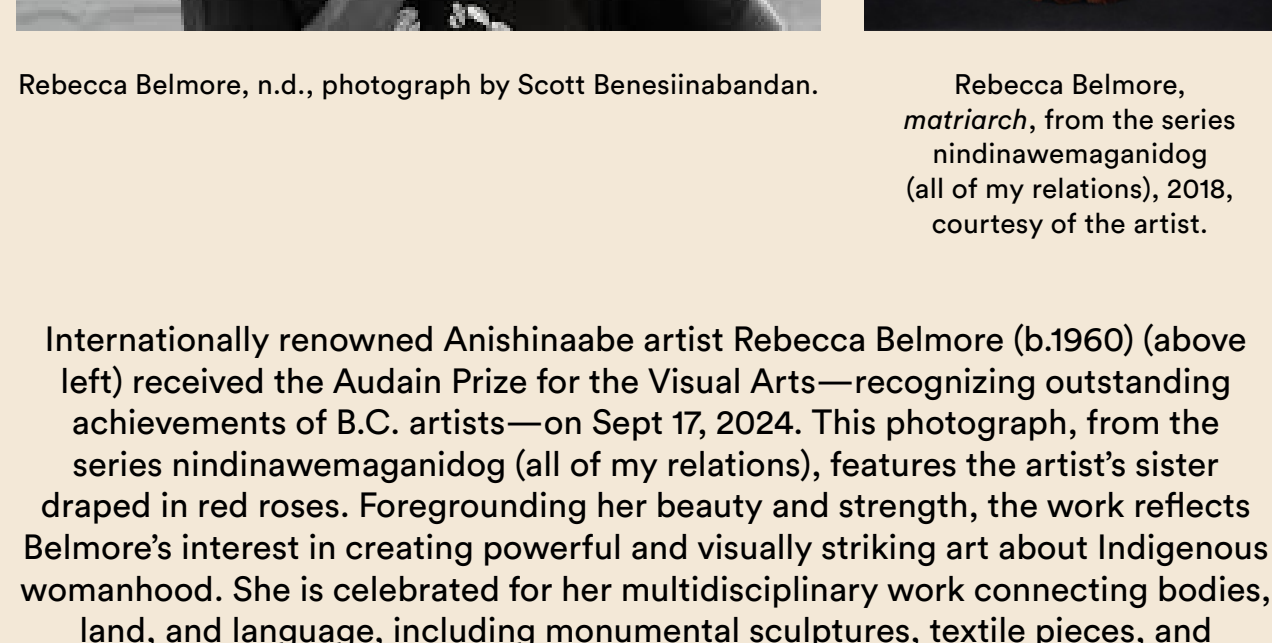
Iqaluit-born Inuk artist Couzyn van Heuvelen (b.1987) (above left) received the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts Artist Prize on February 29, 2024. Commenting on his work, van Heuvelen has [said](#), "I think my practice has to do with the types of objects that are significant to Inuit culture, but it's more about what those objects say about Inuit culture—our past and our future, and what's going on 'right now.'" His *one-scale sculpture Scraping Sealskin*, 2023 (above right), monumentalizes typical Inuit practices for preparing sealskin. It is a wide range of van Heuvelen's work, which explores his culture and identity through a wide range of materials, technologies, and narratives. In addition to his large-scale sculptures, van Heuvelen creates works of a more intimate scale, such as series of jewel-like fishing lures made of baleen, glass beads, muskox horn, and silver.

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

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TANABE PRIZE FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA PAINTERS

Aubin Soonhwan Kwon and Sandra Smolski



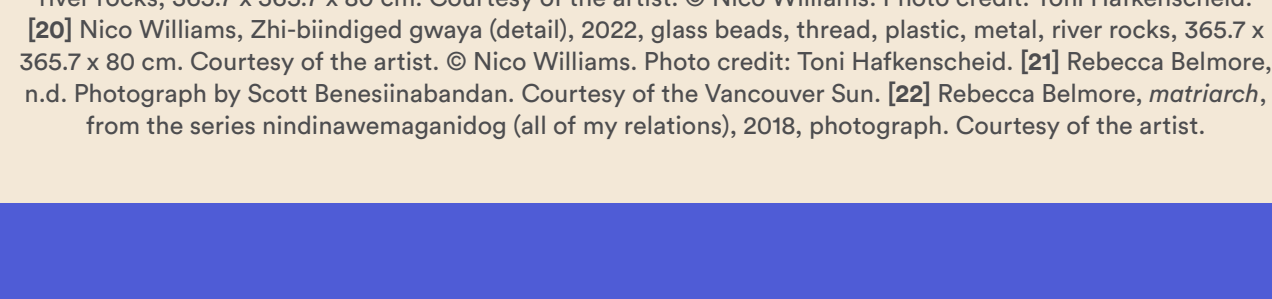
Top left: Aubin Soonhwan Kwon, n.d., courtesy of 221A. Top right: Aubin Soonhwan Kwon, *Saccharine Biased*, 2023, courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Bottom left: Sandra Smolski in her studio, East Vancouver, n.d., photograph by Perrin Grauer. Bottom right: Sandra Smolski, *I Miss You*, 2023, courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Vancouver-based artists Sandra Smolski (above, bottom left) and Aubin Soonhwan Kwon (b.1987) (above, top left) each received the Tanabe Prize for British Columbia Painters on March 5, 2024. Recognizing B.C. artists whose primary medium is painting, Smolski, an Emily Carr University of Art + Design student, was named the 2024 emerging artist. Korean-born Kwon won the 2024 mid-career artist award for his work's "ability to feel intimate and personal, while at the same time relevant and meaningful to the way many of us navigate the contemporary world." The prize—which does not accept applications and keeps the jurors secret—is named for renowned Vancouver Island artist Takao Tanabe (b.1926).

Learn more about the [Tanabe Prize for British Columbia Painters](#)
 Learn more about [Sandra Smolski](#)
 Learn more about [Aubin Soonhwan Kwon](#)

THEODORE PRIZE

Megan Samms



Megan Samms, n.d., photograph by Kristin Pope. Installation view of Megan Samms, *a (gentle) reminder series*, 2023, photography by Ash Hall and Megan Samms, courtesy of the artist. Megan Samms creating, *a (gentle) reminder series*, 2023, photograph by Ash Hall and Megan Samms, courtesy of the artist.

L'nu and Nlaka'pamux artist Megan Samms, Ktaqmkw, Ktaqmkw (Cedroy Valley, New Westminster and Labrador), received the Theodore Prize—led by the Throop Family Foundation and administered by the Beaverbrook Art Gallery—on July 19, 2024. It is awarded annually to an Atlantic-Canadian artist whose work demonstrates creative excellence and leadership. Samms was recognized for her work in textiles and paint as well as natural dyes and inks, words, mapping, photography, and performance. She pursues a holistic practice grounded in place, decolonial values, and ways of making and living. As she has [said](#) of her craft, "I am in love to practice as an artist to learn more, to unearth specifics about place in a meaningful way, to visit with past and present people."

Learn more about the [Theodore Prize](#)
 Learn more about [Megan Samms](#)

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

Shuvinal Ashoona, Barbara Atdman, Dominique Blain, Marjorie Beaucage, Don Ritter, and Greg Staats

Shuvinal Ashoona, n.d., courtesy of Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver. Shuvinal Ashoona, *untitled (polyhedron)*, part of *Help Us*, 2022, private collection. Photo: Byron Dauncey. Courtesy of Marion Scott Gallery and Robert Kardosh Gallery, Vancouver.

Kinngait, Nunavut-based drawing artist Shuvinal Ashoona (b.1961) (above left), Toronto-based photographer Barbara Atdman (b.1950), Montreal-based interdisciplinary artist Dominique Blain (b.1957), Duck Lake, Saskatchewan-based documentary filmmaker Marjorie Beaucage (b.1947), Montreal-based multimedia artist Don Ritter (b.1959), and Toronto-based photographer Greg Staats (b.1964) received this year's Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts for Artistic Achievement on March 6, 2024. The awards are described as "the most prestigious distinctions for artistic merit and outstanding contribution to the visual and media arts in Canada." The six artists' works will be featured in an annual exhibition of the award winners that is taking place at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa from November 15, 2024, to March 23, 2025.

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

SOBEY ART AWARD

Nico Williams

Nico Williams, n.d., photograph by Cory Hunlin. (Foreground) Nico Williams, *Zhi-bindinged gwaya*, 2022, courtesy of the artist. Nico Williams, *Zhi-bindinged gwaya (detail)*, 2022, courtesy of the artist.

Nico Williams (b.1989), a Montreal-based Anishinaabe artist of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, received the Sobeay Art Award, this country's most generous prize for contemporary art, on November 9, 2024. Williams is best known for his astonishingly detailed sculptural beadwork, part of a wider multidisciplinary and collaborative practice. Notably, this was the first year that the Sobeay jury was comprised of previous artist finalists and winners, in addition to one international juror. Williams's work, as well as that of the five finalists from across Canada—Taqralik Partridge (b.1975), Judy Chartrand (b.1959), Rhayne Vermette (b.1982), June Clark (b.1941), and Mathieu Léger (b.1975)—is on view in the annual Sobeay Art Award exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa until April 6, 2025.

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

AUDAIN PRIZE FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

Rebecca Belmore

Rebecca Belmore, n.d., photograph by Scott Benesinabandan. Rebecca Belmore, from the series *ninindawemaganidog* (all of my relations), 2018, courtesy of the artist.

Internationally renowned Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore (b.1960) (above left) received the Audain Prize for the Visual Arts—recognizing outstanding achievements of B.C. artists—on Sept 17, 2024. This photograph, from the series *ninindawemaganidog* (all of my relations), features the artist's sister draped in red roses. Foregrounding her beauty and strength, the work reflects Belmore's interest in creating powerful and visually striking art about Indigenous womanhood. She is celebrated for her multidisciplinary work connecting bodies, land, and language, including monumental sculptures, textile pieces, and video as well as visceral durational performances. Her work is firmly rooted in Indigenous communities' resistance to the ongoing violence of colonialism.

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

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Image Credits: [1] Destinie Adélakun, n.d. Photograph by Lowell Alomar. Courtesy of the artist. [2] Destinie Adélakun, *OBÀ Nanni – The Queen of Oyo*, from Daughters of the diaspora: When Obá made the ultimate sacrifice, turning from the tapestry of humanity, she sought the forest's embrace, a homeless in solitude's sacred space, 2022. Photography on fabric, resin, final, and resin rods. Courtesy of the artist. [3] Clara Gutsche, 2024. Photograph by David Miller (CNW Group/Scotiabank). [4] Clara Gutsche, *Cuin, Kevin, Bainbridge Island*, 2013, from the series *Siblings and Singles*, chromogenic colour print, 102 x 127 cm. Courtesy of the artist. [5] Curtis Talwst Santiago, n.d. Photograph by Luis Mora. [6] JSP Art Photography. Courtesy of CBC. [7] Curtis Talwst Santiago, *A lineup for lineups must be Friday. Always that one barber on the damn phone! Bruh, can you please finish my fade!?*, 2022, reclaimed jewellery box, paper, leather, plastic, wool, acrylic paint, oil paint, human hair, gold leaf, epoxy putty, 101 x 8.9 x 5 cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Holger Albrich. [8] Couzyn van Heuvelen, n.d. Courtesy of the artist. [9] Couzyn van Heuvelen, *Scraping Sealskin*, 2023, wool yarn, rug cloth, rug backing pad, felted wool, wood, steel, brass, 15.2 x 243.8 x 365.8 cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. [10] Aubin Soonhwan Kwon, *Saccharine Biased*, 2023, watercolour, inkjet spray on vinyl wood. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. [11] Sandra Smolski in her studio, East Vancouver, n.d. Photograph by Perrin Grauer. Courtesy of Emily Carr University of Art + Design. [12] Sandra Smolski, *I Miss You*, 2023, acrylic and oil on canvas, 162.6 x 199.4 cm. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. [13] Megan Samms, n.d. Photographs by Kristin Pope. Courtesy of Bonavista Biennale. [14] Installation view of Megan Samms, *a (gentle) reminder series*, 2023, linen, Icelandic fleece, hand-made laser cut felt, natural dyes, organic cotton, bone, lumber. Photo credit: Ash Hall and Megan Samms. Courtesy of the artist. [15] Megan Samms creating *a (gentle) reminder series*, 2023, Photo credit: Ash Hall and Megan Samms. Courtesy of the artist. [16] Shuvinal Ashoona, n.d. Courtesy of the Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver. [17] Shuvinal Ashoona, *untitled (polyhedron)*, part of *Help Us*, 2022, coloured pencil and graphite on folded and structured paper, 23.5 x 23.5 x 23.5 cm. Private collection. Photo: Byron Dauncey. Courtesy of Marion Scott Gallery and Robert Kardosh Gallery, Vancouver. [18] Nico Williams, n.d. Photograph by Cory Hunlin. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [19] (Foreground) Nico Williams, *Zhi-bindinged gwaya*, 2022, glass beads, thread, plastic, metal, river rocks, 365.7 x 365.7 x 80 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Nico Williams. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. [20] Nico Williams, *Zhi-bindinged gwaya (detail)*, 2022, glass beads, thread, plastic, metal, river rocks, 365.7 x 365.7 x 80 cm. Courtesy of the artist. © Nico Williams. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid. [21] Rebecca Belmore, n.d. Photograph by Scott Benesinabandan. Courtesy of the Vancouver Sun. [22] Rebecca Belmore, *matriarch*, from the series *ninindawemaganidog* (all of my relations), 2018, photograph. Courtesy of the artist.