



Press Release

The ArQuives Announces Inductees for 2026 National Portrait Collection

National Portrait Collection to recognize nine new individuals whose work, art, activism, and leadership have strengthened 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in Canada

OCTOBER 22, 2026 - TORONTO, ON — The ArQuives is thrilled to announce nine inductees for the 2026 National Portrait Collection, representing individuals whose work, art, activism, or leadership has meaningfully impacted 2SLGBTQIA+ communities across Canada. The contributions of this year's inductees have advanced, reflected, or preserved the diversity, resilience, creativity, and histories of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally.

The 2026 National Portrait Collection inductees are:

The Canon Reverend Canon Joyce E. Barnett

The Canon Reverend Canon Joyce E. Barnett was a pioneering Anglican priest, freedom fighter, and trusted therapist whose decades of quiet, sustained care profoundly strengthened the health, dignity, and legal equality of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada. Artist: Zoë Gemelli

Barry Deeprose

Barry Deeprose joined the Board of Gays of Ottawa, Ottawa's first gay liberation organization, in 1979. In 1985, he co-founded the AIDS Committee of Ottawa and was awarded the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship in 1990 for his AIDS work. Artist: TBD

Dr. OmiSoore Dryden

Dr. OmiSoore Dryden, a Black queer femme, is a scholar, activist, and public intellectual who has significantly advanced understanding and advocacy for Black 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. Dr. Dryden's achievements bridge activism, scholarship, and policy change. Artist: Gesilayefa Azorbo

Kay MacDonald

Kay MacDonald is an African Nova Scotian, a queer and trans activist, movement educator, youth worker, and transdisciplinary artist raised in Kijipuktuk, Mi'kma'ki (Halifax, Nova Scotia).

Their creative and activist practices foreground Black liberation, abolition, and queer joy.
Artist: Kayza DeGraff-Ford

Alan Miller

Librarian, historian, and epic bibliographer, Alan Miller entered his 50th year as a volunteer and supporter of The ArQuives. Researchers from around the world have benefited from his commitment, knowledge, and support. Artist: Gilberto Prioste

Robert Wallace

Robert Wallace has been a writer, publisher, educator, and activist in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community since the 1960's. Wallace was a professor at York University, a founder of the AIDS Committee of Toronto, and one of the principal founders of Gay News and Views. Artist: McKenzie James

In 2019-2020, The ArQuives added 4 additional names to the National Portrait Collection. Because of COVID restrictions at the time, the launch celebration was postponed, and these 4 individuals will be included in the upcoming celebration.

The 2019 National Portrait Collection inductees are:

Imam El-Farouk Khaki

El-Farouk Khaki has done groundbreaking work in expanding Canada's refugee protection on grounds of sexual orientation and gender. El-Farouk is one of the co-founders of the Canadian Muslim Union and Salaam Canada. Artist: Samra Habib

Prof. David Rayside

David Rayside is a Professor Emeritus of Political Science and founding Director of the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto. He was a member of the Right to Privacy Committee, and in 2014, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Artist: Louisa Rayside

Mirha-Soleil Ross

Mirha-Soleil Ross is a trans sex worker, performance artist, and activist. Raised in Montréal, she moved to Toronto and co-founded the pivotal queer zine Gendertrash with her then partner Xanthra Philippa Mackay. She founded important organizations, including Meal Trans and the Counting Past 2 festival. Artist: Julia Stringhetta

Eve Zaremba

Eve Zaremba was a feminist, publisher, lesbian role model and author, including six mysteries featuring the first-ever fictional lesbian detective, a memoir tracing her flight from Poland, and

Privilege of Sex, a collection of works by underappreciated women writing from 1830 to 1925.
Artist: Nadine Arpin

“For nearly 30 years, The National Portrait Collection has been one of the many important ways The ArQuives honours the people whose courage, creativity, care, and leadership have shaped 2SLGBTQIA+ life in Canada,” said Raegan Swanson, Executive Director of The ArQuives. “We are proud to commission these portraits to recognize those whose stories deserve to be preserved, celebrated, and shared.”

Established in 1998 with 25 original portraits to commemorate The ArQuives’ 25th anniversary, the National Portrait Collection has now grown to 85 portraits in photography, oil, watercolour, collage, and other mediums. The collection is regularly exhibited at The ArQuives’ home in Toronto, Ontario and at venues across Canada, celebrating the people and stories that have shaped 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. The collection is also available to organizations and museums on loan.

Nominations opened on March 15, 2026, for this round of inductees. For each round, a committee carefully reviews and selects inductees using the following criteria: Nominees may be living or deceased and may be of any gender, sexual orientation, or nationality. They should have made a meaningful contribution to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in Canada through their work, art, activism, leadership, community-building, advocacy, or other forms of impact. The National Portrait Collection, like The ArQuives, is supported by 2SLGBTQIA+ communities dedicated to preserving our shared history and receives no operational funding from any level of government.

Past inductees include Nicole Brossard, Dr. Alan Li, Shani Mootoo, Glen Murray, Carmen Paquette, Carole Pope, Craig Russell, Kyle Scanlon, and Douglas Stewart. This fall, The ArQuives will honour this year’s National Portrait Collection inductees and the artists commissioned for their portraits at a private event in Toronto. Following this, the portraits will be added to The ArQuives’ public digital portrait collection online.

About The ArQuives

The ArQuives is dedicated to preserving and celebrating Canada’s 2SLGBTQIA+ histories. Through collections, exhibitions, programming, and community engagement, The ArQuives works to collect, protect, and share 2SLGBTQIA+ stories for current and future generations.

For project updates, visit [ArQuives.ca](https://arquives.ca) and follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Bluesky](#).

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