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*United States Sports University and American
Sport Art Museum and Archives*

LAKEFIELD, ON, CANADA, August 25, 2026
/EINPresswire.com/ -- Canadian contemporary
artist Murray Henderson has been named the
2026 [Sport Artist of the Year](#), becoming the
first Canadian in the history of the award to
receive the international honor presented by
the United States Sports University and the
American Sport Art Museum and Archives
(ASAMA) in Daphne, Alabama.

First presented in 1984, the Sport Artist of the
Year Award recognizes artists whose work
captures the spirit and life of sport, preserving
the drama and excitement of athletic
competition for future generations.

Henderson joins a distinguished group of
internationally recognized artists honored by the institution, including LeRoy Neiman, Ernie
Barnes, Stephen Holland, Bernie Fuchs, Hans Erni, Bart Forbes, Paul Goodnight and Cristóbal
Gabarrón.

For Henderson, whose career spans more than three decades, becoming the award's first
Canadian recipient represents both a personal milestone and international recognition of a life
in art deeply connected to sport.

"To be selected as the 2026 Sport Artist of the Year is one of the great honors of my career,"
Henderson said. "And to learn that I am the first Canadian ever to receive the award makes it
even more meaningful. Canada and sport are such an important part of who I am, both
personally and as an artist."

"I have never wanted to simply paint what an athlete looks like. I want to capture what the
moment feels like — the movement, history, pressure, triumph, struggle and humanity behind



Murray Henderson art

it.”

FROM PRECISION TO EMOTION

Henderson has developed a distinctive visual language he calls “Exact Abstract,” combining carefully rendered imagery with spontaneous abstraction, movement, texture and expressive paint.

His philosophy is summarized in a phrase central to his work:

“I build it with precision, then I destroy it with emotion.”

His sports works often combine painting with three-dimensional elements and authentic sports memorabilia, incorporating objects connected to the athlete or moment directly into the artwork.

Game-used equipment, shoes, basketball flooring, hockey sticks and other artifacts can become part of the composition itself, allowing Henderson to merge fine art, sports history and collectible culture into a single original work.

His subjects have included Wayne Gretzky, Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, Shohei Ohtani, Tom Brady, Peyton Manning and Ray Lewis. Henderson has also created work in live settings around athletes, sporting events, charitable initiatives and entertainment experiences.

A CANADIAN ARTIST ENTERS SPORT-ART HISTORY

For Henderson, being the first Canadian recipient carries particular significance. Canada has produced generations of celebrated athletes and maintains one of the world’s strongest sporting cultures, yet no Canadian artist had previously received ASAMA’s Sport Artist of the Year honor.

“There is something very Canadian about the way sport becomes part of our identity and our memories,” Henderson said. “A sporting moment can become much bigger than a score or a game. It becomes part of a family’s history, a city’s history and sometimes a country’s history. That is what I try to put into the work.”

Henderson’s selection also places his name within an award tradition that has recognized major figures in [sports art](#). Ernie Barnes, the celebrated painter and former professional football player, was the inaugural Sport Artist of the Year. LeRoy Neiman, whose expressionist images of athletes and major sporting events made him one of the world’s best-known sports artists, was later honored by the institution.

“When you see the artists who have received this award before you, you understand the history attached to it,” Henderson said. “To have my name become part of that history is something I will always value.”

ABOUT ASAMA

The American Sport Art Museum and Archives was founded in 1984 and is located on the campus of the United States Sports University in Daphne, Alabama. Its collection includes more than 1,800 works spanning painting, sculpture, prints, photography, posters and assemblage.

ABOUT MURRAY HENDERSON

Murray Henderson is a Canadian contemporary artist whose career spans more than 30 years. Known for Exact Abstract, Henderson combines precision, realism, abstraction, movement and

unconventional materials across paintings, three-dimensional works and live performance art. His work is held by private and corporate collectors in Canada, the United States and internationally.

Murray Henderson

Murray Henderson Art

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