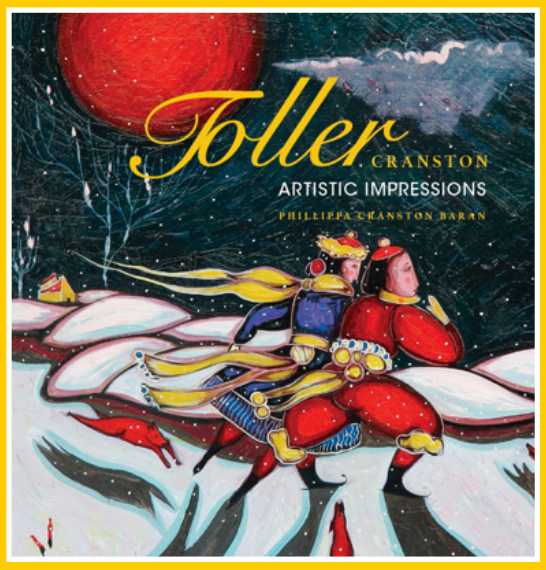
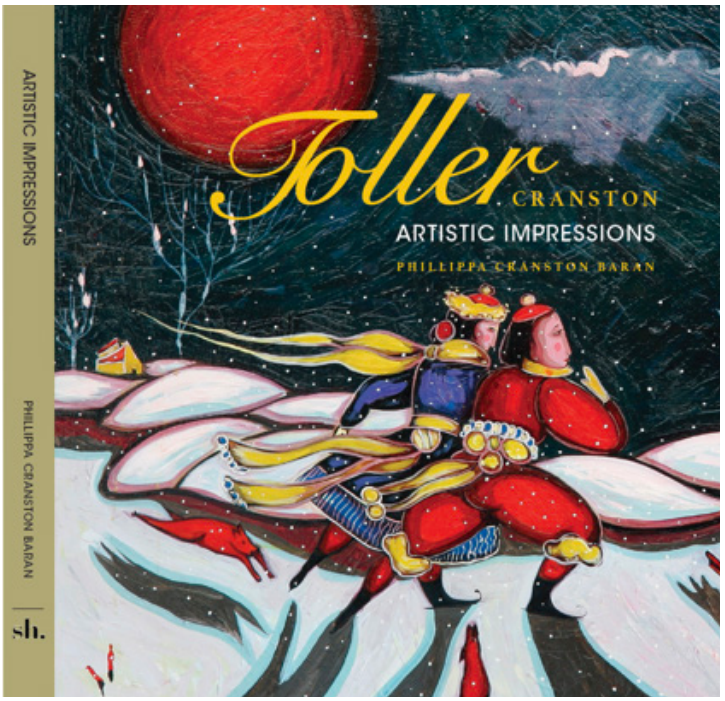


MEDIA KIT

TOLLER CRANSTON, ARTISTIC IMPRESSIONS



Toller Cranston, Artistic Impressions celebrates the astonishing creative output of a Canadian icon who continues to inspire ten years after his death in 2015. The artworks are stunning, the stories behind the artworks are poignant, the messages to young artists and athletes—be brave, chase your destiny, dream big, and do the work—resonate.

Toller
CRANSTON

"I am unique because I became world-class in two things. Da Vinci was never the figure skating champion of Italy."

Toller Cranston

ABOUT TOLLER

Toller Cranston, CM, OLY, LLD

World and Olympic Medalist
Six-time Canadian figure skating champion
Created 20,000 paintings
Participated in 300 international exhibitions
Artist

Toller considered himself an artist. Period. He studied the Renaissance masters who he much admired. He examined their techniques, their brush strokes, their use of colour. His admiration for the great artists was profound, but he did periodically observe that as great as they were, neither Leonardo nor Michelangelo could execute a double axel. Toller was an artist who skated. He utterly rejected the idea that he was a skater who painted.

He had zero tolerance for stupidity, rigidity, mediocrity, incompetence, or half-assed effort. He was a fearless, creative, force and truly authentic in everything he said and did. An artist on ice, in the studio, and in his life.

Toller Cranston died of a heart attack in 2015 in Mexico. He was 65. His headstone in San Miguel de Allende reads Toller, Artist, 1949-2015, Zero Tollerance[1].

[1]The title of one of his books

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phillippa Cranston Baran has a BA from Queens University and an MA in Film from UCLA. She is an award-winning writer, producer, former university film professor and for a few glorious years back in the day, a dairy goat farmer. Her 2025 biography, *Toller Cranston, Ice, Paint, Passion* is the winner of ten book awards.

Toller Cranston is her brother. She carries the stories about how he once pushed an orange crayon so far up his nose that it stuck and melted and how he learned the word scrotum. She carries the scars—a tiny mark near her left eye when he threw heavy silver scissors at her. That was an accident. She bears a faded gash on her left leg where he kicked her with his skates because she refused to twirl him. That was not an accident. She carries the knowledge about his constant striving for the "pat on the head," about his herculean work ethic, and about how he worked every day to achieve technical and artistic excellence. She knows about the loneliness, even though it was often self-imposed. She saw as he was judged and criticized, often unfairly, and she watched as he banished self-doubt, grew from failure, and embraced the courage to be who he was.

Phillippa hopes that by getting to know the artist as a person, becoming more familiar with the influences and experiences that impacted his work, and gaining a better understanding of his thinking and attitudes, readers will have a richer, deeper, more complete experience with the artworks.

In 2025 she established Toller International and remains dedicated to building and consolidating her brother's legacy in Canada and around the world. She is a competitive Duplicate Bridge player and holds the rank of Ruby Life Master. She lives in the original Cranston family cottage on the Ottawa River near Arnprior, Canada.

The author welcomes every opportunity to speak about her brother's life and the lessons learned from her ten-year journey as executor of Toller's estate.. You can connect with her by email at phillippa@tollerinternational.com or phillippabaran@gmail.com or visit her author website at www.phillippacranstonbaran.com

ABOUT THE BOOK

TOLLER CRANSTON: ARTISTIC IMPRESSIONS

"We're all born with an inclination in the genes about who we are and what we're supposed to do. It's in the DNA. I had full knowledge as to what my destiny was from a very early age. I was a painter."
Toller Cranston

The first piece of art that Toller ever sold was a pen and ink drawing of an upside-down-hanging-by-its-feet dead chicken. The price was fifteen dollars. In 2025, a Toller Cranston oil painting was sold to an international collector for seventy-thousand dollars. The images and stories of the creative journey that started with a drawing of a dead chicken continue. The journey, the inspirations, the influences, and the recurrent elements are the focus of this book.

Toller's tombstone in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico is inscribed:
Toller, Artist, Zero Tollerance1, 1949-2015.

No last name.
No explanation.
No explanation necessary.
He wanted his work to speak for itself.
He wanted people to connect with the paintings.
He wanted people to understand him.

Toller Cranston: Artistic Impressions is an exploration of the artworks of a man who embodied in everything he did, the values of courage, creativity, and expression. His paintings are filled with recurring imagery and landscapes, almost like the characters of a book.

Artistic Impressions presents the artworks with perspectives and observations from the artist who created the work, the gallerists who represented the work, the collectors who fell in love with the work, and the sister who bought for $15 the first piece he ever sold—that pen and ink drawing of a dead chicken that he did at age fifteen.

REVIEWS

5.0 out of 5 stars Inspirational, A must have book

Toller Cranston: Artistic Impressions by Phillippa Cranston is so beautifully crafted, both in writing and imagery. It feels like a true treasure. I believe every home and every public school should have a copy. As an art educator, I can't wait to share it with all my students, and as an artist, I find it an inspiring reminder to keep creating fearlessly."

Mahshid Farhoudi, Artist/Art Educator

DONNA C 5.0 out of 5 stars A Stunning Portrait of a Visionary Artist

Toller Cranston: Artistic Impressions is a gorgeous tribute to Cranston's unforgettable artistry. The book is filled with vibrant, imaginative paintings that burst with colour, emotion, and storytelling. Each page reflects his unique creative voice and the theatrical flair that made him such a captivating figure. A must-have for art lovers and anyone inspired by bold, expressive work.

What a masterpiece. It helps me see his work quite differently.

Barb Armstrong, Art with Barb

This book makes us happier and prouder than we already are to be Canadian.

Toller once observed that, "Da Vinci was never the figure skating champion of Italy." Phillippa's gorgeous presentation of Toller's paintings is interspersed with revealing quotes. After feasting your eyes on the artworks, you may be persuaded that this Canadian icon is indeed the Da Vinci of the figure skating world.

Sally Hansen, theHumm Magazine

It is a gorgeous, important book.

Susan Page, Executive Director, San Miguel Writer's Festival

5.0 out of 5 stars A Must-Have!

His artistry - bold, vibrant, eccentric, unmistakable Toller. The layout, the storytelling, and the way each piece of artwork is framed with quotes and stories behind the art make it feel like you're being personally guided through Toller's creative world. The book is an eclectic, carefully curated celebration of a man whose creativity knew no bounds.

Ryan Stevens, Figure Skating Historian, Skateguardblog

Artistic Impressions is an engaging and powerful tribute **to Toller's unique visual voice**. As someone who has spent a lifetime in the entertainment and music industry, I have a deep appreciation for artistic process.

Robert Stevenson, POISON Special Events Manager

KEY THEMES

creativity

talent

persistence

courage

inspiration

dream

destiny

WHO NEEDS THIS BOOK?

Art afficionados, collectors, curators, critics

Artists and performers

Designers and decorators

LGBTQ+ community

Lovers of figure skating

Canadians who cherish their heroes

STORY IDEAS & QUESTIONS

1. How should we think about Toller Cranston? As a skater who painted or a painter who skated?

2. In a time when having hope for the future is so important, this book causes us to reflect upon the life of someone who really made a difference and inspires us to forget the boxes and be not who we are but who we can be. Toller's message to everyone was "Be creative now?" Is that realistic?

3. Toller is an internationally acclaimed artist who was more prolific than Picasso. How did a Canadian figure skater make a living as an artist? What makes his art unique?

4. Toller spent the last third of his life in Mexico. What was the attraction?

5. In the eyes of many, Toller Cranston is a Canadian icon. Why is he relevant? Why should people be interested in this book? What was his impact? How would you describe his legacy?

6. Through his skating and his painting, Toller reminds us of Georgia O'Keefe who said, "I found I could say things with colour and shapes that I couldn't say any other way — things I had no words for." How did Toller express himself on and off the ice?

7. Everyone seems to have a Toller story. Why does Toller resonate with so many people? What's your own favourite Toller story?

8. The structure, tone and organization of this book is quite unusual. For one thing, the book presents the artist in and out of the studio. What led you to approach the book in this way?

9. What do you think readers will find most surprising about the book?

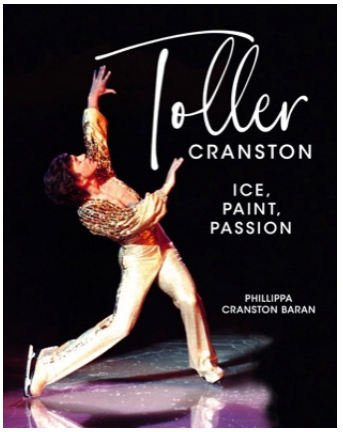
Other Books by Phillippa Cranston Baran

Toller Cranston: Ice, Paint, Passion

From the sister of an icon comes a totally original account of an epic and extraordinary creative life. Toller Cranston was a complex talent—brilliant, funny, flamboyant, and deeply human.

The news of Toller Cranston's sudden death in Mexico at age sixty-five shattered the skating world. With his passing in 2015, Canada lost an icon. Figure skating lost a trailblazer. The creative world lost a creative force. For decades, this Canadian icon and internationally recognized celebrity amazed, outraged, motivated, and inspired. He changed a sport. He changed attitudes. He changed lives. He deeply touched people. The book is a celebration of his life, a tribute to the values by which he lived, and a road map for living fearlessly. It is about dealing with failure and success. It unfolds through the voices of those who knew him, admired him, competed with him, and were inspired by him. It is about you. It is about me. It is about all of us.

Awards
2025 IPPY Award
2025 Four Seasons Book Awards, Finalist
2025 The Book Review 5*Gold Rating
2024 Literary Global Book Award
2024 International Impact Book Award
2024 International Firebird Book Awards
2024 Best Book Awards, Finalist
2022 Sutherland House Book Prize, Finalist



Executor, Battle Scars and Wisdom: *Lessons from the 10-year soul-destroying, financially horrifying, and utterly uplifting precedent-setting battle of the Toller Cranston estate.*

Executor, Battle Scars and Wisdom is for executors, financial advisers, lawyers, families, anyone with a will, and certainly anyone without a will—in short, anyone with interest in an estate. It has to do with the shit that can happen, the shit that nobody warns you about, and how to prevent it, avoid it, or get through it. It is about surviving. In the process of writing this book, Phillippa had to deal with corruption, extortion, greed, stupidity, and threats by gun-toting thugs. Like her famous brother, she is not a quitter. Publication: 2026

QUICKFACTS

Ken Whyte, Sutherland House,
Phillippa

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Order the book

Amazon

Toller Cranston, Artistic Impressions:
https://www.amazon.ca/Toller-Cranston-Impressions-Phillippa-Baran/dp/1997701022

Indigo - Chapters

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https://www.indigo.ca/en-ca/toller-cranston-artistic-impressions/9781997701026.html

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https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/242546645-toller-cranston

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View the Toller Cranston Collection at

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