

Plaskett

THE JOE PLASKETT FOUNDATION

Press Release

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Azadeh Elmizadeh wins \$30,000 Joseph Plaskett Award in Painting

\$10,000 Nancy Petry Award won by James Gardner



Painter Azadeh Elmizadeh in her studio. Photo credit: Greg McCarthy.

Painter Azadeh Elmizadeh is the 2020 recipient of the \$30,000 Joseph Plaskett postgraduate award in painting. Originally from Tehran in Iran, she is a recent graduate of the Master of Fine Arts degree in painting at the University of Guelph in Ontario. The award will allow her to spend six months in Europe when public health guidelines permit international travel again.

This period of great freedom will give Elmizadeh the opportunity to develop her art practice in a stimulating environment: "The Plaskett Award provides the opportunity to extend my understanding of the role that intercultural encounters have played in shaping Modernist abstraction through the 20th century", says the artist. "During my stay in Europe, I hope that I will be able to engage and contribute to the contemporary

dialogues that are being generated by the growing diversity in Europe's cultural landscape. I intend to base my studio practice in Berlin where I will have access to the significant collection of Persian manuscripts at the Islamic art museum in Germany. I also hope to travel and will continue to explore my research interests with visits to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Victoria and Albert Museum in England."

From the onset, the jury was captivated by Elmizadeh's masterful approach to constructing a painting that evokes luminosity through simplicity. In her works, they found a great balance between a sense of history, with a nod to colour field paintings, and a desire to bring something fresh and new, thanks to an incredibly complex colour palette that evaporates in fire and light, as well as hints of figures emerging from the painting surface.



Painter James Gardner in his studio. Photo credit: Daniel Esteban.

The 2020 Nancy Petry Award was won by painter James Gardner, who is originally from Kitchener in Ontario and who just completed his MFA in Painting and Drawing at Concordia University. The \$10,000 award will allow him to travel to Europe for two months, where he plans to stay in Greece, Italy and Ireland to continue his study of paintings made within the tradition of the Art of Memory and further develop his ideas about the intersection between "Western esotericism" and image making. The jury was impressed by Gardner's strong knowledge of painting norms and conventions, along with his willingness to explore them with playful, complex constructions.

The award recipients were chosen after a careful assessment of the 34 exceptional applications that were received. The jury met virtually in November 2020. For the first time this year, the jury members came from different regions, in an effort to accurately represent the variety of viewpoints in Canadian painting: Gwenessa Lam, associate professor, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver; Sara Hartland-Rowe, part-time instructor, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax; Stéphane La Rue, painter, Montreal. The call for applications opens in February 2021 for the next set of Plaskett and Petry Awards.

Canadian artist Joseph Plaskett, who wished to give young Canadian painters the opportunity to discover Europe, created the Joe Plaskett Foundation in 2004. Since 2015, the Nancy Petry Foundation has partnered with the Joe Plaskett Foundation to administer a second prize given to the first runner-up. The award recipients are exceptional emerging Canadian artists in the field of painting who are admitted in a graduate program.

For more information:
info@joeplaskett.com