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ROSS KING NAMES CASSI SMITH THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2017 RBC TAYLOR EMERGING WRITER AWARD

SHARING A COMMITMENT to emerging Canadian talent, the Charles Taylor Foundation and RBC Wealth Management are pleased to announce that CASSI SMITH is the fourth recipient of its annual Emerging Writer Award. The young Saskatchewan writer was chosen by Ross King, winner of the 2017 RBC Taylor Prize for his book *Mad Enchantment: Claude Monet and the Painting of Water Lilies*. The Award consists of a \$10,000 cash prize and mentorship by Mr. King.

RBC Taylor Prize Founder Noreen Taylor commented: “When the people in RBC Wealth Management and the Charles Taylor Foundation looked at the qualities they wanted to in their desired Emerging Author, they outlined all of the qualities we find in Cassi Smith. She has that rare blend of the gift for storytelling, dedication to research, and inherent curiosity that are the hallmarks of great writers of nonfiction. When you think that these are the same qualities that would describe the work of Ross King, I think we can look forward to Cassi Smith’s bright future.”

Vijay Parmar, president of RBC PH&N Investment Counsel added: “On behalf of RBC Wealth Management, we congratulate Cassi Smith on being named this year’s RBC Taylor Emerging Writer Award recipient. We believe that offering aspiring Canadian writers opportunities for mentorship, exposure and financial assistance will make a considerable difference to their careers and further influence our country’s cultural landscape for generations to come.”

“It’s a tremendous privilege be able to select the RBC Taylor Prize Emerging Author. I wanted to find a young writer who both wrote compellingly and showed a positive engagement with the world. I’m delighted to have discovered Cassi Smith. I’ve been impressed with the empathy of her writing and her commitment to human values, which she explores without judgment or sentimentality. Hers is a voice that deserves to be heard, along with those of the people she writes about,” said Ross King.

THE RBC TAYLOR EMERGING WRITER AWARD was established to provide recognition and assistance to a Canadian published author who is working on a significant writing project, preferably but not limited to the genre of literary non-fiction. Through mentorship from the current RBC Taylor Prize winner and the cash award, it is intended that the recipient will be able to progress toward the creation of a first draft.

CASSI SMITH was born and raised in Saskatchewan. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Saskatchewan in 2013 with a Double Major in Political Studies and English. Today she is working toward a Masters of Fine Arts in Writing at the



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University. Ms. Smith received the 2016 University of Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship for her nonfiction project in Indigenous Studies. She was a content writer for Sunrise Publishing, (*SaskBusiness Magazine*, *The Saskatchewan Mining Journal*) for a number of years before being accepted into the UofS Master of Fine Arts program. Cassi Smith is currently working on a collection of nonfiction short stories based on interviews with Saskatchewan's First Nations Elders.

ROSS KING is the author of *The Judgment of Paris*, *Brunelleschi's Dome*, *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*, *Defiant Spirits: The Modernist Revolution of the Group of Seven* and *Leonardo and the Last Supper*. His work has twice won the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction and has been shortlisted for the RBC Taylor Prize. Born and raised in Canada, he holds degrees from the University of Regina, York University in Toronto and University College, London. He now lives near Oxford, England.

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Established biennially in 1998 by the trustees of the Charles Taylor Foundation, the RBC TAYLOR PRIZE commemorates Charles Taylor's pursuit of excellence in the field of literary non-fiction. Awarded to the author whose book best combines a superb command of the English language, an elegance of style, and a subtlety of thought and perception, the Prize consists of \$25,000 for the winner and \$2,000 for each of the remaining finalists, as well as promotional support to help all of the nominated books to stand out in the media, bookstores, and libraries.

THE TRUSTEES of the Charles Taylor Foundation are: Michael Bradley, Vijay Parmar, David Staines, Edward Taylor, Nadina Taylor, and Noreen Taylor.



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FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRIZE please go to: www.rbctaylorprize.ca

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TO DOWNLOAD a high-resolution image of the recipient of the 2017 RBC Taylor Emerging Writer Award, please go to:

www.rbctaylorprize.ca/2017/hr_images/cassi_smith_rbctew_2017.jpg

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