ARTIST LANI MAESTRO AND CURATOR NICOLE GINGRAS RECEIVE HNATYSHYN AWARDS

OTTAWA, October 30, 2012 – Gerda Hnatyshyn, C.C., President and Chair of the Board of The Hnatyshyn Foundation, today announced the recipients of the 2012 Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Awards. The $25,000 prize for outstanding achievement by a Canadian artist is awarded to Lani Maestro of Montréal, while the winner of the $15,000 award for curatorial excellence in contemporary art is Montréal-based independent curator and writer Nicole Gingras. Since 2006, a total of $265,000 has been awarded.

For many years Lani Maestro has been concerned with questions of how we occupy space, how space occupies us, as well as how our space is occupied with and by others. This direction is inevitably affiliated with the themes of home: are we at home by belonging or as difference; that is, by way of non-belonging?

In recommending Lani Maestro for The Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Art Award, the jury found her work to be “initially intellectually enigmatic but sensuously resonant,” stating that “this formally restrained work is almost (in today’s context) elegantly classical in spite of the raw emotion sometimes embodied there. Many of Maestro’s works situate places within places as a means by which to have us travel in and out of the home, inside and outside space, hoping to erode binary opposition. In this sense we might describe Maestro’s work as architecture of the body, with the proviso that such works, which emphasize passage rather than permanence, ultimately erode architecture’s claim to authority.”

Born in Manila, Philippines where she began working professionally as an artist, Maestro immigrated to Canada in 1982. Her expanded art practice has included exhibitions, publishing, writing, teaching and running an itinerant gallery. She has been a Canadian representative to numerous international exhibitions including Encounter: UK/Asia, The Royal Academy in Asia at the La Salle ICA, Singapore (2012), Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates (2009), Mixed Bathing Worlds, The Beppu Project, Beppu, Japan, (2009), Tempo ao tempo, Museu del arte contemporaneo, Vigo, Spain (2007), Busan Biennial, Korea (2004), Mind Space, Ho Am Art Gallery, Samsung Foundation, Seoul, Korea (2003) Shanghai Biennial, China (2000), Sydney Biennial, Australia (1998), Istanbul Biennale, Turkey (1997), and the Bienal dela Habana, Havana, Cuba (1994/1986) where she received the Bienal Prize in 1986. Maestro lives and works in Orgères la roche, France and Montréal, Québec.

The recipient of the 2012 Hnatyshyn Foundation Award for Curatorial Excellence in Contemporary Art is Nicole Gingras. Since the 1980s, Ms. Gingras’ career has been distinguished by her broad knowledge of and articulate support for experimental practices in photography, film, video, and sound art. As a curator, programmer, essayist, and filmmaker, she has worked independently and in collaboration with galleries, museums, and artist-run centres, actively contributing to the recognition of contemporary visual and media art in Canada and throughout Europe.
A native of Québec City, Nicole Gingras studied visual arts, cinema, and art history at the Université Laval, Concordia University, and the Université de Montréal. Her practice is informed by the wide understanding of media afforded by her training, as is evident in her numerous publications. These include a book on cinema, *Les images immobilisées. Procéder par impressions* (1991, Guernica Editions, Toronto) and an anthology on sound in visual art, *S:ON – Le son dans l’art contemporain canadien / Sound in Contemporary Canadian Art* (2003, Éditions Artexte), to mention only two. Her desire to make the work of contemporary artists better known is further demonstrated by her decision in 1996 to establish Éditions Nicole Gingras, which publishes monographs, Québec artists’ books, and CDs by Canadian artists.

In its recommendation, the jury noted Nicole Gingras’ important role in Canada, and internationally in promoting awareness and understanding of experimental practices in contemporary art among both specialized and general audiences. “Nicole Gingras’ active engagement with new art, her energy, and her intellectual rigour have enabled her to sustain a practice devoted mainly to new and relatively unexplored areas of contemporary art. As an independent curator, her practice is subject to many of the same risks and uncertainties as those of the artists she works with, while it demonstrates a versatility that has allowed her to use this fluid institutional context to great advantage.”

The award recipients were selected by a jury of arts professionals from across Canada:
- Robert Enright, contributing editor, Border Crossings magazine
- Michael Fernandes, Artist
- Peggy Gale, Independent Curator
- Stephen Horne, Arts Journalist, Educator, Visiting Scholar, Jarislowsky Institute in Montréal
- Diana Nemiroff, Curator and Art Historian.

The presentation of the awards and interviews with the recipients will take place in Bourgie Hall at the Musée des beaux-arts in Montréal on Monday November 19, 2012 at 5:30 pm. The public is invited to attend and admission is free.

The Hnatyshyn Foundation offers it sincere congratulations to this year’s recipients.

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**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 assist 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](http://www.rjhf.com), or by contacting:

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