

Strong Communities

August 20, 2008



Eight artists, one organization shortlisted for Alberta Arts Awards

Three \$50,000 prizes to be handed out

Edmonton...Eight Alberta artists and one Alberta arts organization have made the short list for the prestigious Alberta Arts Awards. A total of \$150,000 will be awarded in the visual, performing and literary arts categories.

The Government of Alberta and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) created the Alberta Arts Awards to recognize the accomplishments of Alberta's artists and arts organizations and their contributions to the cultural life of the province. This year's finalists are as follows.

Alberta Foundation for the Arts Visual Arts Award (\$50,000)

- Alex Janvier, painter, educator and elder, from Cold Lake
- Ron Moppett, artist, teacher, curator and gallery director, from Calgary
- Sandra Vida, visual and installation artist, filmmaker and arts administrator, from Calgary

Tommy Banks Performing Arts Award (\$50,000)

- Vicki Adams-Willis, dancer, choreographer, and educator, from Calgary
- Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
- Stewart Lemoine, playwright, director and producer, from Edmonton

Grant MacEwan Literary Arts Award (\$50,000)

- Laurie Greenwood, literary and literacy advocate, from Edmonton
- Sid Marty, poet and literary non-fiction writer, from Lundbreck
- Christopher Wiseman, poet and educator, from Calgary

"Alberta has many talented and creative artists who greatly contribute to our province's social and economic prosperity," said Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. "Supporting our artists and recognizing them for their excellence is critical to the continued growth of Alberta's cultural landscape."

One artist or arts organization will be chosen through a peer-review process to receive the \$50,000 prize in each of the three categories. The Alberta Arts Awards will be awarded on an annual basis. This year's recipients will be honoured during a special gala at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium in Calgary on Alberta Arts Day – September 6. The gala will also include a line-up of lively and eclectic performances by the Alberta Ballet, Asani, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, The Swiftys and many more.

"We are pleased to be presenting these newly expanded awards," said Audrey Luft, Chair of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. "The artistic excellence represented by these shortlists really shows the breadth and depth of talent and dedication that exists in Alberta's vibrant arts communities."

Alberta Arts Day and the Alberta Arts Awards support the goals and strategies in Alberta's cultural policy – *The Spirit of Alberta*. For more information on the gala and awards ceremony, Alberta Arts Day or *The Spirit of Alberta*, visit www.culture.alberta.ca/artsday. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts is the Government of Alberta's principal arts funding agency.

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Attachment: Additional information on each of the award categories

Editor's note: Media are invited to attend the awards ceremony and gala on September 6 at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. The gala will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will run for approximately two hours.

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000

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Alberta Arts Awards categories

Alberta Foundation for the Arts Visual Arts Award

This is a new award created to honour an individual, a partnership, a collective or an organization for outstanding contributions to the visual arts in Alberta and for demonstrated artistic excellence. This award recognizes that visual arts are integral to the quality of life of all Albertans. The value of the award is \$50,000.

Tommy Banks Performing Arts Award

This award was created to honour Tommy Banks' contribution to the performing arts, particularly his role as founding chairman of the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts. It recognizes excellence within Alberta's performing arts community. Individuals, partnerships, collectives and organizations are eligible. The award has been expanded to include all the performing arts and its value has increased to \$50,000.

Grant MacEwan Literary Award

This award was created to honour the tremendous achievements of the late Dr. Grant MacEwan who practiced and supported literary excellence. It recognizes literary excellence in Alberta and celebrates the achievements and contributions of an individual, a partnership, a collective or an organization from the literary arts community. The value of the award has increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

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