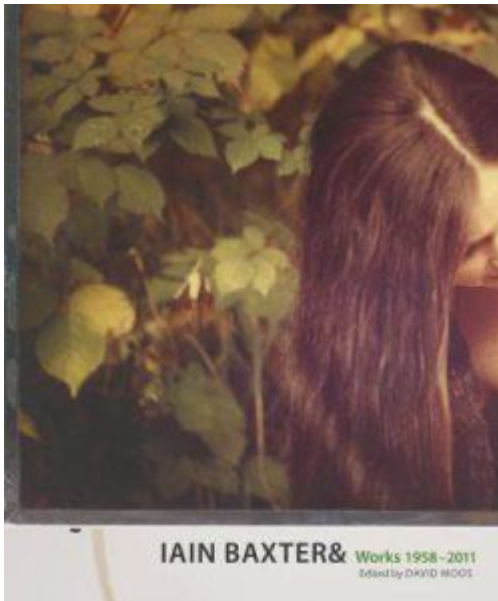


## 2013 Melva J. Dwyer Award Winner

### *IAIN BAXTER&: Works 1958–2011*



The Melva J. Dwyer Award committee received 15 nominations this year representing a diverse range of subjects on Canadian art, architecture and design; we were all pleased to view such a dynamic array of publications chronicling our national artistic and cultural heritage. One title, however, stood out as truly representing an “exceptional reference or research tool relating to Canadian art and architecture”

ARLIS/NA Canada is pleased to confer the 2013 Melva J. Dwyer Award to *IAIN BAXTER&: Works 1958–2011*; a publication that accompanied an international exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Art Gallery of Ontario. Featuring more than 160 reproductions, it also includes essays by the exhibition co-curators David Moos and Michael Darling, as well as contributions by Lucy Lippard among others. A noteworthy feature is the comprehensive bibliography compiled by ARLIS/NA member Adam Lauder of York University.

The integrity of the critical essays, high quality art reproductions, academically sound citations, rigorous indexing, innovative nature of the publication’s “Narrative Chronology,” and authoritative bibliography all make this a publication of unique value for researchers in Canada and beyond.

A motivating rationale for the jury was how clearly the publication chronicles BAXTER&'s unique oeuvre, placing the artist as a prescient pioneer of relational aesthetics and other 21st century movements that strive to open a democratic dialogue over the art market, value theory, curatorial control and power paradigms embedded in aesthetics overall.

These philosophical goals are nothing new to BAXTER& as, for over 50 years, he has radically redefined the role of the artist and purposely defied the limitations of medium by effortlessly integrating painting, drawing, photography, installation, sculpture, and performative aspects into his work.

Despite the provocative nature of this re-signification of the role of the artist; BAXTER&'s creative process is never confrontational but, instead, is nourished by empathy, concern, playfulness, humour and is always founded in an unwavering sense of collegiality with his audience.

This collaborative ethos has led to a particular sense of play in how he represents himself to the world: he has worked under various monikers throughout his career, including N.E. Thing Co., a corporate-style organization in which he served as co-president. In this guise, he blurred the two solitudes of private vs. public with an astoundingly creative number of initiatives including sponsoring a youth hockey team, hosting a game of “Monopoly with Real Money” played in a Toronto Dominion banking hall and being hired by Labatt’s Brewing Company in 1981 as a creative consultant “artist in residence.” His own name has metamorphosed over the decades: often he is known as “McCoolman,” but always “the &man.” Since 1983, he has joined forces with Mrs. &man, artist Louise Chance. As the ultimate example of his collective spirit: his online catalogue raisonné is NOT a linear, chronological representation of only HIS works, but instead encourages a cacophonous “piling on” of artworks by welcoming user-generated

content. This open source approach to his name became formalized in 2005 when he legally added an ampersand to his surname.

The ampersand, in fact, has been a recurring symbol throughout his oeuvre, which, for librarians well-versed in Boolean searching techniques, gives him an especial position of fondness and esteem. Although in practice, this fluidity in self-identification leads to perplexing cataloguing gymnastics in maintaining name authorities. I might add that the Getty's Union List of Artist Names still lists the [artist FORMERLY KNOWN AS Iain Baxter!](#) But in an ironic turn, librarians are essentially unable to recognize his new identity: to use the ampersand in a [library catalogue search yields an error message due to "an unexpected end of clause,"](#) a situation that I'm sure would delight the &man!

In closing, I will let David Moos explain the enduring nature of the artist's work: "BAXTER&'s thinking resonates today because his willingness to experiment remains undiminished... It is here, between originality and the familiar, that one finds BAXTER&, raising our awareness that art is an experiment—an embrace [that] one must experience."

Presented on Sunday 28 April 2013 at the ARLIS/NA 41st annual conference Convocation at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium.

Presented by: Daniel Payne, Canadian Member-at-Large (2012–14); Head, Instructional Services, Dorothy H. Hoover Library, OCAD University.

The 2013 jurors included Adrienne Connelly, Librarian, Alberta College of Art + Design; Élise Lassonde, Bibliothécaire, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec; Linda Morita, Librarian/Archivist, McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

## WORKS CITED

BAXTER&, IAIN. "artist's message." IAINBAXTER&raisonnE...York University Libraries: Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections online exhibits.

Web. [http://archives.library.yorku.ca/iain\\_baxterand\\_raisonne/archive/files/b...](http://archives.library.yorku.ca/iain_baxterand_raisonne/archive/files/b...)

Bourriaud, Nicolas. Relational Aesthetics, trans. Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods and Mathieu Copeland. Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002. Print.

Canadian Art. "Iain Baxter&: Ampersand, Mon Amour." Canadian Art Magazine (6 Nov. 2008).

Web <http://www.canadianart.ca/see-it/2008/11/06/iain-baxter/>

"Iain BAXTER&." The Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art. Web. <http://ccca.concordia.ca/>

"IAIN BAXTER&: Works 1958-2011 (March 3 – August 12, 2012)." Art Gallery of Ontario.

Web <http://www.ago.net/theandman>

IAINBAXTER&raisonnE ... I i v E ... & ... the&MAN. Web Blog. <http://andraisonne.blogspot.ca/>

## 2013 Melva J. Dwyer Award Nominees | Titres nommés

- [\*The Allied Arts: Architecture and Craft in Postwar Canada\*](#)  
 Author: Sandra Alfoldy  
 Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press
- [\*Canadian Folk Art To 1950\*](#)  
 Authors: John A. Fleming; Michael J. Rowan; James A. Chambers (Photographer)  
 Publisher: University of Alberta Press
- [\*A Commerce of Taste: Church Architecture in Canada, 1867-1914\*](#)  
 Author: Barry Magrill  
 Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press
- [\*Creation and Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art\*](#)  
 Contributors: Ingo Hessel, Christine Lalonde, Susan Gustavison, Norman Vorano, Darlene Coward Wight  
 Publisher: Douglas & McIntyre
- [\*David Alexander: The Shape of Place\*](#)  
 Author: Liz Wylie  
 Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press
- [\*Exploring Vancouver: The Architectural Guide\*](#)  
 Authors: Harold Kalman, Robin Ward, John Roaf (Photographer)  
 Publisher: Douglas & McIntyre
- [\*Garry Neill Kennedy : Printed Matter / Imprimés, 1971–2009\*](#)  
 Author: Peter Trepanier  
 Publisher: The National Gallery of Canada
- [\*Napoléon Bourassa: la quête de l'idéal\*](#)  
 Author: Mario Béland  
 Publisher: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec
- [\*Rethinking Professionalism: Women and Art in Canada, 1850-1970\*](#)  
 Authors: Kristina Huneault and Janice Anderson  
 Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press
- [\*Seekers and Travellers: Contemporary Art of the Pacific Northwest Coast\*](#)  
 Author: Gary Wyatt  
 Publisher: Douglas & McIntyre
- [\*Selwyn Pullan: Photographing Mid-Century West Coast Modernism\*](#)  
 Contributors: Adele Weder, Barry Downs, Donald Luxton, Kiriko Watanabe, Selwyn Pullan  
 Publisher: Douglas & McIntyre

- [\*Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980\*](#)  
Editors: Grant Arnold, Karen Henry  
Publisher: Vancouver Art Gallery, Art Gallery Of Alberta, Douglas & McIntyre
- [\*Unbuilt Calgary: A History of the City That Might Have Been\*](#)  
Author: Stephanie White  
Publisher: Dundurn Press
- [\*Unbuilt Victoria\*](#)  
Author: Dorothy Mindenhall  
Publisher: Dundurn Press