



Photo: Trudie Lee, courtesy of Three Left Feet

HOW DO ARTS HELP BUILD A CITY?

Large-scale and small, traditional and cutting-edge, amateur and professional, once-in-a-lifetime and part of daily life—all of these aspects combine into a vital arts ecosystem that helps a city thrive. At Calgary Arts Development, we believe that arts build our city by:

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Arts build community and enhance well-being, through our personal enjoyment of participation and creative expression, along with the connections we make with artists and each other through artistic experiences.

[LEARN MORE](#)

BOOSTING ECONOMY

Arts contribute to our economy, both as a sector and in making Calgary a great place to make a living and to make a life.

[LEARN MORE](#)

SHAPING IDENTITY

Arts shape our city's character, reflecting our diversity of experiences and voices, and attracting businesses, workers and visitors.

[LEARN MORE](#)

INSPIRING YOUTH

Arts develop essential skills in our youth, such as creative thinking, confidence, team-building, discipline and social interaction.

[LEARN MORE](#)

This report provides a snapshot of all of these benefits in action. For each area, you'll find data that captures how Calgarians are currently engaging with arts, as well as a few representative stories (which were difficult to select—there are hundreds to choose from!). We'll share updated data and new stories annually.

Whether you're looking for information or inspiration, we hope you'll find it here. More importantly, in the 364 days between updates, we hope you'll recognize the many ways that arts build our city and celebrate the presence that arts have in your own life.

Patti Pon, President & CEO
Dean Prodan, Chair
Calgary Arts Development

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, The City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the [2016 Accountability Report](#).

[Arts in Action YYC 2014](#) | [Arts in Action YYC 2015](#) | [Arts in Action YYC 2016](#)



info@calgaryartsdevelopment.com



Photo: Michael Tan, courtesy of Sled Island

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Although today's technology connects us more than at any other time in history, some studies show that many people still feel alienated and disconnected—and arts are a catalyst for belonging, well-being, and community strength. Artistic expression connects us socially and emotionally to fellow Calgarians and to our city.



David Munoz, project participant, introduces his interpretive experience of Loughheed House | Photo: Courtesy of Loughheed House

Loughheed House

How do you connect a museum to its community? That's the question the people who run Loughheed House ask a lot these days, as they try to find the connective threads that tie their museum—located in a mansion that looks as if it beamed out of some 19th century Jane Austen novel—onto 13th Avenue, in the middle of Calgary's 21st century, highly contemporary, millennial-dominated Beltline neighbourhood.

[READ MORE](#)

IN 2017:

3,385,616

attendees to arts activities in Calgary

25,602

volunteers for arts-related activities

555,307

volunteer-hours for non-profit arts organizations

*These statistics capture events produced by Calgary Arts Development grant investees, and not every arts event that takes place in our city. Based on data from organizations funded in part through Calgary Arts Development.

Creative Aging Calgary Society

What's the opposite of a loneliness epidemic? In Calgary, it just might be the Creative Aging Calgary Society. That may not have been the question Gail Hinchliffe asked when she launched the Creative Aging Calgary Society back in 2009, but for hundreds of independent-living Calgary seniors, it's turning out to be a cheap, fun—and inspiring—answer.

[READ MORE](#)



Inaugural pop art session featuring intuitive painting with seniors from Silvera's Willow Park on the Bow | Photo: Courtesy of Creative Aging Calgary Society

CALGARIANS' ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ARTS

86%

of Calgarians believe that arts help bring people together and enable people to connect to each other

79%

of Calgarians believe that a strong arts and culture scene is key to creating a vibrant, safe and prosperous city

92%

of Calgarians engage with the arts in some way:

69%

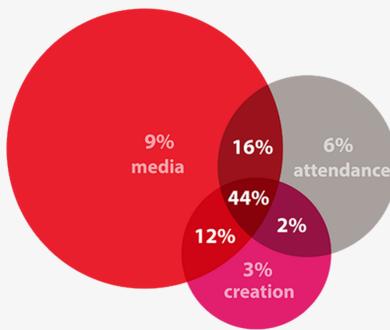
attend arts events (visiting galleries, attending performances, etc.)

63%

have a creative or personal practice (photography, sketching, playing music, etc.)

83%

engage through media (watching TV, downloading music, reading magazines, etc.)*



15%

donate to a not-for-profit arts or cultural organization

15%

volunteer for an arts organization or arts event

*In September 2016, Calgary Arts Development commissioned Stone-Olafson to complete market research with Calgarians about their engagement in arts. The research design was completed by Stone-Olafson in collaboration with Calgary Arts Development. A representative sample of 1,047 Calgarians participated in an online survey, and was balanced to be representative of the general population. Calgary Arts Development published this survey in 2017. It can be found here.

ARTS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A study by the National Endowment for the Arts examining the correlation between arts and civic engagement found that American adults who attended art museums, galleries or live performances were far more likely than non-attendees to vote, volunteer or take part in community events.

Performing arts attendees were:

2.6x

more likely to volunteer

3x

more likely to attend community meetings

1.4x

more likely to vote

Art gallery and museum attendees were:

2.4x

more likely to volunteer

2.9x

more likely to attend community meetings

1.4x

more likely to vote

Arts-Goers in Their Communities: Patterns of Civic and Social Engagement, National Endowment for the Arts, October 2009.



CommunityWise's AGM in May 2018 | Photo: Tet M

SNAPSHOT

BUG INCISION

Bug Incision was founded in 2005 by Chris Dudge, David Laing, and Scott Munro, then known collectively as the Bent Spoon Trio. Originally focused on recording projects, in 2006 the group expanded its local presence into presenting concerts that revolve around improv/free jazz/noise, and celebrated their 10-year anniversary in 2016. GRAND and present venues have included EMMEDIA, Theatre Junction GRAND, National Music Centre, Weeds Cafe, the Soda, and Broken City. Their current season experiments with curating fluctuating combinations of talented instrumentalists for unique, short, improvised performances. The series has become a staple in the community, and is a driving force in bringing artists of different aesthetics, abilities, and communities together while encouraging experimentation and collaboration.

SNAPSHOT

COMMUNITYWISE

CommunityWise has long been an exemplar for multi-tenant, inclusive, shared community space for grass-roots and non-profit organizations. It's a home for many arts groups and arts activities, often happening right alongside those working in other sectors, such as the social, environmental, and community. Since March 2016 they have been spearheading an anti-racism policy framework with an objective of creating greater racial equity in their own organization. Through a consultative process they also developed some tools and resources that they are generously sharing with the community-at-large. Learn more about the Anti-Racist Organizational Change (AROC) Equity Framework.



Jack Sinclair | Photo: Jarrett Edmund

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, the City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016



info@calgaryartsdevelopment.com

Lougheed House

By Stephen Hunt

How do you connect a museum to its community?

That's the question the people who run Lougheed House ask a lot these days, as they try to find the connective threads that tie their museum—located in a mansion that looks as if it beamed out of some 19th century Jane Austen novel—onto 13th Avenue, in the middle of Calgary's 21st century, highly contemporary, millennial-dominated Beltline neighbourhood.

The house is a treasure trove of historical artifacts, art, and the personal history of one of Alberta's truly iconic families—all of which unfortunately tends to make it feel a bit forbidding for the neighbours to just drop by, says Lougheed House curator Carolyn Loewen.

"The building itself is imposing," Loewen says. "It's this sandstone mansion. That is, itself, a physical barrier for people to walk into a museum—a lot of people may think of it as a symbol of colonialism."

"It's from the 1890s," she adds. "It was built by a very wealthy white man from Ontario, originally from Scotland—so it's got this very colonial narrative and that can be intimidating and imposing."

And let's not even talk about trying to get a younger demographic interested in artifacts in the age of endless digital distractions.

"How do you try and break down those barriers?" she asks. "I guess that's what we're trying to do."

Breaking down barriers

Beyond the barriers posed by the architecture, there are also the barriers that visitors themselves erect between themselves and a museum.

"I feel like as house and museum professionals, we're expected to hold authority over things," says Amanda Foote, Lougheed House's Visitor Experience Coordinator. "We were really trying to give that up—and there was a little bit of reluctance [on the part of patrons] to do that."

All of which leads to the question: how do you take all those digital culture muscles and apply them to what is essentially a highly 19th century way of engaging with information?

Welcome to Lougheed House's *Altournatives*, where the traditional museum tour was reinvented in a 2017 small experiment, by handing storytelling duties over to the visitors themselves.

"Basically," says Loewen, "we had the idea that we wanted to invite community members into the house to develop their own stories—or stories connected to the house."

Four communities, four unique stories

The idea was to connect with a variety of neighbours—both personal and institutional—that represented a rough approximation of the Beltline's diverse demographic, and offer them the opportunity to host their own tour of Lougheed House, incorporating their own personal histories into it.

"We're all really interested in co-creation," Foote says, "and finding new ways this space can have real meaning for people—and we feel like that probably rests in people being able to tell their own stories, and seeing their own stories reflected back to them when they visit."

Four different tours were chosen. There was a group of students from Connaught School; a man who'd experienced homelessness who lived at The Mustard Seed; a recent Colombian immigrant named Richard, who was an animator at Quickdraw Animation; and Camille, a senior who lives in one of the heritage apartments next door to Lougheed House.

Each one was free to go through whatever artifacts or documents the Lougheed House possessed. They were also equally welcome to incorporate their own Calgary history into the tour.

"They came in and got introduced to the house," says Foote. "And I gave them the tour we usually give visitors."

"Then," she adds, "we also introduced them to some of house's collections and archives and library here, which have so much Calgary history, and asked them to think of what stories they thought the house could tell or should tell to combine their story with the house's story."

What the museum pros discovered was that there are as many ways to talk about Calgary's history as there are Calgarians.



Camille Betts, project participant, and Caroline Loewen, Lougheed House curator | Photo: Courtesy of Lougheed House

Weaving personal histories into Calgary's

"Camille was really interested in her great grandmother's history," Loewen says, "so she talked a lot about women's history and artists that may have been working here at the time that the Lougheeds lived here—which was very a different story from Robert, who lived here in the neighbourhood in the 60s," Loewen says.

"He saw the house being reconstructed and preserved and the whole site undergo this transformation.

"At the same time, he saw a lot of change in the neighbourhood—a lot of houses being torn down—which showed the contrast between what we're [as a city] preserving and what we're not.

"His theme was the house as a witness to history—he was interested in the history of the neighbourhood."

Contrasted to that was the history of the city and the house as seen through the eyes of David, a recent Colombian emigre.

"David's tour was comparing himself as a new immigrant and the house as a place out of time," Foote says. "He works with images, so he was going through some of the images and layering images of the house history on top of each other."

To top it all off, were the tweens from Connaught School.

"The students gave a tour that was just a good deal more fun than a bunch of adult interpreters who are interested in history from the academic sense—they took a lot more personal interest to the tour," Foote says.

"They definitely latched on to the things they found funny or interesting," Loewen says. "Like bathrooms. When Lougheed House first was built, a lot of people had outhouses—but this was a fancy house, with indoor plumbing and indoor bathrooms.

"Things like that, that 11-year-old kids really like," she says. "That's what they told people."

Interacting with museums now

Whether the tour changed the way the community feels about Lougheed House remains to be seen—although it was completely sold-out, and received a 2017 Alberta Museums Association Leadership Award for Engagement.

What's indisputable is that the project—one of a number Lougheed House has undertaken over the past several years to shake up and contextualize its relationship to the community—shed a little light on how people interact with museums now.

"One of the outcomes that surprised me—or I'd hoped for but didn't think we'd get it—was how meaningful the experience was for the people who were giving the tours," says Loewen.

"At the end of the tour, some of them were almost in tears, because they felt so proud of what they had been able to do.

"That was an amazing feeling for me, and I think for Amanda too, to see that," she says, "because we really did want to empower people to feel their story was important.

"It was meaningful and empowering, which was amazing being able to give to people."

Maybe, just maybe the psychological barrier that separates the community from Lougheed house and its neighbours lowered a notch.

"The thought behind that is the idea that we are a museum, we make history—and then we deliver history to the people," adds Foote. "But actually, it's all of us.

"We're all responsible for it," she says. "We can all benefit, and use it in different ways—it's not this elite thing that only museums get to do.

"It's for everyone."

lougheedhouse.com

15%

donate to a not-for-profit arts or cultural organization

15%

volunteer for an arts organization or arts event

*In September 2016, Calgary Arts Development commissioned Stone-Olafson to complete market research with Calgarians about their engagement in arts. The research design was completed by Stone-Olafson in collaboration with Calgary Arts Development. A representative sample of 1,047 Calgarians participated in an online survey, and was balanced to be representative of the general population. Calgary Arts Development published this survey in 2017. It can be found [here](#).

ARTS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A study by the National Endowment for the Arts examining the correlation between arts and civic engagement found that American adults who attended art museums, galleries or live performances were far more likely than non-attendees to vote, volunteer or take part in community events.

Performing arts attendees were:

2.6x

more likely to volunteer

3x

more likely to attend community meetings

1.4x

more likely to vote

Art gallery and museum attendees were:

2.4x

more likely to volunteer

2.9x

more likely to attend community meetings

1.4x

more likely to vote

Arts-Goers in Their Communities: Patterns of Civic and Social Engagement, National Endowment for the Arts, October 2009.



CommunityWise's AGM in May 2018 | Photo: Tet M

SNAPSHOT

BUG INCISION

Bug Incision was founded in 2005 by Chris Dodge, David Laing, and Scott Munro, then known collectively as the Bent Spoon Trio. Originally focused on recording projects, in 2006 the group expanded its local presence into presenting concerts that revolve around improv/free jazz/noise, and celebrated their 10-year anniversary in 2016. Past and present venues have included EMMEDIA, Theatre Junction GRAND, National Music Centre, Weeds Cafe, the Soda, and Broken City. Their current season experiments with curating fluctuating combinations of talented instrumentalists for unique, short, improvised performances. The series has become a staple in the community, and is a driving force in bringing artists of different aesthetics, abilities, and communities together while encouraging experimentation and collaboration.

SNAPSHOT

COMMUNITYWISE

CommunityWise has long been an exemplar for multi-tenant, inclusive, shared community space for grass-roots and non-profit organizations. It's a home for many arts groups and arts activities, often happening right alongside those working in other sectors, such as the social, environmental, and community. Since March 2016 they have been spearheading an anti-racism policy framework with an objective of creating greater racial equity in their own organization. Through a consultative process they also developed some tools and resources that they are generously sharing with the community-at-large. Learn more about the [Anti-Racist Organizational Change \(AROC\) Equity Framework](#).



Jack Sinclair | Photo: Jarrett Edmund

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, the City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016



info@calgaryartsdevelopment.com

Creative Aging Calgary Society

By Stephen Hunt

What's the opposite of a loneliness epidemic?

In Calgary, it just might be the Creative Aging Calgary Society.

That may not have been the question Gail Hinchliffe asked when she launched the Creative Aging Calgary Society back in 2009, but for hundreds of independent-living Calgary seniors, it's turning out to be a cheap, fun—and inspiring—answer.

Hinchliffe was interested in exploring the role creativity could play in mitigating some of the negative aspects of the aging process—both in an assisted living environment as well as outside it.

A decade later, the Creative Aging Calgary Society is a full-blown, non-profit, charitable organization that offers guidance to institutions and individuals, teaching them how to tap into their creative lives.

On this particularly warm Tuesday in May, the Chinese Cultural Centre in downtown Calgary is jammed with practitioners from various caregiving organizations around the city for one of CACS's Creative Aging Symposiums, a day-long program packed with workshops, guest speakers and a cross-section of curious seniors, artists, and people who care for seniors professionally.

"We know that older adults that participate in creative activities—whatever that is—tend to be healthier, require less medication, and experience lower rates of depression—so our goal is to educate the population at large on the positive impacts of creative expression," says Creative Aging Calgary board member Zabin Jadavji.

That population, in particular—people in their sixties, seventies, eighties, and nineties—who live independently are often the ones most prone to becoming isolated.

"Last year at one of the senior housing forums we gave a presentation about creative aging," says fellow board member Alice Lam, "and in the audience were many senior Calgarians who came up to us and asked, do you teach art? I live in a condominium with 50 other seniors—but there's no programming, because it's just independent living."

"That's where the light bulb went off," Lam adds. "Because there's not even an on-site coordinator to help them with facilitating events, so that's where we decided to put our focus with pop art."

For Lam, that message was driven home when she started to volunteer at a low-cost housing complex in Chinatown, providing support and companionship for seniors, many of them first generation immigrants.

"We would go there, just to talk, help to translate letters, how to get benefits or healthcare issues—and then, eventually, we're just hanging out, we're just friends, and I'm like, would you guys like to do painting?"

"And they're like no!"

Lam understood their reluctance.

"That's seen as a kind of class issue," she says. "A lot of the Chinese seniors who came here, they grew up in tumultuous times, they were victims of war and poverty, and never saw being creative as something they would be able to do—they saw it as a high class thing that rich people did."

Lam knew some of the horrors and trauma and displacement that some of those seniors had experienced.

One had told her of having to dig graves, as a 12-year-old, to bury bodies left on the streets during the Cultural Revolution in China.

Another man had been onboard a ship filled with linseed oil that caught fire in Hong Kong harbour, leaving him with burns all over his body.

But still alive.

"They never think that their story matters," Lam says.

What Creative Aging Calgary Society has developed over the years is a six-week long series of exercises designed to get seniors creatively engaged.

"We are doing things like gardening, painting, photography, just even going out for a walk and storytelling—a rainbow of creative activities—just to show them you don't need a lot of resources or money," Lam says. "Our goal is, after the six weeks, they'll enjoy it so much that they'll start brainstorming and chatting with each other and developing their own little community there."



Inaugural pop art session featuring intuitive painting with seniors from Silvera's Willow Park on the Bow | Photo: Courtesy of Creative Aging Calgary Society

Creative Aging Calgary identifies barriers and looks for ways to lift them.

"If your barrier is language, we can find a translator," Lam says. "If your barrier is skill set, this city is full of artists who would love to pitch in and teach something."

"That's kind of how the whole idea started."

While it started out as a philosophy, the idea of creative aging as a genuine life strategy has been gathering momentum—and believers—since Creative Aging Calgary Society launched a decade ago.

It's a core part of the programming at United Active Living's senior residence in West Calgary. Around the same time, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks and the University of Calgary's Anne Flynn launched Dancing Parkinson's YYC, a class for people with Parkinson's Disease, their caregivers, and loved ones to dance. It has been a rousing success.

What's missing now is a body of data and research to confirm what the board of Creative Aging Calgary Society and a lot of the seniors they've worked with over the past decade know in their gut—that there's often no better prescription than learning how to tap into your imagination.

Lam heard what those Chinatown seniors said—but ignored their protestations.

"I told them, okay, we're just going to do it anyways," she says.

Then she got them started with accessing their own creativity.

"We started with a very simple exercise: a mural, where each senior had a little tile," she says. "It was almost like a paint-by-numbers thing. There was a design already on the tile, but what happened was, when we pieced all the tiles together, it formed a large mural of the Forbidden City [in Beijing]."

"They were super impressed by that," she adds. "And while they were painting, just anecdotally, they discovered things like, oh wow, this is good for my arthritis. Or, this is good for clearing my mind."



Inaugural pop art session featuring intuitive painting with seniors from Silvera's Willow Park on the Bow | Photo: courtesy of Creative Aging Calgary Society

Before she knew it, they wanted to know what they were going to create next. It was paintings of flowers.

Lam also learned a little bit about pushing through those initial barriers, as well.

"The greatest thing I've learned is even if they say no, it's up to us as facilitators to move the agenda of creativity, to find the way around that—there are ways to get them involved in activity."

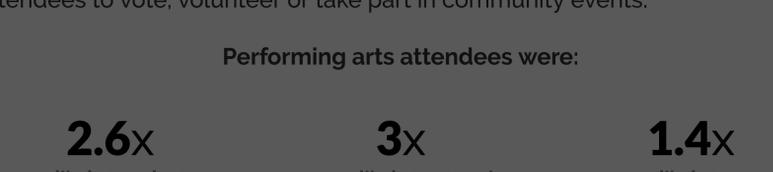
The most emotionally resonant data Lam has accumulated to date? Informal conversations with loved ones.

"I hear from their kids, who are like in their sixties themselves," she says, "and they tell me—my mom and dad have the painting hanging up in their room!"

"They're proud of what they've created," she adds, "and it doesn't cost a lot of money either."

creativeagingcalgary.com

Performing arts attendees were:



Art gallery and museum attendees were:



Arts-Goers in Their Communities: Patterns of Civic and Social Engagement, National Endowment for the Arts, October 2009.



CommunityWise's AGM in May 2018 | Photo: Tet M

SNAPSHOT

BUG INCISION

Bug Incision was founded in 2005 by Chris Dodge, David Laing, and Scott Munro, then known collectively as the Bent Spoon Trio. Originally focused on recording projects, in 2006 the group expanded its local presence into presenting concerts that revolve around improv/free jazz/noise, and celebrated their 10-year anniversary in 2016. Past and present venues have included EMMEDIA, Theatre Junction GRAND, National Music Centre, Weeds Cafe, the Soda, and Broken City. Their current season experiments with curating fluctuating combinations of talented instrumentalists for unique, short, improvised performances. The series has become a staple in the community, and is a driving force in bringing artists of different aesthetics, abilities, and communities together while encouraging experimentation and collaboration.

SNAPSHOT

COMMUNITYWISE

CommunityWise has long been an exemplar for multi-tenant, inclusive, shared community space for grass-roots and non-profit organizations. It's a home for many arts groups and arts activities, often happening right alongside those working in other sectors, such as the social, environmental, and community. Since March 2016 they have been spearheading an anti-racism policy framework with an objective of creating greater racial equity in their own organization. Through a consultative process they also developed some tools and resources that they are generously sharing with the community-at-large. Learn more about the Anti-Racist Organizational Change (AROC) Equity Framework.



Jack Sinclair | Photo: Jarrett Edmund

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, the City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016



calgaryarts development

info@calgaryartsdevelopment.com



Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Economic Development

BOOSTING ECONOMY

As an economic engine for our country, Calgary's success increasingly hinges on creative thinking and innovation, skills honed by arts participation. Also, a healthy arts sector typically punches above its weight economically and helps attract top talent to our city.



Section 35. Designer: Justin Louis (Cree-Maskwacis, Treaty 6). Talent: Rebecca Merasty (Flying Dust First Nation, Treaty 6) | Photo: Courtesy of Otahtpiaaki

Patti Derbyshire and Otahtpiaaki

When talk turns to ways to diversify Calgary's economy, hopes usually focus on finding a way to transform the city through technology—the new ways of making business. Mount Royal University professor Patti Derbyshire, who teaches marketing, entrepreneurship and social innovation, has teamed up her business smarts with a growing team of emerging Indigenous fashion designers to make a business out of the old ways.

[READ MORE](#)

IN ALBERTA, \$1,000,000 OF INVESTMENT CREATES

22

full-time jobs in the arts, recreation and entertainment sector

This is greater than many other industries, including retail trade; accommodation and food services; professional, scientific and technical; administrative and support services; wholesale trade; crop and animal production; and oil and gas extraction.

Research Note: The Economic Impact of Arts Organizations Supported by Calgary Arts Development, Calgary Arts Development, June 2014.

The Film Centre

The tone of the newspaper articles told one story. The data told another. In mid-May, there were a few articles about the Calgary Film Centre in various media outlets, mentioning that occupancy was down in the studio's second season, which boasts 50,000 square feet of state of the art studio space.

[READ MORE](#)



The Calgary Film Centre | Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Film Centre

IN 2017:

4,545

Calgarians work in an artist occupation, comprising 0.7% of our city's overall labour force*

\$126

million in direct economic output, including artistic expenses, facility costs, administration and more, via Calgary's investment in its arts sector

702

full-time equivalent staff hired by Calgary arts organizations

8,379

artists hired by Calgary arts organizations

Based on data from organizations funded in part through Calgary Arts Development.

*Artists and Cultural Workers in Canadian Municipalities, Hill Strategies, December 2014 (based on 2011 National Household Survey).



Participants in the artsVest Alberta program | Photo: Courtesy of Allison Moore, artsVest Alberta

ARTS SNAPSHOT ARTSVEST

artsVest is Business for the Arts' national flagship program that works directly with small to mid-sized arts organizations, equipping them with in-depth training, tools and mentorship relationships. artsVest Alberta launched a two-year program in 2017. Calgary Arts Development contributed \$75,000 to sponsorship matching funds for Calgary arts organizations. In 2017, 27 arts organizations created 58 partnerships with local businesses and exceeded their sponsorship goal of \$128,500 by raising over seven times that amount in sponsorship funds for a total of \$946,042.

ARTS SNAPSHOT FIVE ART & MERCHANDISE

Five Art & Merchandise is a gallery, shop, and studio in Calgary's vibrant East Village neighbourhood that is committed to finding unconventional methods of bringing contemporary art and creativity into people's lives. With each exhibition they host in their gallery they release limited edition merchandise designed by the exhibiting artist. The merchandise is available both online and in their physical shop beside the gallery space. They also collect and offer some of their favourite creative brands, publications, and art made in and out of the studio. Five Art & Merchandise invites you to stop by, tune in, and join them in living an endlessly creative life.



Visitors check out Craig Question Scott's drawings in his exhibition The Deadly Spawn | Photo: Courtesy of Five Art & Merchandise

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, The City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016



info@calgaryartsdevelopment.com

Patti Derbyshire and Otahpiaaki

By Stephen Hunt

When talk turns to ways to diversify Calgary's economy, hopes usually focus on finding a way to transform the city through technology—the new ways of making business.

Mount Royal University professor Patti Derbyshire, who teaches marketing, entrepreneurship and social innovation, has teamed up her business smarts with a growing team of emerging Indigenous fashion designers—along with some Calgary-based business partners like PARK and Sewing Seeds Canada—to make a business out of the old ways: elevating a group of young, emerging Indigenous fashion designers into hot commodities, at the same time they turn Calgary into an epicentre of Indigenous fashion design.

From Indigenous tradition to couture

It's called Otahpiaaki and features young designers and artists from 15 different First Nations around Turtle Island, who are transforming Indigenous designs into couture, and at the same time, thanks to Derbyshire and her entrepreneurial skill set and connections, learning the how-tos of creating a business plan, taking product to market, export, branding and marketing.

It's all on display too, at the East Village Junction, the innovative pop-up street mall tucked behind the National Music Centre, through the Labour Day weekend.

It's the third year of Otahpiaaki—a Blackfoot word that refers to the moment where the vamp—the top of a moccasin—is sewn together with the rest of the moccasin.

The project was launched by a quartet of Mount Royal students, as a form of reconciliation, Derbyshire says.

"It was the brainchild of four students in our senior brand studio who were encountering for the first time, information on murdered and missing Indigenous women, on the Sixties Scoop, on the intergenerational impacts of the residential schools," she says.

"We were looking at the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action—and #83 has to do with Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks working together on creative projects that would allow us to know one another's cultures better.

"To take specific action," she adds, "as a gesture of reconciliation. So the idea of using fashion and design as a platform for reconciliation was born."

Sewing Seeds close to home

Partners were enlisted to collaborate on the project, including Sewing Seeds Canada, the Calgary-based non-profit created by Calgarian Sylvia Rempel (as a charitable offshoot of her wildly successful Sun Ice apparel company) that spreads sewing skills around the planet—in destinations as far-flung as Sierra Leone, Peru, Ukraine, and Mexico—as a way to lift impoverished women out of poverty.

"They've been doing this for years," Derbyshire says. "So we have projects in September, literally going onto reserves—taking sewing machines, taking fabrics and reintroducing beginner, intermediate, and senior projects to various Indigenous Nations.

"There's always an Indigenous design sponsor who is welcoming the group," she adds. "The materials come, there are Indigenous teachers on the reserve, and they're working out which projects they want—because designers are also having great success and they need to hire their first employees."

Taking original design to market

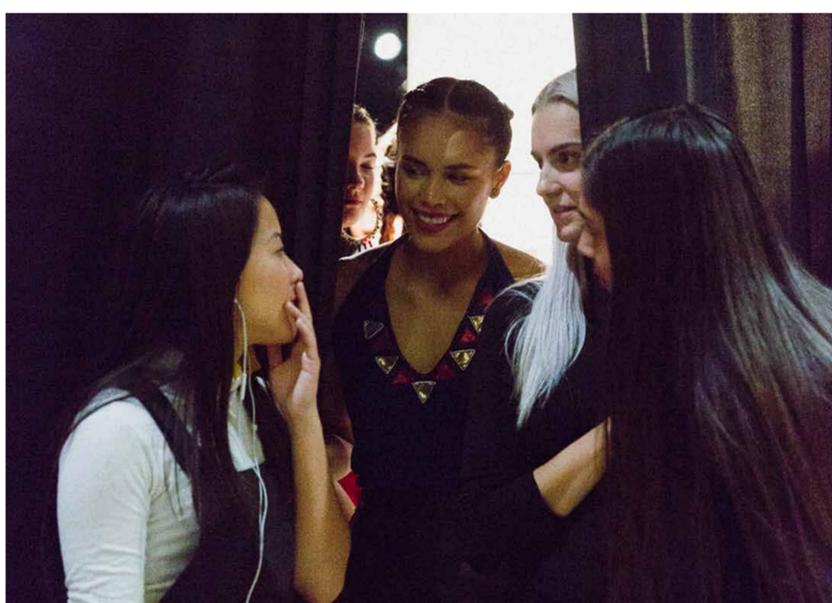
If Sewing Seeds helped Indigenous designers with the fundamentals, PARK helped with pushing their new creations into the marketplace.

That's the Calgary fashion production group that supports local designers.

Three years ago, Derbyshire and the group of designers decided they wanted to showcase their new designs in some way that was a bit beyond the original plan—a fashion show in the hallway of the business school at MRU where they routinely met to launch Otahpiaaki.

Not having much background in producing fashion events, Derbyshire called PARK.

"I called them and said, is it crazy we want to do a fashion show in about 30 days? And they were like, not at all! Come on!"



Backstage with PARK. Design: Ahksistowaki (Blackfoot meaning Brave Woman) Jamie Medicine Crane (Pikani-Kainai Nations, Treaty 7) | Photo: Courtesy of Otahpiaaki

Supportive partnerships, gestures of reconciliation

That relationship has blossomed over three seasons, Derbyshire says.

"What we really love about our relationship with PARK, is that they have really become true partners in this gesture of reconciliation," she says. "They don't just show up and kind of shine their brilliance on us and go away. They are true partners in terms of the calibre of the show, seeking guidance from our Elders, and now that we deal with 15 designers and many more workshops—we really rely on them for that expertise.

"And likewise, what they're doing is identifying this new generation of couture Indigenous designers who also go onto their runways—and that's really exciting."

Additionally, the organization receives help from MRU Justice Studies student Taryn Hamilton, who has done significant work towards redefining Canadian law to integrate with Indigenous law, so designs are protected from appropriation—a long-standing problem for Indigenous designers.

She's being assisted by MRU Policy Studies student Spirit River Striped Wolf, who's done research into what was lost culturally, as a result of the Sixties Scoop and residential school traumas.

There's even an Environmental Science student, Braden Etzerza, who is implementing prosperity crops—this summer 225+ Indigo plants, from which the designers are able to create blue dye to use in their designs. The project also increases food and water security on participating reserves.

All those partnerships will be on display from November 5 to 10, 2018 during Calgary's Indigenous Fashion Week.

"What we thought was going to be one night of fashion in a hallway, in the business school, has grown to three nights at City Hall," Derbyshire says, including music curated by Richard Sparvier (BLKFT), a prominent producer in the local Indigenous hip-hop scene.

"He's a force in this city, getting young Indigenous folks the skills they need for rap, hip hop, turntables," Derbyshire says, "and he and his team are building this movement for contemporary Indigenous music in this city.

"So it's music, it's film, it's fashion, it's design—it's really grown.

"People have heard about us," she says. "There's an Indigenous Fashion Week in Toronto. There's an Indigenous Fashion Week in Vancouver, too—Calgary is a leader!

"Calgary is the fashion show to be at, if you're part of Indigenous design, or involved in activism."

But Derbyshire's designers are also spreading their wings all the way across the ocean, to the City of Lights, where couture was born.

What's Blackfoot for 'Bonjour Paris?'

That's when the Otahpiaaki designers must put on their brand-building hats and with input from a few good social enterprise and marketing students, they're making inroads that extend all the way to the runways and buyers in Paris.



LUXE Ready-to-Wear, Derek Jagodzinsky (Whitefish First Nation, Treaty 8) | Photo: Courtesy of Otahpiaaki

"We've got a website," Derbyshire says. "We publish essentially couture lookbooks every year.

"It's absolutely fabulous. Every two years, we actually go to Paris on a luxury branding study—and we promote the individual designers," she says.

The next Paris trip? 2019.

Young men involved

The project is still evolving, in ways Derbyshire hadn't foreseen.

One of the most surprising, for her, has been the demographics of the designers and participants.

"The thing that's most surprising to me, that I've personally observed, is the number of young men who come and sit around and learn about these things—and stay," she says. "I have stood back more than one time looking at the people around the table doing the sewing projects with us, and just been really fascinated by the fact that there are lots of young fellows who want to know more—and do better."

The other little victory?

Those brand studio students—who could have gotten busy any number of ways—were inspired to launch a small gesture of community-building that's as healing as it is exciting.

"We're really truly believing that reconciliation is for neighbors," she says. "And this project is how it's manifesting right now, in these creative partnerships, business and entrepreneurial partnerships, and in this social innovation project that is using fashion and design as a platform for conversation."

otahpiaaki.com

The Film Centre

By Stephen Hunt

The tone of the newspaper articles told one story.

The data told another.

In mid-May, there were a few articles about the Calgary Film Centre in various media outlets, mentioning that occupancy was down in the studio's second season, which boasts 50,000 square feet of state-of-the-art studio space?

Occupancy, it turned out, was down from 65% in 2016 to 52% in 2017.

However, the same articles also mentioned that the \$10 million the city had invested (along with \$5 million from the province) in building state-of-the-art film and TV sound stages had generated \$178 million in spinoff economic activity in the city, well up from \$165.5 million in 2016).

Namely—in the teeth of a somewhat brutal recession caused in large part by plummeting oil prices—every dollar the city invested in its sound stages returned around \$17.80 in economic activity, in a city that sorely needed some.

And that figure doesn't include either the economic activity generated by other local productions that don't shoot at the Film Centre, or in any way factor in the ancillary benefits to Calgary's national and international branding efforts that come from shooting—among other things—*Inception*, *Interstellar*, the Oscar-winning *The Revenant*, *The Bourne Legacy*, as well as cult western-sci-fi TV hit *Wynonna Earp*, BBC's *Tin Star*, AMC's *Hell on Wheels*, and CBC Television's long-running hit *Heartland*, among others.

For Calgary Film Centre General Manager Erin O'Connor, the figure to pay attention to is \$178 million, not the occupancy rate of its soundstages.

"It's huge" she says, sounding more bemused than anything.



The Film Centre | Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Film Centre

Direct flight from LA nabbed Fargo

While there's no question the sound stages are a big catalyst to draw Hollywood productions north to Calgary, the inescapable reality of the movie business is that sound stages are one part of delicate infrastructure that includes geography, tax credits, airline connections—and available light.

The good news: Calgary has the longest summer days anywhere, dazzling and varied landscapes nearby, and is a direct, three-hour flight from LA.

That direct flight, O'Connor confirms, is the reason why *Fargo* producers chose to shoot their series in Calgary instead of flatter, more *Fargo*-esque Winnipeg.

"I have heard that *Fargo* Season 1 star Billy Bob Thornton didn't want to go on two flights," she says.

"The crazy things that determine locations—sometimes it can come down to that!"

Back to that \$178 million figure.

"It goes to prove that producers are still coming here, to make their work—but they come for the location and the light in the summer," she says.

"They don't necessarily come for the Film Centre," she adds. "The Film Centre is a piece of infrastructure that's a tool in the tool belt to help sell this place as a year-round filming centre.

"It adds value to production servicing as a turnkey solution to production needs."

"They're still coming—we're doing a lot in film and TV in terms of production and creative industries. So it's a really positive story."

In order to rent out some of those vacant soundstages, the Film Centre may include advertising and digital media content creators in the future.

"It's not changing, it's still screen production," O'Connor says. "It's still being used for the purpose it was built for—but the clientele might shift. We're not going to hold out for Hollywood all the time, we're going to keep one studio for rentals—which is great. It's a positive thing."

And don't forget: In a packed media and information landscape, a community's film and television scene can provide nearly as much of a tourism and branding buzz as hosting an Olympic Games, a Stanley Cup run—or perhaps a Royal Honeymoon.

Ancillary benefits: late-night buzz

That was made evident last year by the presence of Ewan McGregor, star of Season 3 of *Fargo*, talking up Calgary on late-night American television.

"He had a great time here," O'Connor says. "And he loved the crews. Calgary has more Golden Globes, Emmy, and Oscar wins in the last 15 years than any other jurisdiction in Canada. We're very proud of the talent and the crews we have. He enjoyed the production experience here."

"The Film Centre played a big role," she says. "I'm personally proud of that."

Also, the reality of renting soundstages is that sometimes, you can't give every series in town the studio space they need.

For example, SyFy Channel cult hit *Wynonna Earp* shoots in Calgary—employing dozens of people, and injecting millions of dollars into the local economy—but doesn't shoot in the Film Centre—and that's OK, O'Connor says.

"They needed to shoot in one place, and so they ended up in a warehouse," she says. "But because we had *Tin Star* shooting in two studios, we didn't have enough space for them.

"They wanted to be shooting in one place, and so they ended up in a warehouse."

"*Tin Star* is in two of the studios all the way through August, so we can't complain," adds O'Connor.

"And there are a couple of big ones [Hollywood studio features] coming into Studio 1 too, so I think the picture is actually more positive than the way it was painted in the papers."



The Film Centre | Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Film Centre

18 hours of beautiful sunlight

O'Connor—who travels internationally to promote Calgary's film and TV scene—says that more about Calgary has changed over the past several years than just the film studios opening.

"Calgary has come a long way," she says. "Everyone has heard of Calgary. They know what's been filmed here, and they know why they would want to film here."

"They know Calgary has the amenities and services they need, we have a walkable city, we have restaurants—great places to eat—that top end Hollywood executives appreciate and return to. Being a cosmopolitan city is a big plus along with extended magic hours of light and a wider variety of locations, award-winning crews and state-of-the-art studio space to boot."

"The 18 hours of beautiful sunlight in the summertime is a really big draw for producers," she adds.

The city also has astonishing flexibility in terms of look and feel.

"Calgary has been everything from Mongolia to Wyoming and Utah and small towns like Bemidji, to places like LA, New York, and San Francisco," she says. "We really have incredibly talented location scouts here, who can figure out how to read a script, and a treatment, and figure out how to adapt an area for interiors and exteriors—so we have the flexibility to host all kinds of stories, and make it work."

"It's exciting actually."

calgaryfilmcentre.com



Photo: Sebastian Hanlon, courtesy of Calgary Folk Fest

SHAPING IDENTITY

Our city leaves its thumbprint on all our citizens and the millions of visitors we welcome each year. That unique Calgary character comes from our history and geography, our artistic and cultural vitality, and the stories of the people who live here. Arts have the ability to both reflect and interpret who we are, and project that image beyond our borders.



Thundering Nations International | Photo: Courtesy of Action Dignity

Our Canada, Our Story

How do you grow a community out of a whole world full of different ones? That's a question that popped up frequently in the offices of Marichu Antonio, the Executive Director of Action Dignity—formerly the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary—an organization dedicated to working with culturally diverse communities from every corner of the planet to negotiate what was often an unwelcoming, challenging and highly racialized Canada.

[READ MORE](#)

IN 2017:

14,587

public activities produced by Calgary arts organizations

1,262

held outside of Calgary in 2017

9,113

arts education and public arts activities held in the Centre City

14,517

held outside the Centre City

Based on data from organizations funded in part through Calgary Arts Development.

Calgary artists are receiving opportunities for international exchange, developing their craft and acting as ambassadors for Calgary. Of the artists who received funding for professional development:

46%

of opportunities took place in Canada, outside of Calgary

46%

of opportunities took place outside of Canada

Based on 2017 recipients of Calgary Arts Development's Artist Opportunity Grant.

Femme Wave

In 2015, Kaely Cormack and Hayley Muir, members of The Shiverettes, a Calgary feminist punk band, took a look around Calgary's punk music scene. The view lacked something. "There just weren't many women," Cormack says. "We'd play a lot of shows and we'd be the only women onstage. We'd be the only women organizing shows, but there would be no women doing sound. It was just very male-centric. We didn't see ourselves represented in the scene."

[READ MORE](#)



2017 headliner Sannus performs at the Femme Wave Fun House | Photo: Jarrett Edmund

IN 2017:

Calgary-produced arts activities reported engaging artists and participants from diverse communities

4,187

activities engaging multicultural communities

2,516

activities engaging people with disabilities

1,438

activities engaging Indigenous communities

729

activities engaging LGBTQ+ communities

Based on data from organizations funded in part through Calgary Arts Development.



Cool Choir performs at the Jubilee | Photo: Richard Alan Brown

SNAPSHOT COOL CHOIR

Cool Choir is fairly new in Calgary but represents a modern concept in choirs that is very popular in the United Kingdom. Cool Choir takes the traditional classical or community choir experience and injects well-known rock and pop songs—everything from Queen, Michael Jackson, and Tom Jones to Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, American Authors, and many more. Calgary's largest adult choir (over 300 people singly weekly), in 2017 they released an emotionally-charged new and original anthem, celebrating diversity, as part of the Canada 150 anniversary. There are no auditions, no requirements to read music and no training or prior singing experience is needed. Cool Choir operates on the ethos 'if you can speak you can sing' and offers weekly rehearsals in a fun, welcoming and relaxed, all-inclusive environment.

SNAPSHOT EMPATHY WEEK

Calgary hosted the world's first *Empathy Week* in June 2017, with the second festival taking place June 1 to 7, 2018. Empathy Week is a seven-day festival of events that promotes empathy, human connection, and the recognition of our shared humanity. Empathy Week is a community initiative curated by Humainologie (a division of the Calgary Centre for Global Community) with numerous partners and individual Calgarians coming together to host a variety of events that are suitable for diverse audiences with varied interests as a way of creating strong relationships and healthy communities.



The Unity Project, St. Patrick's Island | Photo: Chris Jensen

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, The City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016

Our Canada, Our Story

By Stephen Hunt

How do you grow a community out of a whole world full of different ones?

That's a question that popped up frequently in the offices of Marichu Antonio, the Executive Director of Action Dignity—formerly the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary—an organization dedicated to working with culturally diverse communities from every corner of the planet to negotiate what was often an unwelcoming, challenging and highly racialized Canada. Many of these communities have made Canada their home for more than a century.

In Calgary, that meant working with more than 70 different cultural communities.

Antonio, a political activist who immigrated to Canada from the Philippines in the mid-1990s, was one of the founders of Action Dignity, at a time when there was little open discussion of racism faced by newcomers and racialized Canadians—and even fewer resources to help combat it.

"Racism was not openly talked about except by ethno-cultural people," she says. "Even the various anti-racism organizations were marginalized."

We do 'systems change work'

The impetus behind the creation of Action Dignity was to bring all those disparate communities together in order to help build a community of communities, that could speak to the needs of newcomers and racialized Canadians—because if they didn't find a way to do it as a group, they would be forced to do it as a thousand splintered individuals, each being forced to navigate languages, cultural norms and a vast, often mystifying myriad of public agencies and institutions in order to be included.

In other words, if one superhero can have a little bit of impact on the system, imagine a community organization filled with *Avengers!*

"We're not like all the other immigrant serving agencies," Antonio says. "We don't do direct individual service."

"We're doing what we call 'systems change work.'"

"We want to look at public awareness, public perception, the way policies are made, the historical roots of the problems and the issues—we do a lot of research, leadership training and we really want a unified voice for these ethno-cultural communities to talk about big picture change."



Individual musicians | Photo: Courtesy of Action Dignity

Celebrating 15 years

15 years later, the organization was succeeding in its own way—in the same year Canada was throwing itself a sesquicentennial party.

"We're celebrating 15 years," Antonio says, "and we thought, what could be a more meaningful way to celebrate 15 years than to put on a show?"

She also had a sneaking feeling that some of that big picture change her organization sought to make might be achieved through art, aside from its usual way of spreading its message.

The thought was that maybe by telling a lot of different cultural stories, what would emerge was one, beautiful—and occasionally painful—big picture vision of Canada's origin story.

"There are different ways of educating people or talking about people's perceptions or talking about how welcoming or unwelcoming Canada is," Antonio says, "but the power of stories of arts or culture—especially if the actors have the lived experience—you cannot question the message that's being relayed to the audience."

Then, they decided, the show would honour the Indigenous experience as well.

"We said, if we're celebrating Canada 150, we have to start from the time—thousands of years—before the colonizers came," she says.

Arts Commons

That impulse became a reality when Antonio connected with Arts Commons President and CEO Johann Zietsman, who offered her the use of Jack Singer Concert Hall for a weekend. Arts Commons has long provided the organization with free tickets to its World Stage concert series, which are distributed to Action Dignity participants.

There wasn't really enough time or money to undertake planning and producing and marketing an event that the organization had never attempted to do before, but she did have to pay for a technical crew and people to produce a two-hour live show—about \$55,000 worth.

Long story short: through a lot of hustle—including receiving funding through Calgary Arts Development's ArtShare program, The City of Calgary, the Calgary Foundation, and donations—they managed to cobble together the production budget. The plan was to incorporate cultural performance with a narrative exploring some of the struggles of the newcomer experience, but it was challenging to find the right blend of historical context, cultural performance, and narrative—in fact, it was downright daunting.

The organization was in the middle of a rebranding effort, and marketing a show was a huge challenge—but even so, in mid-December, they performed their show *Our Canada, Our Story* over a weekend.

It not only explored the Indigenous experience, but also Chinese, Syrian, African, Filipino, Vietnamese—even Ukrainian—newcomers trying to find a place in their new country.

It worked. *Our Canada, Our Story* told stories—through a combination of song, spoken word, theatre, dance, and multimedia presentation—that were real, in a way that revealed universal experiences.

Even though some of the stories were dark, there was an undercurrent of possibility, of humour and humanity to the entire experience.

"Some teachers were there," Antonio says. "There were two who said, that's a good history class for our kids!"

"Why don't you approach our principal and then we'll include it in our curriculum?"



Kala Bhavan of Calgary | Photo: Courtesy of Action Dignity

Taking the show into schools

Antonio now has a new task—namely, connecting with the city's theatre community to see if there's a way to shrink down Action Dignity's big, pageant-sized two-hour-long Jack Singer holiday special to a size that can travel lightly (and less expensively) to schools to be performed for children of newcomers, so that they might see and hear themselves and their stories reflected on a stage.

"It's transforming people," she says.

Our Canada, Our Story even connected with audiences who didn't necessarily share the newcomer experience.

"We got a lot of great feedback," Antonio says. "Even Ken Goosen, Producer of GlobalFest was there. He sent us a message saying, it's a brilliant production! A wonderful afternoon of entertainment and education."

"Even Caucasian families said they were not antagonized by the way the history of racism was portrayed," she adds. "Because sometimes, when you talk about racism, you make people feel defensive—but this one, no. They didn't feel that way."

"For example, the Vietnamese actress brought her fiancé, who's Caucasian and he brought his family so they would understand the historical context of their future daughter-in-law."

"They loved it."

"They said it promotes more empathy, rather than defensiveness, or hate—because if you talk about racism, sometimes you highlight hate—but this presentation promotes more empathy, reconciliation, change, and forgiveness. Those kinds of things."

Even bigger picture

It's not what Antonio envisioned when she, with many other community leaders, launched Action Dignity as the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary 15 years ago, but maybe it's even better—that big picture, it turns out, includes more people than she ever imagined it would.

"This is our opportunity not only to voice what's happening but to partner with a new range of communities," she says. "To engage those who are not experiencing racism too—also to advocate for a more welcoming community."

"It's more effective if you include people who are not experiencing it to be the voice too—to protect and uphold the interests and rights of racialized communities."

It's been a decade and a half of fighting to create a system that gives today's newcomers and racialized Canadians a fair shake, but it behooves us to remember that for centuries people have migrated to this land searching for exactly the same thing.

"That's why we changed our name to Action Dignity," she says. "When we broadened the issue of equity beyond racialized communities—to include seniors, regardless of their colour, youth who are also being discriminated against, artists, LGBTQ2, youth, the disability sector, and people living in poverty—all of these are equity-seeking groups looking for dignity."

"And we don't just *talk* about dignity," she says. "We *do* something about it."

ecccalgary.com

ARTS IN ACTION YYC

captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016

Femme Wave

By Stephen Hunt

In 2015, Kaely Cormack and Hayley Muir, members of The Shiverettes, a Calgary feminist punk band, took a look around Calgary's punk music scene.

The view lacked something.

"There just weren't many women," Cormack says. "We'd play a lot of shows and we'd be the only women onstage. We'd be the only women organizing shows, but there would be no women doing sound. It was just very male-centric.

"We didn't see ourselves represented in the scene."

DIY-minded festival

One of the guiding ethos of the punk movement has always been a DIY—Do It Yourself—mentality.

Which, ironically enough, matches up quite seamlessly with one of Calgary's core values: an entrepreneurial, action-oriented belief that if something's wrong with your view, improve it.

So in 2015, the duo launched Femme Wave, a new kind of Calgary festival—then reached out to everyone—other women, non-binary artists, the LGBTQ2 community—anyone who felt as if they'd had a gate slammed in their face instead of a door opening.

It didn't take long for them to realize they were on to something.

"We want to connect all those people that are facing the same obstacles we're facing, and work together," Cormack says, "rather than each of us individually trying to climb up in this very male-dominated scene.

"In other words, why not work together? And then we can create a bigger wave, for lack of a better term, to make some change."

The plan was to create more musical opportunities for women, and non-binary and queer artists, but somehow, the plan shifted, to include visual art, standup comedy, and film—because there were just as many gates around those cultural scenes as there were in the punk music scene.

"We try to frame it as a multi-disciplinary arts festival," says Muir.

"Everybody has similar and different gates to break through," she adds. "That's what's so important about having a wide variety of individuals at the board level, the committee level—even just at the level of sound boards, asking for advice and that kind of thing.

"The more people we have involved that have different life experiences and come from different areas, the more perspectives you have on life and on people."

One rock 'n' roll show, and call it a day

It turned out there was a market for Femme Wave, both from the number of artists interested in participating in a micro-budget festival, volunteers willing to form programming committees and help curate, and audiences interested in attending.

"Going into that first one, we just planned for it to be one night," Muir says.

"One rock 'n' roll show, and call it a day," adds Cormack.

Four years later, they have just finished strategic planning sessions, laying out the future of the festival. They have a board of directors. They have a three-year-plan to find a way to have full-time, paid staff running the festival, rather than volunteers.

"When it [the first one] was over, it just sort of snowballed," Muir adds, "and people said, so you guys are doing this again next year right? Because that was so cool and so fun and so great and so different."

Collectively curated cultural voices

What makes Femme Wave unique is that rather than being a reflection of their own, individual tastes, Femme Wave is every bit as collaborative, and collectively curated as the communities it showcases.

Take, for example, its visual arts component.

"Our arts curator is Dana Buzzee," Cormack says, "and she curates through a very feminist, queer lens—so she's done a wonderful job of bringing in her community, showcasing a lot of artists that are queer, that are non-binary, that are trans—and putting the spotlight on them."

What Muir hopes Femme Wave has become over the years is a way for young women and non-binary artists to find the role models and mentors she struggled to connect with as a young teenage girl attending all-ages shows back in the days before Femme Wave existed.

"I never saw any women onstage," Muir says. "I saw women in the crowd, for sure, I tried to make friends with them but I had a hard time busting into the community at that time.

"At that age, if I had seen women in bands, it might have happened for me sooner—so if the work we do can provide somebody like me at 15 a spark to maybe do that, then that's great."



Festival organizers Hayley Muir and Kaely Cormack | Photo: Jarrett Edmund

All ages

Cormack, who grew up in small-town Ontario before attending university in St. Catherines and then relocating to Calgary about a decade ago, says the all-ages component of Femme Wave matters. They've done a number of all ages shows at various venues, one of last year's being at McHugh House.

"Every year, I go to Girls Rock Camp, and the last two years I've gone, I've taught them about Femme Wave," she says. "I teach them about how to start their own rock festival. I teach them like—you can just do this. Here's how. Go and do it. Like I did. You'll figure it out—and hopefully I can give them some tools and get them a little further ahead than I was at the same age."

Muir—who also hosts a radio show on CKUA—agrees.

"I learned so much from women who did this 10 years before I did," she says. "They imparted so much wisdom and helped us grow and got Femme Wave to where it is now. The duty now is to do that for the kids who are 10 years younger than we are, so that one day they can take over and run with it—and they're so much smarter than I am.

"These kids coming up now, it's so impressive how in tune they are, how smart they are and how progressive their ideas are—once they're in a place where they take the torch over, and take this thing over, changes will happen even faster," she adds. "It's really important for us to connect, and mentor, younger people so they have that support system that been so helpful for us."

And if there was ever a question of whether it's worth all the effort—rather than say, relocating with the band to Vancouver, or Toronto—neither seems in much of a hurry to break down gates in a different area code.

"I love it here," says Muir, who mostly grew up in Calgary. "I've seen it grow and shift, especially in the last few years—and there's always such a strong sense of community, and I think there's good and bad to that.

"We have such a strong community that it's difficult to break it out into something it hasn't been before—but I think there are a lot of people who are working who want to break it out into the open."

Cormack adds that there's something to be said for a city the size of Calgary.

"It's kind of in the middle," she says. "It's not a huge city. I just volunteered at a couple places and the next thing you know you're in.

"Everyone's got this real entrepreneurial spirit here, where everyone wants to start something. Everyone's volunteering at something, and so I think, it's a perfect city to start something like Femme Wave.

"So many people want to be involved with it," she adds. "So many people want to see it succeed."

femmewave.com

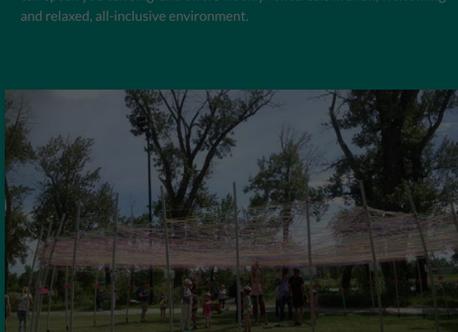


Cool Choir performs at the Jubilee | Photo: Richard Alan Brown

SNAPSHOT

COOL CHOIR

Cool Choir is fairly new in Calgary but represents a modern concept in choirs that is very popular in the United Kingdom. Cool Choir takes the traditional classical or community choir experience and injects well-known rock and pop songs—everything from Queen, Michael Jackson, and Tom Jones to Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, American Authors, and many more. Calgary's largest adult choir (over 300 people singly weekly), in 2017 they released an emotionally-charged new and original anthem, celebrating diversity, as part of the Canada 150 anniversary. There are no auditions, no requirements to read music and no training or prior singing experience is needed. Cool Choir operates on the ethos 'if you can speak you can sing' and offers weekly rehearsals in a fun, welcoming and relaxed, all-inclusive environment.



The Unity Project, St. Patrick's Island | Photo: Chris Jensen

SNAPSHOT

EMPATHY WEEK

Calgary hosted the world's first *Empathy Week* in June 2017, with the second festival taking place June 1 to 7, 2018. Empathy Week is a seven-day festival of events that promotes empathy, human connection, and the recognition of our shared humanity. Empathy Week is a community initiative curated by Humainologie (a division of the Calgary Centre for Global Community) with numerous partners and individual Calgarians coming together to host a variety of events that are suitable for diverse audiences with varied interests as a way of creating strong relationships and healthy communities.

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, The City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016



info@calgaryartsdevelopment.com



Photo: Sean Blair, courtesy of Calgary Girls Choir

INSPIRING YOUTH

Everyone wants our youth to have the foundation they need for a full and rewarding life. Some will grow up to be professional artists, but no matter what their path, arts experiences help build essential 21st-century skills like creative thinking, confidence, teamwork, discipline, and social interaction.



Jarret Tymen and Sol Chiniquay | Photo: Courtesy of Nakoda AV Club

Nakoda AV Club

Growing up in Morley, Jarret Tymen (Twoyoungmen) loved to watch movies with his dad. They would rent videos from the local store. "I love Rocky," Tymen says. "I love horror movies." He wasn't the only kid in Morley who did, either.

[READ MORE](#)

IN 2017:

9,043

arts education activities provided by Calgary arts organizations for children and youth

348,659

participants in arts education activities provided by Calgary arts organizations

Based on data from organizations funded in part through Calgary Arts Development.

A recent study by Business for the Arts found that:

83%

of Canadian parents believe that engaging children in the arts is important for their development

80%

of Canadians believe that arts education improves children's academic performance

79%

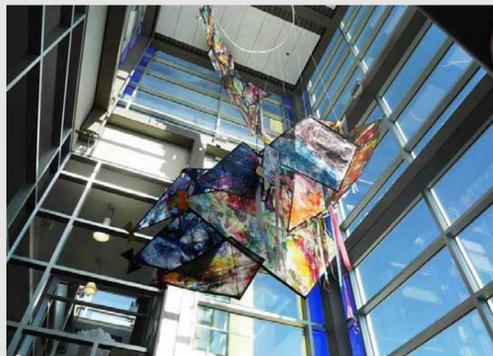
of Canadians believe that the arts help children from disadvantaged communities succeed

Building the Case for Business Support of the Arts, Business for the Arts, February 2015.

Antyx

If Antyx Arts was a household item, it would be thread. Only instead of stitching together fabric, the Forest Lawn-based community arts company uses the tools of creativity to stitch together a community out of a lot of young people who may feel alone.

[READ MORE](#)



Summer Dreams-Pillars of Humanity at the Genesis Centre | Photo: Abigail Roth, Courtesy Antyx Community Arts

Young adults with many arts-rich experiences in high school are:

5x

more likely to graduate high school

3x

more likely to earn a bachelor's degree

... and they are more likely to volunteer, vote and participate in political campaigns.

The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies, National Endowment for the Arts, March 2012.



This world-class learning space at Stampede Park's Yourh Campus opened in October 2017 | Photo: jchu photography

SNAPSHOT

CALGARY ARTS ACADEMY

The arts can be a vehicle for transformational learning—something Calgary Arts Academy knows better than anyone. As a Kindergarten to Year 9 Public Charter School, Calgary Arts Academy leaves tradition behind and embraces new education methods and learning style theories, teaching the Alberta curriculum through Arts Immersion. The school transforms children into young people who are curious and kind, empathetic and engaged, responsible citizens. By emphasizing creativity and collaboration—the underpinnings of pure entrepreneurship—it prepares them like no other school for the vagaries of an uncertain economy. Calgary Arts Academy has two campuses—the Knob Hill campus for Kindergarten to Year 3 and the recently opened Education Centre as part of Calgary Stampede's Youth Campus for Years 4 to 9.

SNAPSHOT

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

In July 2017, a three-level heritage house in Inglewood was transformed into The Children's Reading Place—Calgary's largest Little Free Library. This welcoming, homey atmosphere is the perfect place for families to experience the pleasure of curling up with a good book. It has comfy reading nooks along with creative decor inspired by children's literature and created by students and local artists. The Children's Reading Place is one of the many initiatives that come from Calgary Read's commitment to building a thriving community where all children read with confidence and joy.



The Children's Reading Place | Photo: Shannon Yau Photography

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, The City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016



info@calgaryartsdevelopment.com

Nakoda AV Club

By Stephen Hunt

Growing up in Morley, Jarret Tymen (Twoyoungmen) loved to watch movies with his dad. They would rent videos from the local store.

"I love Röckz," Tymen says. "I love horror movies."

He wasn't the only kid in Morley who did, either.

"On the reserve—pop culture-wise—horror movies are just really popular," says Sol Chiniquay, a photographer and cinematographer who grew up there as well.

What perhaps distinguished Tymen from the other kids growing up in Morley was that he wanted to make movies, not just rent them from the corner store.

He wanted to share his community's stories, the stories of the Stoney Nakoda First Nation people—not just experience the screen stories of the Hollywood dream factory.

What better way to do that than on screen?

Meet two of the men behind the Nakoda AV Club, a filmmaking collective unlike any other.

It's a group of around 100 film makers and young people from Morley, many of whom got their introduction to film-making the day, maybe a decade ago, when Tymen and his cousin announced they were planning to shoot a zombie film and was anyone interested in being in it?

"I didn't know if a lot of people would show up," Tymen says. "But a lot of people showed up. Just kids.

"They said, hey—I heard you're making a zombie movie! I think there were 37 kids who showed up [that first day]," he adds. "So we had to put a whole bunch of makeup on them."

The Nakoda AV Club is a volunteer-run production society, a visual storytelling club that was born of Tynmen's understanding that if there was one common thread that connected the Morley community, it was their collective love of horror films.

The catalyst came one night, when he saw *28 Days Later*, a contemporary zombie film by Academy Award winning director Danny Boyle.

"That's the most interesting movie I've ever seen," Tymen says.

"I was asking my old roommate—I said, I bet I can make something like that! Because all the raw footage he was doing—Danny Boyle—it was the most simple thing I'd ever seen, and something that I could do."

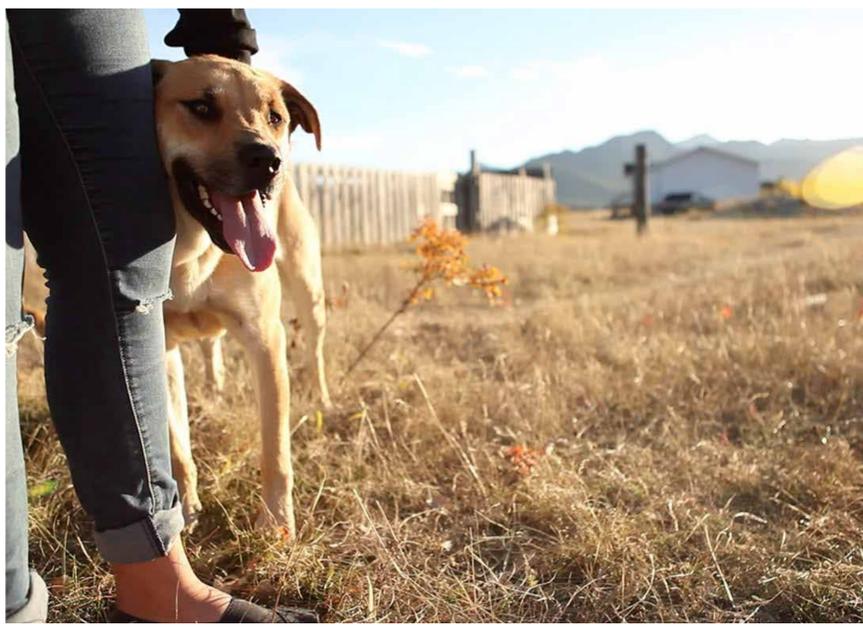
Then, he asked his brother if he could borrow his camera to shoot a movie.

"He said just take that memory card out because there's a video of my kid playing hockey," he said. "So I started making films. But I forgot to take that memory card out, and erased the whole thing. That was upsetting."

The Nakoda AV Club was born out of funding that was made available to create an afterschool camp on Morley, which led to Calgary arts administrator Amanda Foote seeking out Tymen—whom she'd met through Angel Aubichone at Quickdraw Animation—to see if he was interested in supervising young people as they learned the process of filmmaking.

While the group shoots a variety of projects, depending on available locations and volunteers, one of their most ambitious projects they've been working on is *Rez Dogs*.

That's a documentary that explores the relationship of dogs to the reserve. Morley has lots of them, as the area has become a spot where pet owners have been known to abandon theirs.



Rez Dogs | Photo: Courtesy of Nakoda AV Club

It's also known as a place for people to get a free dog, which has led to a few people having their dogs stolen—which led to one Morley resident deciding to try to share the stories of the Stoney Nakoda First Nation people and its dogs (dogs have higher status than horses on the reserve), so what happened to her wouldn't happen to anyone else.

"April Powderface... suggested hey, why don't you make something about rez dogs?" Tymen says. "And we said, okay, we can do that. And so year after year, we gave her our camera, just to start filming around.

"I actually started following her. The reason why she did it was because one of her dogs was stolen," he adds. "She had no idea where her dog was, and she loved this dog very much. She wanted to find out why no one was doing anything about it."

While filming for *Rez Dogs* progresses in fits and starts, the group has also forged a deeper relationship with Quickdraw Animation, where some of the young people from the group have created their own animated film shorts.

Tymen has also found ways to turn some of the people's stories of the community into films, such as *Morning Star irha (Smiles)*, a 10-minute-long short that tells the story of a nine-year-old Morley girl Tymen knows who had to raise her younger siblings pretty much by herself.

"She's being a mom at the same time she's being a kid," he says. "I went up to her and said, can I write a story about you? And she said yes."

Around 2013, he wrote a script, entering it in a screenplay competition sponsored by the ImagiNATIVE Film Festival—and won.

"They said do it," he says.

The Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (CSIF) provided equipment. The people in Toronto gave Tymen some production money and he shot it, then travelled to see it screened at th ImagiNATIVE festival in Toronto, at New York University in New York, and in Calgary, before bringing it home to screen at Morley.

That was an event that was both a source of great pride for the community—and a lot of tears, seeing a difficult story about their community onscreen.

"Everyone was expecting action in Morley," he says. "It was maybe a little too real for them."

That's the thing about movies that drew Tymen in the first place, all those years back, watching Hollywood action pictures with his father.

They transform reality into mythology. They supersize people's stories—all of which is why there's something extraordinary—and inspiring—about growing a mini movie making community on the Stoney Nakoda First Nation.

"Movies are a way to make more people understand," Tymen says. "Because growing up, watching movies, I thought they were real. *La Bamba*? Lou Diamond Phillips? I thought Lou Diamond Phillips y a\$ Ritchie Valens.

"And then when I actually saw him in *Young Guns*, I thought—it's Ritchie Valens! I thought he died!

"Movies made it real for me," he adds. "that's a tool I'm going to use to show films everywhere if I can."

nakodaavclub.com



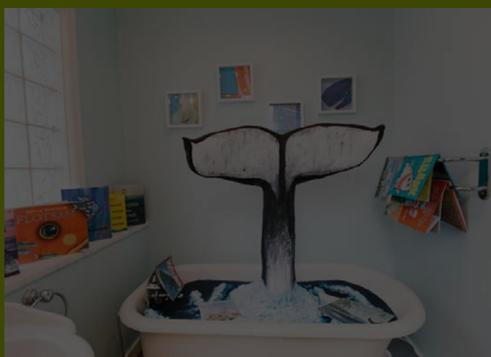
This world-class learning space at Stampede Park's Youth Campus opened in October 2017 | Photo: jchu photography

SNAPSHOT

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

In July 2017, a three-level heritage house in Inglewood was transformed into [The Children's Reading Place](#)—Calgary's largest Little Free Library. This welcoming, homey atmosphere is the perfect place for families to experience the pleasure of curling up with a good book. It has comfy reading nooks along with creative decor inspired by children's literature and created by students and local artists. The Children's Reading Place is one of the many initiatives that come from Calgary Read's commitment to building a thriving community where all children read with confidence and joy.

behind and embraces new education methods and learning style theories, teaching the Alberta curriculum through Arts Immersion. The school transforms children into young people who are curious and kind, empathetic and engaged, responsible citizens. By emphasizing creativity and collaboration—the underpinnings of pure entrepreneurship—it prepares them like no other school for the vagaries of an uncertain economy. Calgary Arts Academy has two campuses—the Knob Hill campus for Kindergarten to Year 3 and the recently opened Education Centre as part of Calgary Stampede's Youth Campus for Years 4 to 9.



The Children's Reading Place | Photo: Shannon Yau Photography

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, The City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016

Antyx Community Arts

By Stephen Hunt

If Antyx Arts was a household item, it would be thread.

Only instead of stitching together fabric, the Forest Lawn-based community arts company uses the tools of creativity to stitch together a community out of a lot of young people who may feel alone.

Antyx's Executive Artistic Director, Richard Campbell, comes by the organization's blend of arts and community activism pretty naturally. He studied theatre years ago in Regina, where he fell in love with the way theatre creates community, and connects a lot of people who feel like outsiders while simultaneously providing them with a variety of skills—oral, presentational, performative—that have as much use in the real world as they do in portraying imaginary ones.

Rather than chasing roles—he says he's a 'bad auditioner'—Campbell took that skill set and applied it to helping challenged communities find their own voices and tell their own stories, in Regina, then Toronto, and eventually Calgary.

"Our strongest and most powerful outcome is often building connections for kids and community members who don't have a lot of connections," Campbell says.

"We try, for our work, to engage kids who are feeling marginalized. Often it's a sense of being with somebody in a group where people are listening to them and discovering that their voice matters—that makes the biggest difference in their personal development."

The company's community arts strategy involves developing collaborative projects that can take many forms—photography, theatre, hip-hop, or most recently, in constructing *Pillars of Humanity*—a quartet of large sculptures to display in the Genesis Centre in northeast Calgary.

"It's a fascinating place," Campbell says. "I love being in the Genesis Centre, in the courtyard area.

"It's such a hugely diverse population that uses the place—such an active place and in the middle there could be kids break dancing—you never know what's going to happen there."

Antyx looks to work with a variety of other non-profits and community groups.



Fall into Diversity-Pillars of Humanity at the Genesis Centre | Photo: Abigail Roth, Courtesy Antyx Community Arts

At the Genesis Centre, Antyx works out of 1000 Voices, a community hub that includes a collection of 30 different non-profits and 30 different community groups providing support and searching for connecting threads.

"At 1000 Voices, we make connections with other youth serving agencies to find ways of getting kids more involved," Campbell says. "whether it's a project or a long-term program. The Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Aspen Family and Community Network—and other community groups have youth components as well."

That led to the sculpture project.

"Team North, our Youth Art Action Group created four mobile sculptures for each of the four corner towers inside the Genesis Centre," he says. "They're huge, and they're hung from the top of the towers—I think 45 feet up, maybe more than that—but they created four mobile sculptures that reflect the four seasons, along with the themes *Dreams, Diversity, Resilience, and Mental Health*. So each sculpture has a seasonal theme and also reflects the thoughts and feelings of what those words represent."

Who were the sculptors?

"Most of the group go to Nelson Mandela High School, which is right next door to the Genesis Centre," he says. "What was interesting is that the sculptor group was all girls—all young women—most of them are immigrants or first generation kids—they were a very keen, hard working group.

"I think two or three of them are going to be vying to be a future Prime Minister!"

That is not necessarily the typical profile of an Antyx kid, Campbell says—and he's just as happy to work with kids who are struggling to answer the question young people ask more than any other: who am I?

One of those youth that Campbell says stands out in his memory was Zach (name has been changed for privacy), a young transgender individual who connected with Antyx at a difficult time in his life—although that wasn't necessarily what got him through the door the first time.

"He came to his first Antyx session because a counsellor told him there would be pizza," Campbell says.

A few years ago, Zach was invited to join Antyx's Youth Arts Action group, which was doing a sculpture project called *Water Ways at Phantom Wing*, which involved creating art installations at King Edward School (before its transformation into cSPACE), using found objects from the 2013 flood, like old wood, and other random objects.

"[Zach] worked on that and the next year helped create a mobile playground in our *Play on Wheels Project*," Campbell says.

"And in the year they were doing the *Water Ways* sculpture, Zach and a couple other people who were core to the group, were really challenged when new people came in and joined the group—like they were almost protecting their turf," he says.

But as much as they experienced some negative emotions trying to incorporate the arrival of newcomers, they also recognized those emotions—and did something about it.

"When we did the *Play on Wheels* project next, there was a growth he and the others had," Campbell says, "and they started to feel more open to others.

"They were so welcoming, inclusive, and provided mentorship to the new kids."

These initial projects led to Antyx working with Zach on a video project for his school GSA (Gay Straight Alliance).

"We did a video project that was part of a social media campaign called #SafeAB—about how every kid deserves to be safe in their school—and he took a real leadership role there," Campbell says. "I even think he helped CBE with some of their policy work on inclusion around how school space can be safer for transgender kids.

"So he found a place there where he could be accepted and learn skills. He became a great public speaker—and really came into his own."

It turned out that Zach had a core sense of himself that only needed a structure from which to emerge, while many other kids come to Antyx looking to find real sense of who they are—at times they may have trouble connecting with other people and being heard. By participating in one of Antyx's artistic collaborative efforts, whether it's sculpture-making at the Genesis Centre, a documentary video about food instability, or a play, many kids can find that sense of self and belonging.

"It feels like we're giving them a time and space to develop what they don't believe they have—are they going to be successful, or drop out and fall off the rails?"

"A lot of the time," he says, "it's inspiring to see the kids stay involved, discover something about themselves, and use their new found skills to start to make connections with others and create something positive for their community."

antyx.org



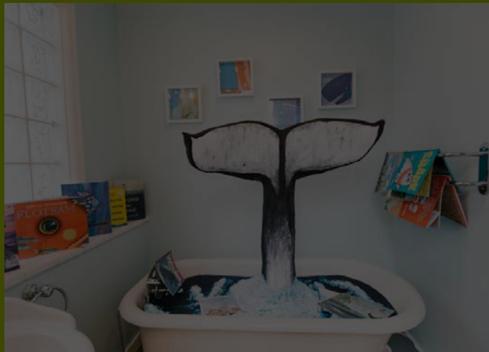
This world-class learning space at Stampede Park's Youth Campus opened in October 2017 | Photo: jchu photography

SNAPSHOT

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

In July 2017, a three-level heritage house in Inglewood was transformed into *The Children's Reading Place*—Calgary's largest Little Free Library. This welcoming, homey atmosphere is the perfect place for families to experience the pleasure of curling up with a good book. It has comfy reading nooks along with creative decor inspired by children's literature and created by students and local artists. The Children's Reading Place is one of the many initiatives that come from Calgary Read's commitment to building a thriving community where all children read with confidence and joy.

behind and embraces new education methods and learning style theories, teaching the Alberta curriculum through Arts Immersion. The school transforms children into young people who are curious and kind, empathetic and engaged, responsible citizens. By emphasizing creativity and collaboration—the underpinnings of pure entrepreneurship—it prepares them like no other school for the vagaries of an uncertain economy. Calgary Arts Academy has two campuses—the Knob Hill campus for Kindergarten to Year 3 and the recently opened Education Centre as part of Calgary Stampede's Youth Campus for Years 4 to 9.



The Children's Reading Place | Photo: Shannon Yau Photography

ARTS IN ACTION YYC | Stories and data about how arts build a city is produced annually by Calgary Arts Development, The City of Calgary's designated arts development authority. This online report captures the latest data related to Calgary's arts sector along with a few stories from the community.

For details about Calgary Arts Development's programs, read the 2016 Accountability Report.

Arts in Action YYC 2014 | Arts in Action YYC 2015 | Arts in Action YYC 2016