

# PROJECT: UNDER GARDINER



## Naming Jury – Bios & Photos



**Images, top row (left to right):** Jane Farrow (Chair), George Elliott Clarke, Sabina Ali, David Balzer, Melony Ward, Mark Kingwell. **Bottom row, from left to right:** Judy Matthews, Ameer L , Jesse Wentz, Vass Bednar, Roberto Dante Martella, Mahlika Awe:ri Enml'ga't saqama'sgw (*The Woman Who Walks In The Light*).

### JANE FARROW, CHAIR

Drawing on a strong background in journalism and community organizing, Jane excels at bringing people together for constructive dialogue and creative city-building initiatives. She was the founding director of Jane's Walk, a global movement of free, citizen-led walking tours that celebrate urbanist Jane Jacobs' ideas. Jane is Director of Learning and Participation at MASS LBP and has a deep understanding of the mechanics of community engagement and decision-making deriving from a broad set of experiences as a researcher, advisor, city hall staffer and CBC radio host and producer.

### SABINA ALI

Sabina's incredible dedication to making her neighbourhood a better place to live is truly awe-inspiring. A passionate and engaged local resident, Sabina helped transform a run-down park in her Thorncliffe Park community into a thriving neighbourhood hub. When the mother of four arrived in Toronto from India in 2008, the park had only two swings for kids to play on and was littered with garbage. She, along with other residents, banded together to form the Thorncliffe Park Women's Committee and got to work cleaning up the space, which now features a Friday night market, splash pad, tandoor oven, and arts and gardening programs. In 2014, Sabina was awarded the Jane Jacob's Prize by Spacing magazine and was also featured in the Globe and Mail as one of 10 Torontonians who got things done in 2014.

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### **MAHLIKAH AWE:RI ENML'GA'T SAQAMA'SGW (The Woman Who Walks In The Light)**

Mahlikah Awe:ri is a (Haudenosaunee Mohawk/Mi'kmaw) drum talk poetic rapologist, poet, musician, hip-hop MC, arts educator, radio host, curator and founding member of Red Slam Collective, an indigenous hip hop movement nominated for the TD Diversity Award in 2013. Mahlikah is a KM Hunter OAC Literary Arts Award nominee, who released the spoken word EP *Serpent's Skin* in 2011 and is currently published in five literary anthologies. An Indigenous arts educator for the Ontario Arts Council, The Aboriginal Education Centre, and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Awe:ri is the Deputy Executive Director of the Toronto Centre for Community Learning & Development.

### **DAVID BALZER**

David Balzer is an author and critic, and currently Editor-in-Chief of *Canadian Art*. He has written two books: *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else*, and the short-fiction collection *Contrivances*. His writing has appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Modern Painters* and *Artforum* among others. He is the recipient of the 2015 International Award for Art Criticism.

### **VASS BEDNAR**

Vass Bednar is the Associate Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute's Cities team at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. This year, she is also a Civic Action Diverse City Fellow and has completed the prestigious Action Canada Fellowship. Vass has also worked as a Senior Policy Advisor to Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne's administration. In 2012 she delivered a TEDxToronto talk on "How to Make Public Policy More Fun," and she holds her MPP from the School of Public Policy & Governance at University of Toronto (2010). Her twenties were some sort of wonky quest for public policy legitimacy. Now she's 30.

### **GEORGE ELLIOT CLARKE**

A revered poet, George Elliott Clarke was born in Windsor, Nova Scotia, near the Black Loyalist community of Three Mile Plains, in 1960. He is now the inaugural E.J. Pratt Professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Toronto. An Assistant Professor at Duke University, North Carolina, Clarke also served as the Seagrams Visiting Chair at McGill University, as a Visiting Scholar at the University of British Columbia, Mount Allison University, and Harvard University. He lives in Toronto, Ontario, but he also owns land in Nova Scotia. His many honours include an appointment as Parliamentary National Poet Laureate, Poet Laureate of the City of Toronto, the Order of Canada, the Order of Nova Scotia, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award and Governor-General's Award for Poetry.

### **MARK KINGWELL**

Mark Kingwell is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto and a contributing editor of *Harper's Magazine* in New York. He is the author or co-author of 18 books of political, cultural and aesthetic theory; in addition to many scholarly articles, his writing has appeared in more than 40 mainstream magazines and newspapers. His most recent books are the essay collections *Unruly Voices* (2012) and *Measure Yourself Against the Earth* (2015).



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## AMEE LÊ

A circus performer in her youth from Hanoi, Vietnam, Amee Lê is now a Toronto-based arts manager hopping between her favourite arts festivals year-round, among which are imagineNATIVE Film+Media Arts Festival and Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts. Amee is your stereotypical cultural worker who organizes, creates and curates in contemporary visual, film and media arts. Amee also takes baby steps towards focusing on film production and international collaborations.

## ROBERTO DANTE MARTELLA

Grano Restaurant, owned by Roberto Dante Martella and his wife Lucia, celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2016. What started as a simple bakery and light lunch spot (grano means grain in Italian) has become a full blown restaurant dedicated to the socio-cultural fabric of Toronto with its weekly Italian language classes, Language & Linguine and its commitment to Toronto trilingualism. The restaurant also hosts events that include Ben McNally authors' evening, concerts and readings. Roberto and Lucia lived above the restaurant with their four children, Bianca, Luca, Dante and Simona. Roberto is the 2006 recipient of the Jane Jacob's Prize from Spacing magazine and was made a Cavaliere della Repubblica Italiana in 2008.

## MELONY WARD

Melony Ward has a long track record of building brands, audience and revenue for cultural content makers. She is currently Publisher at Canada's History Society, where she oversees print, digital and other media platforms for *Canada's History* and *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*. Melony is on the boards of the National Magazine Awards Foundation and the Toronto Biennial of Art, and has previously served as a board member for Magazines Canada and the magazine advisory committee for the Ontario Media Development Corporation.

## JESSE WENTE

Jesse Wente is Ojibwe from the Serpent River First Nation. A broadcaster, public speaker and curator, he's appeared on CBC Radio's Metro Morning as film and pop culture critic for 20 years and currently serves as Director of Film Programmes at TIFF Bell Lightbox, overseeing theatrical, Cinematheque and Film Circuit programming. Jesse has curated retrospectives on Indigenous Cinema, Tim Burton, Stanley Kubrick, Michael Mann and Keanu Reeves. He has appeared in movies, such as *Reel Injun* and *Nightmare Factory*. Jesse lives in Etobicoke with his wife and two children.



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