

IAIN BAXTER& ARTIST STATEMENT

Over the past 50 years. I have been producing & exhibiting (nationally & internationally) art that focuses on & critiques: *Art, Media & Information systems, Corporate, Consumer & Popular Culture, The Rural vs. the Urban, Technology vs Humans & Nature, Global Ecological & Sustainability Concerns*, & the Landscape in the broadest of ways, as well as Visual Perception in general.

An early source of inspiration for me was the ideas & theories of Marshall McLuhan, which I feel have been incorporated into much of my art, & which profoundly affects our way of looking at the modern world. We live in a natural landscape & a landscape of information, & it is the fusion vs. the confusion between these landscapes that excites me & informs my practice.

This fusion is explored in the work titled *Television Works 1999-2006*. In the past, this work has been exhibited across Canada, America, as well as in the UK in London, & they are now in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario. This work is made up of 10 television sets tuned to 'snow'. Imposed on these 'snowy' screens are acrylic painted landscapes. The work discusses a societal fascination with the rapidity & pervasiveness of technology & its relation to our natural & social landscapes. For the Xi'an exhibition I will be producing a new landscape series of *Television Works 2014*.

Another early source of inspiration for me has been the Eastern philosophy of ZEN, which I studied in 1961-62 in Japan while I was on a Japanese Government Foreign Scholarship & has been important to my life & art. It teaches the importance of living in the moment, of caring for the environment, and the interconnectedness of all living things, & of being aware of your own & the world's present state.

Informing the work of *One Canada Video -1992* (IAIN BAXTER& in collaboration with Louise Chance Baxter&) was the TransCanada highway acting as a highway lifeline & a measurement (every mile videotaped) of our Canadian contemporary landscape. The work was accomplished by affixing a tripod in our van which enabled us to video through the windshield of our vehicle while we traveled for two weeks across Canada. The work was produced during the Charlottetown Accord & its public referendum in Canada, a conference to ensure that there was *One Canada*. Throughout our travels, from Cape Spear, Newfoundland to Long Beach, Vancouver Island BC we engaged in discussions with people along the way concerning the referendum & collected ideas & thoughts. Coming from the small island of Trinidad, in the Caribbean the grandeur of the vast Canadian landscape was of particular interest to my wife Louise Chance Baxter&, & the exploration of that interest was integral to the creation of the work. *One Canada Video* measures the North American continent through the perspective of the windshield & asks the observer to view the 100 hour video projection from inside the vehicle, the way we all everyday view and experience the Canadian landscape. This work has been

exhibited in Paris, Nice & Geneva while working with french curator & critic Christophe Domino.

A survey of my art production includes; sculpture, photography, painting, video/film, drawing, performance, mixed media & installation.

IAIN BAZTER&, O.C., O.ont., O.B.C., FRSC, RCA, MFA, D.Litt.

IAIN BAXTER&: Biographical Notes

IAIN BAXTER& has expanded & challenged the definition of 'art' for over 50 years. BAXTER& was born in Middlesborough, England in 1936 before emigrating to Calgary, Canada the following year. He currently lives in Windsor, Ontario with his wife & collaborator Louise Chance Baxter&. Baxter& is a painter, photographer, sculptor, mixed media artist, installationist, film & video maker, interventionist & performance artist who has been a forerunner for conceptual art in Canada for over 50 years.

First earning a B.Sc. in Zoology & a Master's of Education from the University of Idaho, BAXTER& went on to earn his MFA from Washington State University. IAIN BAXTER& holds five honorary doctorates from some of the most Influential and recognized Canadian Universities including; The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, NSCAD University, the University of Windsor, & most recently OCAD University.

It was BAXTER&'s early education in science and zoology that has inspired many of the continuous themes in his work. These themes include, information technology, landscape, art as commodity, & environmental & ecological concerns. These prominent themes throughout BAXTER&'s work are often met with wit, parody, satire, humour & word play. As a Melva J. Dwyer Award Winner in 2013, the jury stated:

"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."

Using a wide variety of materials, it can be said that the medium of BAXTER&'s work knows no limits. BAXTER& explores the use of new materials such as plastics, creating Canada's first installation work *BAGGED PLACE-1966*, in Vancouver BC made new use of everyday objects & technology, made the first photo-transparency lightboxes (1968) & re-appropriates old & found materials. BAXTER& uses these new materials to challenge the limits of 'medium' & 'artist'. Both this new use of materials, in combination with his creation of the N.E Thing Co. (1966-1978), were integral to BAXTER& becoming recognized as one of Canada's first conceptual artists.

BAXTER&'s work has always been informed by Marshal McLuhan, so much so that BAXTER& has been considered the Marshall McLuhan of Visual Arts in Canada. Among his interests is the practice of ZEN, which BAXTER& studied during his time in Japan from 1961 to 1962. He spent that time producing art on a Japanese Government Foreign Scholarship, resulting in his first one man show in Kyoto (1961).

BAXTER&'s fascination with word play has recently been realized through the permanent changing of his name in 2005 from Iain Baxter to IAIN BAXTER& (also known as the &MAN). This act permanently adhered the ampersand (&) to the end of his name. This fixation with the '&' not only speaks to the interconnectedness of all things & fellow humans but illustrates the ways in which we rely on the 'AND' to connect our thoughts when we use language & when we

In 2010 BAXTER& collaborated with Adam Lauder. Lauder developed, during a three year research grant project an online catalogue raisonne, established as IAINBAXTER&raisonnE, one of the first to be established, in conjunction with York University Library. This new approach to cataloguing works of art rejected the notion of the chronological placement of BAXTER&'s works and instead acted as an interactive vehicle between BAXTER&'s work & archives and allows cultural viewers to continually participate, contribute & dialogue as a way to fuse social media and interactive archiving.

BAXTER& is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, an Officer of the Order of Canada including the Order of Ontario and the Order of British Columbia. He is a Member of the Royal Canadian Academy. Among the many awards he has received are the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012, the Canadian Council Molson Prize for the Arts in 2005, the Gersho Iskowitz prize in 2006, & the Canadian Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2004.

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