Yukon Prize names jury as applications set to open Aug. 17

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News Reporter

The Yukon Prize for Visual Arts has launched its 2027 edition with a national jury of three acclaimed arts leaders, a lineup organizers say reflects the profile of Yukon contemporary art.

Applications for the 2027 Yukon Prize for Visual Arts open Aug. 17 and close Nov. 16, according to a June 16 news release from the Yukon Prize.

The Yukon Prize says the 2027 festival weekend will run Oct. 1 to 3, 2027, bringing artists, curators, collectors and visitors together for exhibitions, talks and public events across Whitehorse and surrounding communities. Last year's Air North Art Crawl drew more than 600 people, according to the release.

The $20,000 privately funded prize will be awarded during the festival's celebration evening at the Yukon Arts Centre. Five other finalists will receive $3,000 each and be featured in a curated exhibition at the Yukon Arts Centre Gallery from September to November 2027.

The Yukon Prize says it will announce a longlist of artists in early February 2027, followed by six finalists at the end of March.

Co-founder Julie Jai said in the release the Prize aims to create opportunities for Yukon artists to connect with broader audiences while celebrating the territory's artistic community.

The release also highlights recent national attention for Yukon artists, including acquisitions, exhibitions and residencies. Examples include 2021 finalist Krystle Silverfox, whose work has been acquired by the National Gallery of Canada and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and 2025 finalist Jeneen Frei Njootli, who recently presented a solo exhibition at The Power Plant.

The organization announced that Secwépemc artist and curator Tania Willard, Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery CEO Carolyn Vesely and Art Gallery of Nova Scotia CEO Sarah Fillmore will serve as jurors for the 2027 award.

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia CEO Sarah Fillmore will serve as a juror for the 2027 Yukon Prize. (Julie Jai/Submitted)

Willard is the 2025 Sobey Art Award recipient and the incoming director and curator of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery at the University of British Columbia. According to the news release, her work has expanded conversations around Indigenous art, land-based practice and community-led art making.

Vesely leads The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto and previously spent two decades with the Ontario Arts Council, including as CEO. The release says she played a significant role in supporting artists and public galleries across the province.

Fillmore, who chaired the Sobey Art Award jury before becoming CEO of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, said serving on the Yukon Prize jury has offered "special access to an extraordinary community of artists and arts supporters." She said the Prize provides an important forum for conversations about art and professional practice.

The Yukon Prize says the 2027 edition marks the fourth iteration of the award. Previous recipients include Aubyn O'Grady in 2025, Kaylyn Baker in 2023 and Joseph Tisiga in 2021.

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Secwépemc artist and curator Tania Willard will serve as a juror for the 2027 Yukon Prize. (Julie Jai/Submitted)