

7 Artists and 1 Curator Win Governor General's Awards

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BY CANADIAN ART



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

The winners of the 2015 Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts were announced this morning in Ottawa, honouring a range of professionals.

Among the recipients are Toronto-based artist **Robert Houle**, Toronto artist **Micah Lexier**, Montreal media artist **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**, Victoria painter **Sandra Meigs**, multidisciplinary Montreal artist **Rober Racine** and Winnipeg digital artist **Reva Stone**. Montreal curator **Louise Déry** was honoured for her longstanding commitment to "exposed art" with the Outstanding Contribution Award and **Paul McClure**, a Toronto-based jewellery artist, was awarded the Saidye Bronfman Award.

Each winner receives \$25,000 in recognition of their excellence in their fields.

This year's awardees show a notable focus on technology, with several recipients incorporating new media into their work.

Currently based in Toronto, **Robert Houle** has had a multifaceted career as an artist, curator and writer. A member of Sandy Bay First Nation, Houle's writing and curatorial work has focused on First Nations artists including [Rebecca Belmore](#), [Faye HeavyShield](#) and

Norval Morrisseau. He was the first curator of contemporary Aboriginal art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the [Canadian Museum of History](#)), and he curated the groundbreaking exhibition “[Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Ottawa](#)” in 1992.

Micah Lexier is a Toronto-based multimedia artist whose many-tiered practice includes sculpture, installation, photography and text-based work, as well as curation. He graduated with an MFA from the [Nova Scotia College of Art and Design](#) in 1984 and his practice is consonant with the sensibility of that institution, revolving largely around conceptual acts of enumeration and demarcation. Lexier has had more than 100 solo exhibitions, participated in some 200 group exhibitions and produced numerous permanent public commissions. In 2013, the Power Plant presented “[One, and Two, and More Than Two,](#)” a 15-year survey exhibition of Lexier’s work.

Mexican-Canadian artist **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer** is based in Montreal and known for his interactive installations that draw on architecture and performance art. Through these installations, Lozano-Hemmer turns technologies such as robotics and computerized surveillance into platforms that can foster community and empathy. He has had recent solo exhibitions at the [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art](#), the [Fundación Telefónica](#) in Madrid and the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#) in Sydney.

Celebrated Victoria artist **Sandra Meigs** has worked for over 35 years creating deeply layered, often enigmated pieces. Though Meigs works in a variety of media, she is best known for her painting. Her recent series [The Basement Panoramas \(2013\) stands as an exemplar](#): large muralistic pieces, they illustrate the interwoven nature of architecture and narrative, hinting at stories of loss and grief. Meigs has had solo exhibitions at the [Power Plant](#) in Toronto, [Art Gallery of Ontario](#) in Toronto, [Contemporary Art Gallery](#) in Vancouver, [Saidye Bronfman Centre](#) in Montreal and the [Montreal Museum of Fine Arts](#).

Multidisciplinary artist **Rober Racine** has created a diverse body of work that pulls from many fields, including literature, performance and music. His work has been exhibited widely at events including the [Venice](#) and [Sydney Biennales](#) and [documenta IX](#) in Kassel, Germany. The author of four novels, Racine has created radio shows, choreographed dance pieces and worked as a professor at the University of Montreal.

As with Lozano-Hemmer, Winnipeg artist **Reva Stone** uses digital technologies and tools to explore the impact and effect of these developments on human nature. *Portal* (2010–12) is one example, combining custom software, media, robotics and mobile phone technology

into an interactive installation. Stone began focusing on obsolete technologies in recent years. She has exhibited widely across Canada and received awards including an honourable mention from Life 5.0, Art and Artificial Life International Competition, Fundación Telefónica in Madrid.

Paul McClure also takes a tech-friendly approach to art, creating pieces of jewellery that interpret the body at a cellular level. He has been a professor at George Brown College in Toronto for the past 15 years.

Curator **Louise Déry**, director of the [UQAM Gallery](#) since 1997, has been a longstanding champion of Canadian art at home and abroad. Déry curated a well-received exhibition of [David Altmejd](#)'s work in the Canadian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2007. Alongside Altmejd, Déry has worked with artists including [Françoise Sullivan](#), [Raphaëlle de Groot](#), [Michael Snow](#), [Shary Boyle](#), [Dominique Blain](#) and [Stéphane La Rue](#). She received the [Hnatyshyn Foundation Award for Curatorial Excellence](#) in 2007 and was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2013.

The Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts were created in 1999 by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Governor General of Canada. The awards celebrate Canada's vibrant arts community and recognize remarkable careers in the visual and media arts. Nominations are taken each spring, and winners announced the following March.

This year's recipients will be honoured at Rideau Hall in Ottawa in a special ceremony on April 8. Rhiannon Vogl has curated a related exhibition of the winners' works at the [National Gallery of Canada](#) that opens April 9 and runs until August 30.