



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



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.



Katie Pearce and Tanner Hamilton's mural, 'Won't You Be My Neighbour?' | Photo: Courtesy of Crescent Heights Community Association

### Crescent Heights Community Association

In the summer of 2018, the Crescent Heights Community Association wanted to make Centre Street feel more like a neighbourhood. What neighbourhood wouldn't? A major artery that drives straight through the neighbourhood, it's also the meeting place for most of our residents.

[READ MORE](#)

### IN 2018:

**2,949,196**

attendees to arts activities in Calgary

**23,494**

volunteers for arts-related activities

**488,524**

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.*

### Rozsa Arts at the Library

Calgary didn't just get a new library, when the downtown library opened its doors last November. It got a whole new hub that connects various Calgary artists and arts groups to the city through the portal of the library. And if the library staff has their way, the newest library and the oldest—Central Memorial—could dramatically redefine the definition of the word "artist."

[READ MORE](#)



A performer at the Central Library | Photo: Courtesy of the Calgary Public Library

## CALGARIANS' ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ARTS

**89%**

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

**93%**

of Calgarians engage with the arts in some way:

**55%**

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

**66%**

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

**81%**

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

**21%**

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

**17%**

volunteer for an arts organization or arts event

*\*In the fall of 2017, 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 1,004 Calgarians participated in an online survey, and was balanced to be representative of the general population. Calgary Arts Development published this survey in 2018. 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**

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Art gallery and museum attendees were:

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



Good Host Program | Photo: Courtesy of Inside Out Theatre

### ARTS SNAPSHOT INSIDE OUT THEATRE

Inside Out is a disability theatre company equally invested in artistic excellence, community development, and deepening our culture's accessibility. They offer community-based drama programs to Calgarians with disabilities, and produce and present plays created by artists with disabilities and their allies that insist on and celebrate their place in the public sphere. They work to improve theatre's accessibility for audience members and to ensure their equity and dignity in attending performing arts in Calgary. Their Good Host Program opens up the theatre-going experience by facilitating accessible performances like ASL interpreted nights, audio described plays, and relaxed performances.

### ARTS SNAPSHOT THIRD ACTION FILM FESTIVAL

THIRD ACTION Film Festival celebrates what has become known as life's third act—a term that has been around for more than a decade and was made famous by Jane Fonda with her 2011 TED Talk. For the vast majority of Canadians, the third act will be the last three decades of our life. THIRD ACTION Film Festival celebrates ageing and the accomplishments of older adults to help speed along an age-positive culture shift and empower everyone to envision their best third act. The time has come to rejoice in the vibrancy, promise, and joy of our third act because let's face it, we don't have a choice about getting older!



President & Executive Director Mitzi Murray | Photo: Courtesy of THIRD ACTION Film Festival

# Crescent Heights Community Association

By Stephen Hunt

In the summer of 2018, the Crescent Heights Community Association wanted to make Centre Street feel more like a neighbourhood.

What neighbourhood wouldn't?

"It is our main street in the city," says community association programs and engagement coordinator Kevin Jesuino. "Centre Street is a major artery that drives straight through our neighbourhood. It's also the meeting place for most of our residents."

Centre Street is also part of a neighbourhood in transition, a combination of middle-income, lower-income, artists, and Chinese-Canadian seniors.

It's also on the Green Line route, with a CTrain line scheduled to be built over the next 10 years, which will have a significant impact on the neighbourhood's density and demographics.

"We're a historic neighbourhood, but we're in a transition time where it's something vibrant," Jesuino says.

So, with funding from the Calgary Parking Authority, the community association put out a call for artists to create a mural.

## Imagination

Calgary artists Katie Pearce and Tanner Hamilton wanted to create a mural that was also a bit of a portal into the possibilities of imagination, a digital time tunnel really, to help community members and visitors tap into their childhood selves, back to the time of life when everything is possible.

Pearce and Hamilton are members of Bud's Collective, a group of Calgary artists best-known for Northern Reflections, a winter art exhibition that utilized A/R (augmented reality) technology. It asked viewers to download an app called Augle on their phones in order to view a number of art pieces that were on display in storefront windows and other spaces around downtown Calgary during the holidays in 2017 and 2018.

Pearce and Hamilton's Won't You Be My Neighbour? was chosen from 13 submissions, explains Jesuino, because of its engaging combination of interactive technology and playfulness.

**For Jesuino, the combination of community-building themes and high tech added up to a project that he thought could turn a Crescent Heights mural into a conversation starter in all the best ways that artists and their art have historically played in revitalizing neighbourhoods in cities around the world.**

"I'm very aware of artists' role transforming neighborhoods," Jesuino says.

Pearce, who has a degree in architecture, and a sense of possibility honed and nurtured from growing up in Nelson, British Columbia, is an engaging combination of visionary art maker, city-builder and tech nerd—and brought that sensibility to the creation of Won't You Be My Neighbour?

"We were looking to extend people's imagination and imagining more for your community," Pearce says.

"It's kind of imaginary itself—and when you watch it, you see it on your phone, but it's kind of almost still there, but in your imagination.

"We were talking about how people can watch that and see this playful imagination, with a rainbow and a kite—almost a child-like idea of how a community can be an extension of your backyard.

"You can play in your community."



Katie Pearce and Tanner Hamilton's mural, Won't You Be My Neighbour? | Photo: Courtesy of Crescent Heights Community Association

## Shadows

The mural is located at 902 Centre Street, on the south-facing wall of Ducktoes Computers Services.

Pearce says creating it went pretty much the way she and Hamilton planned, except the augmented reality part of the equation created a few unforeseen obstacles.

"Shadows," she says. "That can stop the A/R from activating properly.

"And there were other things like glare, or portions being blocked—it just interferes with the image recognition and won't activate properly."

Pearce is also part of a social innovation project, a group of artists who are putting their creativity to use to seek out imaginative solutions to social issues.

Might A/R be put to use as a social changemaker?

"There are a lot of possibilities—I don't think we've explored too many of them," Pearce says. "In some ways, there's a little bit of a social barrier right now—because a lot of elderly don't use technology. A lot of homeless people don't have iPhones."

"So there are some level of barriers there," she adds. "There's the ability for A/R to find applications where it can be used to create change or for social innovation or different things, but I don't know if it's there yet."

Won't You Be My Neighbour?—a shout out to the children's television show Mr. Rogers' Neighbourhood—has been a hit, Jesuino says. It's even become a destination of sorts.

The one downside to it all—the mural has been created on a building slated for eventual demolition, which Jesuino says will happen in two or three years, as Centre Street transforms itself.

And while that might seem transitory, Pearce says it fits the timeline of mural makers just fine. (Pearce and Hamilton have a new mural up on the basketball courts behind the National Music Centre in the East Village as well.)

"Murals in public spaces don't really hang around for more than three years, except for exceptions," she says.

Pearce believes murals should be turned around after a few years because they start to fade even as they help create connections that make the neighbourhoods they live in grow stronger and more connected.

crescentheightsyyc.ca

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Good Host Program | Photo: Courtesy of Inside Out Theatre

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President & Executive Director Mitzi Murray | Photo: Courtesy of THIRD ACTION Film Festival

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# Rozsa Arts at the Library

By Stephen Hunt

Calgary didn't just get a new library, when the downtown library opened its doors last November.

It got a whole new hub that connects various Calgary artists and arts groups to the city through the portal of the library.

And if the library staff, including Carolyn Reicher, its service delivery lead of community engagement and strategic events, has their way, the newest library and the oldest—Central Memorial—could dramatically redefine the definition of the word "artist."

Reicher would like Calgarians—everyone from children to newcomers to old-timers—to make the switch from consuming art to creating it.

"Art isn't simply something you view, or listen to," she says. "It's something you experience, or something you create—or co-create. It involves ideas, inspiration, creativity, innovation, thought, passion, and more."

What she doesn't say is that the Calgary Library wants to help enable the city to connect to its creative self.

## Rozsa Arts at the Library

The downtown library offers an abundance of entry points for Calgarians to tap into their creative selves, at a variety of skill levels and in a number of different media.

Rozsa Arts at the Library is a new program that funds performance arts groups from around town, ranging from emerging and amateur artists and companies to established arts groups.

In 2019, the program plans to focus on five or six amateur or emerging artists/arts groups, meaning priority will be given to performing artists or small groups who might come from a range of different media, including music (vocal or instrumental), dance, theatre, puppetry, spoken word, circus or even magic.

That might not be the library you grew up visiting, but for Reicher, the secret to engaging the community is to activate it.

**"The program aligns with the library's strategic goals of empowering community by connecting patrons to ideas and experience, inspiration and thought. It lowers barriers to participation in the performing arts and supports the library as the preferred path for creative exploration, innovation and inspiration while enriching lives and realizing potentials," she says.**

Before you say wait a minute, aren't libraries temples to literacy? There's plenty of opportunities for readers—and listeners, who can access thousands of e-books with a free library card—at the library.

The library also has an author in residence program. In 2019, the inaugural visiting author in residence is Robert L Sawyer.

The author in residence serves as a kind of literary concierge, reading manuscript submissions if an aspiring author has written one (or a chunk of one)—but also is available to do a consultation or maybe even just to lend a sympathetic ear to someone who finds themselves stuck. The program is available to everyone, not just published writers.

There's also an artist in residence program at the downtown library. Every three months, various artists from a trio of areas—Indigenous art and placemaking, children's art and illustration and newcomers—take up residence, facilitate workshops, and exhibit their work. The current artist in residence is Samuel Obadero.



A performer at the Central Library | Photo: Courtesy of the Calgary Public Library

## Literary Hub

With Loft 112 almost right across the street in the East Village, and the Central Memorial Library being the home of Wordfest and its dozens of literary events, the downtown library has become part of a literary hub of the city—which is exactly the role a great library ought to play in every city, Reicher says.

And while there are those who fret that electronic devices are obliterating our love of reading and writing, she says the library has experienced quite the opposite.

"Rather than seeing a decreased interest in reading, Calgary Public Library has seen a persistent devotion to stories, language, reading, writing, and discussing of issues," Reicher says.

"In fact, new media means new opportunity to engage people in ideas, imagination, and inspiration. As a flagship location, the New Central Library offers excellence in many areas, including unique spaces, innovative programming—the salon series Print(ed) Word, for example—and the connection of Calgarians to new resources, ideas—and each other."

Reicher points to an entire roster of creative possibilities for anyone looking for ways to express themselves.

That includes a musical instrument lending library and free music lessons at Central Memorial, engagements with Indigenous artists, in dance, visual art and storytelling, western-themed performances that will take place during Stampede, holiday music during December, an instrument petting zoo done in collaboration with the Calgary Philharmonic, and the STREAM program for children (the "A" is for art).

There's even arts focused program during Alberta Culture Days every September, exhibiting local visual artists throughout the year at various branches, and partnerships with festivals such as Sled Island, Fairy Tales Film Festival, the Calgary Underground Film Festival, Marda Loop Justice Film Festival, and others.

If your idea of community includes art, the library is the perfect launch point, Reicher says.

"Art is one of the things that makes us human," she says. "Art is one of the things in which the Calgary Public Library is investing, because of the difference it makes in people's lives."

calgarylibrary.ca

21%

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

17%

volunteer for an arts organization or arts event

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President & Executive Director Mitzzi Murray | Photo: Courtesy of THIRD ACTION Film Festival



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.



A lineup outside the Globe Cinema | Photo: Courtesy of the Calgary International Film Festival

### Calgary International Film Festival

It was a Friday night screening of a documentary film in September 2015 at the Globe Theatre, but for Steve Schroeder, it was everything a film festival is capable of being. The doc in question was *Guantanamo’s Child*. It told the story of Omar Khadr, the Canadian teenage boy who’d been charged with murder as a 15-year-old during the Afghan war, and sent to Guantanamo Bay until he was relocated to a prison near Edmonton, before being released. Khadr’s story was controversial and widely-covered. Part of the terms of his release from prison were that he couldn’t leave the house of his attorney, where he was living—until that Friday night at the Calgary International Film Festival.

[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.

### Market Collective

Eleven years ago, Calgary residents Angel Guerra and her friend Angela Dione found themselves at a flea market in West Hillhurst, where hundreds of people drop by every Sunday, to pick over an assortment of old records, hardcover books, vintage clothing, hockey memorabilia, used bicycles, coins, and other collector’s items. It inspired Guerra and Dione to try a variation on the same theme. What if they arranged a similar event, only instead of selling memorabilia, it would feature young artists selling new work? With local bands playing live? And DJs spinning records?

[READ MORE](#)



Families have always been a key part of Market Collective | Photo: Mike Tan

### IN 2018:

# 11,865

Calgarians work in an artist occupation, comprising 1.4% of our city’s overall labour force\*

# \$125

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

# 716

full-time equivalent staff hired by Calgary arts organizations

# 8,524

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 the 2016 Canada census).



Fans gather on Olympic Plaza following the Parade of Wonders | Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Expo

### SNAPSHOT CALGARY EXPO

The *Calgary Comic & Entertainment Expo* is a four-day pop-culture convention held in annually each spring Calgary at Stampede Park. Planning began in 2005 when a group of local nerds decided to bring some notable comic book artists to Calgary, wrangle up some vendors, and put on a fun show for kids of all ages. Since its first fledgling year in 2006, which had an attendance of 3,400 people, the Calgary Expo has grown to be the largest pop culture convention in Western Canada with an annual attendance of about 85,000 people.

### SNAPSHOT SAVAGE ROSE DESIGNS

Melanie Parsons, artist and owner of *Savage Rose Designs*, is a proud Cree Métis woman who was born in, and lives in, Calgary. This area is also known as Mohkinstsis, the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Parson launched *Savage Rose Designs* in 2010 and comes from a long line of Cree artisans. She finds joy in spending hours perfecting her craft, sharing her expertise and learning new skills or techniques from other Indigenous artists. Parson embraces her heritage and promotes Indigenous culture and practices through her art.



Savage Rose Designs | Photo: Courtesy of Melanie Parsons



# Calgary International Film Festival

By Stephen Hunt

It was a Friday night screening of a documentary film in September 2015 at the Globe Theatre, but for Steve Schroeder, it was everything a film festival is capable of being.

The doc in question was Guantanamo's Child, which told the story of Omar Khadr, the Canadian teenage boy who'd been charged with murder as a 15-year-old during the Afghan war, and sent to Guantanamo Bay until he was relocated to a prison near Edmonton, before being released.

Khadr's story was controversial and widely-covered. Part of the terms of his release from prison were that he couldn't leave the house of his attorney, where he was living—until that Friday night at the Calgary International Film Festival.

That's because at the conclusion of the screening, which was full of hundreds of Calgary film lovers, CIFF Executive Director Schroeder stood up, grabbed a mic, and introduced Khadr, who turned out to be a charming, gracious man.

"The audience didn't know he was going to be there," Schroeder says.

**"He's a very controversial figure but when you meet someone in person, who has been the subject of so much international news, and you get a feel for who they really are, it's a very different experience than what you've heard in the media."**

It wasn't just a film screening. It was news.

And for Schroeder, it was a snapshot of what the Calgary International Film Festival is all about, namely the audience experience.



A lineup outside the Globe Cinema | Photo: Courtesy of the Calgary International Film Festival

Calgary's film festival rarely features A-list, Hollywood names. Instead, it's a film festival that brings the world's cinema stories to screens every fall, in the form of an assortment of languages, sensibilities, lengths—many are shorts—and formats.

"It's an audience-focused festival," Schroeder says. "And a public-focused festival.

"We're very much connected to and supporting the industry," he adds, "but really, when we looked at the type of programming we were going to do, what we were going to put on the screen, how we were going to organize those films, where we were going to screen them, what types of cool fun events we program around films themselves, what type of off-screen events happen—like tours, talks, lectures, happenings, all those things—the number one question we ask is, how does this make the audience experience more enjoyable? More exciting?"

"How does this invite the audience themselves to be greater champions of filmmakers overall?"

Concentrated on Stephen Avenue, in the blocks around the Globe, and the Eau Claire Market, the festival is one of those local events that connects to a specific community of film-lovers.

Moving ahead, as the city looks for ways to animate its downtown spaces, Schroeder hopes to grow CIFF's municipal footprint, and to find ways to engage an even larger community to attend events such as Guantanamo's Child, or its red carpet premieres (which frequently take place at larger venues, such as Jack Singer Hall or The Grand), or its kid-friendly fare.



Calgary International Film Festival Executive Director Steve Schroeder with Mayor Nenshi | Photo: Courtesy of the Calgary International Film Festival

**"People ask me, when is the Calgary Film Fest going to have the same presence in the city as the Calgary Stampede, and I say, we're working on it," Schroeder says.**

"But we're getting there. We're definitely getting there. It's just one festival at a time."

In 2019, as it turns out, the 20th, Schroeder is thinking, it might be fun to dial up the festival's profile and party.

"For our 20th anniversary, we're working on having some more recognizable names to attend the festival, because we know that's fun for audiences," he says.

"That's really appropriate for celebration—and if going forward, the festival grows and we're able to attract more celebrities and more well-known names from the screen world, then that's great. And that totally plays into and supports the direction we're going—but the important distinction is, our main mission is not bringing celebrities.

"We don't wake up in the morning and go, how can we bring celebrities to Calgary?"

"We think, how can we make a great film festival experience that's a celebration for people who love movies? That's what we try to do."

Schroeder is happy to let his festival full of timely, thought-provoking, contentious cinema dictate who shows up to answer questions from Calgary film-lovers, much the way Khadr did that Friday night in 2015.

"It felt like a significant moment in Canadian history, really," he says. "Events like that make you realize you're part of something much bigger.

"These stories onscreen are part of much bigger stories," he continues. "And it keeps me doing what I do."

calgaryfilm.com

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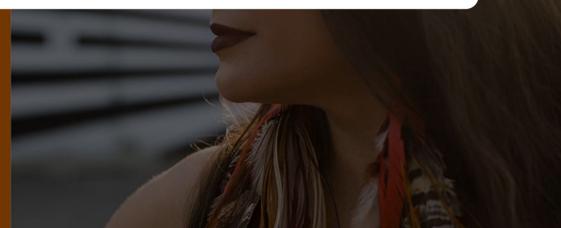
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## SNAPSHOT SAVANNA

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Savage Rose Designs | Photo: Courtesy of Melanie Parsons

Photo courtesy of Calgary Economic Development

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# Market Collective

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It inspired Guerra and Dione to try a variation on the same theme.

What if they arranged a similar event, only instead of selling memorabilia, it would feature young artists selling new work? With local bands playing live? And DJs spinning records?

"Dione really had a heart for the artists and seeing it be an artists space—so we put all our ideas together for live music, community, local commerce and art," Guerra says.

"That was kind of the initial conversation we had and from those passions came Market Collective."

Dion and Guerra each chipped in \$100, rented a room in the carpenter's union hall on 10th Street in Kensington, and Market Collective was born.

The first musician to perform at the first Market Collective was Reuben Bullock, who went on to form Reuben and the Dark.

Back then, the market was an intermittent event—a pop-up—that relied on locating appropriate and affordable temporary spaces at a time when available space was at a premium in boomtown Calgary.

Eventually, the collective moved from that union hall, which is now a condo, across 10th Street to an empty city-owned building. There it built up a following and grew into a seasonal scene, particularly around the holidays, when thousands of people used the work of the Market Collective artists to check off their Christmas gift lists.

The only drawback was that by being a hit, it invariably revived whatever space it occupied to the point where it was forced out by economics.

"It created vitality, then becomes a victim of its success," Guerra says.



Angel Guerra | Photo: Courtesy of Market Collective

## Market Collective 2019

Eleven years later, Market Collective still doesn't have a permanent home, but it has continued to grow and has become a retail institution that allows hundreds of artists to earn money from their art.

In 2018, Guerra estimated that over the past three years, Calgarians have spent \$5 million on artists' work, and that DJs have earned \$75,000 working at various Market Collectives.

**"Over the years, it became apparent that not only was Market Collective filling a gap, but we were a forerunner for pop-ups in the city or different art markets, or even just different endeavors in the community that were able to spring-board from Market Collective or meet some artists from Market Collective. So I think it filled a gap people were looking for at that time."**

"It still fills a bit of a gap, but it's different now," Guerra said, "because there are a lot of things like Market Collective, but at the time, we saw all these artists and musicians leaving Calgary once they graduated high school or university and moved to the next step in their career.

"Things like Market Collective have helped keep artists and musicians in the city and give them a place that they can make a sustainable living."



A bustling Market Collective in the fall of 2017 | Photo: Courtesy of Market Collective

Over the last weekend of May, the Market Collective took place on a whole other level—it occupied the BMO Centre at Stampede Park.

In addition to the artists selling their work, other artists found work performing, Guerra says.

"It had six DJs, eight bands, and four dance troupes," she says.

This summer, the market will take over the St. Louis Hotel on weekends, offering pop-up artisanal retail, live bands, and food.

"We're super-excited for this summer-long activation to be in East Village, alongside other cultural institutions such as the National Music Centre and the new Central Library," she says.

Other pop-up events are planned for the summer in conjunction with Vans, the Bumble singles app, and Sled Island.

If anything has changed over the past decade, it's that the retail world—blending music, food and rotating locations—has become more like Market Collective.

Reuben and the Dark are rock stars now, but Bullock still remembers when he was given the opportunity to perform at Market Collective.

"It was amazing to be a part of the Market Collective from the very first days, but it has been really incredible watching it grow over the last decade," he says. "It has become a cultural hub for Calgary and that is a serious accomplishment. I'm proud of the Market Collective, and everyone who has been involved. It's pretty special to have played on day one."

marketcollective.ca

## BOOK

As an economic creative arts sector talent to



A lineup outdoors

This is great

R

## Market

Eleven years ago, Dione found the of people drop hardcover books and other collector's items on the same flea market selling memorabilia local bands playing

## IN 2018

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Calgarians artist community comprising our city's labor

Based on data from "Artists and Customers"



## SNAPSHOT SAVANNAH

Melanie Parsons, Métis woman known as Melanie Parsons launched a line of Cree art pieces sharing her expertise and learning new skills or techniques from other Indigenous artists. Parsons embraces her heritage and promotes Indigenous culture and practices through her art.



Savage Rose Designs | Photo: Courtesy of Melanie Parsons

Photo courtesy of Calgary Economic Development

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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.



Sarb Akal YouTube channel | Photo: Courtesy of Sarb Akal

### Sarb Akal Music Society

There are actually two Sarb Akal Music Societies. One is the local, East Calgary Indian music academy that had seven students show up the first day they opened in Forest Lawn in 2009. Offering lessons in tabla, sitar, and other classical Indian instruments, they now have about 50 students. The second Sarb Akal Music Society is a digital clone of the first one, also based in the Forest Lawn home of Bhai Harjeet Singh, but it promotes, teaches and speaks to an Indian classical music scene that is global, growing—and awesome. That's what Arts in Action discovered upon meeting with Singh, Sarb Akal General Secretary Pyush Vyas, and Executive Director of Fund Development and Growth Vipul Jasani in early June for an interview.

[READ MORE](#)

### IN 2018:

**14,469**

public activities produced by Calgary arts organizations

**1,231**

held outside of Calgary in 2018

**10,370**

arts education and public arts activities held in the Centre City

**61%**

held outside the Centre City

Based on data from organizations funded in part through [Calgary Arts Development](#).

### SPARK Disability Arts Festival

Every December, there's an art festival that is a little bit more than an art festival. It's a lifeline. That's what the SPARK Disability Arts Festival has been for over 450 artists with visible and invisible disabilities who have had their work exhibited, and sold, since the festival launched at Studio C back in 2010, says festival director Roxanne Taylor. For the 2018 festival alone, Taylor says SPARK received 191 visual art submissions from around the world. They ended up featuring 85 different works created by 52 artists, each of whom has a different story.

[READ MORE](#)



Paula Timm and her work | Photo: Courtesy of SPARK Disability Arts

### IN 2018:

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

**3,249**

activities engaging multicultural communities

**3,058**

activities engaging people with disabilities

**775**

activities engaging Indigenous communities

**1,141**

activities engaging LGBTQ+ communities

Based on data from organizations funded in part through [Calgary Arts Development](#).



Fireflies at Twilight | Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Municipal Land Corporation

#### SNAPSHOT

### FIREFLIES AT TWILIGHT

*Fireflies at Twilight* was a temporary mural installation on land provided by Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) as a way to activate the street level and bring people into Victoria Park. The special containR installation was created in honour of the land and people of Treaty 7 Territory. Inspired by Siksika First Nation Chief Crowfoot's quote *What is Life?*, the project was spearheaded by non-profit arts organization Springboard Performance in collaboration with Governor General Award winning Siksika artist Adrian Stimson who created an inspiring visual interpretation of the quote on a mural installation comprising two 40-foot shipping containers.

#### SNAPSHOT

### CALGARY QUEER ARTS SOCIETY

[Calgary Queer Arts Society](#) exists to give voice to queer people and their stories. Historically, LGBTQ2A+ individuals have been suppressed, deprived of power, misrepresented, and often overlooked by institutional support systems. They are committed to transforming this reality, and will continue to work passionately towards an inclusive future for all people. The arts are an integral part of this story. Storytelling connects us all, dissolves our differences and breaks down barriers, so that we can find aspects of ourselves in others, and of others in ourselves. These stories are important to Calgary, which is why this group is committed to creating and sharing the narratives that shape us.



**CALGARY QUEER  
ARTS SOCIETY**  
PRESENTATION · CONVERSATION · EDUCATION



# Sarb Akal Music Society

By Stephen Hunt

There are actually two Sarb Akal Music Societies. One is the local, East Calgary Indian music academy that had seven students show up the first day they opened in Forest Lawn in 2009. Offering lessons in tabla, sitar, and other classical Indian instruments, they now have about 50 students.

The second Sarb Akal Music Society is a digital clone of the first one, also based in the Forest Lawn home of Bhai Harjeet Singh, but it promotes, teaches and speaks to an Indian classical music scene that is global, growing—and awesome.

That's what Arts in Action discovered upon meeting with Singh, Sarb Akal General Secretary Pyush Vyas, and Executive Director of Fund Development and Growth Vipul Jasani in early June for an interview.

## Passion Project

The organization is really the passion project of Singh, a tabla player that's been transformed, through Singh's single-minded passion, a supportive Calgary community, and exponential growth due in large part to the emergence of social media, into a multimedia, global music hub whose reach extends well beyond the 403 area code.

Exhibit A: The Sarb Arkal YouTube channel, which has over 23,000 subscribers.

"And 200 new signups each day," exclaims Jasani.

There's a weekly radio show, Tuesday from 6:00 to 7:00pm, on 94.7 FM.

"We only talk about music. No politics," says Vyas, who is also a tabla player.

There is a yearly international music festival, which brings in the top Indian classical musicians from around the world, to perform at venues such as the Bella Concert Hall and the Rozsa Centre.

There's a steady, relentless interaction between musicians, who live in India, London, South Africa, and Russia, all asking for an invitation to perform at the Indian Classical Music Festival.

And then there's the story of the young violin player in Medicine Hat, who contacted Singh, asking if there was a way to connect him with a well-known violinist, who lives in India.

Singh—an Uber driver who says he spends \$25,000 a year of his own money to fund Sarb Akal— kept persisting, writing to the woman in India. He asked her to come to Calgary to perform at the festival—"The number one Indian classical music festival in North America," says Jasani—but the problem was that the woman was a popular musician, with many performing opportunities, and it's an 18-hour flight from India to Alberta.

She said no.

Singh kept in touch, telling her about the young violinist from Medicine Hat, about Sarb Akal and about the Calgary classical Indian music community.

Finally, she relented and asked for a tape.

A little while later, Singh received an email.

"I will teach him," she said. "Free, because you promote Indian classical music."

She teaches the young violinist on Skype.

**It turns out that not only does Sarb Akal stand for everywhere, timeless, immortal and non-temporal, but it also stands for the digital landing spot when it comes to Indian classical music—a completely improvised musical form that Pyari describes as light. It's music that lifts your soul, and your spirit.**

It's also music without a language barrier.

"Whatever language you are speaking, they understand," says Vyas.

In addition to its annual Classical Indian Music Festival, Sarb Akal plays an active role promoting classical Indian music in Alberta. There was a concert in May at the National Music Centre. There was a Canada Day performance in Prince's Island Park. There was an invitation to the Alberta Assembly.

There are also plans to incorporate Indigenous artists into the next festival, says Jasani.

"We want to integrate eastern and western music together," he says.



Sarb Akal YouTube channel | Photo: Courtesy of Sarb Akal

## Healing Power of Music

That's when Singh tells another story about a young couple who were at his home one day, with their six month old baby who was crying and miserable—at which point Singh played him some tabla music, which soothed him and calmed him down.

It quieted the restless baby's soul.

A few weeks later, Singh received a phone call.

It was from the father of the young baby.

They were home, and the baby was once again, miserable, restless, and agitated.

"Uncle I need that instrument," he said.

For Singh, who has plowed his earnings into building Sarb Akal for a decade, those are the types of paydays he has received over the past decade.

As it grows in stature, locally, nationally, and internationally, the hope is to transform Sarb Akal into a financially self-sustaining entity.

The music society recently became a registered charity. They have a board, they're eligible for grants and working hard to raise funds to grow the annual festival—to find a way to imprint Sarb Akal's identity onto Calgary as much as they have the rest of the planet.

Until then, Singh continues to do 10-hour days on Uber, followed by another six with Sarb Akal.

He's building his own unique kind of equity, as a one-man brand preaching the joy of Indian classical music.

"I don't have money in my pocket," he says, "but I am a rich person in the world."

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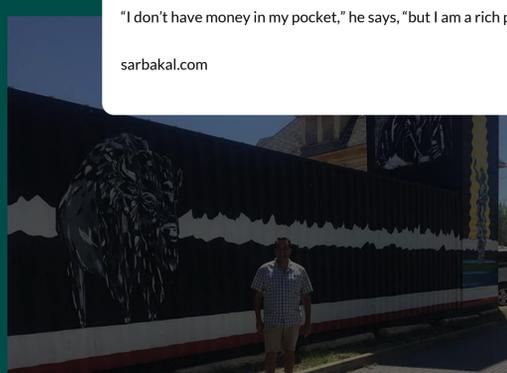
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Fireflies at Twilight | Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Municipal Land Corporation

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SNAPSHOT

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# SPARK Disability Arts Festival

By Stephen Hunt

Every December, there's an art festival that is a little bit more than an art festival.

It's a lifeline.

That's what the SPARK Disability Arts Festival has been for over 450 artists with visible and invisible disabilities who have had their work exhibited, and sold, since the festival launched at Studio C back in 2010, says festival director Roxanne Taylor.

For the 2018 festival alone, Taylor says SPARK received 191 visual art submissions from around the world. They ended up featuring 85 different works created by 52 artists, each of whom has a different story.

At the 2015 festival, one of the artists featured was Paula Timm, a woman who went into hospital for laparoscopic surgery to remove her colon, and ended up with an accidentally-severed aorta that caused her to die for a while on the operating table—until she came back to life.

Following that unfortunate series of events, Timm faced a long, uncertain recovery period at home, part of which she dealt with by painting and accessing her creative side.

"I found Studio C actually into my second year of healing," Timm said, in a 2015 interview with the Calgary Herald. "Their message—in addition to the messages I was following—basically, live a creative life and figure out how to do that."

"Although it's been a traumatic event," she says, "what I focus on today is really the blessings that have come from it and the ultimate message that I got from my life-altering surgery was: live life with creativity and joy."



Paula Timm and her work | Photo: Courtesy of SPARK Disability Arts

## Why Does it Matter?

According to figures provided by Taylor, 13.7% of Canadian adults experience disability, and one in five faces mental health challenges, yet overall, Canada lags when it comes to providing a platform and exhibition opportunities for artists with disabilities.

The SPARK Festival, she adds, fills in that gap. It's the largest and longest-running disability arts festival in Calgary.

"We are excited to be at the forefront of this critical movement, providing arts programs and services to marginalized communities with barriers to cultural access," Taylor said, in an emailed reply to a question.

**Festivals such as SPARK, she added, offer participating artists an assortment of benefits, including overcoming underrepresentation in mainstream media and society, helping society to better understand the concept of inclusion and accessibility, provide safe spaces for disability artists to confront—and resist—social stereotypes and stigmas, as well as a chance to earn money—the artists keep 90% of the money the sale of their artwork generates.**



Melanie Marcotte's Mel's Rainbow Life | Photo: Courtesy of SPARK Disability Arts

For Timm, the catastrophe of that botched surgery that led her to exhibiting her work at SPARK changed her life, in all the right ways.

She left a career in oil and gas, when she was chosen as one of the first tenants at cSPACE, the art hub in the King Edward School.

"There are so many different things Calgary has, like the SPARK Disability Festival, Studio C, Calgary Arts Development—there are these entry points to get involved, to showcase your art in a very honourable way, in some really cool facilities," she says.

And along the way, Timm has become a kind of creative mentor for people who drop in to cSPACE, wondering if there's a way to ignite their own creative lives.

"One person came to a drop-in night I have on Wednesdays, where I get anybody to come in for \$20 to participate in some kind of expression activity, whether it's writing, painting or hanging out and knitting," she says.

"Whenever someone saunters in, I give them the cSPACE spiel—and when they left, someone said don't you get tired of giving that? And I said no. It fuels me. It inspires me. That's why I didn't want a studio with no public facing environment."

"The fact that I get to keep encouraging others—whether it's to help them or help them think, okay, art is not that scary. It's a place for us to play, and wonder, and experience even as non-professional artists."

For Taylor, the most surprising aspect of her job is the exceptional quality of the submissions for each subsequent SPARK Festival.

"I'm not so much surprised, but rather always impressed by the incredible quality of artwork that is submitted to SPARK," she says. "The festival accepts a broad range of two- and three-dimensional media, and I love to see the diversity of works submitted. We've exhibited everything from photography, drawing, painting, encaustic, found objects, fibre, ceramics and glass to digital and video art."

"As a practicing artist myself, I find each SPARK showcase to be fantastically inspirational. It's also thrilling to see emerging and established artists represented side-by-side."

"I'm filled with excitement knowing that this talent represents Calgary's next wave of professionals," she says. "It's rewarding for me as a festival producer to create personal connections with the artists, and I feel privileged to be able to share in their life stories."

sparkdisabilityartfestival.com

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Fireflies at Twilight | Photo: Courtesy of Calgary Municipal Land Corporation

SNAPSHOT  
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Sebastian Hanlon, courtesy of Calgary Folk Fest

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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.



Trevor, Davey, and Cody | Photo: Courtesy of The Napi Collective

### The Napi Collective

Trevor Solway grew up on the east end of Siksika Nation—the quiet part. “People who live on the east end are farmers and ranchers. Nothing happens on the east end near Clooney,” Solway says. Those people included Solway’s grandfather, who in addition to being a farmer, trained race horses. One day, he took Solway horse shopping, to a thoroughbred sale that also had an animal young Trevor had never seen before. “I remember when I first saw one, I said grandpa, look at that funky horse!” Solway says. “He said, those are called llamas.” Solway was transfixed.

[READ MORE](#)

### IN 2018:

**10,370**

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

**339,065**

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.

### WordsWorth

WordsWorth is summer camp for language lovers. The week-long program, created by the Alberta Writers Guild, brings 40 young people aged 11 to 19 together in Kananaskis country between July 14 and August 2. It’s a lot like all summer camps have been doing ever since there were kids and a summer to kill before going back to school in the fall. At this camp, however, the kids use those woods to fuel their imaginations, as they write the stories of their lives. WordsWorth director Colin Matty says, “In the past we’ve offered everything from experimental poetry, genre fiction, and journalism to improv, book binding, songwriting, podcasts... the program uses creative writing as an entry point to all manner of creative arts.”

[READ MORE](#)



Participants in WordsWorth summer camp | Photo: Courtesy of Alberta Writers Guild

### 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.



Participants in the Youth Empowerment Program | Photo: Courtesy of the Philippine Festival Council of Alberta

### SNAPSHOT YEP PROGRAM

The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) is a project of the Philippine Festival Council of Alberta, the organization behind the annual Fiesta Filipino in Calgary. Presented in partnership with Arts Commons and Calgary Arts Development, YEP is all about youth engagement (ages 13 to 25) through introduction and hands-on experience of Filipino arts, culture, and heritage in the Canadian setting. To increase the youth’s sense of belonging and sense of identity of being Filipino-Canadian, YEP works with artists as mentors in delivering free workshops on visual, performing, and other types of arts such as filmmaking, writing, poetry and spoken word, dance, and more in order to gain confidence, and feel more integrated, creative, and involved in the community.

### SNAPSHOT WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE

*We Are All Treaty People*—a collaboration between [Quest Theatre](#) and Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society—is an innovative theatrical adventure in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists explore the shared history of our ancestors. The show, which is designed for all ages of young people, is 50-minutes in length and followed up with a Q&A session with the cast. It premiered in April of 2017 and has since been seen by more than 47,000 young people in 147 schools and other venues mostly across Calgary but also across Alberta and in Toronto. The show was so popular in 2018 that there was a waiting list of 50 schools wishing to book it. Quest Theatre will once again take the show on tour in 2019/20.



We are all Treaty People | Photo: Justina Gibson, courtesy of Quest Theatre

# The Napi Collective

By Stephen Hunt

Trevor Solway grew up on the east end of Siksika Nation—the quiet part.

“People who live on the east end are farmers and ranchers. Nothing happens on the east end near Clooney,” Solway says.

Those people included Solway’s grandfather, who in addition to being a farmer, trained race horses.

One day, he took Solway horse shopping, to a thoroughbred sale that also had an animal young Trevor had never seen before.

“I remember when I first saw one, I said grandpa, look at that funky horse!” Solway says.

“He said, those are called llamas.”

Solway was transfixed.

“When you look at them, instantly they have a personality,” he says.

Solway didn’t convince his grandpa to start training llamas.

Instead, he took the experience and used it his own way, creating a series of comic stories featuring a llama.

“I always had that creative thirst,” he says. “I didn’t have a camera, I didn’t grow up really wealthy so I used to write—little short stories, comics, anything that came to mind.”

That fascination with creativity and storytelling led to Solway studying film in the Indigenous Digital Filmmaking program at Capilano University in Vancouver, before returning to study journalism at Mount Royal University.

All of it was done to help Solway acquire the tools he needed to tell his stories.

“I didn’t really pick up a camera until I was 20 [or] 21,” he says. “And then once I understood all the mechanisms of it, that’s what opened up the floodgates for me to become a filmmaker.”



Trevor, Davey, and Cody | Photo: Courtesy of The Napi Collective

He’s made comedic shorts such as *Indian Giver* (featuring Telly James) and documentaries such as *The Black Wolf*, *TRENCH*, and *Sacred by Nature*, which have taken him to film festivals all over the world.

Those experiences have exposed him to the wider world of filmmaking, and built confidence that there is an audience for his stories, all of which have been set in Siksika.

In 2018, he made *InterTribal Series*, documenting a quartet of musicians from Siksika Nation who interviewed each other.

Recently, he received funding from the TELUS Storyhive fund to shoot *Broken Records*, his new drama.

“It’s about two siblings,” Solway says. “It’s about a house party on the rez and told through the eyes of the children.”

“These parents have a house party, and it’s just kind of the observations of the children, and the main character—the girl—she’s watching like a romantic movie in her room, and what she’s seeing on the movie is different than what she’s seeing in the party.

“And we’re actually going to shoot the romantic movie inside the movie,” he says.

The stories Solway tells are set around his life on Siksika Nation, which he never left until he was 18.

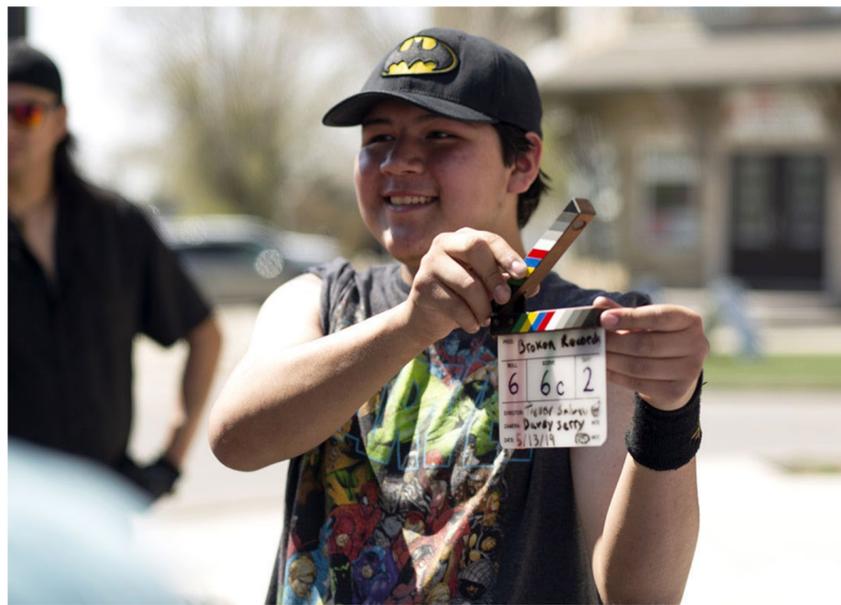
And not only is the Siksika Nation the subject of Solway’s storytelling, but he has used his opportunity to make films to inspire other Indigenous youth.

Solway uses, as much as he can, a majority Indigenous crew to shoot his films, including cousin Adam Solway.

It helps Adam, who has followed in Trevor’s footsteps by enrolling in the Mount Royal journalism program, but it also helps Trevor, who doesn’t have to explain stuff to his cousin.

“We have a shorthand lingo. We grew up on the rez [reservation] together—so he’s my DP [director of photography],” Trevor says.

“That’s what I’m really passionate about—trying to stimulate and create this Indigenous film community out of nothing on the reserve.”



Melanie Marcotte’s *Mel’s Rainbow Life* | Photo: Courtesy of SPARK Disability Arts

“It’s giving people opportunities like that, like Adam,” he adds. “Instead of taking an easy route and hiring a pro cinematographer—let’s give an up-and-coming young Indigenous cinematographer that role.

“When I was coming up, I really grew when I was given roles that were above my head,” he says. “So you give inexperienced Indigenous people roles, so they’ll be better next time—and we’ll get to a point where we’ll really be making some awesome films.”

Together, the filmmaking group call themselves The Napi Collective.

“A lot of my movies are about native youth not seeing themselves reflected on the screen,” Solway says, “and this is an example.

“Sometimes, our realities aren’t what we see in media and sometimes for kids, that can be tough to reconcile—ideas such as my future isn’t going to be there because my reality doesn’t match up to it.” That’s what *Broken Records* is about.”

“That’s what *Broken Records* is about.”

Not only does Solway write and direct and produce his films, but he drives the van in the morning, picking up the crew on the far-flung Siksika Nation, to make sure everyone has a lift to the set.

“I travel all over to pick up people. Filmmaking on a reserve is hard,” he says. “But for me it’s worth it, because of the stories that come out of it—and the talent that comes out of it.”

facebook.com



We are all Treaty People | Photo: Justina Gibson, courtesy of Quest Theatre

# WordsWorth

By Stephen Hunt

WordsWorth is summer camp for language lovers.

The week-long program, created by the Alberta Writers Guild, brings 40 young people aged 11 to 19 together in Kananaskis country between July 14 and August 2. It's a lot like all summer camps have been doing ever since there were kids and a summer to kill before going back to school in the fall.

At this camp, however, the kids use those woods to fuel their imaginations, as they write the stories of their lives.

WordsWorth director Colin Matty says, "In the past we've offered everything from experimental poetry, genre fiction, and journalism to improv, book binding, songwriting, podcasts... the program uses creative writing as an entry point to all manner of creative arts.

"Outside of class, we hike by the river, go LARPing in the woods, sing songs by the fire, and create a space that encourages risk taking and sharing the fruits of one's artistic labours.

"At its heart," he adds, "WordsWorth is a community founded upon creativity, inclusivity, and individual growth."

And all of it is driven, in one way or another, by a collective love and passion and reverence for language.

**It might be surprising to parents concerned that digital devices have robbed a generation of the ability to structure a sentence, or pay attention to one, to learn that the irrefutable lesson Matty learns every summer when he runs the camp is the simplest: Words still matter.**

Words matter to kids now as much as they ever did.

For the youth who participate in WordsWorth, language is a true superpower.

"Words allow us to share our inner, invisible selves with the world," Matty says. "To use words well is to build better bridges between each other.



A camp activity | Photo: Courtesy of Alberta Writers Guild

## Inspiring Youth With Words

Of course, any time a group of creative minds gathers together, another kind of dynamic can develop—namely, the competitive desire to churn out a complete project in the least possible amount of time.

It's a bit counter-intuitive to imagine a camp in the woods as a hotbed of Type A personalities, but Matty says WordsWorth is less about producing finished products than engaged ones—although if you get swept away by your project that's okay too, he adds.

"Most of our courses are process-oriented rather than product-focused," he says, "but that doesn't stop people from completing exciting projects. We've had students working on zines, operas, soundscapes, collage and blackout poetry pieces, comic books and stand-up comedy routines, handbound books, songs, short stories, and monologues."

The camp is a week long experience, divided by age (11-14, first week, 15-19 second week and 14-19 for the third).

There are a variety of classes, sometimes there's room to chase your own imaginary world, and sometimes there's a connecting thread, Matty says.

"Some courses are dedicated to something specific [this year's Mythic Poetry for example], while others are more open-ended explorations of world-building, visual art, or dramatic performance," he says, "where students can adapt the workshop to their own interests and ongoing projects."

And despite being word-driven, he says WordsWorth participants come from a variety of creative disciplines.

"A fair number of our campers are primarily digital artists or musicians or sketch artists," he says. "The idea is to embrace new challenges, regardless of your personal preference—the science fiction author that takes a dance class will certainly find something that inspires their craft, often in unexpected ways."

Of course, it's still a summer camp. And you're still dealing with kids, in the summer, so once in a while, they take a break to play death polo.

"Two teams take over the shallow end of a swimming pool and lean two flutterboards against one another at either end as a goal. There's a jump ball in the middle, and from there it's a full contact battle to knock over the opposing teams flutter boards with the ball. It is a contest of strength and dexterity and teamwork and it is an absolute riot," he says.

If there's one drawback that Matty has experienced in nearly a decade with WordsWorth—the last five as its director—it's that many of those students, who return year after year as kids, have nothing similar to turn to once they turn 19.

"I would love to start a similar program for people beyond the age of 19. A place like WordsWorth does wonders for the confidence and capabilities of its participants and instructors alike, and I would love to be able to offer a space like that for 'grown ups' and graduates of WordsWorth, who often become isolated from other working artists in their practice," he says.

Parents often tell their young children to "use your words." This is one summer experience for youth that has put that into powerful practice—and will continue to do so into the future.

"A word is a thought made actual. It is at turns a tool, a toy, or a weapon," Matty says.

"I believe that words are magic—they don't call it spelling for nothing."

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... 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.



Participants in the Youth Empowerment Program | Photo: Courtesy of the Philippine Festival Council of Alberta

## SNAPSHOT WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE

*We Are All Treaty People*—a collaboration between Quest Theatre and Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society—is an innovative theatrical adventure in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists explore the shared history of our ancestors. The show, which is designed for all ages of young people, is 50-minutes in length and followed up with a Q&A session with the cast. It premiered in April of 2017 and has since been seen by more than 47,000 young people in 147 schools and other venues mostly across Calgary but also across Alberta and in Toronto. The show was so popular in 2018 that there was a waiting list of 50 schools wishing to book it. Quest Theatre will once again take the show on tour in 2019/20.

## SNAPSHOT YEP PROGRAM

The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) is a project of the Philippine Festival Council of Alberta, the organization behind the annual Fiesta Filipino in Calgary. Presented in partnership with Arts Commons and Calgary Arts Development, YEP is all about youth engagement (ages 13 to 25) through introduction and hands-on experience of Filipino arts, culture, and heritage in the Canadian setting. To increase the youth's sense of belonging and sense of identity of being Filipino-Canadian, YEP works with artists as mentors in delivering free workshops on visual, performing, and other types of arts such as filmmaking, writing, poetry and spoken word, dance, and more in order to gain confidence, and feel more integrated, creative, and involved in the community.



We are all Treaty People | Photo: Justina Gibson, courtesy of Quest Theatre