



*Photo: Rebecca Grenier-Baker, 2025 Award Recipient*

## **POLYGON AWARD IN FIRST NATIONS - WHY THIS AWARD MATTERS**

**The Polygon Award in First Nations Art (FNA)** program celebrates the legacy and creativity of First Nations artists. It honours their role in preserving traditional practices while embracing contemporary art, recognizing their contributions to both their communities and the broader cultural landscape in the province.

By amplifying First Nations voices, the award program builds a deeper appreciation of their artistry and highlights the transformative power of art in advancing understanding across diverse communities. The award also promotes growth and connection among artists, providing opportunities to reach new audiences while acknowledging the artists as stewards of cultural heritage, bridging the past, present, and future.

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## **WHY NOMINATE / APPLY**

The FNA program advances the collective conversation around First Nations art in BC and 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.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

- **Nomination Deadline:** February 15, 2027 @ 11:59 p.m.
- **Awardees Announced:** Fall 2027
- **Combined Art Exhibition & Presentation Ceremony:** Fall 2027 in Vancouver

## **HOW TO NOMINATE / APPLY**

To submit a complete nomination, you must provide:

- **Nominator Details** (name & contact)
- **Nominee Details** (name & contact)
- **Nominee Category:** Emerging or Established
- **Number of years nominee has been practicing their craft**
- **Field / Medium of artwork**
- **First Nations Identity Statement** (max. 500 characters incl. spaces / ~80 words)
- **Nominator Statement** (max. 3000 characters incl. spaces / ~500 words)
- **Nominee's CV or resumé**
- **Images of nominee's work & description**
- **Additional Materials** (optional but strongly recommended; max. 5 items)

**Tip:** If you need more time, use **‘Save and Continue Later’** at the bottom of the online form—you’ll receive a link to complete your nomination before the deadline.

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## CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU START

- ✓ Review this **Nomination Guide** for **tips (see below)** and requirements
  - ✓ Confirm nominator and nominee meet **eligibility criteria**
  - ✓ Draft your **Nominator Statement in a Word doc first**, then copy it into the form
  - ✓ Have all nominator & nominee contact details ready
  - ✓ Gather supporting & additional materials (i.e., images & description)
  - ✓ Allow 15–20 minutes to complete the form
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## CATEGORIES

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

- **Emerging artists** have developed foundational techniques through education, mentorship and/or apprenticeship, and have begun to establish an independent artistic practice. They have created and publicly presented a body of independent work and are ready for the next step in their professional development.
- **Established artists** demonstrate advanced technical skill and a sustained commitment to their artistic practice. They are recognized within their community for their artistic contributions and leadership. Their work includes a substantial body of publicly presented, independent work, and they actively support the growth of others by serving as mentors within their 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. It is 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 BC is a place filled with astonishing craft, with unique and immensely expressive power, and continuous wonder.

**Note:** Requesting consideration for the Award of Distinction **does not preclude** the nominee from also being considered within the Established Artist category.

Visit the **First Nations Art Award webpage** to learn more about **past Award of Distinction** recipients.

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## NOMINATOR ELIGIBILITY

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

- Members of the jury panel or their immediate family may not submit a nomination
- BC Achievement board members may not submit a nomination

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## 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, marks, sculpture, stonework, printmaking, basketry, textiles and media art
- Be affiliated with a BC First Nation
- Be a BC-resident for at least 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 First Nations Art Award recipients (check [past awardees](#))

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## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Award recipients are selected based on the following **four criteria**:

- 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** – This 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.

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## IMPORTANT TIPS FOR SUBMITTING IMAGES

- **Tip 1:** Submit high-resolution images (minimum 1MB; JPEGs preferred) to ensure clarity and detail.
- **Tip 2:** Include the maximum number of images allowed to fully showcase the nominee's range and body of work.
- **Tip 3:** Choose well-lit, high-quality photos that present the work clearly – avoid shadows, glare, or distractions.
- **Tip 4:** Provide a mix of overall and close-up shots that highlight both the nominee's signature style and important details.
- **Tip 5:** If the nominee's work includes sound (e.g., music, instruments, or installations), please include links to audio or video samples (i.e., YouTube or the artist's website).

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## NOMINATOR STATEMENT (MAX 3000 CHARACTERS INCLUDING SPACES | ~500 WORDS):

Use the **full word count** for the nominator statement to provide a thorough, well-rounded, and engaging description of the nominee's achievements.

- ✔ **Tell the nominee's story** in a way that paints a **vivid picture** for someone who doesn't know them
- ✔ Outline reasons for the submission and describe why the nominee should be considered for the award
- ✔ Explain what inspires the nominee
- ✔ Describe what kinds of artwork they create, which mediums they practice, and what make the nominee's artwork unique
- ✔ Explain how the nominee's work contributes to the cultural fabric of the province
- ✔ If the artist is presenting work outside of their Nation's traditions, 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

**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 incl. spaces | ~80 words).

## FIRST NATIONS IDENTITY STATEMENT (MAX 500 CHARACTERS INCLUDING SPACES | ~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.

- ✔ Provide a statement that **outlines the nominee's relationship and connection** to their First Nations identity

## NOMINEE'S CV OR RESUMÉ

- ✔ Provide details on the nominee's education and training
- ✔ Outline significant projects, exhibits and achievements / awards in their field

## IMAGES & DESCRIPTION

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

**Note:** 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 RECOMMENDED):

- Include materials such as the nominee's biography, CV, letters of support, \*links to articles, recorded testimonials, YouTube videos, photos, etc.
- A maximum of five items will be accepted

- If the total of all the ‘Additional Materials’ is more than ten pages OR five minutes of video OR five weblinks, the jury members will only review up to these limits, due to time constraints

**Note:** The nominator may upload **one word or PDF document** with up to five links in the ‘Additional Materials’ section.  
**\*Each web link counts as one Additional Material.**

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## UPDATING A PREVIOUS NOMINATION

Nominations are valid for **three years**. To update:

- Use the online form and select **‘Yes’ to the question** “Is this an update to a previous nomination?”
- Indicate the original year of submission
- Update with new information and images

**Need help?** We can send you your previous submission—email [rup@bcachievement.com](mailto:rup@bcachievement.com).

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## HOW AWARDEES ARE SELECTED & RECOGNIZED

An independent jury reviews the nominations and selects the recipients. The jury’s decisions are final. Only selected nominees are contacted, and nominators are informed of the outcome of their submission.

Awardees receive a **cash prize** and are featured in professionally produced **recognition film** by BC Achievement. Each awardee is also presented with a medallion and lapel pin designed by renowned artist Robert Davidson, OC, OBC, along with a commemorative framed certificate and letter from the Premier. Recipients are granted use of the First Nations Art Award seal to signify their creative excellence and are celebrated at an exhibition and presentation ceremony showcasing their work.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. Can information be saved on the nomination form and completed at a later date?** Yes. Click **“Save and Continue Later”** at the bottom of the online form. **Enter your email to receive a link** that allows you to return and complete your nomination before the deadline.
- 2. Is a nomination considered for more than one year?** Nominations begin a three-year program and may be reviewed by up to three selection committees. Nominators are given the opportunity to update their nomination each year.
- 3. When are awardees notified and where are the names of the awardees published?** Awardees are notified in the fall. Their names are published on BC Achievement’s website and social media channels and shared in the press release.
- 4. If an artist is affiliated with a First Nation outside of BC but is currently living and working in BC, can they be nominated or apply?** No. The artist must be affiliated with a BC First Nation.
- 5. Can an artist submit images of the work in each field they practice?** Yes. However, only ten visuals total may be submitted.

**6. What is “media art”?** BC First Nations artists working in media art are those whose work is created with media technologies including film, digital art, and computer animation.

**7. Are part-time artists eligible?** Yes. Artists who work part-time are eligible, provided they demonstrate a clear commitment to their artistic practice and ongoing contributions to their field.

**8. Should a previously submitted nomination be updated?** If possible, nominators should annually provide updated visuals and information reflecting the nominee’s recent work.

**9. 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 First Nations Arts Award program and other promotional activities on BC Achievement’s website, social media channels etc.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit the BC Achievement website to view the **First Nations Art Award** program page or contact:  
[rup@bcachievement.com](mailto:rup@bcachievement.com)