



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Creative City Network of Canada Awards of Excellence Award Winners**

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**October 5, 2023, OTTAWA, ON:** The Creative City Network (CCNC) announced award winners for the 2023 Awards of Excellence program on October 5 2023 at the St. John's Creative City Summit in Newfoundland. Nominations were accepted from all municipalities across the country in May and June 2023. A volunteer peer jury conducted a review of all submissions and selected the successful candidates and honorable mentions in the summer of 2023. Four awards were handed out to members of the Creative City Network of Canada in returning categories: Cultural Events, Public Art Legacy, Public Art Sustainability, and Cultural IDEA. The recipients will be celebrated at the CCNC's annual summit.

**The City of St. Catharines, ON awarded the Cultural Events Award** — The City of St Catharines was the successful candidate for Cultural Events Award for their project "Celebration of Nations – Annual Gathering of Indigenous Arts, Culture and Tradition". The gathering, now entering its 7th year, offers a unique blend of both traditional and contemporary Indigenous perspectives to give a one-of-a-kind immersive experience for visitors to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in downtown St. Catharines Ontario during its annual weekend gathering. Free and ticketed events allow the local community and visitors in one weekend – and in one place – to reflect on an Elder's shared wisdom by the Sacred Fire as the sun rises, to try their hand at a traditional craft, get a better sense of the lived Indigenous experience through poetry, song, dance and film, taste Indigenous foods, cultivate new perspectives and support meaningful reconciliation. Colleen A. Smith, CEO FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre shares that "since the initial gathering, Celebration of Nations continues to be a source of pride for local leaders, city staff, Councilors and community members while inspiring other similar gatherings from coast to coast to coast."

An Honorable Mention was awarded to the **City of Surrey, BC for the Cultural Events** category for the "Surrey Fusion Festival", an event with a profound community impact that drew 110,000 attendees in 2023. The festival's 50 cultural pavilions and nine stages provided a platform for people from all walks of life to celebrate diversity, create lasting connections, foster a sense of unity, and create appreciation for different cultures.

**The City of Richmond, BC awarded the Public Art Legacy Award** — The City of Richmond received the Public Art Legacy Award for "Sea to Sky", a five-storey integrated glass artwork by



Musqueam artist Thomas Cannell in collaboration with Franz Mayer of Munich. The work features the traditional iconography of the Pacific Northwest and the teachings and culture of Cannell's Musqueam ancestors. The integrated public artwork was made possible by a contribution from Keltic Development as part of the City's Private Public Arts Program. "Sea to Sky" frames an important view along a main commercial corridor in Richmond, offering impressive views for pedestrian and vehicular passersby. For building users, the interior office and facility spaces on five floors invite a more intimate stained glass-like viewing experience that conveys the hand-made and textural qualities of the work. "The City of Richmond is proud of our strong and vibrant arts community," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "This award not only recognizes our commitment to the arts, but also our vision and legacy in working with artists of all cultures and backgrounds to provide creative, innovative and powerful work. The giant "Sea to Sky" piece by Musqueam artist Thomas Cannell is yet another example of how Richmond brings art to the community through partnerships in design and development."

An Honorable Mention was awarded to **City of Edmonton, AB for Public Art Legacy Award** for "If the Drumming Stops", a series of four large-scale artworks on glass, which symbolically connect Edmonton transit users to stories of the traditional Papaschase Cree territory. The City of Edmonton shares that the intention of the artists to give voice to the spirit of the language, land, histories and present realities of Indigenous peoples in what has become the current neighborhood of Mill Woods, but which was and will always be carried in the hearts of Papaschase descendants.

**The City of Humboldt, SK awarded the Public Art Sustainability Award** — The City of Humboldt was awarded the Public Art Sustainability Award for their mural titled "Reconciliation Mural" installed at Humboldt's City Hall. The mural was designed by Indigenous artist Kevin PeeAce with inspiration from 185 students at the four local schools who also painted portions of the mural. City of Humboldt's Director of Cultural Services, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, shared that this work of "collaborative art has become a symbol of what can be achieved when we strive to form genuine relationships and learn together about Reconciliation."

The project echoes one of the City of Humboldt's main priorities. Mayor Michael Behiel shared that "Truth and Reconciliation has been and will continue to be one of our priorities. The striking "Reconciliation Mural" installed on City Hall is a symbol of our commitment in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls To Action. Reconciliation is a national process that requires tremendous efforts by all Canadians – and across all levels of government."

The jury also awarded **Honorable Mention to the District of Sechelt (pronounced "see-shelt") for the Public Art Sustainability Award** for their project "Weaving Patterns and



Rhythms: A Community Mural”. The mural was painted directly onto the stone seating of the Hackett Park Amphitheatre in Sechelt, BC. Artist Emily Gray led the creation of this community-engaged public art project by hosting several drop-in painting sessions with over 100 volunteers of all ages. The result was a kaleidoscope of colours, patterns, and stenciled words written in the shashishalhem language of the shíshálh Nation, that weave their way around the amphitheatre, transforming the park into a welcoming place for everyone to enjoy.

**The City of Camrose, AB awarded the Cultural IDEA Award** — The City of Camrose was awarded the Cultural IDEA Award for “READY, SET, PLAY!”, a project that involved a partnership between the City of Camrose Recreation & Culture Department, Action for Healthy Communities and Alberta Health Services “Move Your Mood”. Focusing on the word ‘Play’, the project included games painted on picnic tables that would inhabit the city’s local parks during the spring and summer aimed at engaging families and friends to participate in all types of play. The unique program was designed to help cultural groups in the local community feel a sense of belonging. Creating, designing and painting picnic table games inspired by games played in community members’ homelands and passed on to younger generations allowed the local community to showcase the importance of cultural diversity that reminds the community of fun, family and friendship. The community learned new games to play and also about the diverse groups that inhabit the city, share in the diverse cultures and traditions, and develop new intercultural friendships. Tammy Richard, Addiction Prevention and Mental Health Promotion Facilitator, Community Addiction and Mental Health notes the important impact of the project on the local community: “By getting active and exploring City parks and picnic tables, program participants and City residents not only had the opportunity to enhance their physical and mental health, but also had the opportunity to learn about different cultures, meet others, and develop a sense of belonging.” Local community members share what the project meant to them, such as Khadija, a mom who came from Morocco to live in Edmonton who shared that “many people do not know about Morocco. Through this table project, my kids and I were able to share something interesting about our culture with the community.”

CCNC congratulates all recipients of the Awards of Excellence, the honourably mentioned, and the nominated municipalities and projects across all categories for the important work that they do in their local communities. The dedication of CCNC members to their communities and local cultural ecologies has showcased the resilience of this sector and dedication of local culture professionals to supporting the cultural offerings of Canada’s towns and cities that make them not only livable, but vibrant.