

FINAL ADJUDICATION CREATOR AWARDS

JURY REPORT

April 13, 2023



BACKGROUND

This report is an overview of the discussion and decision of the volunteer citizen jury that met on the afternoon of Tuesday April 11, 2023 to determine which of the short-listed 2023 City of Hamilton Arts Awards nominees should be selected to receive a Creator Award. An annually rotating jury - comprised of discipline-specific artists, arts professionals and community leaders – are key to the selection of recipients in each category. The 2023 Final Jury are listed at the end of this report.

The adjudication session was facilitated by arts service organization Cobalt Connects Creativity and audited by a member of the Arts Advisory Commission to ensure a fair and transparent process. Where conflicts were declared those jurors did not participate in the discussion of those nominees. The Arts Awards Commitment to Inclusion and Representation was reviewed, emphasizing the jury's role in selecting recipients reflective of the breadth of Hamilton's arts community.

CREATOR AWARDS

The Creator Awards recognize living artists or artistic collectives working in any artistic discipline and at any career level. A minimum of eight Creator Awards will be conferred each year to recognize artistic excellence and / or innovation that contributes to artistic growth in the city, progresses the artform and expresses the cultural vitality and diversity of Hamilton's art scene.

JURY COMMENTS

The jury appreciate the 99 nominations submitted by the public in this category and recognize the work of the Arts Sector Review Panel in developing an extremely strong Creator Award Short List which included a total of 30 individuals, duos and collectives spanning multiple artistic disciplines, practices, and career levels. The jury feel that all shortlisted nominees are deserving of recognition for the quality of their work and contribution to Hamilton's arts and culture sector.

The jury selected 9 individuals as recipients of 2023 City of Hamilton Creator Awards. Further details about why each artist was chosen to receive a Creator Award is outlined below.

Angela DeMontigny

The jury hold deep respect for Angela's mastery of materials and connection to land in the creation of fine, wearable garments. Acknowledging that fashion as a whole is often overlooked as an artform, the jury celebrate Angela's success in elevating crafts such as leatherwork and beading to a fine art. Moreover, they recognize Angela's key role in positioning Indigenous fashion as a luxury item on the global stage. Angela is also perceived as an important part of the local Indigenous community – an essential mentor and “auntie” who imparts invaluable spiritual and professional guidance to other artists.

Anuja Varghese

Anuja is described by the jury as a quirky, playful and courageous writer that is integral to Hamilton's literary community through projects such as LitLive. They note that Anuja's work was spotlighted by an impressive publisher and concur that Anuja is a very compelling new voice - writing from the perspective of strong intersectionality. The jury appreciate that Anuja's writing, “throws you in the middle of a situation – grabs you - and you have to figure it out from there.”

David Collier

Recognized by some of the best magazines in Canada, the jury appreciate that David's comic art, is, and has long been, “so distinctly Hamilton”. They note that David has an impressive longstanding career characterized by strong storytelling and a bleak and charming point of view. Having been published by the best graphic novel publishers in Canada and U.S., the jury are impressed that David still manages to self-publish. They find David to be a wonderful ambassador for Hamilton – taking the city everywhere.

Deepti Gupta

The jury view Deepti as a serious and engaging artist whose work is of the highest professional calibre. They acknowledge a long and accomplished career of over 30 years as a dancer, choreographer, and theatre artist characterized by collaboration, mentorship and sharing knowledge through international workshops, seminars, and lectures. The jury are deeply impressed by Deepti's work in bringing the traditional northern Indian classical dance form of 'Kathak' forward from its ancient roots to contemporary settings by celebrating the female body and elevating the role of women in family, community and society at large. They are grateful for Deepti's contribution to Hamilton's vibrant arts landscape.

Kareem-Anthony Ferreira

The jury recognize Kareem-Anthony as a strong figurative painter who deftly negotiates the line between traditional painting and photography / mixed media. They appreciate that Kareem-Anthony has been very actively exhibiting in Hamilton art galleries such as the Art Gallery of Hamilton and Centre[3] while simultaneously being shown in international arts institutions. The jury value the window that Kareem-Anthony's work opens to everyday Black families, finding power in its relatability to diasporic communities in portraying imagery that can be found in many family photo albums. They also celebrate Kareem-Anthony's practice of integrating object and craft into art.

Nathan Eugene Carson

Nathan is felt by the jury to be a talented synthesizer of different variables, pulling them together visually to build a distinct world that elicits a visceral response. The jury view Nathan's work as very expressive and intuitive - "outsider art that invites you in". Bodies of work such as *Black Carnival* reflect a shared Hamilton experience in a surreal way, making it fascinating. The jury admire Nathan's generosity in sharing the art-making process with peers and community participants. A remarkable number of fellow artists were invited to partake in Nathan's residency at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, indicating a unique and admirable willingness to share in success.

Open Hearts Arts Theatre

The jury highly value the work of Open Heart Arts Theatre in creating space for voices not often heard in arts spaces. This collective is praised for integrating principles of Pedagogy of the Oppressed in their work with members of projects such HAMSMaRT and Keeping Six - allowing them to directly tell their own stories. The jury find these performances very moving and powerful. Moreover they feel that the individual members of Open Hearts Arts contribute remarkable experience as theatre artists in shaping this project.

Sarah Sproule

The jury appreciate Sarah's contributions as a phenomenal emerging artist and in community engagement and social practice projects with local organizations including Hamilton Artist Inc. and Centre[3]. The jury feel Sarah's artwork is important in that it uniquely highlights disability, identity and the body. They praise Sarah's remarkable initiative, such as in working with the McMaster School of Engineering to bring an accessible printing press to Centre[3].

The Hamilton Youth Steel Orchestra (HYSO)

The jury joyfully support conferring a Creator Award to the Hamilton Youth Steel Orchestra. They feel that HYSO lifts us up through community engagement and the performance of beautiful music, "making it feel like a party while being impactful for the community." The jury appreciate all of the work HYSO have done to support Hamilton youth in high-needs neighbourhoods who face systemic barriers. They also note the skill required to create this music - an artform that is not easy to perform nor access. Furthermore, the jury find it very heartening to see HYSO youth genuinely enjoying

themselves on their own terms while performing, given how difficult it can be to engage young people in the current climate.

REFLECTIONS ON 2023 CREATOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

The jury note a strong thread of community awareness amongst the practices of the 2023 Creator Award recipients. The jury value this shift particularly given how the importance of community care has been highlighted over the past few years. They also appreciate how the Arts Awards program has evolved to include a greater representation of artists of the global majority over the past few years.

THE JURY

Donna Akrey	Visual Art / Arts Education / Collectives
Stephen Altona	Visual Art / Collectives
Luis Arrojo	Theatre
Laura Couchie	Writing / Performance / Beadwork
Dan Edmonds	Music / Visual Art
Dayna Gedney	Fine Craft
Carmela Langese	Visual & Media Art / Arts Education
Nancy McKibbin Gray	Arts Champion Recipient / Arts Management/
Taien Ng-Chan	Media Arts / Writing
Christina Tarsitano	Community Art / Arts Education
Bryan Prince	Lifetime Achievement Recipient / Writing

Regrets

Clairandean Humphrey	Visual Art / Media Art / Movement
Yuma Dean Hester	Film
Paul Gordon	Dance / Performance
Colin Lapsley	Arts Management / Music

Jury Auditor

Monika Ciolek	Arts Advisory Commission
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Advisors to the Jury:

Kim Selman, Cobalt Connects (Facilitator)
Jen Anisef, City of Hamilton