

**Media Advisory  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 2, 2015**

### **Edmonton Arts Council recognizes outstanding local artists**

The Edmonton Arts Council is hosting a recognition event for the 2014 recipients of **the Cultural Diversity in the Arts** project grants and the **Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund** awards. Presenters include Mayor Don Iveson and Alex Draper, Donor Grants Associate of the Edmonton Community Foundation.

**When:** February 2, 6:30-9:00 p.m. (awards presentation to take place 7:00-7:30 p.m.)

**What:** Awards presentation and reception, media photo opportunity

**Where:** Timms Centre for the Arts, University of Alberta

"The City of Edmonton values diversity of artistic expression," said Paul Moulton, Executive Director of the Edmonton Arts Council. "We are grateful for this wide-ranging group of writers, filmmakers, musicians, actors, performers, visual and media artists who call Edmonton home – for all that they bring to the Edmonton Arts Community, and to the lives of Edmontonians."

The City of Edmonton through the Edmonton Arts Council established the **Cultural Diversity in the Arts program** to recognize that artists from all parts of the world enrich Edmonton's cultural scene. This grant program helps to provide an economic opportunity for new Canadians, in recognition that due to their cultural background and relatively recent arrival in our city, some artists may find themselves in isolation from the greater artistic community.

The **Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund** provides awards of \$7,500 to encourage artists to stay in our community. The funds are intended to offset living and working expenses, allowing artists to devote a concentrated period of time to their artistic activities, career enhancement and/or development. The award is available to artists at any stage of their professional career.

#### **Recipients of the 2014 Cultural Diversity in the Arts grant:**

**May Banh** has explored the many facets of Chinese opera for over twenty years. Currently May is undertaking the organization of two-days of Chinese opera performances in 2015.

**Will Belcourt** is an award-winning multi-disciplinary artist who will be creating a new body of music rooted in traditional Métis folk music and writing songs taken from four generations of his family history.

**Sofia Cristanti** is a visual artist actively involved in the Edmonton Indonesian Community Association. Sofia is creating a series of oil pastel paintings inspired by the Indonesian dancers at the Heritage Festival.

**Yong Fei Guan** is a painter and illustrator creating a picture book about worm composting for preschoolers. Fei's book will help familiarize young children with the concept of reducing household waste.

**Todd Houseman**, a performer and Aboriginal Peoples Interpreter, along with **Ben Gorodetsky**, a first generation Russian-Canadian theatre artist, will be further developing *Folk Lordz* an improvised theatre show driven by Cree storytelling and Chekhovian character drama.

**Erika Namsechi** was born and raised in Peru. She has since had her paintings included in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts TREX program and has received a RISE Award from the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers.

**Yukari Meldrum, Sharmila Pokharel, Pushpa Raj Acharya & Tiffany Adair** met during a multicultural initiative called Borderlines Writing Circle. The four women have come together to develop *Somnio*, a unique project that unites visual art and poetry to create a dialogue between two art forms.

**Marina Mair Sanchez** is a dancer and performer originally from Aguascalientes, Mexico. Marina is developing a script for a bilingual play *Frida y su Reflejo* about the life Frieda Kahlo and her relationship with muralist Diego Rivera.

#### **Recipients of the 2014 Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund Awards:**

**Colleen Brown** is a prairie-raised singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist whose 2008 *Foot In the Heart* album brought praise early in her career. Colleen's fourth album, *Direction*, will be released March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Kyle Charles** is an illustrator whose graphic novels are read around the world. Kyle dedicates his spare time to mentoring emerging artists in Edmonton, to build their skills and create industry connections.

**Nuela Charles** is a soul-pop siren whose voice is bringing her success. Nuela was the very first Edmonton Music Prize winner and a recipient of a Lieutenant Governor General Emerging Artist Award.

**Beth Dart** is the co-artistic producer of Catch the Keys Productions, an independent arts-based event and production company. She is a freelance director, theatre collaborator, producer, lighting designer and stage manager.

**Beth Graham** is a playwright and actor who has performed in theatres across the country. Beth is currently in New York for the Catalyst Theatre's production of *Nevermore*.

**Laura Krewski** is a freelance choreographer and instructor for dance and theatre. She has created work for local and national organizations as well as her own company, Freefall Dance.

**Lindsay McIntyre** is an artist who embraces film as a physical medium. Lindsay's film work and commitment have garnered awards and accolades including the Canada Council for the Arts Victor Martyn-Lynch Staunton Award for Excellence in Media Arts.

**Doug Organ** has played alongside a diverse group of musicians as well as produced and engineered recordings by a wide range of Canadian artists. Doug supports MacEwan music students through the annual Edmontone Studio awards.

More information about the Edmonton Arts Council's grants and award programs can be found at: [grants.edmontonarts.ca](http://grants.edmontonarts.ca)

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The Edmonton Arts Council is a non-profit society and charitable organization that supports and promotes the arts community in Edmonton. The EAC works to increase the profile and involvement of arts and culture in all aspects of our community life.

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