



BC Achievement Polygon Award First Nations Art



NOMINATION GUIDE & TIPS

I hope to inspire and pass down my knowledge that has been passed down to me and one day perhaps see one of my own children carry this legacy forward. Art has always been part of who I am.

Photo & Quote: 2024 Award Recipient, Kelly Cannell

This Nomination Guide includes important information that should be carefully reviewed before submitting a nomination and tips on how to present a compelling nomination.

AWARD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Polygon Award in First Nations Art Award (FNA) program celebrates artistic excellence in both traditional, contemporary or media art. It honours artists from BC First Nations who have demonstrated a commitment to their art practice, accumulated a body of work and are recognized in their communities as artists.

WHY NOMINATE OR APPLY

The FNA program advances the collective conversation around First Nations art in BC. Applying for the award serves as a platform to communicate an artist's work, vision and creativity. The process invites an opportunity for critical artistic reflection and exposes artists to a wider audience.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **February 15, 2026** – Deadline to submit for the 2026 award program
- **October** – Awardees Announced
- **November** – Art Exhibition & presentation ceremony

The completed nomination form and all materials must be submitted by **February 15, 2026 @ 11:59 p.m.** for the nomination to be considered for the **2026 award program.**

SAVE AND CONTINUE LATER

- If you don't have all the information on hand, click on the **'Save and Continue Later'** button at the bottom of the online nomination form
- You will be prompted to **enter your email and will receive a link** that you can access and complete your nomination prior to the deadline

CHECKLIST - BEFORE YOU START

- Review the **Nomination Guide** (this document) with tips for submitting a compelling nomination
- Ensure the nominator and nominee meet the eligibility criteria
- Prepare the Nominator Statement **in a word document**, then copy and paste the content into the required field
- Have all nominator and nominee contact information
- Have all documents ready to upload
- Schedule 15-20 minutes to complete the form

CATEGORIES

Artists have the option to self-identify in one of two categories: emerging or established.

The nominator must select the category that best describes the artist (i.e., nominee):

Emerging: Artists have developed basic techniques through education and/or apprenticeship; and are in the early stages of launching a professional career. They have created and publicly presented a body of independent work and are ready for the next step in their artistic development.

Established: Artists have demonstrated advanced techniques; shown a commitment to their art practice; and are recognized in their community as artists. They have publicly presented a significant body of independent work and serve as mentors in their respective artistic community.

Award of Distinction: The nominator may request that the Established Artist nominee be considered for this award designation.

The Award of Distinction is presented to an **Established Artist** in recognition of extraordinary and sustained accomplishment in First Nations Art in BC. It is also a commemorative reflection on how these artistic leaders contribute to their communities, how they respect tradition, how they mentor the next generation, and how they transform reality. They ensure that BC is a place filled with astonishing craft, with unique and immensely expressive power, and continuous wonder.

*Visit BC Achievement's website to learn more about past Award of Distinction recipients.

NOMINATOR ELIGIBILITY

Any person, group or organization may submit nominations for the Award with exceptions noted below:

- Current members of the jury panel, or members of the jury panel's immediate family may not submit a nomination
- BC Achievement board members may not submit a nomination

NOMINEE ELIGIBILITY

An eligible nominee must:

- Practice traditional or contemporary visual art in fields such as, but not limited to, carving, photography, beading, weaving, jewellery, painting, masks, sculpture, stonework, printmaking, basketry, textiles, and media art
- Be affiliated with a BC First Nation
- Have been a resident of BC for the past three years

An artist may self-nominate (i.e., apply for the award program).

The following are ineligible to receive the Award:

- Posthumous nominations
- BC Achievement board members or jury members
- Past recipients*

*Visit BC Achievement's [Awardees webpage](#) to see if your nominee is a past recipient of the award.

HOW TO NOMINATE / APPLY

The nominator must complete the online nomination form and include the following:

- Nominator Name & Contact Information (if applicable)
- Nominee Name & Contact Information
- Nominee Category: Emerging or Established
- Number of years nominee has been practicing their craft
- Field / Medium of artwork
- Nominee First Nations Identity Statement
- Nominator Statement
- Nominee's CV or resumé
- Images of the nominee's work & description
- Additional Materials – optional, but strongly recommended (up to 5 items max.)

TIPS FOR SUBMITTING A COMPELLING NOMINATION

Nominator Statement Max. 3000 characters including spaces or approx. 500 words.

We encourage you to make use of the full word count for the nominator statement to provide a well-rounded and engaging description of the nominee's achievements.

- **Tell the nominee's story**
- Provide reasons for the submission and a description of why the nominee should be considered for the award
- Describe why the nominee became an artist, what their work means to them and others
- Explain what inspires them
- Address what kinds of artwork they create, which mediums they practice in and what makes the nominee's artwork unique
- Describe how it contributes to the cultural fabric of the province
- If the artist is presenting work outside of their Nation's traditions, please indicate how authentic and respectful efforts have been made to engage with the artists or other members of the Indigenous communities whose culture or protocols are incorporated in the work

Nominee First Nations Identity Statement Max. 500 characters including spaces or approx. 80 words.

At BC Achievement, we see the nomination process as a collaboration and the beginning of a strong meaningful relationship. The nomination must clearly articulate the nominee's relationship and connection to their First Nations identity. For the purposes of the FNA program, First Nations are status and non-status individuals who are citizens, recognized members or direct blood relatives of a larger tribal group.

- Please provide a statement that outlines the nominee's relationship and connection to their First Nations identity.

For Emerging Artists – provide a statement that describes how receiving the award would help to advance their career trajectory and support them in achieving the next level of artistic development. Max. 500 characters including spaces or approx. 80 words.

Nominee’s CV or resumé

- Please provide information on the nominee’s education, training, significant projects, exhibits and achievements in their field

Images & Description

- Provide up to 10 high-resolution images of recent work
- For each image uploaded, provide the title, date, medium and a short description

***Please include the image number in the name of the image uploaded – for example:**

- first name-last name-image-01
- first name-last name-image-02 etc.

Additional Materials – optional, but strongly recommended

- Include materials such as the nominee’s biography, letters of support, links* to articles, recorded testimonials, YouTube videos, photos, website links, etc.
- A maximum of five items will be accepted
- Jury members will review up to 10 pages total and five minutes of video

***Each link submitted is considered one additional material.**

TIPS FOR SUBMITTING IMAGES:

All images should be high resolution, min. 1MB in size. JPEGs preferred.

- It is strongly recommended the nominator **submit the maximum number of images permitted**
- High quality images make a difference to the jury and should show off the nominee’s work in the best light
- If the image is taken outdoors, ensure no shadows are blocking the art
- Images should show the nominee’s signature style even if it is in different mediums
- Please include images that focus on the details of the nominee’s work

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

If the artist’s work produces sound (e.g., musical instruments, installations), it is recommended that the artist/nominator provide links via YouTube or to the artist’s website.

Support Letters help to paint a complete picture of the nominee and what they have accomplished. If provided as an ‘additional material’, they should:

- Describe why the nominee should be considered for the award (this is particularly helpful if the nominee is an emerging artist)
- Be written by individuals who know the nominee well enough to be able to talk about the nominee from first-hand experience (e.g., past award recipients, or other well-known people in a similar field to the nominee)
- Be current and written **specifically for the FNA award program**

Request support letters early on so the referee has time to write a strong letter.

Strong nominations use descriptive words such as: leader, innovator, trailblazer, mentor, supporter, advocate, visionary, changemaker; perseverance, commitment, dedication, recognition, determination; exemplary, admired, motivated, passionate, inspirational, extraordinary, committed, dedicated, resourceful, tireless, etc.

UPDATING A NOMINATION

To update a nomination:

- Click on the link for the nomination form
- Select 'yes' to the question 'Is this an update to a previous nomination?'
- Include the year the nomination was **first submitted**
- Complete the online nomination form and include updated information & materials about your nominee

Nominations are valid for three years including the first year of nomination and two subsequent years.

Nominators are **strongly encouraged to update their nomination** for consideration by the following year's jury panel if their nominee was not recognized in the previous year's awardee cohort.

We are happy to send the documents previously submitted for your nominee. Please email rup@bcachievement.com to make your request.

SELECTION OF AWARDEES

An independent jury panel reviews the nominations and selects the awardees. The decision of the jury is final. Nominees are notified only if selected for an award. Nominators are informed as to whether or not they have been successful with their application.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Award recipients are selected based on the material submitted by the nominator. The work of the nominee should exemplify and demonstrate excellence based on the following:

- Artistic Excellence
- Creativity & Originality
- Aesthetics
- Interpretation of First Nations Culture

Up to four artists will be awarded including the Emerging Artist.

Crabtree McLennan Emerging Artist - the Crabtree McLennan Emerging Artist designation was established in 2019. Named in honour of Brenda Crabtree, former Director, Aboriginal Programs, Emily Carr University and the late Bill McLennan (1948-2020), Curator Emeritus, UBC Museum of Anthropology, this recognition aims to highlight and support emerging talent.

RECOGNITION

FNA award recipients receive a monetary prize of \$10,000 and are featured in a recognition film produced by BC Achievement. In addition, they receive a medallion and lapel pin designed by renowned artist Robert Davidson, OC, OBC, and a commemorative framed certificate and letter from the Premier recognizing their achievements. Recipients are granted use of the First Nations Art Award seal to signify their creative excellence. An art exhibition and presentation ceremony will be held to showcase the awardees' accomplishments.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can information be saved on the nomination form and completed at a later date?

Yes. If you don't have all the information on hand, click on the 'Save and Continue Later' button at the bottom of the online nomination form – you will be prompted to enter your email and will receive a link that you can access and complete your nomination prior to the deadline.

2. If an artist is affiliated with another First Nation outside of BC but is currently living and working in BC, can they apply?

No, the artist must be affiliated with a British Columbia First Nation.

3. Are part-time artists eligible?

Yes, if the artist is committed to their practice; has produced a significant body of work; and is recognized by their community and peers as an artist.

4. Can an artist submit samples of the work in each field they practice?

Yes, but only ten visuals TOTAL may be submitted.

5. What is 'media art' and is it admissible?

Yes, it is admissible. BC First Nations artists working in media art are those whose work is created with media technologies including film, digital art, and computer animation.

6. Should a previously submitted nomination be updated?

Yes, nominees should annually provide updated visuals and information reflecting their recent work.

7. When are awardees announced and where are the names of the awardees published?

Awardees are announced in October. Their names are published on BC Achievement's website and social media.

8. Has the name of the award changed over the years?

In 2018, the name was changed from the BC Creative Achievement Awards for First Nations Art to The Fulmer Award in First Nations Art. In 2023, it was updated to The Polygon Award in First Nations Art.

PRIVACY POLICY

BC Achievement is committed to protecting the privacy of people through responsible management of information received. Nominations are kept confidential between the nominator and BC Achievement. Photographs and information about the award recipients may be used for the promotion of the FNA program and other promotional activities (i.e., on BC Achievement's website, social media channels, in media releases etc.).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the BC Achievement website to view the FNA program page or contact:

rup@bcachievement.com