

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canadian Athletes: A Flame within History
CANADIAN PORTRAITISTS SALUTE OUR TOP ATHLETES
JULY 3-28, 2015 AT THE TORONTO CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

PUBLIC INVITED TO OPENING RECEPTION SATURDAY, JULY 4, 5-8 pm

Toronto, April 29, 2015 – Canada’s professional portrait artists salute the upcoming Pan American Games in a month-long exhibition. *Canadian Athletes: A Flame within History* runs July 3-28, 2015 in the Lower Gallery of the Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge Street (North York City Centre subway).



**Sasha Mehmedovic
By Veronica K Tsyglan**

A distinctive collection of contemporary fine art portraits and sculptures of present and past top Canadian athletes, in a variety of styles and media will be on display. This collection is specially created in honor of the Toronto Pan Am and Parapan Am Games by professional portraitists across Canada. The exhibition is presented by the Portrait Society of Canada in collaboration with North York Arts, Cultura Festival and the Toronto Arts Foundation. It is generously supported by the Government of Ontario, City of Toronto and Toronto Centre for the Arts. (Gallery hours are below.)

OPENING RECEPTION – JULY 4

The public is also invited to the opening reception, Saturday, July 4, 5-8 p.m. Artists and celebrated athletes will also be in attendance, and available for autographs. Government dignitaries will also take part.

The event is part of the summer Cultura Festival in Mel Lastman Square, in the heart of North York. The public is invited free of charge to the exhibition and the opening reception.

Information is available at www.portraitsociety.ca, by calling 416-988-5445; or by emailing info@portraitsociety.ca.

Portrait Society Founder and Chair Veronica Kvassetskaia-Tsyglan hopes that *Canadian Athletes: A Flame within History* will promote friendly competition along with national pride in both arts and sports. “The Portrait Society of Canada considers this an opportunity not only to display Canadian pride, but also simultaneously to foster artistic creativity. We also hope our portraits inspire Canadians to cheer on our athletes in the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games,” she said.

Kvassetskaia Tsyglan is represented in the show by her portraits of Olympic triathlete Simon Whitfield, gymnastic champion Patricia Bezzubenko, Pan Am judo champion Sasha Mehmedovic and Jessica Zelinka, heptathlon silver medalist at the 2010 and 2014 Commonwealth Games and gold medalist at the 2007 Pan Am Games. Amongst the many other Portrait Society members from across Canada who will be exhibiting will be Jean Harding with

portraits of hockey stars Marcel Dionne and Michael Harris; Albert Slark with his portrait of rhythmic gymnastics champion Carmen Whalen; and Jeff Sprang with his portrait of Sami Jo Small, who was on two Olympic Gold medal-winning hockey teams. Andrew Sookrah with Joel Brought-field hockey. Marjorie Morton with Joannie Rochette figure skater , Deborah Pearce with badminton Player Helen Nichol, women's ice hockey player Becky Keller, sprint canoe Mark Oldershow, bobsledder and former football player Jessie Lumsden, soccer player Melanie Booth , Para Pan wheelchair basketball player Brandon Wagner and Portrait of Josh Cassidy wheelchair racing by Jessie Babin.

The Gallery hours for the exhibition will be:

Tuesday to Thursday: 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Fridays: 6 – 8 p.m.

Weekends: Schedule will vary – please check website for details.

The Portrait Society of Canada (www.portraitsociety.ca) national public professional organization dedicated to fostering the traditions of fine art portraiture in Canada.

North York Arts (www.northyorkarts.org) is currently being incubated by the Toronto Arts Foundation designed to address the needs and interests of artists, arts organizations and residents.

Now entering its sixth year, the Cultura Festival (www.culturafestival.ca) continues to serve as a highly anticipated event in North York, providing free admission to a showcase of the arts, July 3-14, 2015 on Friday nights.

For further information, contact:

Linda Litwack
Linda Litwack Publicity

416-782-7837

lalitwack@rogers.com

or **Melissa Foster**
Communications and Outreach
Coordinator, North York Arts
416 733-9388 x7065
melissa@northyorkarts.org