



FINAL ADJUDICATION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT & ARTS CHAMPION AWARDS

JURY REPORT

April 2, 2024

BACKGROUND

This report is an overview of the discussion and decision of the volunteer citizen jury that met on the morning of Tuesday April 2, 2024 to determine which of the short-listed 2024 City of Hamilton Arts Awards nominees should be selected to receive awards in Lifetime Achievement and Arts Champion categories. 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.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

One (1) Lifetime Achievement Award is conferred annually to recognize living artists or arts managers who have contributed substantially to the artistic vitality of the city over the course of a career, and have inspired others through their leadership, creativity and artistic excellence. These individuals' experience and impact may be local, national or international in scope.

JURY COMMENTS

The jury appreciates the 8 public nominations in this category and recognize 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 unique accomplishments and contributions that have had a lasting impact in Hamilton.

After an enthusiastic discussion of the nominees' careers and influence, the jury decided to confer the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award to **Astrid Hepner**.

The jury recognizes **Astrid Hepner** as an arts leader who has demonstrated a profound commitment to nurturing talent and enriching our city's cultural landscape. They celebrate Astrid's capacity to innovate systems that have facilitated access to musical instruments for hundreds of children throughout Hamilton. They deeply appreciate a reflection shared via the nomination process that Astrid has employed, "music as a gateway to the arts for her students". Jury members are grateful for the pivotal role Astrid played in developing the Gasworks, an impactful cultural venue in Hamilton. Moreover, they are impressed that Astrid's initiatives have employed 25 local musicians over the long term – a vital contribution to sustainability in arts professionalism in the city. The jury are proud to select Astrid Hepner as the recipient of the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing her enduring legacy and profound impact on our community.

ARTS CHAMPION AWARDS

The jury appreciates the 9 public nominations in this category. Up to four (4) Arts Champion Awards may be conferred annually to living individuals who are outstanding supporters of the arts in Hamilton as volunteers, advocates, or board members. This is a non-monetary award and recipients will be given a special gift of recognition. This award is open to students and youth over 14 years old.

JURY COMMENTS

The jury reviewed the shortlisted nominees' history of work in the community and considered their impact. They agreed that each nominee has made significant contributions to their communities and the arts sector and appreciate their outstanding service. The jury have awarded four 2024 Arts Champion Awards to: **Noelle Allen, Light Lounge, Melanin Market and Ken Wallis**. Their rationale for selecting these individuals is outlined below.

Noelle Allen

The jury feel that Noelle Allen is integral to the literary community in Hamilton. They laud her tireless volunteer work and leadership roles spanning over two decades and feel her advisory role in initiatives like GritLit and the Hamilton Review of Books underscores her commitment to advancing literature in the City. They also remarked on the success of the Supercrawl roundtable, which fosters meaningful conversations

about literature regardless of being hosted in the middle of a busy arts festival. Jury members feel that Noelle’s impact will undoubtedly continue to inspire generations of writers and literary enthusiasts.

Light Lounge (Carmella Dolmer & Trina Hetherington)

The jury acknowledges Light Lounge as a rising force in our arts community, tirelessly dedicating themselves to providing space and opportunities for visual artists and poets. Their commitment to inclusivity was celebrated – noting their support for queer and emerging artists and demonstrated concern for accessibility, exemplifying a true spirit of community building. In light of the struggles currently faced by emerging artists, the Jury feel that the work of Light Lounge is a strong contribution towards building a foundation for the future of the arts in Hamilton.

Melanin Market (Khadija Hamidu)

The jury recognizes Melanin Market as a true Arts Champion in our community. They celebrate their dedication to creating invaluable spaces for celebration, empowerment, and economic growth for BIPOC artists. Jury members appreciate Melanin Market’s layered approach to advocacy, elevating visual and performance-based artists, as well as entrepreneurs.

Ken Wallis

As a cornerstone of the college radio community, the jury feel Ken Wallis has played a pivotal role in providing a platform for emerging artists, allowing many to discuss and showcase their work for the first time. The jury acknowledges Ken’s work behind the scenes to promote underrepresented genres, such as blues, by bringing in artists from across the country. They also appreciate Ken’s involvement on various boards and in the co-founding new music initiatives.

THE JURY

Donna Akrey	Visual Art / Arts Education / Collectives
Stephen Altena	Visual Art / Collectives
Adam Bentley	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