



2018 Manitoba Arts Award of Distinction Recipients Announced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winnipeg, Manitoba. June 4, 2018. The Manitoba Arts Council is pleased to announce that the 2018 recipients of the Award of Distinction are the dynamic art duo Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan. This recognition awards \$30,000 to the artist team, and is the Manitoba Arts Council's award for the highest level of excellence and long-term achievements of an artist in Manitoba.

Collaborators since 1989, the Winnipeg-based duo were catapulted into the national spotlight with the controversial (and now world-renowned) performance piece, *We're Talking Vulva*. Acclaimed by *Border Crossings* as "one of the high-points of contemporary Canadian artistic production," Dempsey and Millan have toured extensively throughout North America, Europe, Australia, and Japan. Their film and video works have been screened in venues ranging from women's centres in Sri Lanka to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City. Highlights include an art installation titled *Archaeology and You* (Royal Ontario Museum), publications such as *Lesbian National Parks & Services Field Guide to North America* (Pedlar Press), and curated exhibitions throughout Canada and the United States.

"This year we are celebrating the exceptional career of Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan who have developed a significant body of work, and have also changed the landscape of the Manitoba arts community," said Roberta Christianson, Chair of the Manitoba Arts Council. "This award is the Manitoba Arts Council's way of acknowledging our artists and thanking them for the invaluable contribution they have made to the artistic culture of our province and beyond, and for the legacy they are creating."

"I nominated Shawna and Lorri for their biting, insightful humour and risk-taking, and for the magic and wonder of their artwork," said nominator Alexis Kinloch. "I am thankful to these artists for devoting their life's work to standing up for women, tirelessly pushing every boundary, and recontextualizing the politics of gender in and out of the gallery. They root us in reason, creating community, and guiding the way through their artwork towards a feminism defined by equality and justice for all."

The award of \$30,000 will be presented at a celebration held on June 20th 2018 at the Polo Park Bowling Centre from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. All are welcome.

More information about Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan and their work at shawnadempseyandlorrimillan.net



Previous Award of Distinction recipients include: Diana Thorneycroft (2016), Robert Archambeau (2014), J. Roger Léveillé (2012), William Eakin (2009), Roland Mahé (2008), Dr. Robert Turner (2007), Aganetha Dyck (2006), Guy Maddin (2005), Grant Guy (2004), Robert Kroetsch (2003), and Leslee Silverman (2002).

About the Manitoba Arts Award of Distinction

The Manitoba Arts Award of Distinction recognizes the highest level of artistic excellence and distinguished career achievement by professional Manitoba artists in any art form. The \$30,000 Award is presented biennially by the Manitoba Arts Council as part of its commitment to recognize and support professional artists in Manitoba. The nominations for this award are made by the community and reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel of peers who make their decision based on the artistic excellence of the candidate's work and their contribution to the development of the arts in Manitoba.

About the Manitoba Arts Council

The Manitoba Arts Council is an arm's-length agency of the Province of Manitoba, established in 1965 "to promote the study, enjoyment, production and performance of works in the arts." The Council makes awards to professional arts organizations and individuals in all art forms including theatre, literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, media arts, craft, architecture or the graphic arts, and includes other similar creative or interpretive activity, including arts education. The Council uses a peer assessment process in making awards. Historically, the main criterion used to assess applications is artistic excellence. Learn more about the Manitoba Arts Council: www.artscouncil.mb.ca

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