

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

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BILLINGS NATIVE THEODORE WADDELL SELECTED FOR 2015 GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARD

The Montana Arts Council announced that five exceptionally talented and accomplished artists and arts organizations are slated to receive the Governor's Arts Award in a public ceremony at the State Capitol in Helena, 3 p.m. June 5.

The Governor's Arts Award honors outstanding citizens and organizations in Montana whose achievements in the arts, or on behalf of the arts, benefit all Montanans. Artists Lela Autio and Theodore Waddell, author Debra Magpie Earling, Great Falls Symphony conductor and music director Gordon Johnson, and the Missoula Art Museum are this year's honorees.

Gov. Steve Bullock will preside over the ceremony in the Capitol's Old Supreme Court Chambers. "Montana has a rich history of artists who have told the story of our state through music, sculpture, painting, writing and performances," Bullock said. "It's my honor to recognize these artists and institutions that build on our heritage and share their passion with the next generation of Montanans."

Theodore Waddell

Artist Theodore Waddell exemplifies the phrase "Montana painter," writes nominator Robyn Peterson, executive director of the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings, who believes he "has done more than any other living painter to develop a distinctive Montana-based vision that brings Modernism into the 21st century."

The artist was born in 1941 in Billings, and raised in Laurel. He studied with Isabelle Johnson, Montana's first modernist painter, before earning a scholarship to study at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. He received his MFA from Wayne State University.

Waddell's sophisticated modernist paintings have attracted widespread recognition. "As a working rancher, he knows whereof he paints," writes Peterson. "There is no distance from, or fleeting relationship with, his subject ... he knows it."

He also creates sculpture, and according to Peterson, "it's this body of work that's more apt to reveal humor, irony, and social critique."

His work is included in the permanent collections of the Denver Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Booth Museum of Western Art, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, and the National Museum of Wildlife Art, among others. Recent solo exhibitions have included the Albany Museum in Georgia, Gail Severn Gallery in Ketchum, ID, Altamira Fine Art in Jackson, WY, Visions West Gallery in Bozeman, and the Art Museum of Eastern Idaho in Idaho Falls.

"His work is painterly and masterful, and the zeal with which it is snapped up by collectors nationwide is testimony to the maturity of his vision and the quality of the work," writes Peterson.

He's also generous to, and supportive of, younger generations of artists, and has been an avid collector of others' work, much of which he has donated to the state's public collections.

"Few artists have done as much to align this place – Montana – with incisive and original art and with the larger art world," notes Peterson. His success has helped build "the growing reputation Montana has as fertile ground for artists."

For more photos and information on the Governor's Arts Award, visit:

http://art.mt.gov/about/about_govawards.asp

http://art.mt.gov/grants/monida_angus_ted_waddell_art.jpeg

http://art.mt.gov/grants/theodore_waddell.jpeg

http://art.mt.gov/grants/debra_magpie_earling.jpg

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