

RON BAIRD, Sculptor

VENICE BIENNALE 2018

R. Baird



PALAZZO BEMBO

Global Art Affairs Foundation



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Ron Baird
Sculptor/Artist

Ron Arnott Baird OCAD RCA is a Canadian sculptor/artist. (29 March 1940). He is renowned for his monumental stainless steel sculptures. As of 2017, he has had over 300 commissions which can be found in government buildings, parks, hospitals and courtyards across Canada. He also has large scale commissions in the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom.

Joan Murray, art critic and author has said, "Some artists are like explorers who create their own maps. Because of their discoveries our way of experiencing

develops a new sensitivity. Ron Baird is one who has developed a new aesthetic form in Canada, sculpture in the context of architecture."

A winner of numerous awards and medals, including Allied Arts Awards from both the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the Ontario Association of Architects, he has been appointed to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, and is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design. He is the founding director of the Latcham Public Art Gallery, has taught at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, and has presented and conducted workshops at International Sculpture conferences. He was appointed to the post of Master-printmaker at the prestigious Clo Ceardiann na gCnoc Studio in Ireland, and mentored local artists in Nicaragua, through the auspices of the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts.

His works are recognized mostly because they celebrate the accomplishments of others. Dedicated to emergency workers, the generosity of donors, Canadian peace-keeping efforts, honouring history-makers, the First Nations, celebrating multicultural diversity, his works are in public parks, churches, synagogues, subway entrances, community centres, libraries, and government buildings, not only in Ontario, but across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. Many of his pieces are naturally kinetic, move in the wind, are interactive, light responsive or make musical sounds.

www.RonBairdArtist.com

"Ron's sculpture bestows a sense of place; strengthening connections between people and place and is integral in the fostering of a community's identity. It celebrates the social, historical and cultural threads, and honors both natural and urban environments and enhances the spaces his art inhabits.

We have commissioned Ron Baird for the last 30 years for the enormous cultural value he adds. Through historical references and by creating interaction his work influences design from a macro perspective."

Silvano Tardella - Roma

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Joan Murray, Author, former Art Director Robert McLaughlin Gallery

"Without exception, Mr. Baird's artworks enliven every setting in which they have been thoughtfully exhibited. His installations have the uncommon capacity to address the very particular circumstances of their sites in and around Ontario."

Thomas Smart, Curator Beaverbrook Gallery, Fredericton; former CEO McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Art Historian

"Le sculture di Ron comunicano un senso del luogo; rafforzando le connessioni tra persone e territori, ed essendo parte integrante nel supporto dell'identità collettiva. Esse celebrano le fila sociali, storiche e culturali delle comunità; onorando sia gli ambienti naturali che quelli urbani, e valorizzando gli spazi da esse abitati.

Abbiamo commissionato opere a Ron Baird negli ultimi 30 anni per l'enorme valore culturale aggiunto. Attraverso riferimenti storici e le interazioni create, il suo lavoro influenza il design da una macro-prospettiva."

Silvano Tardella - Roma

"Alcuni artisti sono come gli esploratori che creano le proprie carte geografiche. A causa delle loro scoperte, il nostro modo di sperimentare sviluppa una nuova sensibilità. Ron Baird è uno che ha sviluppato una nuova forma estetica in Canada, scultura nel contesto di architettura"

Joan Murray, Author, former Art Director Robert McLaughlin Gallery

"Senza eccezione, l'arte del signor Baird ravviva ogni posto nel quale è stata premurosamente esposta. La sua arte ha la capacità inconsueta di rappresentare entrambi le caratteristiche particolari di questi siti nonchè la maniera in cui gli spettatori li percepiscono."

Thomas Smart, Curator Beaverbrook Gallery, Fredericton; former CEO McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Art Historian



Jig Rig

Chosen by a jury from a nationwide call-out, this towering kinetic sculpture has steel columns intertwined in a complex pattern resembling the flow of water, topped with blades that spin in the wind and illuminated by LED lighting. Wade Morris, Innisfil Hydro Vice-president of Engineering and Operations said the sculpture embraces Innisfil's history, renewable energy and will be a significant landmark on the property. "The main theme of this sculpture is conservation through renewable energy. This art piece clearly demonstrates the possibility of harvesting power from the wind, sun and water."





Left, Right, Left!

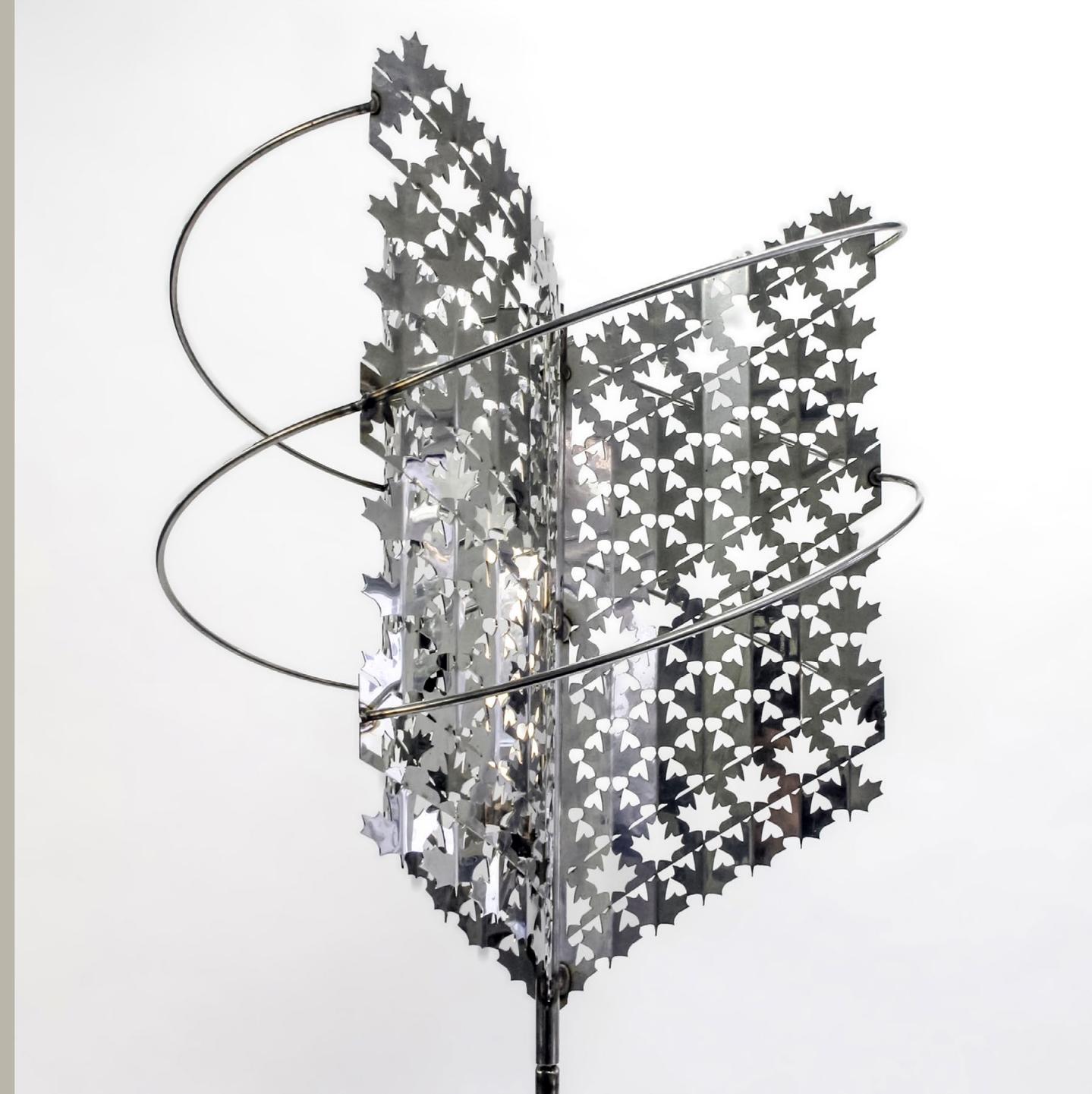
A war memorial designed to honour the courage, bravery and commitment of those who fought for freedom. This design won 'Best in Show' at the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Ontario Canada.





The Gathering Tree

In Kitchener, Ontario, in front of a municipal community centre, Baird was commissioned to create this kinetic piece, appropriately called The Gathering Tree. It features hundreds of shining maple leaves that twirl naturally in the wind - a symbolic welcome to new Canadian immigrants.





Kaleidoscope

Notes from a fan commenting on a series Baird has done:

"I drive the school bus and go purposely through the mall so I can drive by your art. No matter what the weather is, they always make me smile. In the dark months, they hang there, dancing and sparkling, giving me a smile every day. On windy days, your Kaleidoscope spins and puts another smile on my face. I have never loved art the way I love your sculptures. I have often thought of writing a poem about them. When I have time, I'll get at it."

Brenda Meir-Hans





One Hundred and Eight Birds

"We are truly grateful to have not one, but three, permanent installations of Ron Baird's kinetic wind sculptures at The Boardwalk on the west side of Kitchener and Waterloo. They are the jewels of the property that are welcoming and pleasing to thousands of visitors each day. All three pieces are uniquely different, providing interest with captivating balance and movement. They are mesmerizing and change constantly in light and dark, with the sky as the backdrop. They sit quietly on calm days and shift with the weather through the seasons. We consider this the ultimate timeless gift to our community."

Cynthia Voisin, Project Coordinator of Kitchener's Boardwalk.



Dolore in Gabbia (Caged Pain)

This poignant piece was designed as a memorial for Italian prisoners of war. This single strand of barbed wire stands fiercely vertical, stripped of all nuance. It denotes not only the strength and endurance of the captives, but also their agony.





Muskoka Chopper

Situated on the shores of a northern Ontario lake, this piece entertains in every season. Its flashing blades either sit idly, reflecting the summer sun with flashes of silver, or twirl ferociously in the winter gales.





Sky Woman

This sculpture stands approximately four stories high with naturally moving kinetic parts. Destined for the shores of Lake Simcoe, Ontario, she will pay tribute to the First Nations People of the area while welcoming boaters to Beaverton's Harbour. Baird was inspired by the creation myth of the Iroquois, which tells of the woman who fell from the sky and was rescued by birds who carried her gently down. Since the earth was covered by water at the time, a giant turtle rose from the depths and the muskrat brought up mud from the bottom to place on the turtle's back. This became known as Turtle Island, also known as North America. This unique sculpture is designed to become an iconic Beaverton Harbour landmark.





Faerie Wheel

This kinetic installation was designed for a site near Limerick, in the Republic of Ireland. Baird's inspiration came from archeologists exploring the area who uncovered round stone weights used for spinning wool and flax. Local lore determined that these stones were in fact faerie wheels, specially employed by the wee folk. The ancient art of hand spinning using 'the drop spindle' represented here, dates back thousands of years.





Mantis Queen

Towering seven metres above the ground, the one-ton praying mantis has a commanding presence, especially when she dances in the wind, says Baird, adding that her arms spin and rotate while the head turns into the wind. *"She is, in fact, the regal queen of all praying mantis and her permanent home will be at the centre of a spiritual labyrinth in an estate garden."*





Umbrellas Dancing

This maquette is one module of a dozen umbrellas created for Leitchcroft Park in Markham, Ontario. Water randomly sprays out from the tips of the umbrellas, much to the delight of the children playing in the summer sun. They also create a delightful whimsical space for the observers. In the winter, after a heavy snowfall, they transform into a magical mushroom forest.





Butterfly

This seemingly delicate kinetic sculpture was designed to enhance a public butterfly garden. It was produced in an edition of five for private estates.





Tree of Life

Inspired by the random twirling of maple keys, this piece moves in many directions, with the breezes spinning the sculpture in complex circles. This was a private commission, and is located in a beautifully landscaped setting.

The Ties that Bind

"Our family has been surrounded by and imbedded in Ron Baird's art for almost 50 years. His art is on our properties and in our homes as sculptures that move in the wind, railings, books on table or etchings on our walls. Why this long-term love affair? We think it is the surprising and enchanting diversity of his approach. The pieces we have range from the dramatic "Tree of Life", the whimsical and playful "Snakes and Ladders", the amusing "Gate to Nowhere" to the symbolic "Wind Chimes" and Daughter of Spirit Catcher".

Ron's legacy of art has moved into the third Sellers' generation, with a wedding altar for one daughter and bed headboards for the other two - an owl for one and an elephant for the other!

We hope Ron's models give you a sense of his artistry and flare for the dramatic and unusual."

Edward M. Sellers and Myroslava K. Romach Toronto, February 2018





The Honouring Tree

In 2011, Baird installed this kinetic piece, The Honouring Tree, commissioned by the African Canadian Heritage Museum. It commemorates the historic settlement of people of African ancestry in Saskatchewan, Canada.

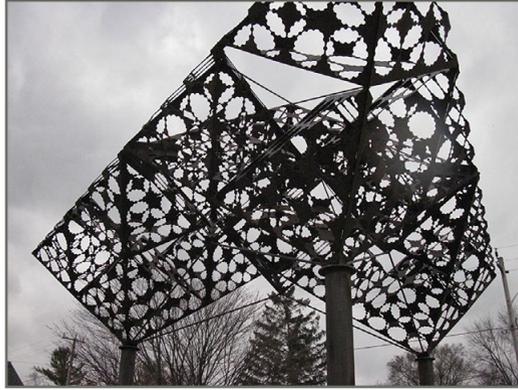




Dragonfly

This large, graceful installation was commissioned for the gateway of a new housing development in Bradford, Ontario. Symbolic of happiness in many cultures, the dragonfly has become the logo of this community. Its transparent wings move naturally in the wind.





Fractal

One of several pieces Baird created for the public sculpture walk in Stouffville, Ontario. The term "fractal" was first used by mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot in 1975 who used it to extend the concept of theoretical fractional dimensions to geometric patterns in nature. Baird has created a fractal, challenging the viewer to participate in the complexity of its design.



A Cut Above

Animated by the wind, this design for a monumental pair of scissors is both playful and formidable. A Cut Above is a very memorable landmark, both amusing and ominously potent.





Tower of Stars

In Oshawa's City Hall, Ron's Tower of Stars is a tribute to the heroes of Oshawa. He created the rising shining stars so that they will, not just reflect the changing light, but also the viewers themselves - the stars of the city.





The Spirit Catcher has been sited on Barrie's waterfront. Initially developed for Vancouver's EXPO '86, Baird created this sculpture to support the EXPO's theme of transportation and communication. Influenced by the iconography of Indigenous oral traditions in the Pacific Northwest, the work references the Thunderbird. Originally installed at False Creek in Vancouver, this 20 tonne steel sculpture took over six months to produce. The sculpture is 21 meters high, and has 16 kinetic quills, 2 wings, 3 legs and a pair of antenna, The Spirit Catcher is made of cor-ten steel, a steel that does not flake when it rusts, but instead retains its structural integrity. After EXPO '86, the sculpture was purchased by the Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation and donated to the Barrie Gallery Project in memory of Helen McCrea Peacock and Kenneth Westrup.

I am very grateful to many friends who have supported me in making this exhibition and catalogue possible.

Zachary Baird
Nora Campbell
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Beaverton Special Events Inc.
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R. B. Jones