

video

# Artist Gary Taxali puts new spin on coin design

**Canadian Mint commissions pop artist, illustrator for edgy, celebratory series**

[CBC News](#)

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Gary Taxali's whimsical pop creations have spanned painting, illustration, children's books and even toys, but the Canadian contemporary artist is now expressing himself in a new medium through a collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mint.

The Indian-born, Toronto-raised visual artist has created a limited-edition series of celebratory coins for the Mint covering six themes: birthday, wedding, tooth fairy, new baby, O Canada and holiday. The series launches Monday. Taxali designed both the images and the font featured on the coins.

"There were challenges, but surprisingly none from a conceptual or stylistic point of view, which was amazing," Taxali told CBC News.

"I was shocked, and still am, that the Mint [was] so open-minded and wonderful to work with in terms of letting me have a lot of creative freedom. The challenges came about in the actual technical process of the pouring of the metal and how the coins would actually be engraved with my designs."

There has already been interest in the series from abroad, he said, revealing that fans have been emailing him to inquire about the release of the coins — which, because each one bear his engraved initials, are akin to affordable miniature Taxali artworks.

"No matter which way you slice it, it's been a fun thing."

Taxali has exhibited his artwork across North America and Europe, with his pieces fetching thousands at auction. Still, he was thrilled to design the coin series. Taxali said he felt honoured to be selected and felt encouraged that the Crown corporation was now including graphic artists in its creative mix.

The Mint has previously collaborated with Canadian artists such as Alex Colville and Bill Reid.

"It's something that I hope they continue to do in terms of reflecting our heritage by highlighting wonderful graphic artists and fine artists and designers that just do phenomenal work in this country," Taxali said.