



FINAL ADJUDICATION CREATOR AWARDS JURY REPORT

April 12, 2024

BACKGROUND

This report is an overview of the discussion and decision of the volunteer citizen jury that met on the morning of Friday April 12, 2024 to determine which of the short-listed 2024 City of Hamilton Arts Awards nominees should be selected to receive awards in Creator category. An annually rotating jury - comprised of discipline-specific artists, arts professionals and community leaders – are key to the selection of recipients in each category. The 2024 Final Jury are listed at the end of this report.

The adjudication session was facilitated by arts service organization Cobalt Connects Creativity. The conflict of interest policy was reviewed, and no conflicts were declared. The adjudication process was outlined, wherein aggregate scores are shared as a jumping off point for discussion and final decisions are made through consensus.

CREATOR AWARD

The Creator Awards recognize living artists, arts professionals and artistic collectives working in any artistic discipline and at any career level. A minimum of eight Creator Awards will be given each year to recognize artistic excellence and/or innovation that contributes to artistic growth in the city, progresses the artform and expresses the cultural vitality and diversity of Hamilton's art scene.

JURY COMMENTS

The jury appreciates the 103 public nominations in this category and recognizes the work of the Arts Sector Review Panel in developing a strong Short List. The jury would

also like to recognize all of shortlisted nominees in this category for their contributions towards Hamilton's artistic landscape across many disciplines.

The jury reviewed the shortlisted nominees' career history, contribution to the community and artwork samples and considered their impact. They acknowledged the challenges in narrowing the list down given the strength of the shortlist. After a thoughtful and collaborative discussion, the jury have awarded nine 2024 Creator Awards. The 2024 Recipients and the jury's rationale for selecting these individuals is outlined below.

Aeris Körper Contemporary Dance

The jury is impressed by the brilliant and profoundly moving work of Aeris Körper Contemporary Dance. They find the collective's co-leadership and anti-oppression model compelling, and their commitment to representation affirming for the dance community. Jury members value the thoughtful and intentional approach Aeris Körper takes in raising awareness of social issues through various means, including performances, educational programs, and residencies. They believe that this collective elevates the dance scene in Hamilton.

Steady Easton

The jury acknowledges Steady Easton as an original artist who addresses challenging themes such as abuse, autism, and queerness with candour and courage. They also commend Steady's exceptional skills in photography and criticism. Steady's visibility as a neurodivergent artist is praised, evident through community engagement and impactful works like the memoir "Daddy Lessons." While Steady has garnered recognition beyond Hamilton, the jury believes local acknowledgment is equally deserved.

Birdie Gehrl

The jury applaud Birdie Gehrl for dynamically establishing accessibility as an aesthetic and site of meaning-making that generatively disrupts the norm. They reflect that Birdie's work has garnered recognition within the disability arts community and beyond, establishing the artist as a vanguard in crip arts aesthetics. Jury members find that Birdie's advocacy for disabled individuals and exploration of sloppy craft offer fresh perspectives, blurring the lines between craft and art. They note that Birdie's evolving practice and interactive works invite curiosity and make art accessible in unique ways, setting a compelling example for emerging artists.

Alex Jacobs-Blum

The jury admires Alex Jacobs-Blum's adept blending of personal experiences and cultural insights in their artwork and process. They find the imagery in the work compelling and striking. Beyond artistic merit, the jury values Alex's support for numerous artists within the community. Additionally, jury members feel Alex's focus on Indigenous Futures is both timely and crucial, offering a forward-looking perspective in a compelling and artistic manner.

Kyle Joedicke

The jury recognizes Kyle Joedicke, a self-taught Indigenous artist for literally leaving a mark on the city. They feel Kyle's work elevates the visibility of marginalized communities and shares their vision, with standout pieces like the re-imagined Ti-Cat emblem emphasizing visibility and inclusivity. The jury finds Kyle's large-scale artworks to be captivating, drawing inspiration from Woodland artists like Norval Morrisseau while forging a distinctive personal aesthetic.

Gordon Leverton

The jury commends Gordon Leverton, a celebrated Hamilton artist known for captivating depictions of the city. They appreciate Gordon's significant contributions to visualizing Hamilton's character and the "Social Space" project which innovatively connects people with art beyond traditional galleries, making it more accessible. Members of the jury feel that Gordon's recognizable aesthetic and widespread presence throughout the city resonate with audiences, forging strong connections through his art.

Lesley Loksi Chan

The jury are captivated by Lesley Loksi Chan's beautiful storytelling through visual arts, blending the magical and poetic and the darkness and light. They find Lesley's work to unfold gradually, inviting deeper exploration rather than offering straightforward messages. The jury also acknowledges a strong community role as an artist, arts worker, and advocate for marginalized groups. With a national and international presence, Lesley's work is found to demonstrate excellence across a broad range of artistic practices.

Monday Press

The jury commends Monday Press for its outstanding efforts in engaging younger Hamiltonians in cultural experiences, leaving attendees feeling invigorated and enthusiastic about arts in the city. By platforming numerous emerging artists at their venue and through events, jury members feel that Monday Press provides invaluable financial and exhibition opportunities. Despite its relatively short history, this collective is recognized by the jury as having achieved remarkable milestones, inspiring other organizations in youth engagement.

Mr. Ben

The jury recognizes Mr. Ben for excelling in a competitive yet often overlooked category – children's music. They applaud Mr. Ben's dual role as a talented musician and a positive role model for children in the arts. The jury is impressed by the diverse tones, speeds, and moods present in Ben's music, which resonates strongly with children. Additionally, jury members commend Mr. Ben's meaningful work with autistic children and his wide range of activities, including festivals, live performances, and teaching.

THE JURY

Donna Akrey
Stephen Altena
Adam Bentley

Visual Art / Arts Education / Collectives
Visual Art / Collectives
Music

Trevor Copp	Theatre / Theatre Administration
Melanie Gillis	Photography / Dance
Dayna Gedney	Fine Craft
Rose Hopkins	Community Arts / Theatre
Gary Joseph	Media Arts
Colin Lapsley	Arts Management / Music
Matthew MacFadzean	Theatre / Arts Management
Bernadette Rule	Writing / Arts Journalism
Anuja Varghese	Writing
Jessica Vinluan	Arts Champion / Arts Management
Laurie Kilgour-Walsh	Arts Education

Advisors to the Jury:

Kim Selman, Cobalt Connects (Facilitator)

Jen Anisef, City of Hamilton