

**Press release**  
***For immediate release***

## **ahdri zhina mandiola and Brigitte Poupart: Recipients of the 2025 Gascon-Thomas Awards from the National Theatre School of Canada**

**Montreal, March 18, 2025** – The National Theatre School of Canada (NTS) is proud to announce the recipients of the **32nd edition of the Gascon-Thomas Awards**. This prestigious event recognizes outstanding artists who have made a lasting impact on the performing arts landscape in Canada and beyond. This year, NTS is celebrating two major figures in theatre and multidisciplinary arts: **ahdri zhina mandiola and Brigitte Poupart**.

**ahdri zhina mandiola**, a pivotal figure in Canada's artistic landscape, is the recipient of the **2025 Gascon-Thomas Award for Lifetime Achievement**. Poet, theatre producer, and artistic director, she has played a key role in the rise of Afro-Canadian theatre while mentoring and shaping generations of emerging artists across the globe.

**Brigitte Poupart**, a multidisciplinary artist, director, playwright, and filmmaker, is the recipient of the **2025 Gascon-Thomas Award for Innovation**. This award acknowledges her bold and groundbreaking approach that transcends artistic boundaries. Her work, merging theatre, dance, film, and performance, demonstrates profound artistic sensitivity and a steadfast commitment to innovation and diverse forms of expression.

*« NTS is honored to present the 2025 Gascon-Thomas Awards to ahdri zhina mandiola and Brigitte Poupart, two visionary creators whose commitment and boldness shape the artistic landscape. Their outstanding contributions embody the very essence of theatre: an engaged, vibrant, and ever-evolving art form. Their careers inspire our students, illustrating how creativity, innovation, and dedication can leave a profound mark on the world of performing arts. » – Fanny Pagé, CEO of NTS.*

### **ahdri zhina mandiola: Recipient of the Gascon-Thomas Award for Lifetime Achievement**

Engaged in political movements from a young age, ahdri zhina mandiola made her mark on the cultural scene as a poet, giving readings, performances, lectures, and workshops worldwide. Based in Toronto, she founded and led b current performing arts for 23 years. Among her many personal projects, she pioneered dub theatre with her work *dark diaspora...*



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*in dub* (1991) and launched the *rAiz'n the sun* training program (1999), while also organizing the *rock.paper.sistahz festival*, a key event in Canada's racially diverse artistic scene.



Following in the footsteps of pioneering theatre artists from the 1970s, such as the women of Black Theatre Canada, her work continues to inspire her creative vision. Today, mandiela explores new documentary projects in emerging media, including *blackstage too*, a sequel to her 1990s film *on.black.stage.women*, while also developing new theatrical and literary creations.

### **Brigitte Poupart: Recipient of the 2025 Gascon-Thomas Award for Innovation**

As co-founder of Transthéâtre, Brigitte Poupart has produced, directed, and written several innovative productions, including *Le Défilé des canards dorés*, *Cérémonials* and *What's Next*. In addition to her theatrical work, she has explored various artistic mediums, notably film, earning multiple accolades, including a Jutra Award for *Over My Dead Body*. She has also distinguished herself in the digital arts field with her immersive installation *Ciel à outrances*, created in collaboration with the PHI Centre in Montreal, which won two Numix Awards in 2023.



The Quebec artist has also directed large-scale productions, such as the multimedia show *Ode à la vie*, projected onto the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, and *Luzia* by Cirque du Soleil, which returns to Montreal this summer for a second run. She has also created performances for prestigious festivals, including the Montreal International Jazz Festival and the Festival d'été de Québec. As a filmmaker, her documentary *Over My Dead Body* received international acclaim, and her second feature documentary, *À travers tes yeux*, is set for release in 2025. With her bold and innovative projects, she continues to push the boundaries of artistic creation.

#### **About the Gascon-Thomas Awards**

Created in 1990 in honor of Jean Gascon and Powys Thomas—two iconic figures in Canadian theatre and founders of NTS—the prestigious Gascon-Thomas Awards celebrate their **32nd edition in 2025**. Presented annually to one Francophone and one Anglophone artist, the awards recognize visionary talent that has made a significant impact on the performing arts. The **2025 Gascon-Thomas Awards ceremony** will take place at the Monument-National in Montreal on **March 21, 2025, at 6 p.m.**

#### **About the National Theatre School of Canada**

Founded in 1960, the National Theatre School of Canada is widely recognized as the country's premier theatre training institution. It offers unparalleled, high-level training to artists from diverse backgrounds in all areas of the performing arts, in both French and English. With over 2,000 graduates among Canada's most active and versatile artists and designers, NTS's influence extends across the country and beyond.

**Source:** National Theatre School of Canada

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