

For Immediate Release: August 15, 2008

Toronto Arts Council Foundation Announces Finalists for 2008 Awards

Today, the Toronto Arts Council Foundation (TACF) announced the shortlist for the **2008 Toronto Arts Council Foundation Awards**. The jury, which includes prominent artists, cultural workers and arts supporters, has chosen 15 finalists for the prestigious awards. Winners of the **2008 Toronto Arts Council Foundation Awards** will be announced on **Friday, October 17, 2008** at the Mayor's Arts Awards Lunch.

"There's no doubt that creativity is thriving in our city! From those who make art to those who support artistic endeavors, this year's awards shortlist is a proclamation of excellence, innovation, rigor and passion," says jury member Alana Wilcox of Coach House Books. "Serving on the 2008 jury is as much a privilege as it was a challenge. The jury saw such a range of worthy accomplishments that decisions were certainly difficult. Bravo to all finalists." Wilcox's fellow jurors included Stephen Andrews, Laurie Brown (Chair), Adonis Huggins, Patty Jarvis, Molly Johnson, Michael Levine, Linda MacKenzie, ahdri zhina mandiola, Andrew Moodie, Rina Singha, Jason van Eyk, and d'bi.young.anitafrika.

The **2008 Toronto Arts Council Foundation Awards**, with cash prizes totaling \$35,000, celebrate artists, cultural professionals and arts supporters from every creative discipline who have made significant contributions to Toronto's artistic and cultural life. The 2008 finalists are:

Arts for Youth Award – a \$15,000 cash prize established in 2007 by Martha Burns, Jim Fleck and Jim Pitblado, this award celebrates an individual, collective or organization that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to engaging Toronto youth in the arts.

Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People (LKTYP) is a longtime visionary contributor to the development of Toronto's youth. Through high quality theatre experiences designed specifically for young people, to multiple educational and community engagement programs, LKTYP invites young people to examine their evolving identities and the contexts in which they live.

Mammalian Diving Reflex (MDR) is an interdisciplinary company that creates opportunities for youth to be valued creators in their own right and have their voices respected in collaboration with adults through various youth-driven events, theatre-based performances, theoretical texts and community happenings.

SKETCH Working Arts for Street-Involved and Homeless Youth creates art-making opportunities for young people who are street-involved, homeless or who are considered to be at risk. By engaging marginalized youth in progressive learning opportunities within the context of a multi-disciplinary studio, SKETCH creates opportunities for personal and community development, enhanced job and life skills and cultural development and leadership.

The Globe and Mail Toronto Business for the Arts Award – recognizes a local business that has made a significant contribution to the arts in Toronto. Established in 2006, this award is presented in partnership with Business for the Arts. The recipient will receive an original work of art created by Nobuo Kubota.

For many years, **BMO Financial Group** has contributed to the health of Toronto communities by supporting artistic companies, emerging artists and celebrated cultural institutions. BMO also sponsors myriad arts education initiatives, including outreach programs that bring the voices of youth to life in underserved areas across the GTA. BMO Financial Group believes in the transformative power of the arts and works to make them accessible to a wide range of participants.

Concord Adex Developments is dedicated to promoting art in the public realm by collaborating with and supporting artists, city staff and planners. From commissioning an installation for the Spadina Avenue underpass, to supporting the Art With Heart benefit for Casey House, Concord combines knowledge of the contemporary art scene with awareness of community needs. Through generous financial support and creative involvement in the projects they sponsor, Concord works to improve city spaces and the lives of those who live within them.

Torys LLP, a Toronto-based international law-firm, has partnered with CARFAC Ontario to form the Visual Artists' Legal Clinic of Ontario (VALCO). Through VALCO, the Torys team of lawyers provides essential advice to artists regarding their legal rights and responsibilities. Since 2005, Torys has provided free legal expertise to CARFAC artists, the majority of whom would otherwise be unable to afford the service.

RBC Emerging Artist Award – a \$5,000 cash prize presented to an emerging Toronto artist working in any medium or performing arts discipline in celebration of their current accomplishments and future potential. Established in 2006 by RBC Foundation, this award is intended to support the development or completion of new work.

Actor, writer, producer and director **Greg Atkins** has brought his diverse talents to multiple self-created short films including *Build* which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2004 and went on to great acclaim, traveling to over forty festivals worldwide. His versatility, willingness to examine controversial issues, and notable experimentation with style have earned him recognition and ignited enthusiastic anticipation of his coming works.

Glenda del Monte Escalante is a piano soloist, chamber musician and performer of diverse cultural styles. Glenda is also an emerging cultural leader, taking action in such roles as musical director of the New Cuban Generation Group where she facilitates the meeting of different fields, cultures and ideas.

Director and dramaturge of Dora-award winning *blood.claat* and director of the internationally acclaimed play *da kink in my hair*, **Weyni Mengesha's** physical and intellectually grounded productions leave a lasting impression on Toronto audiences. Weyni was the leader of the Playwrights Collective at Theatre Passe Muraille, and one of the forces behind Stage 3. She is also dedicated to nurturing a new generation of artists and leaders through the A.M.Y. and her work with Ethiopian and Eritrean youth as co-founder of the annual Salem Youth Festival.

Roy Thomson Hall Award of Recognition – a \$10,000 cash prize presented to an individual, ensemble or organization to recognize creative, performing, administrative, volunteer or philanthropic contributions to Toronto's musical life. This award was established by the Volunteer Committee of Roy Thomson Hall in 1984 to recognize and thank the community that supported the conception, building and establishment of the new concert hall. In 2002, the Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall (RTH) asked the TACF to manage the award.

Conductor **David Fallis** is recognized as one of Canada's leading interpreters of operatic and choral/orchestral repertoire from before 1800. He is artistic director of the Toronto Consort, music director for Opera Atelier, and former conductor of the Toronto Chamber Choir. In addition, David was a co-artistic director of the Metamorphosis Festival (2005) and the Sacred Spaces, Sacred Circles Arts Festival (2008), two community-based initiatives working to build partnerships, foster links among diverse cultural groups and attract new audiences.

New Music Arts Projects (NMAP) acts as a unifying organization for Toronto's contemporary new music community. It creates a space for the diverse expressive possibilities within Toronto by supporting music that takes risks, challenges audiences and invites cross-disciplinary collaboration. NMAP works in cooperation with the Toronto Coalition of New Music Presenters to conceive of innovative events such as the soundaXis festivals that explore the interaction between music and other forms of expression and artistic practice.

Jazz musician and composer **Richard Underhill** brings his talents to multiple musical communities in the city including the African and Latin music scenes, the swing and blues communities, and his own free-spirited Shuffle Demons band. He also prioritizes community participation in music, as made evident by his work as the Musical Director for the Kensington Horns Community band since 2003, and musical director of the Festival of Lights since 2002.

William Kilbourn Award for the Celebration of Toronto's Cultural Life – a \$5,000 cash prize presented to an individual performer, teacher, administrator or creator in any arts discipline, including architecture and design, whose work is a celebration of life through the arts in Toronto. Established in 1996, this award is funded through an endowment made possible by private donors who wished to celebrate the life of William Kilbourn (1926-1995). Kilbourn was an author, an educator, an historian and a politician, serving as alderman for the City of Toronto (1970-76) and as a board member of the Toronto Arts Council for seven years, serving as its president from 1981 to 1984.

David Anderson draws on the magic of theatre and puppetry to celebrate the local histories and current interests of Toronto's diverse communities. He has been instrumental in developing a culture that supports rehearsal and performance in Toronto's public spaces, and has taken full advantage of these asserted rights as founder of Clay and Paper Theatre. His efforts to captivate broad audiences have also led him to develop the wildly successful *Day of Delight* festival of love and desire and *Night of Dread* parade of fear and commemoration.

Marc Glassman is a community builder, facilitator and mentor with a flare for pushing artists and audiences alike to define and redefine the possibilities of artistic expression. In addition to co-founding the MOVING PICTURES and IMAGES festivals, his creative commitments range from work as an arts journalist and film curator to proprietor of Pages, Toronto's famously extensive indie bookshop. He creates opportunities for other artists to share and grow their work such as the multi-disciplinary literary programme, *This is Not a Reading Series*. Marc is the editor of two leading film magazines: *Montage*, published by the Directors Guild of Canada and *POV* for the Documentary Organization of Canada.

Thomas Hendry's bold work as a playwright, theatre administrator and arts activist continues to have a meaningful impact on the Canadian arts community. Hendry has helped to define and develop Canadian theatre through his writing and his support of Canadian works and premieres. In addition, Hendry has developed policy and institutions that support the arts. His efforts as co-founder of Arts and the Cities and as Policy Director of the Toronto Arts Council (1984-1995) have contributed to dramatic increases in municipal spending on the arts and improved equal access to these benefits.

Toronto Arts Council Foundation, existing to provide the creative opportunity for donors to support the arts in Toronto, believes that a great city demands great art, and by supporting, celebrating, financing and advocating for Toronto's local artists, we're improving the quality of life of all Torontonians. Although separate entities, the Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council Foundation benefit by being run as sister organizations, ensuring close contact with the arts sector in Toronto and the continuous awareness of needs across the community.

For more information on the awards and the work of the Toronto Arts Council Foundation, please visit www.torontoarts.org/awards.html

Media Contact:
Karen Lorenowicz, KL Strategic Communications
T: 416-243-0168
E: karen.l@sympatico.ca