

The Alcuin Awards

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The Alcuin Award

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for Excellence in Book Design in Canada

## Contents

- 3 Design Awards for Canadian Publications of 1996
- 5 The Award Winners
- 6 Prose Fiction
- 8 Prose Nonfiction
- 10 Pictorial Books
- 12 Poetry
- 14 Text and Reference
- 17 Limited Editions
- 18 Children's Books
- 21 Concluding Comments
- 23 The Design Awards
- 24 The Alcuin Society

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## Design Awards for Canadian Publications of 1997

For this, the Society's fifteenth annual presentation of design awards, the undersigned panel of four judges spent April 26, 1997 examining some two hundred fifty books published in Canada during 1996, each entered into competition by its Canadian publisher or designer. Producers (platemakers, printers, binders) are not necessarily Canadian: economic, and formerly also technical, reasons have always taken some production elsewhere. Not every eligible organization submits work to this competition, although each January, the Society makes every effort to locate and notify every Canadian publisher and graphic arts firm known to take book work. Still, those submitted are representative of the quality now expected in the Canadian book industries.

As in the arts of food, drama, etc., excellent content and excellent presentation do not necessarily go hand in hand. This is not the competition for content, but good design reflects a book's content, purpose, and proposed audience. The judges therefore noted these in considering how the visual qualities of each book support its individual purpose and contribute to making it a work of both fine and practical art. The awards itemized and the qualities discussed below celebrate the considerable achievements of 1996, a particularly difficult year for the financing of any endeavour in the Canadian cultural field.

Judging is done in a number of categories so that books presenting similar design challenges can be judged together rather than against totally disparate ones. The categories this year differ somewhat from those of the previous seven years, which were becoming increasingly problematic. Graphic reproduction techniques have changed radically as computer-based methods progressively replace physical ones. One result is greater use of illustration and colour in books of a type once characterized by the use only of type in black-and-white. Even poetry now more often features pictorial content as well as sections set as prose.

Distinguishing whether a book for an adult audience is primarily pictorial, reference/text, or simply prose nonfiction has become especially difficult. The latter category slips ever further in design characteristics from fiction, which alone remains largely unillustrated and is now a separate category. A separate "hobby/cookbook/how-to" category has for years seemed redundant, and these books are now judged in another appropriate category, usually either pictorial or text/reference. A category is specified with each submission, but either the Society's Awards Committee or the judges will move an item from that category to another if they feel it can be more fairly judged there. Yet whatever categories are established, some individual items

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## Design Awards for Canadian Publications of 1997

*continued*

transcend boundaries and the judging can never entirely escape the criticism of comparing apples with peaches.

The 1996 submissions fell into the following categories as newly named:

- 32 Prose Fiction
- 65 Prose Nonfiction
- 25 Pictorial Books
- 28 Poetry
- 35 Text and Reference Books
- 5 Limited Editions
- 57 Children's Books

First, second, and third prizes are available in each category, with ties permitted.

The primary criterion of excellence against which each book is judged is the harmony of all aspects of its materials and design, fashioned as a harmonious whole suitably tuned to the book's intellectual content and intended audience. A book cited for Honourable Mention exhibits some exceptionally noteworthy feature(s), for example a striking and appropriate cover, which brought it, in the eyes of the judges, above the mass even if as a whole it fails to sustain comparison with prize-winners in the category.

# The Award Winners

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## Prose Fiction

As generally unillustrated prose with few if any captions and nearly standard length, novels may not seem to present many design challenges. In fact, drawing attention to some single aspect brings the risk of overwhelming the text. The best one can say of a well-designed novel is that the calm, even flow of type in the text block—the physical characteristic that helps keep the reader going—is a unity without offsetting blemish. Such typography commends four of the award winners; the fifth, *Hard Core Logo*, is a deliberately rough-edged visual presentation of prose, poetry, and illustration, successful precisely because its content demands that the rule be broken.

A unifying treatment of the cover or dustwrapper, endpapers, preliminaries, and features carried through the text such as running heads, chapter openings, graphics, and pagination completes a satisfying presentation. This attention is evident in all five winners but most pleasingly so in the first, where a tiny appropriate illustration also opens each section. The presence of two ties shows that preferences expressed got rather subjective. The two second-prize winners are poles apart from each other in design! The designer of *Alias Grace* dealt nicely with the additional challenge of how to make a quite long novel seem manageable to both hand and eye. *Butterfly* exudes the charm of its oriental subject.

### First Prize (tie)

*Last Seen: A Novel* [by] Matt Cohen.  
Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada.  
ISBN 0-394-28168-3 (212pp., hbk) \$28.95.  
Designer: Gordon Robertson (text);  
Paul Hodgson, Spencer Francey Peters (cover).  
Printer: R.R. Donnelley, USA (text);  
Phoenix Colour (cover).

### First Prize (tie)

*Hard Core Logo* [by] Michael Turner.  
2nd edition.  
Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.  
ISBN 1-55152-033-8 (197pp., pbk) \$16.95.  
Designer: Patty Osborne (text);  
Dean Allen (cover).  
Printer: Kromar Printing

### Second Prize

*Slow Emergencies* [by] Nancy Huston.  
Toronto: Little, Brown & Co. (Canada) Ltd.  
ISBN 0-316-38009-1 (237pp., pbk) \$19.95.  
Designer: Michael P. Callaghan (text);  
Tania Craan (cover).  
Printer: Best Book Manufacturers

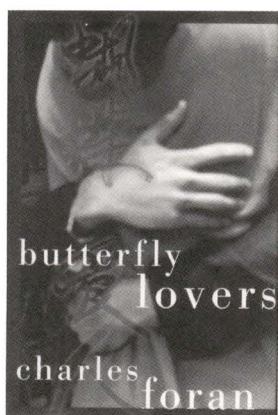
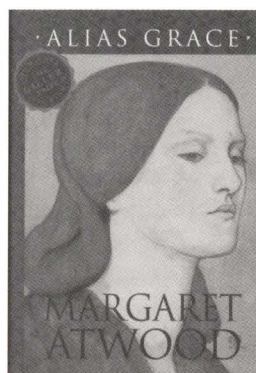
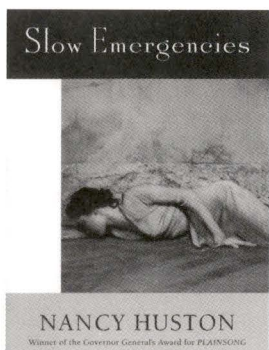
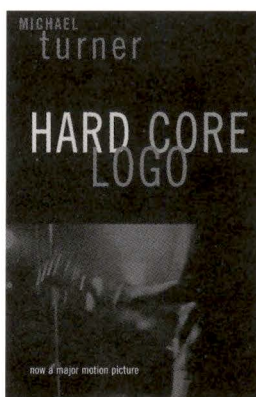
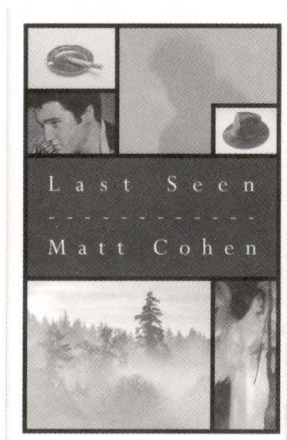
### Third Prize (tie)

*Alias Grace* [by] Margaret Atwood.  
Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.  
ISBN 0-7710-0835-x (470pp., hbk) \$32.50.  
Designer: Kong Njo  
Printer: Friesens

### Third Prize (tie)

*Butterfly lovers* [by] Charles Foran.  
Toronto: HarperCollins.  
ISBN 0-00-224390-3 (308pp., hbk) \$27.00.  
Designer: Counterpunch/Linda





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## Prose Nonfiction

The first prize winner sets a suitably sombre mood in every aspect of its design, totally befitting its subject while using just two simple motifs and one variation of type. While one might dispute that Leacock's classic is "nonfiction", this reissue is, appropriately if surprisingly, not designed as a novel. The integration of Bates' woodcut initial letters and illustrations and the touches of rust colour in running heads and pagination as well as some illustrations, give this pictorial presentation new life as a gift book. Third prize goes to a book designed as a workshop presentation to a business audience; one feels physically present, sensing from the page the power-point projections and the places of verbal emphasis in a way that is sure to become more common in books designed, as well as written, to persuade. The cover art and layout, on both front and back, recommend the honourable mention.

### First Prize

*Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War* [by] Jeffrey A. Keshen.  
Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.  
ISBN 0-88864-279-2 (333pp., pbk) \$29.95.  
Designer: Alan Brownoff  
Printer: Friesens

### Second Prize

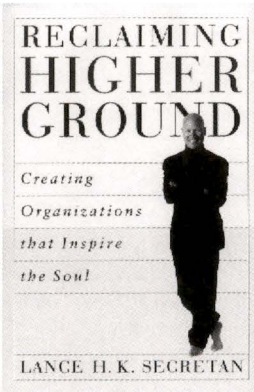
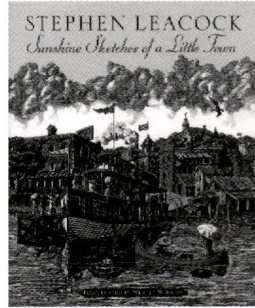
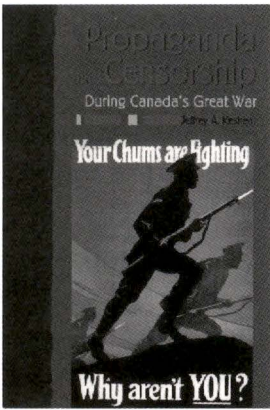
*Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* [by] Stephen Leacock; illustrated by Wesley Bates.  
Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.  
ISBN 0-7710-5001-1 (184pp., hbk) \$30.00.  
Designer: Sari Ginsberg  
Printer: Friesens

### Third Prize

*Reclaiming Higher Ground: Creating Organizations that Inspire the Soul* [by] Lance H.K. Secretan.  
Toronto: Macmillan Canada.  
ISBN 0-7715-7375-8 (258pp., hbk) \$29.95.  
Designer: Kevin Connolly  
Printer: Friesens

### Honourable Mention

*The Presumption of Culture: Structure, Strategy, and Survival in the Canadian Cultural Landscape* [by] Tom Henighan.  
Vancouver: Raincoast Books.  
ISBN 1-55192-013-1 (167pp., pbk) \$15.95.  
Designer: Dean Allen  
Printer: Best Books



*The Soul*

When I think about my life, I often think of my childhood in the mountains of the West. It was a time of great beauty and great joy. I was born in the mountains of the West, and I grew up in the mountains of the West. I was born in the mountains of the West, and I grew up in the mountains of the West. I was born in the mountains of the West, and I grew up in the mountains of the West.

**How to Reclaim the Soul**

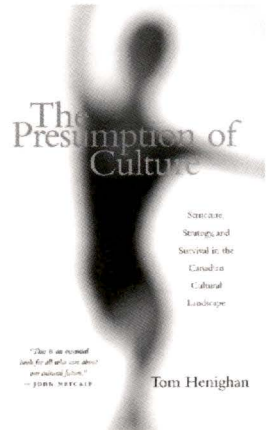
Reclaiming the soul is a process of self-discovery and self-actualization. It is a process of finding one's true self and living in accordance with one's values and beliefs. It is a process of becoming a better person and a better citizen. It is a process of becoming a more complete human being.

**How to Reclaim the Soul**

Reclaiming the soul is a process of self-discovery and self-actualization. It is a process of finding one's true self and living in accordance with one's values and beliefs. It is a process of becoming a better person and a better citizen. It is a process of becoming a more complete human being.

**The Learning Self-Cycle**

The Learning Self-Cycle is a process of continuous learning and growth. It is a process of becoming a better person and a better citizen. It is a process of becoming a more complete human being.



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## Pictorial Books

It is impossible to deny the impact of corporate subsidy on the quality of the pictorial book for adults. Even hard-cover binding is becoming rarer in this expensive species: only the two first-prize winners have it, although this is not what gave them priority in the judging. Excellent design can tip the balance but not replace the expensive art work and full-colour printing seen in *Wildfowl Art*. The other first-prize winner is not subsidized in this direct way, which makes it even more pleasing that the publisher could display Kluckner's large watercolours so attractively with text and captions interspersed with marginal vignettes.

Full-colour illustration of completed work is successfully integrated with sketches and text in the outwardly unassuming architectural catalogue awarded second prize.

Exhibition catalogues are always prominent in this category. The two from the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal are designed by different persons and their differing text/illustration balance called for different design decisions. However, the basic quality of clear catalogue presentation is present in both so equally that neither could be preferred to the other. Finally, the spirit of a generation past is deliberate in both the design and the colour reproduction of the collection of BC postcards.

### First Prize (tie)

*Wildfowl Art: Carvings from the Ward World Championship*; photographs by Ernie Sparks; text by Laurel Aziz.  
Willowdale: Firefly Books.  
ISBN 1-55209-043-4 (119pp., hbk) \$39.95.  
Designer: Linda J. Menyes/Q Kumquat Designs  
Printer: Friesens

### First Prize (tie)

*Michael Kluckner's Vancouver*; text and watercolours by Michael Kluckner.  
Vancouver: Raincoast Books.  
ISBN 1-55192-044-1 (123pp., hbk) \$36.95.  
Designer: Dean Allen  
Printer: Palace Press International, Hong Kong.

### Second Prize

*Works: The Architecture of A.J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt and Company, 1968-1995*, [editor Brian Carter].  
Documents in Canadian Architecture.  
Halifax: tuns Press.  
ISBN 0-929112-31-8 (148pp., pbk).  
Designer: Bhandari & Co.  
Printer: Atlantic Nova Print Co. Inc.

### Third Prize (tie)

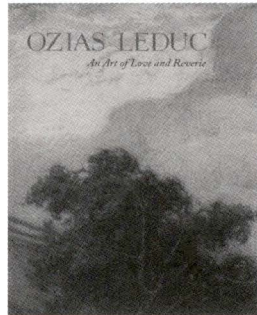
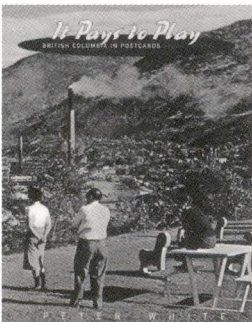
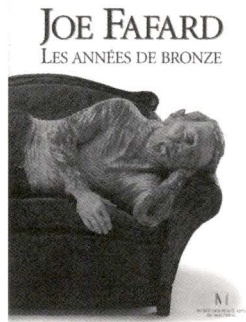
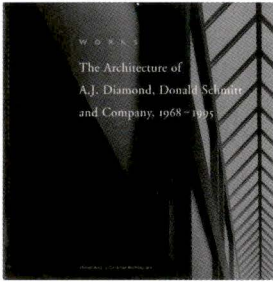
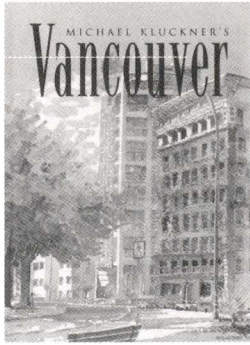
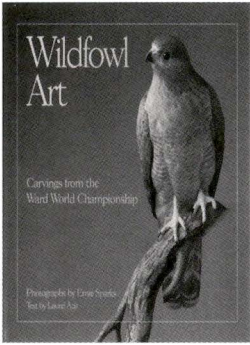
*Joe Fafard: Les années de bronze*. Montréal: Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal.  
ISBN 2-89192-216-6 (119pp., pbk)  
also published in an English-language edition as: *Joe Fafard: The Bronze Years*  
ISBN 2-89192-217-4 (pbk).  
Designer: France Lafond  
Printer: Richard Veilleux Imprimeur Inc.

### Third Prize (tie)

*Ozias Leduc: An Art of Love and Reverie*.  
Montréal: Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal;  
Québec: Musée du Québec.  
ISBN 2-89192-207-7 (318pp., pbk) also published in a French-language edition as: *Ozias Leduc: une oeuvre d'amour et de reverie*  
ISBN 2-89192-206-9 (pbk).  
Designer: Martin Dufour  
Printer: Richard Veilleux Imprimeur Inc.

### Honourable Mention

*It Pays to Play: British Columbia in Postcards 1950s - 1980s* [by] Peter White.  
Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery; Arsenal Pulp Press.  
ISBN 1-55152-037-0 (112pp., pbk) \$24.95.  
Designer: Alexandra Hass  
Printer: Kromar Printers





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## Poetry

Poetry is the most individual of literate art forms. More than in other categories, the physical presentation should be tailored to the "voice" of the poet. That poetry is usually the least profitable (rather, the most often unprofitable!) form of publication means that printing it to a formula directly from the output of a word processor now too often seems economically necessary. There were also many fewer submissions of poetry this year than heretofore.

The success of Éditions du Noroît in this genre has been recognized regularly in these awards; this year's first prize goes to an ideal design collaboration involving the author.

The other submission to stand out as a whole is cool and architectural as the concrete of its title, from cover through text setting. The striking full-page reproductions of Parker's paintings are worthy of honourable mention, whether in this or the pictorial category; here they accompany well-set poetry.

### First Prize

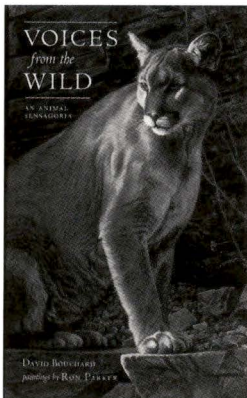
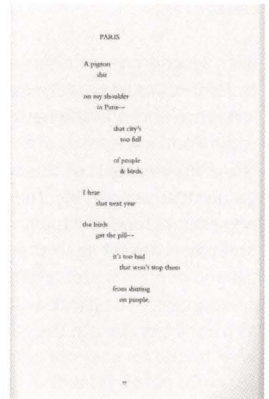
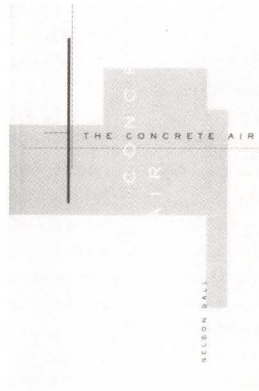
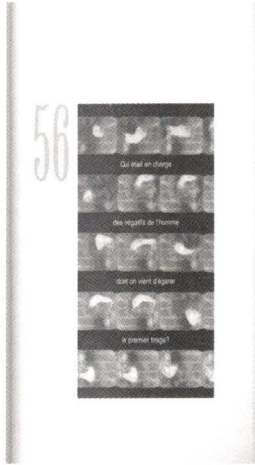
*Poèmes contre la montre* [par] Carle Coppens avec les reproductions des oeuvres de Jesus Carles de Vilallonga.  
Saint-Hippolyte: Le Noroît (distribution Fides).  
ISBN 2-89018-365-3 (100pp., pbk). \$15.00.  
Designers: Claude Prud-Homme et Carle Coppens  
Printer: AGVM "L'imprimeur" inc.

### Second Prize

*The Concrete Air* [by] Nelson Ball.  
Stratford: Mercury Press (distributor: General Distribution Services).  
ISBN 1-55128-040-x (95pp., pbk) \$12.95.  
Designer: Gordon Robertson (cover);  
TASK (composition and page design)  
Printer: Metropole Litho

### Honourable Mention

*Voices from the Wild: an Animal Sensagoria* [by] David Bouchard; paintings by Ron Parker.  
Vancouver: Raincoast Books.  
ISBN 1-55192-040-9 (65pp., hbk).  
Designer: Dean Allen.  
Printer: Palace Press International, Hong Kong.





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## Text and Reference

From a design standpoint, these publications are at the opposite end of the spectrum from novels. Thoughtful design can add immeasurably to emphasizing what is important, providing links between parts of the content, helping to show its organization.

The thousand-page, two-volume history of Canada awarded first prize is an admirable solution of the problem of balancing quality and cost. The skilful, yet economical, use of a single additional colour (green) for many clever design touches as well as in graphics enriches the visual appeal of a dense college text.

Both second-prize winners are characterized by features making them easily consulted as reference books. In the nature guide, colour coding and icons focus attention and keep the many elements of this very compact field guide clearly separable. The cookbook presents its recipes equally clearly, while the text pages are set against a subtle background of manuscript letters and antique photographs. The garden planner is designed as a book to take into the garden with you, wire-bound for easy opening and full of blank space for notes, yet within a pleasant comprehensive design. Its colour illustrations are well suited to reproduction on a coarser paper. *Bishop's* includes effective black-and-white illustrations of restaurant ambience as well as the more expected lavish colour plates. Effective use of graphics and cartography recommend *Contact Canada* for mention.

### First Prize (tie)

*Origins: Canadian History to Confederation* [by] R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, Donald B. Smith, 3rd edition.  
Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada.  
ISBN 0-7747-3381-0 (460pp., pbk).  
Designer: Opus House Inc.  
Printer: Best Book Manufacturers

### First Prize (tie)

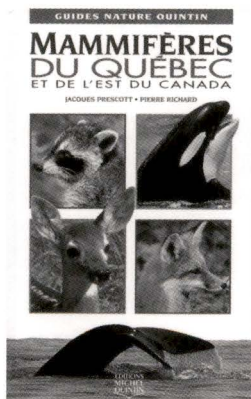
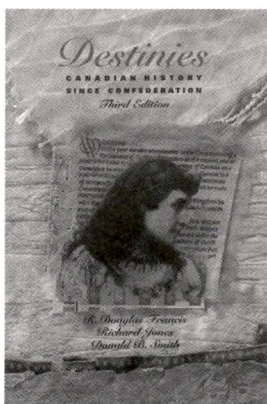
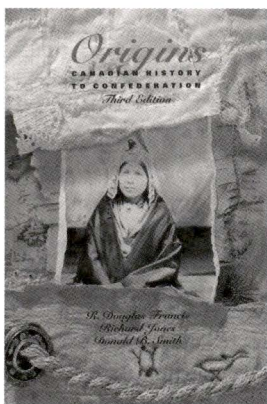
*Destinies: Canadian History since Confederation* [by] R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, Donald B. Smith, 3rd edition.  
Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada.  
ISBN 0-7747-3380-2 (537pp., pbk) \$32.95.  
Designer: Opus House Inc.  
Printer: Best Book Manufacturers

### Second Prize (tie)

*Aunt Maud's Recipe Book from the kitchen of L.M. Montgomery* [by] Elaine Crawford & Kelly Crawford.  
Norval, Ontario: Moulin Publishing Ltd.  
ISBN 1-896867-01-4 (140pp., hbk) \$27.95.  
Designer: Counterpunch/Linda Gustafson.  
Printer: Friesens

### Second Prize (tie)

*Mammifères du Québec et de l'est du Canada* [par] Jacques Prescott, Pierre Richard. Waterloo, Québec: Editions Michel Quintin.  
ISBN 2-89435-081-3 (399pp., pbk) \$29.95.  
Designer: Standish Communications  
Printer: Imprimerie HLN



**LYNX ROUX**

*Lynx baileyi* Famille des félins

**DISTRIBUTION GÉOGRAPHIQUE**  
On trouve le lynx roux depuis le sud du Canada jusqu'en Amérique centrale.

**NOUVEAUX**  
Longueur totale : 70 à 100 cm, queue : 15 à 20 cm env. - 10 à 15 cm, queue : 10 à 16 cm, hauteur à l'épaule : 40 à 50 cm.

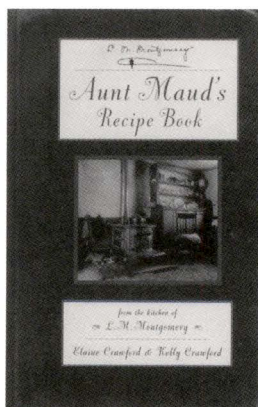
**PÈS**  
Le poids des femelles adultes oscille de 5,5 à 11,5 kg, celui des mâles de 6,5 à 12 kg. À la naissance, les petits pèsent de 120 à 400 g.

**CARACTÈRES PRINCIPAUX**  
Le lynx roux a le dos brun foncé orné de mouchetures brunes, comme le ventre blanc tacheté de noir et les membres bruns marqués de noir. Bien protégé d'être un plus gros chat d'Amérique que son cousin européen, il est beaucoup plus robuste et une grande agilité et flexibilité dans l'escalade pour grimper aux branches, et ses dentures, un autre caractère.

**HABITAT**  
Le lynx roux s'adapte aux milieux les plus divers, il fréquente la forêt des conifères, les taillis, les forêts de cultures et d'arbustes, les zones agricoles et jusqu'aux hautes altitudes. Il n'est ni omnivore ni carnivore, les aliments les absorbent des végétaux.

**LES**  
Le lynx roux se couche occasionnellement dans un arbre ou sur un gros rocher. Les parties situées dans les cornes moutonnées, les bois morts ou une accumulation de neige peuvent le trahir et l'humain les aperçoit.

239



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## Text and Reference

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### Third Prize

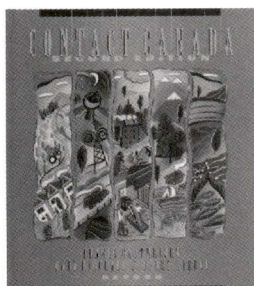
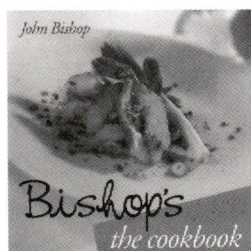
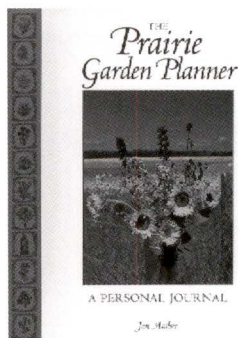
*The Prairie Garden Planner* [by] Jan Mather.  
Red Deer: Red Deer College Press.  
ISBN 0-88995-144-6 (256pp., pbk, wire bound).  
Designer: Kunz + Associates.  
Printer: Friesens.

### Honourable Mention

*Bishop's, the Cookbook* [by] John Bishop; with  
additional recipes by Michael Allemeier,  
Dennis Green and Tina Perenseff.  
Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.  
ISBN 1-55054-437-3 (156pp., hbk) \$35.00.  
Designer: George Vaitkunas  
Printer: Friesens

### Honourable Mention

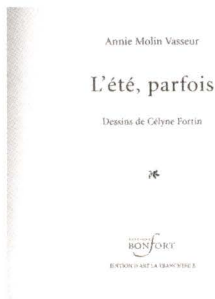
*Contact Canada* [by] Fraser Cartwright,  
Gary Birchall, Gerry Pierce. 2nd edition.  
Toronto: Oxford University Press.  
ISBN 0-19-541148-x (476pp., hbk) \$48.00.  
Designer: Brett Miller  
Printer: Friesens



## Limited Editions

None of the four limited editions judged this year appeared to warrant the award of a first prize. (One book, submitted in both this and another category, was judged in the other because of the presence of a commercial edition identical except for autographs.)

The typography of the small book of poetry from Québec might, in itself, seem too light for the textured paper, but it turns out to be a perfect match (and the text paper a perfect contrast) to the six delicate illustrations on semi-translucent paper which allows the small amount of type on the next page to show through with impressive effect because of its appropriateness. Much thought obviously went into this. The french-fold protective outer sheet may have been an afterthought! The awesome craft we have come to expect in Barbarian Press work is displayed in the production of the trilingual collection of Carlo Toselli's poems.



### Second Prize

*L'été, parfois* [par] Annie Molin Vasseur; dessins de Célyne Fortin.

Saint-Lambert: Editions Bonfort; Montréal: Edition d'art La Tranchefile.

ISBN 2-922219-00-3 (unpaginated: 56pp. on text paper, including six leaves at front and back blank, plus six leaves of illustration, pbk; 100 copies).

Printer: Imprimerie Saint-Louis (text), Copie B.G.R. (illustrations)

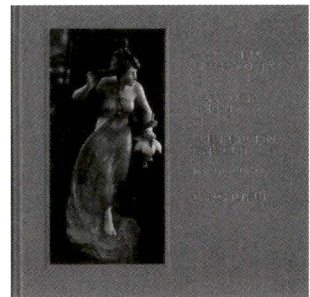
### Honourable Mention

*La Fanciulla di Terracotta; Terracotta Maiden; La Jeune Fille en Terre Cuite; poesie, poems, poemes* [by] Carlo Toselli.

West Vancouver: Le Grazie.

ISBN 0-9681184-0-2 (143pp., hbk; 250 copies, 50 of them boxed and with hand-marbled endpapers).

Designer: Crispin Elsted, printer of text: Jan Elsted (both of Barbarian Press); printer of photographs and of dustwrapper for unboxed copies: Benwell-Atkins, Ltd.; binding: Rasmussen Bindery.



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## Children's Books

In the first prize winner, bold hand-silk-screened pictures in the Warli tradition of folk painting, and striking type printed in red or blue, are beautifully matched with each other and with the paper stock. Like the screening and printing, the paper originates in India; made of rice husk and cotton fibre, it adds texture and additional colour. All seem perfect for the folk-tale text. The second-prize winner looks as colourful and fast-paced as its subject, with action shots of a team of high-school learners treated the same as those of professional players. An identically designed pair of nature books share third prize for their clear, eye-catching layout which incorporates observation, experiment, and review in the text, along with large clear drawings of nature and the children who study it. Many children's books separate a block of text from the predominating illustration on a page, too often creating harsh clashes; honourable mention goes to an effective variant of the technique in which the illustration is faded behind the text block.

### First Prize

*The Very Hungry Lion, a Folktale*; adapted by Gita Wolf; art by Indrapramit Roy.  
Toronto: Annick Press, distributed by Firefly Books Ltd.  
ISBN 1-55037-461-3 (24pp., hbk) \$24.95.  
500 copies signed by the author and illustrator as a limited edition.  
ISBN 1-55037-481-8, \$29.95.  
Designer: Tara Publishing and Annick Press.  
Printer: C.Arumugam, amm Screens, India.

### Second Prize

*Hockey the NHL Way: The Basics* [by] Sean Rossiter; foreword by Pat Quinn.  
Vancouver: Greystone Books,  
Douglas & McIntyre.  
ISBN 1-55054-499-3 (92pp., pbk) \$14.95.  
Designer: Peter Cocking  
Printer: Friesens

### Third Prize (tie)

*The Kids Canadian Bug Book*; written by Pamela Hickman, illustrated by Heather Collins.  
Toronto: Kids Can Press Ltd.  
ISBN 1-55074-231-0 (32pp., hbk) \$14.95.  
Also published in a French-language edition as: *Les insectes*  
Richmond Hill: Éditions Scholastic  
ISBN 0-590-16470-8 (pbk). \$8.99.  
Designer: Blair Kerrigan/Glyphics.  
Printer: Wing King Tong Co. Ltd., Hong Kong.

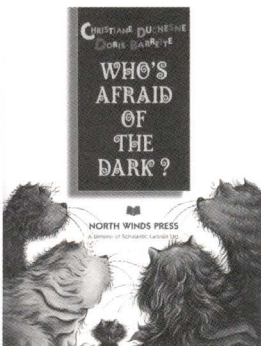
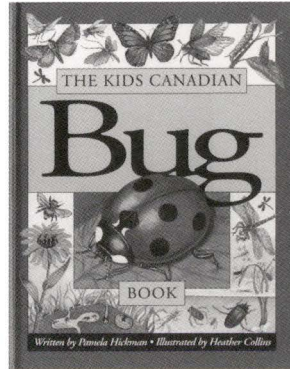
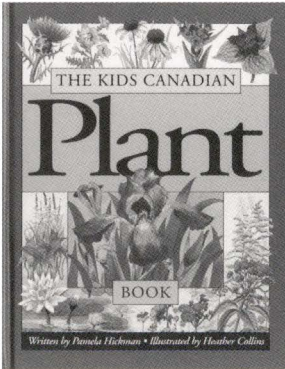
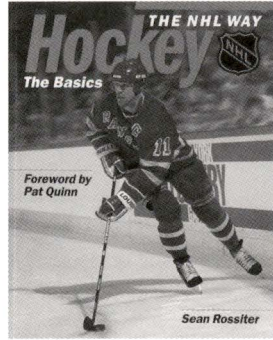
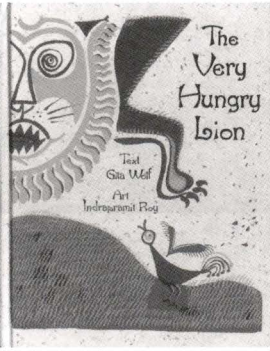
### Third Prize (tie)

*The Kids Canadian Plant Book*;  
written by Pamela Hickman, illustrated by Heather Collins.  
Toronto: Kids Can Press Ltd.  
ISBN 1-55074-233-7 (32pp., hbk) \$14.95.  
Designer: Blair Kerrigan/Glyphics.  
Printer: Wing King Tong Co. Ltd., Hong Kong.

### Honourable Mention

*Who's Afraid of the Dark?* [by] Christiane Duchesne [and] Doris Barrette.  
Richmond Hill: North Winds Press, a division of Scholastic Canada Ltd.  
ISBN 0-590-24448-5 (29pp., hbk) \$16.99.  
Also published in a French-language edition as: *Qui a peur, la nuit?*  
Richmond Hill: Éditions Scholastic.  
ISBN 0-590-24449-3 (pbk) \$8.99  
Designer: Yüksel Hassan  
Printer: Friesens





The Alcuin Awards

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## Concluding Comments

Aesthetic judgements combine elements of both absolute values and comparison. Two items submitted this year were new editions or added volumes to ones which previously won awards. They were reminders to the judges that each year's submissions comprise a unique gathering of artifacts to be examined not only as individual items but as a whole. It is a shame that only the judges see the entire group of submissions together because although we single them out, the award winners described above are an integral part of the mass of the year's publications, a mass different from that of any other year in any place or at any time since Gutenberg. In this mass, we see values of diversity and cultural creativity which we think we can characterize and celebrate as "Canadian".

Publishers use physical design features to catch the attention of potential buyers within categories much more finely delimited than the broad ones of this competition. It is understandable that covers (of paperbacks) and dustwrappers (of hard-cover books) should attract the lion's share of the design budget for books in categories in which they are the attraction to the impulse buyer: general trade fiction and nonfiction, pictorial books, and books for the young. The other reason for good design, to provide the most fitting clothing for the book's intellectual content, usually has less obvious results since understatement can be more valued than a frontal attack on the senses. The noted typographer Beatrice Warde quipped, "Printing should

be invisible." The Canadian publishers honoured here, pinched ever more tightly between diminishing available capital and buyer resistance to higher prices for the product, are commended for continuing to value the less immediately obvious purpose. While the two are not mutually exclusive, it is easy to slight the latter as one watches the budget, or to forget that aesthetically desirable details are not incompatible with digital technology.

The Society's requests for submissions to this competition go to every known Canadian publisher and as many designers and design companies as are known to its Awards Committee to work on books. In January 1997, the Committee sent out approximately 400 notices of this competition; submissions were received from 60 sources. The judges would always like to see more submissions; some fine Canadian design is surely being missed in these awards.

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## Judges

### **Peter Bartl**

*Professor, Department of Art and Design,  
University of Alberta*

### **Sylvia Smallman**

*Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design*

### **Ronald Hagler**

*Professor, School of Library, Archival  
and Information Studies,  
The University of British Columbia*

### **Dennis Nagy**

*Studio Allsorts, Vancouver*

Judging any artistic endeavour involves the discussion of objective evidences as seen by each judge from a subjective point of view. Instant unanimity that a particular prize should be awarded to a particular book does occur, but it is not typical of the day's discussions. No single judge among us would, independently, have arrived at all and only the above list of awards. This list is the result of compromises of initial reactions with reflective reassessment of those reactions during discussion. Professor Hagler trusts that in this report, his compilation of hours of the comments of his fellow judges constitutes a balanced summary of their views as well as his own.

May 24, 1997

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## The Design Awards

The competition began 15 years ago and had as its clear purpose the support and encouragement of good book design in Canada.

The categories for submission were adopted from the American Institute of Graphic Arts competition: Prose, Poetry, Adult Picture and Photography Books, How-To, Cook-, Craft-, and Hobby Books, Text and Reference Books, Juvenile Books and Limited Editions. The judges for the competition and the Society's Design Awards Committee have recently decided to divide the prose category into separate categories for fiction and non-fiction, and in addition have decided to eliminate the How-To category and include these types of books into other categories.

In January of each year, the Society's Awards Committee sends approximately 400 letters to as many English- and French-language publishers and book designers in Canada as it can identify. These invite submission by the end of March of publications of the previous calendar year. In April, the judges convene for two days to review submissions and recommend awards. First, second, and third prizes and Honourable Mentions are available in each category listed above. Award certificates are presented in person at the Society's Annual General Meeting in May or sent by mail shortly thereafter. The winning books are donated to the Special Collections Division of the library at Simon Fraser University where they are

available to the entire university community, but are especially useful to the instructors and students in the publishing programme as examples of excellent Canadian book design. An article listing and describing the winners of the competition has been published in the Society's quarterly publication, *Amphora*, but last year we produced our first ever catalogue of the winning entries. This second catalogue represents the winners of the 1997 competition.

The judges have varied over the years but in latter years have primarily been Dr. Ronald Hagler of the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at UBC, Roberto Dosil of Praxis, and Dennis Nagy of Studio Allsorts. Guest judges have been Jan Elsted of Barbarian Press, Peter Bartl of the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta, and Sylvia Smallman of the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

The Alcuin Society takes great pride in sponsoring this competition celebrating excellence in Canadian book design.

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## The Alcuin Society

The Alcuin Society was founded in 1965 by G.A. Spencer for booklovers worldwide to promote a wider appreciation of what goes into finely-wrought books.

The name "Alcuin" was chosen to honour the memory of Alcuin of York (735 to 804 ad). Alcuin was a man who cared not only about books but handwriting too, which he rescued from the proliferation of bastard styles of the period. As, in effect, Charlemagne's "Minister of Culture", Alcuin selected the most pleasing and certainly the most legible script of his day, and gave it official blessing. Known as the "Caroline Minuscule", it ultimately led to our modern lower-case alphabet.

To further its aims, The Alcuin Society engages in a wide range of activities, many in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing at Simon Fraser University: lectures, workshops, exhibitions, and competitions. Annual design awards are made by a panel of judges for the best in Canadian book design. *Amphora*, the Society's quarterly journal, covers a wide range of topics related to the book arts: collecting, typography, type design, typesetting, calligraphy, paper-making, ornamentation, illustration, printing and binding.

### Honorary past chairs

G.A. Spencer  
Bryan Peet  
Peter Quartermain  
Gwen Murray  
Allen Segal  
Ron McAmmond  
M.S. Batts  
Madeline Williams  
Neil Brearly  
Don Atkins  
Anne Taylor  
Richard Hopkins

### Directors whose term of office expires in:

2000  
Stuart Isto  
Ann Cowan  
Frances Woodward  
Sylvia Smallman

1999  
Mary Conibear  
Richard Hopkins  
Jim Rainer  
Brenda Peterson

1998  
John King  
Don Atkins  
Geoff Spencer  
Anne Terriss

### Membership in the Society has the following categories

*Individual*  
\$ 40.00 per year  
*Corporate*  
\$ 40.00 per year  
*Patron*  
\$ 100.00 per year  
*Student*  
\$ 20.00 per year  
*three years maximum*





