



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 150 • NUMBER 219

ED BURTYNSKY

CONGRATULATIONS ON PHOTO LONDON'S
2018 MASTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY HONOUR

Statement by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: Colleagues, when one travels, patriotic pride swells within. Canada's international position is high; it certainly was last month.

All of the 2018 Governor General's Performing Arts Award recipients, to whom I extend my heartfelt congratulations, are making their mark globally.

Canadian artists of all disciplines were on the world stage making their truly meaningful mark in Britain. I particularly congratulate Toronto's fine art photographer Ed Burtynsky, recipient of Photo London's 2018 Master of Photography honour. This much-deserved tribute included an exhibition of his recent work at Somerset House.

I learned of his receiving the award not from the Canadian press but from a poster in London, and this award is the biggest and most important in his field around the globe. I'm glad I was in London when I saw that poster. Burtynsky has exhibited globally, his subjects emanate from all parts, and his works are in international public, corporate and private collections.

This innovator continually stretches the properties of fine art photography technically and in subject. Capturing detail and texture in his landscape photos, he conveys the minute within his compelling macro vistas. Burtynsky's message is a timely, an urgent call to action. His beautiful images carry a tough message — our planet and our impact on it.

Photo London's directors said:

Ed is one of the great image makers of our times and a great champion of photography and sustainability . . .

Oil, mining and marble quarries preoccupy him; their extraction, transport and use. Burtynsky's overarching theme? Respect for both the planet and our human needs. He says:

We can't all live off the land, so we're kind of in a pickle . . . We've had five great extinctions. Now our species is having a similar effect – we are the equivalent of a meteor impact.

The May 13 *London Times* said his Anthropocene project shows “the sublime qualities of human-marked landscapes and the unsettling reality of sweeping resource depletion.” He notes the “proposed name [is] for our current geological age, an age on which human activity has had a profound and still ultimately unknown impact.”

Other Canadian artists of all disciplines have also made important global contributions. Ballet BC's London debut was this spring; Country singer Donovan Woods, designated “an amazing and under-recognized Canadian talent,” is at the UK Borderlines Festival; Tate Modern has featured Canadian Tamara Henderson's *Out of Body* since early March, dubbing her penetrating and compelling films “imaginative”; FOCUS Wales' 2018 music festival featured 17 emerging Canadian bands, including Indigenous Albertans, nêhiyawak, Quebec's Wake Island and Yukon's Declan O'Donovan.

I salute them all.
