



# TURQUOISE

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TURQUOISE Nominees



VANCOUVER  
**PRIDE**  
SOCIETY

## **Turquoise – Art (Art) The award recognizes an outstanding queer artist whose work has created dialogue around a key social issue in Vancouver’s LGBTQ Community.**

### **Karen White**

Karen became involved in feminist and lesbian theatre in Winnipeg at the Women's Building in 1980, doing lighting and stage managing for plays by Painted Ladies. Later in the 80's she was an actor and writer with Women on Cue in Nelson, B.C. doing feminist and lesbian plays and original, topical sketches. She also produced and acted a few seasons with Theatre Energy in the Kootenays, touring a drug and alcohol educational play through B.C. Leaping Thespians originated in Nelson with two other actor/writers and produced plays in Nelson and for the Women in View Festival in Vancouver. Then living on Vancouver Island, Karen learned technical skills of lighting and sound with Qualicum Players and Theatre B.C. participation. Finally relocated to Vancouver in 1999, Karen worked again with Vancouver story-telling company Random Acts as stage manager. Karen directed and produced her first play in 2001 with a revived Leaping Thespians, 'Oldest Living' by Vancouverite Pat Smith. From there, the company has gone on to do 14 productions, 10 of them written by company members. During the last twelve years, the company has developed a core group who are a mixture of women of all levels of training and experience in theatre. The Leaping Thespians is still affiliated with Theatre B.C., and because of personal and professional connections in the Deaf community, the company provides an ASL-interpreted performance of every production possible. Karen is currently writing and directing 'The Troll and the Three Lesbians Gruff' for the Vancouver Fringe Festival, September 2013, with the largest cast and production team yet for Leaping Thespians.

### **Joe Average R.C.A.**

Joe Average is a nationally and internationally acclaimed Vancouver-based artist. Born in Victoria in 1957, Joe showed an interest in drawing and art making at an early age. Without a doubt, his undiagnosed dyslexia played a role in his struggles at school and at 17 he dropped out and moved to Montreal, Toronto and finally Vancouver where he gravitated toward the local arts scene. At 27, Joe was diagnosed with HIV, prompting him to put his aspirations into action by making a living from his art work. His career took off in the mid-1980s with the creation of a

unique visual lexicon. His art drew from First Nations art, pop and commercial art and the modern avant-garde. Using vivid colours and bold lines as structuring elements, Joe created highly stylized human, animal and plant characters. In the 70's and 80's Joe spent a lot of time with his camera mainly documenting people. In 2010 Joe started photographing again mainly doing self portraits to document his struggles with lipoatrophy. Joe has lent his name and his art to many social and humanitarian causes and is a fierce advocate of arts education for children. He has received countless awards and citations for his philanthropic work.

## Shaira Holman

SD Holman is a photo-based artist and Artistic Director of The Queer Arts Festival, a professional three-week, transdisciplinary arts festival in Vancouver, Canada. Holman defines as a non-commercial artist, a participant observer employing subjective conceptual documentary practice. Holman's approach to photography is conflicted and perverse, bringing gesture, hazard, and a painterly sensibility into this most technical of media. Holman has exhibited internationally at galleries including the Advocate Gallery (Los Angeles), the Soady-Campbell Gallery (New York), the San Francisco Public Library, The Helen Pitt International Gallery, Charles H. Scott, Exposure, Gallery Gachet, the Roundhouse, Vancouver East Cultural Centre, Artropolis, Pendulum and Fotobase Galleries (Vancouver), and been published in the books *Culture and Education*, Wadham, Pudsey & Boyd, (Pearson Education Australia: 2007; 2nd ed. 2009); *Femme/Butch: New Considerations of the Way We Want to Go*, Gibson & Meem (Routledge: 2002); *Fusion* (Link publications: 2002); *The Mammoth Book of Erotic Photography*, Jakubowski & Jaye Lewis (Robinson Publishing: 2001).

Lets get one thing straight, I'm photo-based artist, not a commercial or fine art photographer; Photographers work in a controlled, even scientific, environment. I am a participant observer employing subjective conceptual documentary practice. My approach to photography is conflicted and perverse, bringing gesture, hazard and a painterly sensibility into this most technical of media, I purposefully allow chance elements to slip into my shooting. The work I am most attracted to is dark and blurry, what I call the 'dark pond.' Photography is light, all about light; I delve into the dark pond. I do not believe in the perfect moment, but many moments of imperfection that make up the whole of our messy lives and selves, pointing at something just out of our perceptual reach. I am interested in Indeterminacy, the philosophy championed by pioneer experimental multidisciplinary artist John Cage that opens up artistic practice to the random as a way of radically breaking from tradition, convention and habit. As Cage said,

“Indeterminacy in art is made not as an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we’re living.” I work on a project-by-project basis, and summarily refuse a signature style. Each new project is different from the last, from how it is shot, to its installation, determined by the unique needs of the situation. I consider all of my work to be portraiture, whether it portrays a person, a place or a thing. I gravitate toward things from which the rest of the world turns away – I approach the marginalized, and work subjectively with them to create a space where hopefully we can speak. I want my work to be meaningful and transformative. I like photographs that are unexpected. I deal in paradox: the cognitive dissonance between estrangement and recognition, aversion and attraction, harshness and beauty, bravura and restraint, outrageousness and subtlety, expressionism and classicism.