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Attention: Arts, Entertainment, Lifestyles

MOCEAN DANCE WINS THE 2016 MASTERWORKS ARTS AWARD

“Canvas 5 x 5” becomes the first win for “Dance” in the history of the Award

November 8, 2016 – HALIFAX, Nova Scotia: *Canvas 5 x 5*, the contemporary dance work commissioned by Mocean Dance, has won the 2016 Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Masterworks Arts Award and marks first time in its 11-year history that the prize has gone to a Dance work. Also named in the Award are choreographer/creator Tedd Robinson and dancers Jacinte Armstrong, Rhonda Baker, Susanne Chui, and Ruth-Ellen Kroll-Jackson.

The Award, which carries a cash value of \$25,000, is the provinces largest award given annually to a single work of art. It was presented on November 5 at the Creative Nova Scotia Gala held at the Halifax Central Library, itself a 2016 Governor General Architecture Medalist. Visual artist and curator Katie Belcher; actor, choreographer, writer, and director Cory Bowles; musician Timothy Crofts; multimedia visual artist, goldsmith, and poet Charles Doucette; actor and director Ann-Marie Kerr made up the 2016 independent, five member multidisciplinary jury. High in its praise of *Canvas 5 x 5*, the jury commented that “The dancers are athletic and precise, and their performance appears effortless. The choreography serves them perfectly. The dance is profound in its integration of form and concept.”

AN ATLANTIC SUCCESS STORY

The Masterworks Award caps a landmark year for Mocean Dance, which is celebrating its 15th Anniversary Season. On April 29, Mocean Co-Artistic Director Susanne Chui delivered the 2016 Choreographer’s Message for International Day of Dance in Canada. As well, this summer, the Company performed choreographer Serge Benathan’s *Sable Island* at the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa and at the Dancing on the Edge Festival in Vancouver.

During its history, Mocean Dance has commissioned 35 new works, collaborated with 23 choreographers and welcomed 21 dancers into the fold over the 15 years. Throughout that time, the Company has built a reputation for being on the front line of groundbreaking dance development in Atlantic Canada. The culmination of the collaborative spirit lives in the celebratory anniversary piece *15 for 15*, which featured work by 15 choreographers and was performed by 17 local dancers.

Canvas 5 x 5 was also a 2014 Dora Mavor Moore Award nominee for Outstanding Ensemble Performance in the Dance Division and to date has been presented throughout the Maritimes and Ontario. But it is this recognition by its home province that strikes such a chord with the Company.

“Mocean Dance has a long history and deep roots in Nova Scotia,” said Sara Coffin, who shares co-direction of the company with Susanne Chui. “Our strong links with the Nova Scotia cultural community and our passion for performance, and has helped us to become a sustainable anchor organization for the region’s professional dance artists,” she said. “Since the founding of the company in 2001, Mocean has been committed to bringing stimulating and rich contemporary

dance to Atlantic Canada communities. We have brought together gifted artists to create new work that is rooted in collaborative process and stretches physical and artistic boundaries.”

ABOUT TEDD ROBINSON

A Chalmers Award winner and 2014 recipient of the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts, Choreographer Tedd Robinson’s career spans four decades and has included creative partnerships with a long list of outstanding artists who include Margie Gillis, Louise Lecavalier, Ame Henderson and composer/performer Charles Quevillon. An Associate Artist of the National Arts Centre, he is a sought-after collaborator and mentor.

Mr. Robinson is delighted that *Canvas 5 x 5* has become the first work in Dance to receive the Masterworks Award. “The work that we did in creating *Canvas 5 x 5*, and the fact that so many have seen it, particularly in the Maritimes, is already enough tribute. So, to be shortlisted, and then to win this prestigious award is truly a gift,” he said. “It is not often in a contemporary choreographer’s career that one’s work is recognized to this extent. It was such a pleasure to create for Mocean Dance and without everyone’s collaboration it would not be the work it is.”

MORE ABOUT CANVAS 5 x 5

Originally presented by Live Art Dance in 2012, *Canvas 5 x 5* incorporates Nova Scotia’s rich cultural heritage by interweaving the resonance of traditional Celtic music with arresting, joyful and inspiring contemporary choreography. In addition to music by Alasdair Fraser, Natalie Haas, Paul Machlis, Talitha Mackenzie, the work also features a bagpiper. Costume Design is by Rachael Grant and Lighting Design is by Leigh Ann Vardy.

More about Mocean Dance and *Canvas 5 x 5*:

<http://www.moceandance.com>,

<http://www.moceandance.com/en/home/repertoire/fullrepertoire/canvas5x5.aspx>

Facebook: @moceandance Twitter: @moceandance

Blogspot: moceandance.blogspot.com

More about the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Masterworks Arts Award

<http://nsmasterworks.ca/>

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