



NEWS RELEASE

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Calgary Poet Laureate Announced

Calgary's first Poet Laureate reflection of city's maverick spirit

(Calgary, AB) – Calgary Arts Development and the Calgary Poet Laureate Selection Committee are pleased to announce the appointment of Kris Demeanor as Calgary's inaugural Poet Laureate.

Kris Demeanor is a multi-disciplinary artist who has become a fixture of Calgary's spoken word, theatre and music communities. In words from a nomination letter, Kris is "a skilled, passionate and keenly insightful artist whose work is both accessible and deeply committed to an honest expression of what it is to be Calgarian."

Demeanor, a native Calgarian, reflects on how Calgary has contributed to his role as an artist and Poet Laureate.

"My Mom and Dad's families came to Calgary in the 1950s intoxicated by the classic frontier dreams of boundless opportunity and big nature. I'm a fortunate son of those fulfilled promises, and have had a life long centre line seat to Calgary's evolution into bundle of wild contradictions, alternately inspiring and confounding, an over-indulged child with flashes of old wisdom and visionary plans."

"I am delighted and humbled to have been enlisted to articulate the Calgary experience through language over the next two years, and will do so with a solid balance of humour, history, gravitas, celebration, critique and raw entertainment value. I look forward to being your mirror."

Members of the volunteer selection committee were on hand as Alderman Druh Farrell, who championed a motion to establish the position, announced Kris Demeanor as the Poet Laureate on Monday, March 19th at City Council. Following the announcement, Demeanor performed his first official duty as Calgary Poet Laureate, presenting in Council Chamber as part of a nation-wide "Mayor's Poetry Challenge".

Kerry Longpré, chair of the Selection Committee, acknowledges that the selection process was a difficult one due to the high caliber of the nominations received. "Calgary's poetry community is vibrant and thriving, as evidenced by the 14 nominations we received and the diversity of the short list. In choosing to appoint Calgary's Poet Laureate, one of our considerations was 'How do we connect to Calgarians and introduce them to poetry in a way that is new and surprising?'. Kris is a highly talented artist who has a tremendous gift for storytelling. His poetry reflects what it means to be Calgarian in a way that is both accessible and recognizable to Calgarians from all walks of life."

The appointment of Calgary's first Poet Laureate comes after a unique 5-month selection process, which included a public call for nominations and a sold-out Poet Laureate Showcase. The showcase was a dynamic public event that featured the short list of six nominees in an evening of poetry and conversation celebrating the vitality and diversity of Calgary's poetry community.

The vibrancy of the community did not go unnoticed by Demeanor, saying, "I give a deep bow to my fellow shortlisted nominees Derek Beaulieu, Sheri-D Wilson, Daniel Bennett (Transit), Diane Guichon, and Tyler Perry. The depth of their commitment to this city will be my metre stick."

The Calgary Poet Laureate is funded by Poet Laureate Ambassadors: The Calgary Foundation, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, First Calgary Financial, FirstEnergy Capital Corp., Hotel Arts, TransCanada and an anonymous supporter.

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Read more: Background information about Kris Demeanor at [CalgaryArtsDevelopment.com/files/Kris Demeanor Backgrounder.pdf](https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/files/Kris%20Demeanor%20Backgrounder.pdf).

More background about the program is available at [CalgaryArtsDevelopment.com/calgary-poet-laureate](https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/calgary-poet-laureate).

For more information on the program or to contact the Poet Laureate call [403-264-5330 ext. 202](tel:403-264-5330)

Photos available upon request. Hashtag: #yycpoet

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Media Contacts:

JoAnn Reynolds, Communications Manager

Calgary Arts Development

Phone: (403) 264-5330 ext. 201 Cell: (403) 437-8826

Email: joann.reynolds@calgaryartsdevelopment.com