



THE HNATYSHYN FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

ARTIST REBECCA BELMORE AND CURATOR ANTHONY KIENDL RECEIVE HNATYSHYN AWARDS

OTTAWA, November 2, 2009 – Gerda Hnatyshyn, C.C., President and Chair of the Board of The Hnatyshyn Foundation today announced the recipients of the 2009 *Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Awards*. The \$25,000 prize for outstanding achievement by a Canadian artist is awarded to Rebecca Belmore, while the winner of the \$15,000 award for curatorial excellence in contemporary art is Anthony Kiendl, Director/Curator, Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art.

The award recipients were selected by a jury of arts professionals from across Canada: Ian Carr-Harris, artist, writer and educator, Ontario College of Art & Design; Peter Dykhuis, Director/Curator, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax; Timothy Long, Head Curator, MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina; Joan Stebbins, Curator Emerita, Southern Alberta Art Gallery and Gaétane Verna, Executive Director at Musée d'art de Joliette, QC.

Born in Ontario, Rebecca Belmore (Anishinaabe) works in a variety of media including sculpture, installation, video and performance. Currently living and working in Vancouver, Belmore has long been creating work about the plight of the disenfranchised and marginalized in society. In her poignant and dramatic performances, the artist's own body becomes the site of historical, cultural and political investigations as she explores self and community, boundaries between public and private, chaos and linear narrative. The official representative for Canada at the 2005 Venice Biennale, Belmore's work has been exhibited internationally since 1987 and can be found in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada Council Art Bank, and many others. In 2004 Belmore received the prestigious VIVA award from the Jack and Doris Shadbolt foundation.

In recommending Rebecca for the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Award, the jury highlighted the impact of her artistic practice: “Since the late 1980s, Rebecca Belmore has challenged romantic conceptions of Aboriginal cultures through a remarkable series of performance art pieces and mixed media installations. Her work combines passionate thinking and a brilliant use of materials with a deep cultural knowledge drawn from her Anishinaabe heritage. Working tirelessly against historical amnesia, her work gives expression to silenced voices by restoring value to community, local experience and the land. In the process, Belmore's work has inspired myriad artists from within and without the First Nations artistic community to follow her ground-breaking path. Belmore's achievement has been an ever evolving art practice which, while it explores her own history, simultaneously challenges the precepts and concepts of contemporary art on a global stage.”

The recipient of the 2009 Hnatyshyn Foundation Award for Curatorial Excellence in Contemporary Art is Anthony Kiendl, Director/Curator, Plug In ICA. In 2007, Anthony was Leverhulme Visiting Research Fellow at School of Arts, Middlesex University, London. He was the Director of Visual Arts, Walter Phillips Gallery and the Banff International Curatorial Institute at The Banff Centre in Alberta from 2002 until 2006. In 2002, he served as Acting Director of the Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina Public Library in Saskatchewan where he was Curator since 1997. He is currently the instructor of a graduate theory seminar in the Architecture Department at the University of Manitoba.

In recommending him for the curatorial award the jury praised the deep understanding of artists, their work as an expression of culture. “Anthony Kiendl’s curatorial practice is shaped by a global perspective and sustained by an unbounded curiosity regarding contemporary culture and its artifacts. His diverse background as a curator encompasses a broad spectrum of arts related activity and reflects an understanding gained through involvement in artist run centres, public art galleries, art centres, arts boards and diverse communities. His extensive research, writing and publishing have focused on the overlooked and undervalued. Kiendl’s curatorial projects have consistently addressed topics that have been marginalized by exclusion from the mainstream and his scrutiny has deemed them worthy of critical attention. Thoughtful in framing and gentle in spirit, Anthony Kiendl’s curatorship challenges ideologies of power by looking beyond the obvious to expose the most basic elements that contribute to the construction of culture. In doing so, he has highlighted and championed the work of a broad range of contemporary art practitioners and expanded the margins of cultural theory bringing new audiences to contemporary art.”

The awards will be presented in Winnipeg, Manitoba on December 1, 2009 at a ceremony and reception generously hosted by the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, The Honourable Philip S. Lee C.M., O.M. at Government House, 10 Kennedy Street at 5:00 p.m..

About The Hnatyshyn Foundation

The Hnatyshyn Foundation is a private charity established by the late Right Honourable Ramon John Hnatyshyn, Canada’s twenty-fourth Governor General to help emerging and established artists in all disciplines with their schooling and training and promote, to the Canadian public, the importance of the arts in our society. Its programs are funded by donations from government, foundations, corporations and individuals. The Department of Canadian Heritage has provided \$2.4 million in matching funds to the Foundation.

Information about *The Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Awards* is available on the Foundation’s website www.rjhf.com, or by contacting:

Dawn Firestone
Executive Director
The Hnatyshyn Foundation
(613) 233-0108
director@rjhf.com

Government House enquiries (204) 945-2753