

The Sobey Art Award

The Sobey Art Foundation was established in 1981 with a mandate to continue the work of the late Frank H. Sobey as a dedicated supporter and collector of Canadian visual art. Since then, the Foundation has assembled one of the finest collections of 19th and 20th century Canadian art at Crombie House, the former home of Frank and Irene Sobey in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. The collection, which is open to the public each Wednesday during July and August or by appointment throughout the year, contains an impressive range of works from many of Canada's leading painters, including Cornelius Kreighoff, Tom Thomson, and J.E.H. McDonald.

In 2001, the Foundation extended its support to contemporary Canadian Art with the creation of the Sobey Art Award, the richest of its kind in Canada. Every two years, the Sobey Art Award is bestowed upon an emerging contemporary Canadian artist, 39 years of age or younger, who has exhibited work in one of the country's public or private art galleries within the past 18 months. A panel of curatorial advisors, representing major galleries from each region of Canada, develops a shortlist of aspiring contestants and chooses the eventual winner. The award, which directs \$50,000 to the winner, is intended to provide meaningful assistance to the country's most promising artists, while stimulating greater public interest in their work. For further information pertaining to the Sobey Art Award please visit the website at dev3.axionic.com.



Brian Jungen, Prototype for a New Understanding #4, 1998, Nike Air Jordans, hair. Courtesy of Catriona Jefferies Gallery, Vancouver.

In December, 2002, the inaugural \$50,000 Sobey Art Award was awarded to Brian Jungen, a Vancouver artist representing the West Coast region of Canada. Since graduating from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 1992, Brian Jungen has gained a national reputation as one of Canada's most promising young artists. Noted for his ability to reconfigure everyday objects and transform them into complex and compelling art, Jungen encourages us to reconsider the world around us. His award winning piece is the native-style mask created from a disassembled pair of Nike Air Jordan basketball shoes. The red, white, and black high-tops have been reconfigured into a North-west Coast native ceremonial mask.