



2025 **RBC Award** for Glass

Winner: Gordon Boyd
Runner-up: Nadira Narine
Finalists: Samwell Guertin,
Em McDonald & Jérémie St-Onge

2025 RBC Award for Glass

The Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery is proud to present the 14th RBC Award for Glass. Recognizing emergent talent and ensuring a bright future for Canadian artists are shared values that the Gallery and RBC Foundation strive to uphold and celebrate. This annual award – which is the only one of its kind in Canada – celebrates the outstanding work in glass of early-career artists working in a variety of techniques. The \$10,000 prize for first place will enable the winner to dedicate more of their time to learning and creation, thereby elevating their artistic and professional practice.

Gordon Boyd of Oakville, Ontario is the winner of the 2025 RBC Award for Glass. We are pleased to present his work in a special exhibition along with this year's runner up – Nadira Narine (Toronto), who is awarded a \$5,000 prize – and finalists Samwell Guertin (Montréal), Em McDonald (Oakville), and Jérémy St-Onge (Montréal), who each receive a prize of \$1,000.

Many thanks to the esteemed jurors for the 2025 RBC Award for Glass, including Benjamin Kikkert, Cheryl Wilson-Smith, and Franklin Silverstone, and especially to The RBC Foundation for their cultural leadership in making such an award possible and for their partnership and support to the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery. Together, we are honoured to give emerging talent a platform to share their work with the public.

My sincere congratulations to the winner and finalists who all put their bright imaginations and sharp skills to work in glass.

Sarah Stanners, PhD

Executive Director & Chief Curator

Gordon Boyd (Oakville, ON)

Grand Prize Winner



Gordon Boyd, *365 Days*, 2025. Blown glass, handwritten journal entries. 79 x 18 cm. Collection of the artist.

Gordon Boyd is a Canadian glass artist whose work explores the expressive potential of blown glass as both a functional and conceptual medium. Born in Manitoba and now based in Ontario, he has been working with glass for over a decade. Gordon holds a Bachelor's degree in Craft and Design from Sheridan College and for the last 5 years he's been a resident artist at the Living Arts Centre, where he continues to refine his practice and push the boundaries of contemporary glass. With a background in traditional glassblowing techniques and a strong conceptual approach, Gordon has exhibited widely and received multiple awards in glass. His work continues to explore the relationship between material, memory, and storytelling, demonstrating the ability of glass to hold both form and meaning in a uniquely compelling way.

Nadira Narine (Toronto, ON)

Runner Up

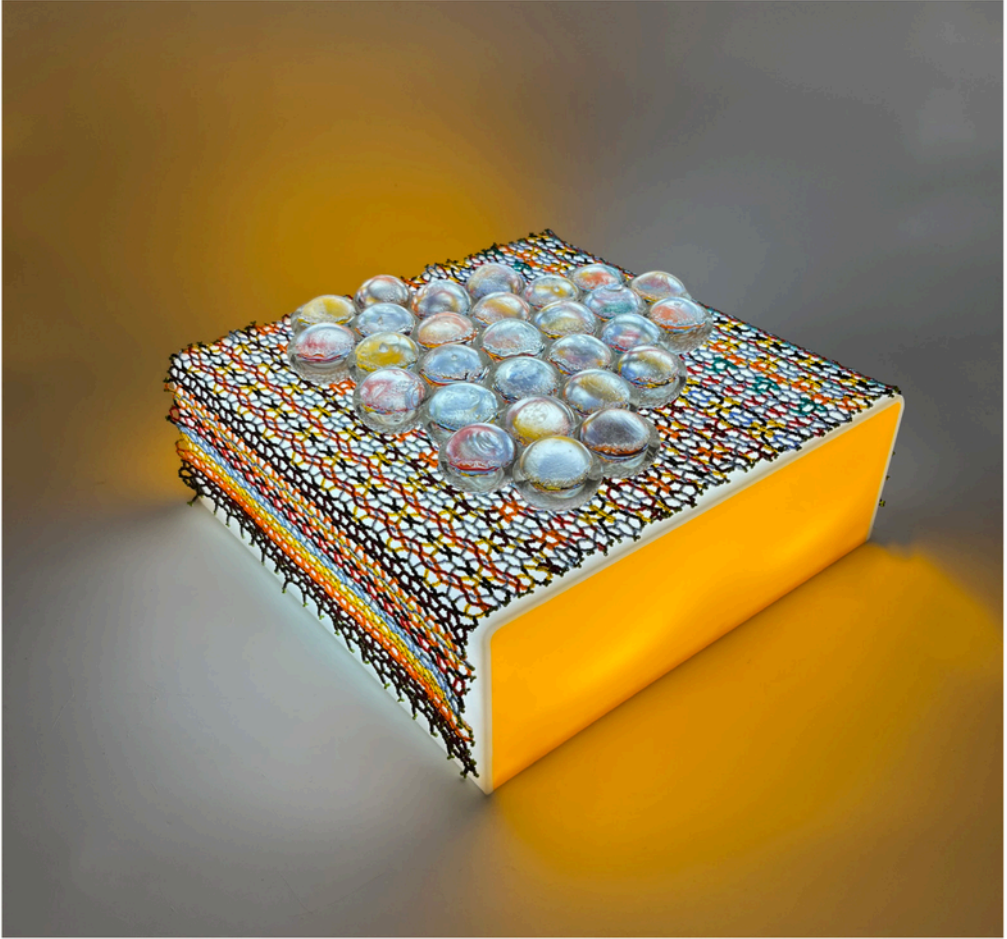


Nadira Narine, *Woven Series*, 2023-2024, Glass, Saw Carved Sandblasted. Varied Dimensions. Collection of the artist.

Raised in Panama City, Nadira Narine has a deep interest in her cultural roots. Having lived in Canada since 2011, Nadira explores objects and memories from her childhood as a means of self-discovery and connection to home. Nadira is an Artist-in-Residence at the Living Art Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. She holds a Bachelor of Craft and Design with a specialty in Glass and Textiles, completed a four-year Artist-in-Residence position in glass at Harbourfront Centre, and was most recently recognized as a finalist for the prestigious 2023 RBC Glass Award.

Samwell Guertin (Montréal, QC)

Finalist



Samwell Guertin, *Lost and Found Marbles*, 2024. Kiln-fuzed soda glass sculpted marbles, woven size 11 Czech seed beads, acrylic base, led electrical components. 30 x 30 x 10 cm. Collection of the artist.

Samwell Guertin (b. 1992) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Montréal, originally from Ottawa. His work explores the sculptural and symbolic possibilities of glass and beadwork, with a focus on geometry, structure, and systems of repetition. Drawing from craft traditions and contemporary design, he creates precise, labor-intensive works that balance formal rigour with playful material contrasts.

Guertin studied fashion design before transitioning to fine arts, graduating from the glass program at Cégep du Vieux Montréal in 2023. In 2025, he presented his first solo exhibition, *Quanta+phi*, at Maison de la Culture Villeray. His work has also been exhibited at the 2023 Bridges Conference in Halifax and in group exhibitions with Espace Verre. He is the recipient of several awards, including the Houdé-Mendel Grant and the Donald Robertson Grant, and continues to expand his practice through technical experimentation, conceptual inquiry, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Em McDonald (Oakville, ON)

Finalist



Em McDonald is a multidisciplinary artist from Georgetown, Ontario. They received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from York University in Philosophy, where they focused on art and aesthetics. They chose to continue exploring these ideas as a maker and so pursued another degree in the Craft and Design program at Sheridan College focusing on glass sculpture. Em is now a Resident Artist at the Living Arts Centre where they continue to further their artistic practice and teach.

Em McDonald, *Blind Contour #6*, 2023.
Flameworked glass. 63.5 x 40.6 x 5 cm.
Collection of the artist.

Jérémie St-Onge (Montréal, QC)

Finalist



The work of Jérémie St-Onge attests to the ambivalence between functional objects and works of art. The uninhibited approach to his medium allows the artist to deepen the primary meaning of form. Following production, a study of line and colour reveals pictorial, even romantic, compositions. By adopting certain forms and concepts from ceramics and archaeological glass, his practice explores the role of the material that is blown glass in our spaces. These timeless pieces celebrate this ancient technique.

Jérémie St-Onge, *Flor*, 2024. Blown glass. 16.5 x 16.5 x 25.4 cm. Collection of the artist

Jurors' Statement

The 2025 RBC Award for Glass was juried by Benjamin Kikkert, Cheryl Wilson-Smith, and Franklin Silverstone. On the jurying process, they state: "We were thrilled by the exceptional quality and impressive number of applicants for this year's prestigious RBC Award for Glass. Artists from across the country were well represented, making the decision an especially difficult one. We are truly grateful to have had the opportunity to view such outstanding work and deeply appreciate the time and effort each applicant put into their submissions."

About the Jurors

Benjamin Kikkert is a Vancouver, BC artist working in hot glass and mixed media sculpture. His work explores impressions of landscape, culture, and technology through texture and patinated materials. A graduate of the Sheridan College Craft & Design program and recipient of the 2012 RBC Award for glass, Kikkert has served as a past president of the Glass Art Association of Canada and appeared as a contestant on the Netflix series *Blown Away*. His studio, Vancouver Studio Glass, is located on Granville Island in downtown Vancouver.

Cheryl Wilson-Smith has lived her life in Canada's North, working with glass to explore the passage of time and her sense of place in the vast world around us. Drawing from her isolated life, residencies around the world and travels she has created a unique image. By manipulating the physical characteristics of powdered glass, she is able to achieve forms that resemble familiar land formations. Cheryl is a fortunate to be a previous winner of the RBC Award for Glass as well as a finalist in numerous other international competitions. She has received a Chalmers Fellowship and her work is in galleries in North America and the U.K with an invitation to participate in a show in Bulgaria later this year.

Franklin Silverstone joined Phillips Auctioneers on reception desk, at 26. Junior partner, 28 full partner and head of the Fine Arts departments in all branches of the company. He left Phillips in 1979 and built his own company, originally based in Montreal. It has been a great honor and pleasure for him to curate the collections of Charles Bronfman for over 40 years and to have been chosen by Pierre Elliot Trudeau to select the artist, Myfanwy Pavelic, who would paint his official portrait. It now hangs in Parliament in Ottawa and has a postage stamp of its own. He is also the developer and Chairman of Collectify, a popular collections management software.

The RBC Award for Glass

The RBC Award for Glass is presented annually by the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery and is supported by the RBC Foundation. This prestigious \$10,000 award allows practising early-career glass artists to undertake a period of independent research, or other activities that advance their artistic and professional practice. One runner-up will receive a prize of \$5,000. Up to 3 finalists will also be selected who will each receive a prize of \$1,000. Each year, the winner and finalists of the RBC Award for Glass will have their work presented in an exhibition held at the Gallery.

About RBC Emerging Artists

RBC Emerging Artists supports organizations that provide the best opportunity to advance an artist's career trajectory in genres such as visual arts, music, theatre, performance, literature and film. Every year the RBC Foundation donates millions of dollars to hundreds of arts organizations globally to help emerging artists become established.



Cover: Gordon Boyd, *Journal Entry Nov 8 2024*, 2024. Blown glass. 51 x 23 cm. Collection of the artist.

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