

A creative, connected Calgary through the arts.

ACCOUNTABILITY & IMPACT REPORT

2021

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Welcome



We are the city’s designated arts development authority, created to support and strengthen the arts to benefit all Calgarians.

We are proud to put public dollars to work in the interest of the public good. This means *all* public. We aspire to foster a resilient and sustainable arts sector that is safe and welcoming for all, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, economic status, physical, or mental abilities.

We believe that art infusing the lives of Calgarians has the power to build our city. Our vision is a creative, connected Calgary through the arts where everyone is empowered to live a creative life. To deliver on our mission, we are:

- An investor in artists, arts collectives, and arts organizations
- An arts champion, supporter, and amplifier
- A connector, facilitator, and collaborator
- A catalyst and opportunity-maker



PHOTOS

Top row: Writer and director Berkley Brady, photo by Marni Burkhart | $\Delta^{\circ}q\circ$ (Iskwe Woman) by Karlee Fellner | NAPPY Dance Collective's *Not Another Political Playground Y'all* | The Ascent, a collaboration between Calgary International Film Festival and Beakerhead, photo by Michael Grondin

Bottom row: Cast member and puppet from Mudfoot Theatre's *Yabber: A Junk Folk Opera*, photo by Caitlind Brown | Taylor Crow Spreads His Wings and daughter Melody Fox dancing at Pókaiks – The Children: Orange Shirt Day event, photo by Albert Woo | *Perspectives From Within* group exhibition at Contemporary Calgary, curated by Dick Avern's | Singer-songwriter Kayla Williams in Studio Bell's Busker sessions

Overview

WHAT DID 2021 ASK OF US?

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ASSESSORS, ADVISORS, AND JURIES

What Did 2021 Ask of Us?

We acknowledge that the land we gather on, Mohkínsstsi, is the ancestral territory of the Siksikaitapi — the Blackfoot people — comprising the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani Nations, as well as Treaty 7 signatories, the Tsuut’ina Nation, and the Îyâxe Nakoda Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley First Nations. This land is also the home of Métis Nation Region 3.

We acknowledge that there has been art, music, dance, storytelling, and ceremony on this land since time immemorial and it is in the spirit of this land and its people that we do our work.

[▶ READ MORE](#)

Acknowledging the traditional territories on which we gather has become a customary practice at Calgary Arts Development and an important step in our reconciliation journey.

More than just words to memorize and recite, the land acknowledgement is a way to remember and honour the Original Peoples of this land — people who have been here for millennia.

In this spirit, we created a musical land acknowledgement to begin the 2019 Mayor’s Lunch for Arts Champions, featuring Olivia Tailfeathers and the Grassland Singers, visual artist Mandy Stobo, and Calgary Arts Development President & CEO Patti Pon.

We believe that finding a personal connection is essential and we strive to communicate that personal meaning every time. Adding music and visual arts to the land acknowledgement at that Mayor’s Lunch for Arts Champions was a way to connect the meaning of our work to this land and the peoples who have lived here since time immemorial.

[View video here](#)

Welcome to our 2021 Accountability and Impact Report



[BOARD AND STAFF LIST](#)

Board of Directors

Calgary Arts Development is governed by a board of directors, appointed by and directly accountable to our shareholder, The City of Calgary, via City Council. The board of directors governs lawfully, observing the principles of a policy governance model, with an emphasis on strategic leadership and clear distinction of board and CEO roles.

The board also identifies the principal risks of Calgary Arts Development's business, achieves a proper balance between risks incurred and potential returns, and oversees the development of policies and the implementation of appropriate systems to manage the risks.

The board carries out its responsibilities through the work of a number of committees. Each committee meets at least four times per year, and more frequently as necessary.

Board Committees

FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

The purpose of the finance and audit committee is to assist the board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities with regard to financial information, systems of internal controls, the internal audit process, and investment management activities.

2021 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Caitlyn Ducasse (chair)
- Brian Krywulak
- Kathleen McNally Leitch
- Karin King (community member)
- Brian Frank

STRATEGY AND PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The mandate of this committee is to make recommendations to the board on matters affecting strategy and public policy, and to provide guidance and evaluation for the development and evaluation of alignment with our mission and vision, including facilitating the strategic planning process.

2021 STRATEGY AND PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Barb Howard (chair)
- Jeff de Boer
- Kelly Morstad
- Chima Nkemdirim
- Evan Woolley (to November 2021)
- Courtney Walcott (beginning November 2021)
- Wil Knoll (community member)
- Brian Frank

GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

This committee concerns itself with governance matters, including management of the relationships between the board and the CEO and between Calgary Arts Development and the shareholder. It also has oversight of board policy review and development, human resources policy development, board recruitment, development, and evaluation.

2021 GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Sophia Lebessis (chair)
- Oliver Ho
- Lisha Hassanali
- Brian Frank

PUBLIC ART SUBCOMMITTEE

To oversee the bid for Calgary Arts Development in response to The City of Calgary's RFP for a third party to assume the public art program, a public art subcommittee was created, made up of current and past Calgary Arts Development board members.

PUBLIC ART SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Jeff de Boer (chair)
- Chima Nkemdirim
- Sophia Lebessis
- Susan Veres (past board member)
- Brian Frank

CSPACE SUBCOMMITTEE

cSPACE Projects is a subsidiary of Calgary Arts Development in partnership with the Calgary Foundation. As such, a subcommittee of Calgary Arts Development board members undertakes specific focus on our relationship with cSPACE as the majority shareholder.

2021 CSPACE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Chima Nkemdirim (chair)
- Brian Krywulak
- Caitlyn Ducasse
- Brian Frank

Assessors, Advisories, and Juries

Our grant investment programs are assessed by peer assessment committees to ensure that Calgary Arts Development is fairly and responsibly distributing public dollars to artists and organizations on behalf of the citizens of Calgary.

Our peer assessment committees bring their experience, knowledge, skill sets, and perspectives through assessment meetings to identify the best opportunities for the arts sector. They help our staff deepen their understanding and view of the sector.

[READ MORE ABOUT GRANT ASSESSORS](#)

2021 GRANT PROGRAM ASSESSORS

(listed alphabetically)

Alen Delfino Martel
 Ali DeRegt
 Alix-Louise Day
 Amanda Hu
 Anastassia La Musa
 Bukky Niwonda
 Carol Parchewsky
 Cecilia Schlemm
 Chantal Chagnon
 Chelsea Yang-Smith
 Cheryl Foggo
 Christahh Ahh
 Cindy Ansah
 Colin Martin
 Cowboy Smithx
 David Sklar
 Eric Cheung
 Eva Verity
 FOONYAP
 Ireke Amoji
 Jacqs Walker
 James Ziegler
 Jason Long
 Jordan Wieben
 Karoline Gajewska
 Kris Teo
 Kristen Padayas
 Laura Anzola
 Lily Cai
 Lisa Murphy-Lamb
 Lynn Maric
 Malavika Venkatsubbaiah
 Meg Farhall
 Michael Broadfoot
 Michael John (Prashant)
 Mike Hooves
 Mike Tan
 Misha Maseka
 Monda Mahmoud
 Mpoie Mogale
 Natasha Chaykowski
 Olyn Ozbick
 Patricia Anne Duquette
 Paulo da Costa
 Philip Bowen
 Richelle Bear Hat
 Sandra Vida
 Silvia Temis Perez
 Staci Wolfden Duchene
 Suneetha Alokam
 Susan Bristow
 Susan Dumont
 Tamara Eaker
 Tank Standing Buffalo
 Tereasa Maillie
 Teresa Tam
 Thomas Geddes
 Troy Emery Twigg
 Yvette Denby
 Yvonne Kustec

2021 OPIP ADVISORY

The decision-making process for the Original Peoples Investment Program (OPIP) is entirely First Nation / Métis / Inuit-led, with committees including representation across nations and artistic or cultural practice. OPIP assessors are included in the assessors' listing above.

2021 OPIP Advisory Committee members included (listed alphabetically):

Elijah Wells
 Glenna Cardinal
 Jarret TwoYoungmen
 Jessica McMann
 Rose Heavyhead
 Seth Lakota Cardinal Dodginghorse
 Staci Duchene
 Suitaakii Black
 Yvette Denby

CULTURAL LEADERS LEGACY ARTIST AWARDS

Recipients of the 2021 Cultural Leaders Legacy Artist Awards were selected by juries, each comprising a past award-winner, a representative from the benefactor organization, and artistic peers.

2021 Cultural Leaders Legacy Artist Awards Jury members (listed alphabetically):

Alexandra Gmiterek
 Allison Moore
 Amanda Koyama
 Ann Mansolino
 Anna Ko
 Aya Mhana
 Ayla Stephen
 Bassem Nabil Hafez
 Brett Dahl
 Carol Schwartz-Kapuscinski
 Cheryl Sung
 Col Cseke
 Daorcey Le Bray
 Derek Stevenson
 Erin MacLean-Berko
 Jamie Dundson
 Joshua Dalledonne
 Kaely Cormack
 Karen Ball
 Lanre Ajayi
 Mark Hopkins
 Mark Vazquez MacKay
 Mark Wold
 MelVeeX
 Nurgul Rodriguez
 Robin van Eck
 Rose Brow
 Samuel Obadaro
 Sandi Sommers
 Sanja Lukac
 Simon Mallet
 Stephanie Hutchinson
 Su Ying Strang
 Sunny Clark

AISINNA'KIIKS 2019-2021 STEERING COMMITTEE

Aisinna'kiiks was a dinner and dialogue series whose purpose was to deepen understanding and good relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

(listed alphabetically)

Anila Lee Yuen
 Chantal Chagnon
 Cherie McMaster
 Clancy Evans
 Helen Moore-Parkhouse
 Hyder Hassan
 Kaley Beisiegel
 Latasha Calf Robe
 Marichu Antonio
 Saa'kokoto (Randy Bottle)
 Sable Sweetgrass

2021 Grant Investment Programs

Each year, at least 75 per cent of our funding from The City of Calgary goes directly into grant investments.

OVERALL FUNDING



- 81% Community Investment
- 9.6% Communications & Engagement
- 6.3% Operations
- 2.8% Public Art

\$11,600,000
 invested through more than 552 grants to organizations, individual artists, and arts collectives in 2021.

OPERATING GRANT PROGRAM

\$6,722,135

invested in 166 non-profit arts organizations

PROJECT GRANT, ORGANIZATIONS

\$898,352

invested in 47 projects

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURAL CHANGE GRANT

\$166,205

provided to organization exploring and implementing organizational changes specifically related to mergers, permanent strategic partnerships, hibernations, and closures.

PROJECT GRANT PROGRAM – INDIVIDUALS AND COLLECTIVES

\$1,246,862

invested in 86 projects

ORIGINAL PEOPLES INVESTMENT PROGRAM

\$549,996

invested in 38 projects

ARTSHARE PROGRAM

\$644,737

invested in 49 projects

CULTURAL ACTIVATION FUND

\$1,054,171

invested in 64 projects

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT MICROGRANT

\$131,175

granted to 66 artists

CHANGEMAKER PROGRAM

\$152,500

invested in 10 artists

INDIGENOUS ARTIST MICROGRANT

\$48,450

supported 6 projects

HONOURING THE CHILDREN GRANT PROGRAM

\$68,250

granted to 4 artists

Calgary Arts Development is pleased to release the results of its 2021 grant investment programs. A full breakdown of each of the programs can be found at calgaryartsdevelopment.com.

PHOTO

Mini Thni Dancers performing at an event in Cochrane that was held in lieu of Canada Day celebrations. | Photo by: Jujay Yoon

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Our EDIA Journey Accelerated in 2021

As a public agency stewarding public dollars for the benefit of all Calgarians, we aspire to foster a resilient and sustainable arts sector that is safe and welcoming, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, economic status, physical, or mental abilities.

Our core values — equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility — guide how we conduct our work. We strive to design our policies, practices, and programs so that they do not create systemic barriers that are contrary to our values.

Equity. We believe in creating equitable access for Calgarians who have had less opportunity for philanthropic and governmental support due to systemic barriers that exist in our community. This means we strive to mitigate the advantages some people have over others.

Diversity. We believe in supporting a variety of artists and artistic endeavours that reflect our diverse community. This means we strive to put public funds to work for the public good, and by that we mean for the good of all people, not just some.

Inclusion. We believe in engaging diverse voices and perspectives in shaping and furthering all the work that we do. This means people feel like they belong because their knowledge, lived experience, participation, and perspectives are welcomed and valued. It also means that no policy, practice, or program should be decided by us without the participation of members of the communities affected by that policy.

Accessibility. We believe in eliminating barriers that prevent people who encounter physical, mental, or cultural barriers to spaces, programs, and services from participating in the arts. This means we strive to increase our knowledge and actions through a commitment to disability justice.

The arts build bridges, challenge stereotypes, and increase understanding, empathy, and resilience. They provide ways to celebrate our city's rich ethnic diversity, participate in civic life, and create a sense of belonging. We envision a Calgary where there is a resilient and sustainable arts sector that is safe and welcoming for all. This is central to our values as an organization that stewards public dollars for the public good.

Our commitment to equity includes a focus on Indigenous reconciliation, racial equity, disability justice, and gender and sexual diversity. Our EDIA values are embedded in our hiring practices, our group agreements, our grant investment programs, and our community engagement practices.

Grant Investment Programs specifically focused on EDIA

ArtShare, the *Original Peoples Investment Program (OPIP)*, the *Indigenous Artist Microgrant*, and the *Honouring the Children Grant* were all delivered in 2021 to ensure the rich diversity of artists in our city are supported and able to share their stories, cultures, and artistic practices.

Community Engagement

In 2021 we hosted the final gathering of the 2019-2021 *Aisinna'kiiks* dinner and dialogue series, which brought together those who have been on this land longest with those who are newcomers to Calgary. Led by Blackfoot Elder Saa'kokoto, *Aisinna'kiiks* included participation by Indigenous Elders, artists, students, arts and community leaders.



Calgary Arts Development engages with a **community working group** comprising practicing artists and arts educators or arts workers involved in social justice, change making, or equity organizing in community.

In 2021 the community working group helped us improve our hiring process, develop a commitment to equity statement, and investigate methods of conflict resolution. This working group is one way for us to embed community engagement and work towards new levels of shared leadership.

Members of the community working group in 2021 included:

- Alex Felicitas
- asmaa al-issa
- Cesar Cala
- Ebony Gooden
- JD Derbyshire
- Jared Tailfeathers
- jaqs gallos aquines
- Leslie Robertson
- Pam Tzeng
- Saa'kokoto (Randy Bottle)
- Seth Lakota Cardinal Dodginghorse
- Shannon Rusnak
- Toyin Oladele
- Wunmi Idowu

The **Cultural Instigators** are citizen artists who work in community to make things better for and with artists through an anti-racism lens. The Cultural Instigators is a CADA-supported but not CADA-led initiative that supports artists doing projects in community. An update on their major project — *Bringing Power to Truth* — was shared in November 2021 at one of Calgary Arts Development's commitment to equity virtual town halls.



CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT Commitment to Equity Virtual Town Hall

Watch on YouTube

Art for Social Change

In 2021 Calgary Arts Development was invited to participate in an **art for social change national network**. We extended our relationship with the Trico Changemaker Studio as a catalyst to nurture a network of community-based art practitioners and art for social change agents in Calgary. An online gathering took place in 2021 to start the process of getting to know those doing this work in Calgary and how the environment and the network could be strengthened.

VISIT TRICO CHANGEMAKER STUDIO

The **Artist as Changemaker** program is a partnership between Calgary Arts Development and the Trico Changemaker Studio at Mount Royal University.

In 2021 the Artist as Changemaker program supported five artist residencies:

- Barbara Amos partnered with Trico Living Well
- Tito Gomez partnered with Confederation 55+
- Melanee Murray-Hunt partnered with Sagesse
- Kevin Jesuino partnered with Trico Changemaker Studio, and
- Skye Louis and MelVeeX each partnered with ActionDignity

The work of the artists focused on complex problems associated with inclusion, anti-racism, and creative aging. Creativity is being listed by some as one of the most important job skills of the future and artists are often at the forefront of creative thinking and practice. The Artist as Changemaker program investigates the ways artists can use their skills to tackle complex problems and sees the power of the arts to contribute to social change.

ARTIST AS CHANGEMAKER PROGRAM

Reflecting Calgary's Diversity through the Arts

Art = Belonging. The arts bring us together, reflect our values, and tell our stories.

4,039

Number of activities engaging multicultural communities

1,980

Number of activities engaging people with disabilities

1,696

Number of activities engaging Indigenous communities

611

Number of activities engaging 2SLGBTQIA+ communities

Awareness and Connection

Awareness and Connection

Through our [website](#); our newsletter, including the popular [Classifieds](#) section and our [Storytelling Project](#); our social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [CADA Twitter](#), [yycwhatson Twitter](#), [Instagram](#); our online [community directories](#); and our events, we strive to be an information hub for the arts in Calgary.

COVID-19 meant that our own in-person events, such as The Mayor's Lunch for Arts Champions and the Report to Community, were held online. The Mayor's Lunch for Arts Champions took place online in June 2021 with more than 300 guests registered for the event. A highlight of the annual event is the announcement of the [Cultural Leaders Legacy Artist Awards](#).

▲ [READ MORE ABOUT THE 2021 MAYOR'S LUNCH AND CULTURAL LEADERS LEGACY ARTIST AWARDS](#)

The event included a welcome song by Elders Raymond and Greta Many Bears, commentary by Patti Pon, Mayor Naheed Nenshi, and host Dave Kelly, as well as a few video presentations representing a small sampling of how adaptable the arts sector has been during COVID-19.

Recipients of the 2021 Cultural Leaders Legacy Artist Awards were also announced by video featuring interviews with award-winners and sponsors. Each Legacy Award winner received a \$5,000 cash prize funded by a contribution from a local philanthropist or organization with equal matching money from a legacy fund of Calgary 2012. Recipients are selected by a jury of peers.

In 2021, 61 outstanding artists and organizations were nominated, representing some of the artistry that vitalizes our city every day.

Recipients of the 2021 Cultural Leaders Legacy Artist Awards:

The ATB Financial Healing Through the Arts Award was established to recognize artists whose artistic practices encompass health and wellness to improve the wellbeing of individuals, groups, or communities. The award is intended to promote the healing nature of the arts and its critical role as a means of expression for those facing physical or mental health issues.

Recipient: Heather Morigeau

Heather Morigeau demonstrates how arts can empower multiple forms of healing; be it cultural healing, addiction recovery, or living with mental health challenges.

The Calgary Catholic Immigration Society New Canadian Artist Award recognizes that artists from all parts of the world enrich Calgary's arts sector. The award provides new Canadian artists with access to the institutions and support networks available to most Calgary artists.

Recipient: Perpetual Atife

Nigeria-born, saxophonist, songwriter, arts manager, culture enthusiast, and aspiring producer; Perpie is constantly carving expressive means to weave pieces of her life's experiences and dreams, into an open box of treasure — music.

The Mamdani Arts Leadership Award recognizes and rewards the integral role of board members who lend their expertise, talent, and time to support the work of arts organizations and festivals that make Calgary a vibrant and creative city.

Recipient: Arif Ansari

Arif Ansari is the president of the Sled Island Board of Directors. His leadership and dedication have been key to moving the organization forward in recent years and are a testament to his passion for the local arts community.

The RBC Emerging Artist Award was established to recognize up-and-coming, Calgary-based artists. The award recognizes that a thriving cultural community includes artists who choose to live and build their careers in Calgary from the onset.

Recipient: Tank Standing Buffalo

Through talent and hard work, this unconventional and marginalized artist has risen from difficult circumstances, creating opportunities to grow, create work, and succeed. Through his work and dedication, Tank Standing Buffalo has grown into one of Calgary's most up-and-coming filmmakers.

The Rozsa Foundation Emerging Arts Administrator Award recognizes and encourages the role of professional arts managers and administrators who are dedicating their careers to promoting and supporting the work of Calgary's artists and not-for-profit arts organizations.

Recipient: Bianca Miranda

Bianca Miranda is a passionate and skilled emerging arts administrator. Her dedication to social justice and the arts is vital to the betterment of our community.

The SANDSTONE City Builder Award recognizes artists and organizations that make Calgary a better place to live. These individuals are committed to enriching Calgary through an artistic practice or arts program driven by a social impact outcome.

Recipient: Lisa Murphy-Lamb, Loft 112

From its start in 2013 Loft 112, as the brainchild of Lisa Murphy-Lamb, is the vanguard for writers, artists, and neighbours to gather, exhibit, present, and create. Loft 112 is a creative hive where ideas are given space to develop, a place where unheard voices are given a platform and a place of collaboration.

The TD Indigenous Artist Award was established in 2020 by TD Bank Group in partnership with the Calgary Public Library's residency program and aims to recognize the contribution of Indigenous artists, craftspeople, and Knowledge Keepers to Calgary. The award seeks to honour Indigenous cultures and to promote intercultural understanding, perspective-taking, and communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Recipient: Alberta Rose Williams

Often utilizing found or repurposed materials, Alberta Rose seeks to create work that speaks to broader audiences as well as reduce some of the waste prevalent in our society. She feels that this practice is inherent with Indigenous cultures of practicality or using materials to their full potential and acting as a steward of the land.

The Doug and Lois Mitchell Outstanding Calgary Artist Award honours artists who are lauded for their work in the national and/or international arenas and who choose to make Calgary their home. Regardless of career length, these artists are acknowledged by their peers around the world for the calibre of their work and their contributions to the arts.

Recipient: Cheryl Foggo

Cheryl Foggo's commitment to excellence in all her artistic activities has enabled her to generate a body of creative work, earning her respect and acclaim locally, nationally, and internationally.

Thank you to Calgary 2012, the Office of the Mayor, champion sponsor Calgary Foundation, and the cultural leaders whose generosity makes these awards possible: ATB Financial, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, the Rozsa Foundation, Riaz Mamdani, RBC, SANDSTONE, TD Bank Group, and Her Honour, the Honourable Lois E. Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD and His Honour, Honorary Colonel Douglas Mitchell, CM, AOE, QC, LLD.

We thank the Central Public Library, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, and the Rozsa Foundation for their support through artist residencies and courses for the New Canadian Artist, the Doug & Lois Mitchell Outstanding Artist, and the Emerging Arts Administrator.

Our appreciation also goes out to the Arts Patron event sponsors: Aspen Properties, Brookfield Residential, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC), Calgary Foundation, DIALOG, Platform Calgary, University of Calgary, and our media partners Nur Films and Kelly Brothers.

Calgary's Poet Laureate

Natalie Meisner was selected as the fifth Poet Laureate from 2020-2022, her time taking place entirely during the pandemic. Meisner's poetry demonstrates the healing power of the arts and is steeped in empathy and caring. Her legacy project is called *This Might Help* — an online home for recorded audio poems written by and for Calgarians and the world, addressing the challenges facing us right now as a society. It is a public art project with a mandate to put poetry in the hands of everyone. Visit [here](#) to find out more or to listen to the audio poems. Calgary Arts Development also featured one of Natalie's pieces called *The Poem Wants* as our holiday greeting at the end of 2021. You can see a video of this poem [here](#).

Public Art

In March 2021 Calgary Arts Development was selected by The City of Calgary as the future provider of the public art program.

We are honoured to serve as the stewards of the public art program, as it aligns perfectly with what we stand for: our commitment to artists and community, accountability, and engagement; our commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA); our Reconciliation journey; our breadth of knowledge and deep relationship with Calgary’s arts ecosystem; and our vision for a creative, connected Calgary through the arts.

We see the public art program as one tool for community development and belonging. We will strive to run a public art program that is centred on dynamic exchanges between artists and community, that reflects who we are and what we value as a city, that Calgarians can connect with and that reaches everyone in every corner of our city. We believe this program will reflect the rich ethnocultural diversity of Calgary, amplify all stories including Indigenous voices to tell the stories of Mohkínsstisi, and one that will offer many community engagement opportunities for Calgarians. 2021 marked the first year in a three-year transition of this program from The City to Calgary Arts Development.

We still have a long way to go in fully transitioning the program but in 2021 we dipped our toes in by running two public art microgrant programs — an artist-initiated microgrant program and a community-run microgrant program. The community-run microgrant program committed \$97,723 to 11 projects across Calgary. The artist-initiated microgrant program supported four projects with \$140,653.

Public Art continues to be a huge learning curve for us, but we are excited and energized by the process.

[VISIT OUR STAFF AND BOARD PAGE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PUBLIC ART STAFF](#)

Arts-Led City-Building

The Power of Partnerships

Research and community engagement tell us that the arts are important to people for a variety of reasons — as a means of expression; to feel connected to oneself, to others, and to place; to bring meaning to our lives; to offer opportunities for shared experiences with friends and loved ones; to connect to our emotions; to tell our stories; and to engender a sense of belonging.

A vibrant arts scene is extremely important to attract talent and business to our city, to attract visitors, and to make Calgary a great place to make a living and a great place to make a life.

A powerful way to leverage support and develop the arts sector is by ensuring that artists and arts champions are included in important strategies, conversations, and events in our city. Calgary Arts Development works hard to develop reciprocally beneficial relationships with orders of government, civic partners, community organizations, foundations, associations, committees, and individuals in Calgary and beyond.

▲ READ MORE

Throughout 2021, in a spirit of collaboration, we continued to partner with other organizations and agencies who have a shared vision for Calgary. Members of our leadership and managers teams were active participants in a variety of roundtables, collaborations, and workshops whose work centred on the ideas of shared prosperity, inclusion, and social cohesion.

Some of the key work undertaken in 2021 included participation in the following:

- Network of Indigenous Funders of Alberta
- CLIP Council (Calgary Local Immigration Partnership)
- Calgary Anti-Racism Funders Table
- Fine Arts Advisory Council for Calgary Board of Education
- The New Experience Economy longitudinal study
- The Case for Basic Income for the Arts
- Creative Cities Network
- National Hubs for Art for Social Change
- City of Calgary Event Advisory Committee
- Calgary Arts Coalition
- Alberta TriLevel Arts Funder meetings
- Municipal funders from across Canada
- Indigenous Advisory on our Original Peoples Investment Program
- The City's Guiding Circle on public art protocols and engagement
- Pink Flamingo Black Lives Matter murals project
- Shaw Pride murals project
- ACTIVECity Network
- Lanre Ajayi's web series *My City Speaks to Me*
- Authentically Indigenous Art Market
- Arts Commons research on arts and youth in our city, which will be completed in 2022
- Racial Equity in Art Funding workshops conducted by Grantmakers in the Arts
- Panels related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility for the Impact 21 Festival in Ontario
- A national conversation with artists hosted by Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario

We aspire to a future that includes arts and creativity as part of our city's DNA.

Including opportunities to help create conditions for Calgarians to live their most creative lives, we see great benefits to develop the creative economy, increase the vibrancy of downtown, enliven neighbourhoods, and enhance quality of life.

The pandemic caused a lot of people to reexamine what's important to them, and to start to imagine a better future for our city. Having safe ways to gather with others, to celebrate, and to express ourselves is important to Calgarians, and throughout 2021 the arts community was incredibly adaptable, providing many opportunities.

The arts sector provides arts experiences for Calgarians in all wards of the city.

21,955

Total number of arts experiences produced by grantees

4,972

Number of arts activities for youth

194,538

Attendance at education activities of children and youth

Everyday Creativity

Living a Creative Life, Calgary's arts development strategy, encourages everyday creativity for all Calgarians. At the end of 2021 there were more than 200 signatories to the Living a Creative Life strategy. The Storytelling Project is one of the ways we share stories and podcasts about Calgarians who are living creative lives, and our web series highlights the rich diversity of stories about creative Calgarians.

Accessible, appropriate arts spaces play a huge role in increasing vibrancy throughout Calgary and we would like to ensure that neighbourhoods throughout the city are infused with creativity through accessible and vibrant spaces. SpaceFinder Alberta was discontinued in 2020 and Calgary Arts Development undertook community engagement led by J5 to investigate the best way forward. Their recommendation is to promote a variety of space-matching platforms in the market instead of creating a new one.

Our Spaces Consultant, Joni Carroll, has participated in a number of conversations, plans, and strategies around space and how vibrant spaces contribute to a vibrant community, and members of our staff contributed to City strategies such as the Festivals and Events strategy and Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan.

Calgary Arts Development continues to participate on the Fine Arts Advisory for Calgary Board of Education to gain a better understanding of what arts companies are doing in schools and what schools are doing to ensure young people have the greatest access to arts experiences and learning. We also have interactions with the Calgary Catholic School Board, U of C, MRU, AUArts, SAIT, Bow Valley College, and Ambrose University.

cSPACE King Edward, which is a subsidiary of Calgary Arts Development, continues to contribute to the vitality of the Marda Loop neighbourhood. It has been housing a variety of tenants at full capacity since opening day and had been averaging 4,500 weekly visits to the facility pre-COVID. Occupied with tenants ranging from individual artists and collectives to non-profit organizations and local creative enterprises, the space has become a vibrant community hub that features an outdoor market on weekends during the summer.

▲ READ MORE ABOUT CSPACE

cSPACE was created in 2011 as a subsidiary of Calgary Arts Development in partnership with the Calgary Foundation to strategically address a critical demand for creation, production, presentation, and rehearsal spaces that are affordable, sustainable, and collaborative.

cSPACE's first creative hub near Marda Loop in SW Calgary — a revision of the historic King Edward School — opened in 2017 as their flagship project, delivering 47,500 sq. ft. of arts hub, innovative event venue, and coworking space. The facility has remained 100% leased since opening and remains an important anchor for arts, culture, and the community.

Throughout 2021, community events were intermittent due to the live music but in May, outdoor programming returned with the Farmers and Makers Market and live music events.

cSPACE remained active in their creative placemaking efforts and engaged with the arts and local community with the [20/20 Wavelength Project](#). This project extended into 2021 and profiled the creative practices of Calgary artists through exhibitions within the building, on digital platforms, and with public artworks on the grounds. A live event in November showcased Dr. Leroy Little Bear with performances and an artist panel with Andy Moro, Kelly Hampton, Brenn Royal, James Watson, Daniel Pelton, and Wakefield Brewster. A banner project with artist Billie Rae Busby engaged Montessori children and local seniors while animating a vibrant new playspace. A partnership with BUMP saw the collaborative creation of a new mural entitled *We are all treaty people* by Doug Driediger and Nathan Meguinis.

cSPACE also piloted its [Creative Incubator Initiative](#) for 11 artists with peer-learning in branding and communications to support artistic practices responding to the pandemic in innovative ways.

Collaborating with a diverse group of stakeholders, cSPACE also defined its [IDEA Commitment](#) to guide governance and operations of the organization and its work to develop safe creative places for the community.

Vibrant Downtown

Calgary's downtown continues to be the cultural heart of our city and a vibrant arts scene is crucial to creating vibrancy for those who work, live, and visit downtown. The [Downtown Strategy](#) states that "A thriving downtown means a thriving Calgary. The success of our city relies on our downtown being a place where people want to live and be, and where businesses want to set up shop, now, and for decades to come. Downtown must transform toward a vision of a resilient and vibrant downtown for everyone, with welcoming neighbourhoods, active streets, and well-used public spaces." Calgary Arts Development has been participating in many sessions about the downtown strategy, as have artists, arts organizations, and festivals. The arts sector's ability to offer vibrant experiences and welcoming spaces are of great benefit to re-imagining Calgary's downtown.

Creative Economy

In 2021 we continued to support cultural tourism and economic diversification through the arts.

7,938

Total number of artists hired

689

Total full-time equivalent workers

\$121,113,327

Total revenue of arts organizations

\$119,267,588

Total direct economic output

The [Cultural Activation Fund](#) emerged from City Council's November 2018 motion with the intent to connect to economic and tourism indicators and outcomes. As part of our city-building strategic priority, we centred 2021 investments on opportunities that helped Calgarians continue to connect with the arts in safe ways during the pandemic. Many of these events also aligned with Calgary's Music City Strategy, Downtown Strategy, Winter Strategy, and the Creative Economy Strategy. The result was \$979,002 being invested through grants and \$75,170 in sponsorships to 64 projects. Some of the projects funded through this program included Chinook Blast, Pink Flamingo's public art Black Lives Matter mural project, and RISE UP YYC Weekends. A full list of all programs funded in 2021 can be found [here](#).

RISE UP YYC

Calgary Arts Development has been one of the main drivers and supporters of RISE UP YYC, an open-source collaboration with other city-builders such as Tourism Calgary, the Calgary Hotel Association, Calgary Economic Development, the National Music Centre, and Theatre Calgary. RISE UP YYC was created to kickstart the arts industry's recovery, connect Calgarians to safety-conscious live experiences and events, and support local artists and businesses struggling through COVID-19.

▲ READ MORE ABOUT RISE UP YYC

RISE UP YYC has been a powerful initiative, with remarkable results in 2021 including:

- RISE UP YYC Weekends — 31 events over 17 weekends in the summer of 2021 and an additional 20 events in fall/winter.
- Over 100 submissions to the RISE UP YYC song contest with Emily Triggs winning.
- 20 Pop-Up Performances: summer of 2021 providing over 45 hours of free family-friendly programming in communities around the city with more than 40 communities applying to participate. This program received additional support from The City of Calgary, the Friends of the Federation of Calgary Communities, and the Calgary Foundation.
- Hotels Live — there were 33 Hotels Live events in 2021 featuring 124 artists and selling over 1,650 hotel rooms, with 5,013 attendees and \$328,300 in gross ticket sales.
- 7 Relaunch Lunches with over 300 attendees discussing how to keep the creative economy rolling with drive-ins, micro festivals, hotel events, and more.
- A COVID-19 Protocols Handbook specifically created for the live experience economy.
- Leadership on the CreativeCITY Steering Committee with a variety of community members including Mount Royal University, AUArts, CED, Arts Commons, and many more, and the development of an [Ecosystem Report about Calgary's Creative Economy](#) published in June 2021. A creative economy strategy will be released later this year.

Partnerships

Over and above the RISE UP YYC collaboration, we continued to experience the benefits of working together with other agencies who share a strong vision for Calgary. Throughout 2021 members of our leadership and managers teams were active participants in a variety of roundtables, collaborations, and workshops whose work centred on the ideas of shared prosperity, economic diversification, and downtown vibrancy.

▲ READ MORE

Some of the key work undertaken in 2021 included participation in the following:

- Business Sector Task Force hosted by The City of Calgary
- Business Advisory Committee led by The City of Calgary
- City Partners Connect — marketing group supporting LoveYYC, Buy Local, and a number of other local initiatives
- Chinook Blast Executive Committee and marketing sub-committee
- Innovation District focus groups
- [The New Experience Economy](#) — multi-phase research conducted by Stone-Olafson on the live experience economy and public perceptions on the effects of COVID-19
- Experience Economy panel
- City of Calgary Event Advisory Committee, Festival and Events strategy, Microgrant Assessment Panel, and Downtown strategy
- Creative Calgary
- Non-profit resilience lab
- Capacity Builders meetings

Research

Research

We have been dedicated to using research to gain evidence-based knowledge about our sector for a number of years. Data from our own studies as well as external projects build our knowledge and guide our decisions.

Calgary Arts Development is seen as an arts research leader in Canada. Our research activities increase our capacity as a knowledge hub and improve our ability to be a strategic advisor to City Council.

Research projects in 2021 included the following:

[Future of Calgary's Live Experience Economy](#) (Waves 1-3 June 25, August 24, November 20, 2020; Waves 4 and 5 January 29 and April 22, 2021) Calgary Arts Development is one of the sponsors of a longitudinal study Stone-Olafson is undertaking to measure the public's attitudes toward live experiences. It has been extremely helpful in gauging the public's concerns as well as their motivations, behaviours, and pent-up desire to return to in-person gatherings. The learnings from this work will help guide arts organizations as they plan for re-opening.

In 2021 we published our latest [Arts Professionals Survey](#), which was in field in 2020. The report describes a bleak environment for arts professionals in our city. Arts professionals are struggling financially, more than ever. In the past, most survey respondents reported earning low individual and household incomes but never at levels now being reported. 57% of arts professionals reported earning an income under \$35,000 per year, much lower than the Calgary average of \$60,244. And 75% of family incomes fell below the Calgary median, a continuing decrease in household income for those working in the arts.

Another consequence of the lack of work opportunities in our sector due to COVID has been that arts professionals are questioning whether Calgary is a good place to live. In 2017, 57% agreed that Calgary was a good place to be an artist, but in this recent survey that number dropped by almost half with now only 30% of arts professionals agreeing that Calgary is a good place to be an artist. And only 31% of respondents felt that Calgary was supportive of their work.

In 2021 Calgary Arts Development, with support from DataArts, completed the second demographic profile of the non-profit organizations supported through the operating grant program. The report is an update on the [2017 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) survey](#). The survey focused on the demographics of the arts sector, including artists, administrators, and volunteers. The full report will be available in 2022 once related 2021 Statistics Canada census data is available for comparison.

In 2020 our Research and Policy Manager Gregory Burbidge completed his term as Chair of the Cultural Research Network, an international resource-sharing community of practice for people involved in arts and culture related research. With over 1,000 members from around the globe, the network is a collaborative platform that provides opportunities to explore project or professional connections, methodological challenges, technological innovations, standards and practices, and shared infrastructure.

Stories

Stories



Alberta Dance Theatre For Young People



Alexandra Writers Centre Society



Berkley Brady



Calgary International Film Festival, The Ascent



CIF Reconciliation Society



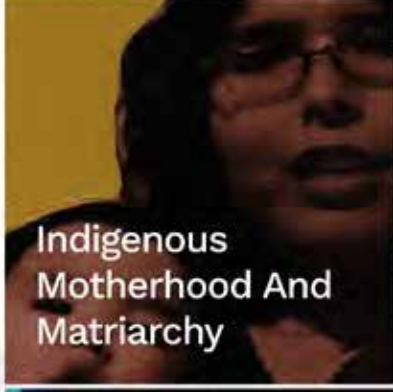
Ebony Gooden



Elephant Artist Relief Society (EAR)



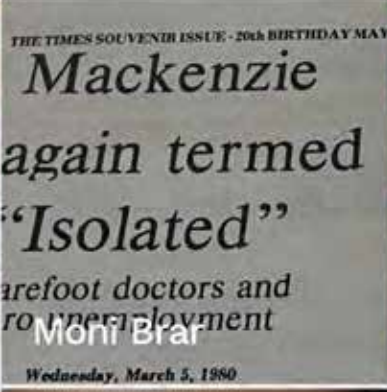
Gayathri Shukla



Indigenous Motherhood And Matriarchy



Mini Thni Dance Troupe



Moni Brar



Mudfoot Theatre



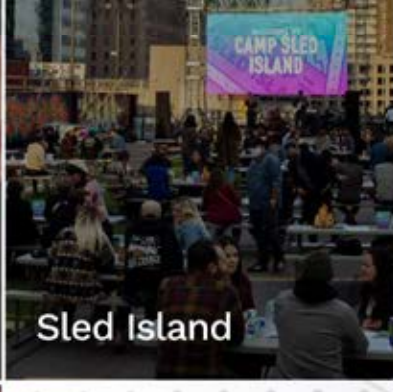
NAPPY Dance Collective



National Music Centre



Rocky Mountain Symphony Orchestra (RMSO)



Sled Island



The Organization For Bipolar Affective Disorders (OBAD)



The Strid



Uji Savage





ADT Junior Company dancers in *Circus Mirandus* | Photo by: Moush Sara-John

Alberta Dance Theatre for Young People

By Meghan Power

Alberta Dance Theatre for young people (ADT) connects youth artists with professional choreographers for 10-12 weeks of mentorship and collaborative creation. The result is an annual production created by children, with children, and for children.

As many as 40 youth performers in grades 1-12 create and perform in ADT's annual dance production. All of ADT's productions are based on children's literature and are accompanied by an original, commissioned musical score.

The funding received from CADA helped to support ADT's 2021 production, *Circus Mirandus*, a play written by the ADT Youth Artists in collaboration with Co-Artistic Director and General Manager, Alicia Ward. The production was inspired by Cassie Beasley's original novel of the same title. CADA funding also allowed for ADT to pilot a Junior Company program that would give dancers in grades 1-4 an opportunity to be introduced to the ADT process with reduced rehearsal commitments from the families. During the 12-week program, ADT youth artists also had the option of participating in a weekend intensive—an out-of-town rehearsal experience where youth artists create, dance, and are immersed in an inspiring and creative learning environment. The out-of-town rehearsal experience allows participating youth an even deeper level of growth and learning, and a chance to connect with each other. This intensive experience felt even more important than in years past, in the context of the isolation and disconnection that many of our youth felt during the pandemic.

"This funding was essential," says Alicia Ward. "It allowed us to offer our weekly Sunday rehearsals for the Junior Company in addition to the weekend intensive. Both opportunities provided time for the dancers to connect with the professional artists who were there to offer their expertise and to connect with their peers. It also meant we were able to pilot the Junior Company without having to worry about budget restrictions, quotas, or having to rely on volunteer time and fundraising. With the success of the pilot, we can now move forward and make the Junior Company program a permanent offering. We've seen first-hand the intrinsic value and positive impact of running the Junior Company program at the same time as our Senior Company, and how our youth dancers support each other, and benefit from the support from each youth artists' family, and how it creates a truly unique, intergenerational learning experience."

ADT believes this type of programming will help to lay a strong foundation for youth artists, on their artistic journeys and continue to help them to grow and develop, not only their craft, but also their confidence, creative leadership, and experience. They are helping to support future generations of artists, performers, and creative leaders that will be thriving, creative forces in Alberta's and Canada's Arts sector.

Alexandra Writers Centre Society

By Meghan Power

The Alexandra Writers Centre Society (AWCS) was established in 1981, by a local Calgary writer, Michael Fray. For over 40 years the centre has been committed to supporting writers in Calgary and Alberta.

They offer a wide range of services for new and emerging writers and offer opportunities for teaching and further development to professional writers. AWCS is probably best known for the quality of classes they offer to their membership and the supportive community that they have cultivated over the last 4 decades. In 2021, AWCS received funding to assist with the publishing of an anthology and a public-facing launch to celebrate the anthology and the centre. "The 40th Anniversary Anthology and launch was a chance for our organization to celebrate four decades of being in the Calgary literary community," says Executive Director, Robin van Eck. "And to celebrate those who have made it possible for us to keep going. And even though we didn't know it at the time, it would end up being the first chance for us to get together, in person, in more than a year and half."

During her time with the AWCS, Robin has seen how the centre supports and nurtures new and emerging writers. "AWCS provides a space where writers can connect and learn their craft and find the power in their voice. We give them the necessary tools to put their work out into the world without fear."

Robin sees literary arts as a relatively small part of Alberta's arts and culture sector. "Writers fight to be seen and heard alongside our theatre and visual arts communities, because writing a book or story takes much longer and the path to publication is challenging." On the path to becoming a writer, one of the biggest challenges a writer will face is being published.

As a published writer herself, Robin knows and understands the challenges that many emerging and even professional writers face in getting their work published: "Despite all this, writers keep plugging away, struggling to make their marks locally, provincially, and nationally. Anything we can do to elevate writers and storytellers in our province will give new wings to collaborative potential with other artists. By receiving this funding, we were able to showcase the great work of our local literary talent in a way that may not have been as accessible to them. The funding strengthens our membership and supports our community that is ever-growing."

Still from the film: *Dark Nature* | by: Jaryl Lim

Berkley Brady

By Meghan Power

***Dark Nature* is Berkley Brady's first feature film and it's already garnering international attention. Produced by Michael Peterson, *Dark Nature*, has been selected by TIFF as one of seven films to be featured at the Cannes Marché du Film, May 2022.**

A feature film is a right of passage for any director and filmmaker and one that has been 14 years in the making for Berkley: "It's the credit you need to show people what you can do—that you can handle the crew, the scale, that you can get it made. I've been working towards this for 14 years. Without Indigenous focused funding, or any grants funding, it would've taken me even longer to get to this milestone."

This isn't the first time that Berkley has applied and received funding from CADA. "Grants have an accumulative effect. Smaller grants over the years have assisted with smaller projects that have helped me prepare for this feature film—to build the stamina, the skill set, and to be able to bring together the creative teams with the skills needed to make a feature film a reality."

Berkley also acknowledges the importance of CADA's funding model and how it is helping to create space for Indigenous focused funding and allowing for artistic autonomy. Berkley was able to use the funding to hire Indigenous people to be part of the crew and to create opportunities for on-the-job mentorship and training. She also believes in the importance of flexibility in grant funding. She was particularly appreciative of how flexible the funding from CADA was. It allowed her to easily adapt to the changing needs of the project, which are bound to happen with any film project, but seemed to be even more prevalent while trying to make a feature film during a pandemic.

These grants are important to the future of film in Alberta and for Indigenous-led projects. "Western Canada is at a disadvantage," Berkley says. "The film industry in Canada is very much based in either Ontario or Vancouver—not a lot in-between. Having the funding to make these types of quality projects is what is growing Alberta's reputation in the film industry and increasing the presence of Indigenous people in the film industry. It gives us the ability to not only offer professional training, but produce projects that can compete internationally, and be produced locally. These funds help to build an Indigenous working community, in Alberta and in Canada's film industry—a network that continues to grow, and work together to support each other."

Photo: The Ascent | Photo by Michael Grondin

Calgary International Film Festival, *The Ascent*

By Meghan Power

Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) is always experimenting with new ways of adding to the film festival experience. The history of film and the development of the film industry is intertwined with art, technology, and innovation, and so, a collaboration between CIFF and Beakerhead seemed inevitable.

"Before we knew what we wanted to work on together, we knew we wanted it to be something big," CIFF's Executive Director, Steve Schroeder explains. "Something that would be emblematic of both festivals' passion for imagination, creative storytelling, and forward thinking."

With the sudden onset of a global pandemic and a drastic change in how Calgary's festivals operated and with some having to be cancelled, CIFF and Beakerhead wanted to offer Calgarians an experience that would provide escape, while contributing to a collective sense of hope and courage that was needed in the face of Covid.

Enter David. David is the largest marionette in North America. David is 34-feet tall, fully articulated, and comprises 800 feet of ½ inch aluminum rods, 1,200 feet of rope, and various pulleys. David was originally created by The Underground Circus (Vancouver), in 2009, for the opening of the Vancouver Convention Centre, but since has been featured at many events across North America.

Together, CIFF and Beakerhead came up with the idea for *The Ascent*, a live, filmed event in which David, assisted by a team of puppeteers and operators, climbs 39 stories of Oxford Properties' Devon Tower, in Calgary's downtown. As David climbed, audience members engaged in a narrative that followed David through a series of human emotions: fear, doubt, anger, joy, love, and acceptance. David's emotional and physical journey was accompanied by installations, *Steely T* (a giant rolling, flaming steampunk turtle), *Nibbles* (Beakerhead's big bunnies), and film clips and provided by CIFF, projected onto the side of Eau Claire Market, to help illustrate what David was experiencing.

The entire event took approximately three hours and was cinematically captured by a multi-camera shoot with drones and multiple ground cameras (an engineering feat of its own). Over 8000 audience members gathered in-person and online to experience *The Ascent*.

According to Steve, funding for *The Ascent*, and for organizations like CIFF and Beakerhead to even have the capacity to experiment and collaborate is essential. Collaborations between organizations require big investments. Not just money, but time, expertise, and equipment. A lot of time and energy is spent just on learning how to collaborate, brainstorming, experimenting, and failing before success is achieved.

"CADA's forward-thinking funding is allowing for organizations, like us, to play together, take risks together, fail together, and ultimately succeed together," Schroeder says. "And at the heart of creativity and innovation is where many different fields intersect. It's within these spaces that creativity and innovation are cultivated. Each collaboration, each event, each artistic project, or scientific endeavor has an accumulative effect – a cultural vibe that continues to fuel more innovation, creative thinking, and forward growth that ultimately is helping to propel Calgary forward as a city that cultivates and attracts creativity and innovation across all sectors."



People walking at Pokaiks – The Children: Orange Shirt Day event, 2021 | Photo by Albert Woo

CIF Reconciliation Society

By Meghan Power

Colouring it Forward (CIF) Reconciliation Society, “delivers art-based workshops and events that provide education through Indigenous ways of knowing and promotes healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.”

Diana Frost, an Algonquin Métis from Quebec, is the founder of the Colouring it Forward Society and social enterprise. In 2021, CIF Reconciliation Society received funding for two events: Pokaiks —The Children: Orange Shirt Day event and a public, traveling art exhibit on the theme of Truth and Reconciliation featuring adult Indigenous emerging and established artists.

Pokaiks – The Children: Orange Shirt Day is an annual event for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come and walk together for a common issue and hold space for conversations. “Our 2021 event was very special last year,” says Founder and organizer Diana Frost. “As the world learned of the discovery of children in mass graves at different Residential Schools in what we call Canada. As an organization, we are determined to walk in honour of residential school survivors, and their families, to commemorate the children that we lost, not only on the day of our event, but every year going forward. We welcome everyone to join us in showing love, honour, and support for positive change for our beloved community.”

This event was also important for Elders, storytellers, performers, and artists who haven’t been able to share their stories, music, beadwork, and other craft work in public market spaces since the start of the pandemic. For many, their livelihood depends on being able to sell their crafts, share their stories, and music.

The public art exhibit features 18 pieces of Indigenous art that focus on Indigenous issues, healing, and Truth and Reconciliation. It first appeared at South Centre Mall, in Calgary. We are grateful to South Centre for helping in the design and funding of this exhibit. Each piece of art is accompanied with a “reconciliAction” offering inspiration to non-Indigenous people—actions they can take to promote healing and furthering the process of Truth and Reconciliation in Alberta and Canada. Funding has helped this exhibit to travel within Calgary and to surrounding areas. It has been on display at Glenmeadows School, Market Spot YYC, and is currently on display at Windsong Heights School (Airdrie). Mount Royal University will host the exhibit for September and October 2022, and The University of Lethbridge will host the exhibit next June 2023.

“This type of funding is critical,” says Diana. “There’s not a lot of funding available for arts events that’s dedicated to funding Indigenous artists and Elders. Especially funding that accommodates Indigenous protocol and understands that Indigenous ways aren’t the same as western ways.” Diana also believes that this type of funding is essential—community development through economic development—building relationships and opportunities to collaborate with non-Indigenous organizations, like the Calgary Board of Education and the Catholic School Board, and to create more opportunity for education and understanding among non-Indigenous folk about Indigenous issues, which is crucial to the process of Truth and Reconciliation and healing within Indigenous communities.

Ebony Gooden | Photo by Mike Lee

Ebony Gooden

By Meghan Power

Ebony Gooden, a Black Deaf digital media artist and consultant first moved to Calgary in 2016 from Washington, D.C., USA, “There was such a diversity of culture and people within that geographic region and then I came to Calgary, and I lost all of that. I was the only Black Deaf artist, here, in the city and that really forced me to shift from being an artist to also being an advocate.

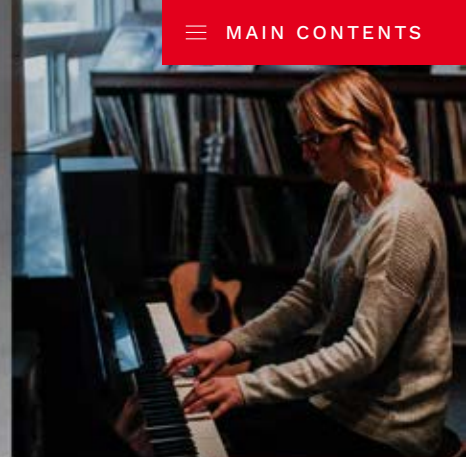
I've had to do more in the way of educating the Black community about deafness and being disabled and educating the Deaf community about racism and making it a safe space for any BIPOC artist and anyone in the BIPOC community.

When Covid hit, it was already a very difficult year. There was all the trauma surrounding Black communities, with the murder of George Floyd, coming to the surface. And then, amidst all that, was this scramble for many businesses to shift online and that's when people finally realized—wow! There's a big gap here. The accessibility had been seriously lacking and now, they needed to fill in the gaps, on the fly, and figure out what to do about accessibility.

In 2021, Ebony received a CADA individual artist grant for Professional Development, to update her website and better reflect the work she was doing as a consultant and accessibility advocate: “We often take it for granted that Deaf people may not be completely fluent in English, in the same way that someone who has learned the language through hearing and speaking, is fluent in English. ASL is a completely different language with its own syntax and grammar. So having both options increases accessibility and helps to remove those barriers. I worked with web developer Shannon Rusnak, a local Deaf web developer and digital media artist. I focused on accessibility for Deaf and DeafBlind users and making my website an example that clients could reference to see the different kinds of ways to offer accessibility. The new website has ASL for any English content, closed captioning, transcript, voice over and image description. You can't just have one and assume it is accessible.”

“One of my favourite experiences of this website project was filming my vlog, *Deafinitely Digital*. I wanted voice over interpretation done by a Black interpreter, along with written transcripts. While, interpreters are trained to be ethical and to suit individual needs, culturally there is that lived experience that can't be learned. Working with a Black interpreter, to have my stories represented by a voice that matched how I was signing was—wow! I mean, just that experience alone was awesome! Without the CADA funding, I wouldn't have been able to hire a Black interpreter, because there are none in Alberta. If I, or any Black, Deaf person, wants to hire one, we must cover their travel costs, and most budgets can't accommodate that cost.”

Ebony explains that while funding bodies, like CADA, have support for Deaf artists, there's often not enough funds to support the accessibility needs, connected to those artists: “We have grants for Deaf (and disabled) artists to support our work, but it's still missing the funding for the artists' accessibility needs.”



Elephant Artist Relief Society

Elephant Artist Relief Society (EAR)

By Meghan Power

Elephant Artist Relief Society (EAR) is a registered charity that provides practical resources to artists in the Calgary region, to help sustain their well-being and livelihood and, in turn, contribute to a vibrant cultural sector.

Many artists in Alberta are working from gig-to-gig and living paycheque-to-paycheque, they often don't have access to regular health benefits. EAR has been trying to provide that safety net for artists, giving them the space they need to focus their energy on their practice and creating, instead of spending time trying to meet their basic human needs.

EAR came into being in 2007, when a group of artists came together to help a fellow artist in need amidst a health crisis. Since then, EAR has become evermore aware of how vulnerable artists are, when struck with an unexpected hardship, or health and medical emergencies. The average annual income for a visual artist, for example, is among the lowest in the country and access to extended benefits is rare.

EAR's Emergency Relief Funds can aid any individual, professional, artist residing in Calgary, who is in urgent need due to an unforeseen medical emergency, or other catastrophic event. In addition to health benefits, EAR also offers professional development and wellness programs. EAR's newest programs available to artists are Studio E, a twice monthly inclusive gathering that offers open conversation and networking opportunities, as well as in-person support; and access to group health insurance and benefits, all thanks to recent CADA funding.

As a small non-profit EAR relies on many different funding sources. According to Marianne Elder, EAR administrator, "This type of funding means a lot. It allows us to empower artists to be artists. We're a small non-profit, but we're maturing and growing, and it is exactly this kind of funding that is helping us to grow and support more artists." With this financial support, EAR has been able to shift to being a more proactive resource for artists. It has also allowed for them to develop and offer more programs that support the well-being of artists in a variety of different ways. But most importantly it will allow EAR to be more sustainable in the long term and therefore, make EAR's programs and benefit programs more comprehensive and more sustainable.

"The funding from CADA is particularly helpful," says Marianne, "there is an element of flexibility built into it and that allows us to apply the funding to our mandate and our programming vision, which is based on what we know Alberta artists need, instead of us having to try and make programs that fit a more rigid funding model and may not fully serve the needs of Alberta's artists."



Gayathri and Elena Esina | Photo by: Krunal Shukla

Gayathri Shukla

By Meghan Power

Landed: Transformative Stories of Canadian Immigrant Women, is a meaningful collection of stories and unique experiences of immigrant women, that illuminate their contributions and challenges of beginning new lives in a new country and within a new culture.

For Gayathri Shukla, a Calgary-based writer, founder of Campfire Kinship, and EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion) strategist, the initial goal was to get between 10 and 12 stories for the anthology. "Once the call was put out, we received over 60 submissions and 37 of those made the final selection." Each selected author was also invited to partake in a series of writing workshops led by Gayathri, in a method called Guided Autobiography that uses creative exercises and prompts to help jog memories and inspire creativity, helping people get their life stories and memories out of their heads and onto paper.

Gayathri describes the process of going through a Guided Autobiography workshop as a collaborative and affirming process of solidarity, especially for the women involved with this project due to their common experiences of love, loss, and belonging as a collective and as individuals. "I do a lot of storytelling in a corporate setting. I help organizations use story-based training and media that empower their teams to become more inclusive and celebrate their diversity. When I'm working in a corporate environment, the stories shared stay within groups. It's verbal. This anthology is giving diverse stories a physical presence and a permanence through paper and publishing. It's also opening the doors to Alberta's arts sector for women who may not have seen themselves as part of Calgary's storytelling community, or even as artists themselves. It's opening Alberta's arts sector to a wider range of arts and culture making for a more rich and culturally diverse community of artists."

Gayathri believes the funding for this project was essential. "This funding allowed me to hire a project manager, an editor, and other creative team members. Without it, this amazing collection of stories would not be available to readers. The women telling their stories in this anthology are from all over the world. Through the process of telling and writing their stories, they ultimately became a source of support and inspiration for each other. The topic of immigration was even more relevant given the war unfolding in Ukraine at the time many were writing their own stories. Many participants in this group have experienced wars and displacement. It was an honour to witness our cohort transcend all borders and uplift each other, representing 30 countries of origin, including Ukraine and Russia."

Gayathri is grateful for the funding and the opportunity to make this project a reality and contribute to the vitality of arts in Calgary. "I see this project as being on-going. There are so many more stories to share. As the world becomes more polarized and divided, and people are forced to leave their homelands and migrate due to climate change and on-going violence, like war, I see storytelling as a way of connecting over our common experiences as humans and helping us to build more inclusive communities."



Blackfoot Confederacy | by: Sable Sweetgrass

and must never be neglected or abused.

Indigenous Motherhood and Matriarchy

By Meghan Power

***Indigenous Motherhood and Matriarchy* was a series of three group exhibitions held in different locations around Calgary.**

The exhibitions were curated by Saulteaux/Métis Curator, Autumn Whiteway, with assistance from Exhibition Coordinator, Miriam Fabijan. According to Autumn, "the exhibition was an exploration of the timeless and timely subject of motherhood and matriarchy through an Indigenous lens." The funding received from CADA helped support the second and third exhibitions.

The works presented were selected by Autumn for how they illustrate the profound impact colonialism has had on matriarchal systems and traditional child rearing practices. "Despite this, Indigenous women display a fierce resilience; providing strength to our communities, reclaiming, and maintaining traditions, and passing on wisdom for the generations to come."

It was late in 2019, when Autumn originally agreed to curate a group exhibition for Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society; however, with a reorganization of MT7, shortly before the pandemic, Autumn and Miriam decided to work together to curate the exhibition independently. Autumn began working on the project within days of the premature emergency birth of her son. For Autumn, this project was about reclaiming ancestral traditions and bringing them to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. And so, it was important how Indigenous womxn and Indigenous views on matriarchy and motherhood in Alberta and across Turtle Island were represented: "It was very important for me to include the voices of Two Spirit and Transgender mothers and womxn... as I feel they are vital and have been somewhat silenced by shifting attitudes resulting from colonialism."

The exhibitions have had a wide reach across Turtle Island through online exhibitions, Zoom sessions with artists, Elders, and media interviews most of which were made available online. Autumn also created an educational package about *Indigenous Motherhood and Matriarchy* for distribution to students and agencies in Alberta to help revitalize ceremonial practices surrounding rites of passage in Indigenous communities in Alberta.

"Funding for Indigenous creatives is extremely important to allow artists a means of expression outside of the tourism and collectors art market." Autumn points to a study (featured in a recent issue of Canadian Art) that showed that Indigenous artists make 68 cents to the dollar relative to their non-Indigenous counterparts. "Without funding, many projects may never come to fruition due to financial barriers," says Autumn. "I'm very grateful for the opportunities that CADA has provided to me through their funding of the *Indigenous Motherhood and Matriarchy* and *Mino-Pimatisiwin: Reclaiming the Good Life* exhibitions, and the Original Peoples Investment Program. This funding kickstarted my career as an emerging artist and curator and has led to many other opportunities. These opportunities have given me a new career path that allows me to provide for my family. I've been curating for Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society for nearly a year and was selected for the Emerging Curator Fellowship with Alberta Foundation for the Arts. My exhibition, *Cross Cultura*, based on their collections, will be exhibited later this year. As an artist, I have been extremely busy. I'm currently working on projects for a large grocery chain, course development related to TRC #92, and activist art for a Calgary landmark."

Mini Thni Dance Troupe | Photo by: Juju Yoon

Mini Thni Dance Troupe

By Meghan Power

Mini Thni Dance troupe had their first performance in 2015, the same year they officially became a dance troupe.

Nikki Clarke, founding member, recalls how the troupe came together: "I was asked by a friend if I could bring some dancers to an event to perform. At the time, it was only intended for a one-time performance, but after the event I was approached by a few people asking for contact information and if we took bookings—and ever since then we've been performing as a troupe. The group comprises girls ages 14-20 and they perform to traditional pow wow music and contemporary music by various First Nation artists."

Funding from CADA and other Alberta granting bodies, has helped the group cover the costs of making and maintaining the regalia, hoop dancing equipment, and PA equipment all of which are essential to their performances. CADA funding has also helped them afford to hire a professional photographer to take photos of their performances and to rent a dance studio where they can rehearse routines for upcoming performances. "Having a space to rehearse has been important in giving the dancers space to practice and be able to time their counts and dance moves more efficiently," says Nikki. "We were also able to receive guidance from various more experienced performers on how to present ourselves and how to grow professionally as a group. Without this funding we wouldn't have had the opportunity to learn about what it takes to maintain originality and how to stand-out as performers."

Funding for First Nations artists is essential. According to Nikki, grants like the one from CADA, gives First Nations artists the opportunities, the resources, and the financial ability to showcase their art in a way that is true to them: "I'm truly grateful to CADA for this funding; it has given us more confidence, as emerging artists, in our ability to perform and succeed at a professional level. It has also helped us to focus our creative vision and set goals. We believe we have the drive needed to break out internationally and perform in bigger venues and to share our culture and traditional dance with other non-Indigenous people, with a contemporary modern style."

"Our dancers are proud to represent their community, families and showcase the Stoney Nakoda people and our style of dancing and help audiences learn about issues that affect all First Nations across Canada. And while we're still learning and growing as performers, we're dreaming big! Our dream would be to produce a large cultural performance, bringing together performers and singers from all different cultures, including performers we admire and who have inspired us—hopefully we can make it happen! So, if the HalluciNation (formally A Tribe Called Red) reads this, the Mini Thni dance troupe would love to collaborate with you!"

again termed “Isolated”

newspaper article from the archives of the Toronto Public Library. Photo by: Moni Brar

Moni Brar

By Meghan Power

Punjabi-Canadian poet and writer Moni Brar is currently on an “intergenerational journey through colonization, displacement, trauma, and resilience,” as she delves deep into her family’s social and political history, while researching a poetry memoir about Punjabi-Canadian families.

“For this project, I’ve been gathering stories, observations, and conversations. My research has included formal sources, like accessing archives for the historic elements to the stories that I’m telling, and also digging into personal archives, like drawing out the memories and stories that still live in my 80-year-old mother.”

“Receiving funding from CADA has had a significant impact on this project. By allowing me to set aside time, hold space, and gather resources, I’ve been able to dig deeper into poetic inquiry and make headway I wouldn’t have been able to otherwise,” says Moni.

One of Moni’s goals with this memoir is to explore the vulnerability of the individual wound with a feminist lens. How politics, social control, and female oppression have contributed, or been catalysts for these wounds: “At first, I thought this project was about my family, but it’s much bigger than that. Now, I see this project as helping to reconcile two worlds—a double consciousness that I embody, as an immigrant. My work is inherently about bridging the personal and the political, the past and the present, and intimate pain to collective hope.”

As an emerging writer, Moni has found this project has deepened her connection to the Alberta arts community, while at the same time, amplified her voice in advocating for BIPOC writers. “I believe this project helps to invite more voices to the table, diversify writing communities in Alberta and in Canada, and bring readers into experiences that they may not know otherwise. I also hope that my work will inspire other BIPOC writers to find their voices and share their stories.”

“I’d like to express my gratitude for this funding,” says Moni. “It has given me the courage to keep moving forward, to keep writing, and to continue growing as a writer. I’m immensely grateful that CADA saw value in my work and wanted to support me on this journey. The impact is a deepened artistic practice and increased self-worth as an artist. I’m applying for writer retreats and working with established writers whose mentorship is helping me develop my voice and, in turn, helping me grow as a writer and a poet. I believe it takes a village to raise an emerging writer, and CADA has connected me with that village”



Mudfoot Theatre cast and creative team (Photo by: Caitlind Brown)

Mudfoot Theatre

By Meghan Power

Mudfoot is an independent Calgary-based theatre company under the artistic direction of Kathryn Smith and Geneviève Paré. Mudfoot works collaboratively with interdisciplinary artists and is focused on the environment, using reclaimed materials, collaborative culture, and puppetry.

In 2021, Mudfoot received funding to produce a musical folk tale. *Yabber* is a tale about one person trying to better society, save the environment, and fight capitalism and discovering that it takes more than one person to save the world.

CADA funding is key for artists dedicated to creating new, independent work. Often artists must rely on larger organizations and funding bodies for money that often comes with a lot of strings attached. Kathryn Smith, co-artistic director, uses the following analogy to describe the CADA funding application: "It's a little like an ice cream shop. Artists and organizations can build their own sundae, choose the flavours of ice cream they want, add different toppings, and ultimately create an application that's customized to the work and how it's envisioned."

The funding from CADA allowed for Kathryn and Geneviève to fully develop this work, from conception to production, and to make sure that the artists involved in the project were paid fairly. It was important for Kathryn and Geneviève making sure the artists felt seen and their time and craft valued—especially during a pandemic when so many theatres and performance venues were forced to close their doors.

"Fortunately, we were able to get funding to cover the three phases of the *Yabber* project," says Kathryn. "Phases one and two focused on development. In phase one we rummaged for materials to use in the production to create masks, puppets, and instruments. We also created a mini documentary about gathering the materials at Bin Diver, a local business dedicated to creating new possibilities for discarded materials."

As part of phase two, *Yabber* was showcased at this year's International Festival of Animated Objects as a work in progress. The International Festival of Animated Objects Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting mask and puppet related performance and providing space and time for the incubation of creative projects.

Phase three is slated for 2023 and will hopefully see *Yabber* tour around Calgary, ideally visiting each quadrant. Mudfoot has converted a horse-trailer into a travelling stage, which keeps venue costs low and allows for free admission to audiences. Mudfoot usually receives support from local community centres by way of a power source and a place to park the trailer and set up the stage. Other than that, the production comes at almost no cost to the community.

"Having the financial funding from CADA, has not only allowed us to do all this, but has also made us feel seen and supported," says Kathryn. "Having granting bodies that look at unconventional creative projects and can recognize the heart and the passion behind them is so important to the artists and creative teams behind them, and to creating a vibrant and innovative arts sector in Alberta."



Not-Another-Political-Playground-Y'all (NAPPY)

NAPPY Dance Collective

By Meghan Power

Creative partners and co-founders of NAPPY Dance Collective, Tiara Matusin and Cindy Ansah first met in the University of Calgary Dance program: “Our vision began with acknowledging our personal lived experiences in response to the media’s renewed investment in the Black Lives Matter movement.

Reflecting on our dance upbringing, we understood the all-too-common feeling of being the only Black person, and sometimes the only person of color, in the studio. We also recognized that Black contemporary dancers are severely underrepresented in Mohkinstsis, not because they don't exist (an assumption that we aim to debunk), but because of the Eurocentric history of racial discrimination and elitism that pervades professional dance structures.

“NAPPY Dance Collective, an emerging all-Black contemporary dance collective, is committed to emboldening the arts, the spaces they inhabit, and exposing them as capable environments for nurturing the pursuits of Black creatives. NAPPY is an acronym for Not A Political Playground Y'all. The history of the word “nappy” is tangled in Eurocentric beauty standards that were used to justify painting Black bodies as “lesser than” their white counterparts. The term has historically been used to negatively describe Afro-textured hair as dry, kinky, coarse, and dirty. We plan to confront and reclaim the term to describe that which is unique and beautiful and invite Black creatives to unapologetically embrace their multifaceted selves.”

The event, a 75-minute dance production, was held in Mohkinstsis' GRAND Theatre. Originally it was a stand-alone event with two performances, April 29, 2022 (International Dance Day) and April 30th, but the event grew into an immersive community-based experience with the addition of a Black business market held in the lobby, featuring Black entrepreneurs and artisans, a curated gallery space, and a 30-minute artist talk featuring the creative team, and on closing night, a special pre-show concert and celebratory afterparty.

Both Cindy and Tiara acknowledge that funding for Black artists in Alberta and Canada is essential: “Throughout the planning process of our endeavor we made economic empowerment a priority. Black artists continue to be underpaid or not paid at all as opportunities are scarce for our demographic and we continue to see organizations evade conversations around reparations and equal pay,” says Cindy. “The tendency of contemporary dance to favor white artists proves its failure to acknowledge acts of resistance and reclamation that underpin social justice movements. Contemporary dance therefore cannot exist without BIPOC people revolutionizing the world.”

Tiara adds, “Change won't happen overnight, but we believed that opening the space up to welcome Black bodies as capable movers, at all abilities to showcase and represent our multifaceted selves, will have a trickling effect, and encourage the next generation of artists to also pursue dance.”

Both Tiara and Cindy believe “BIPOC artists must transcend their designation as the “first” to breach racial barriers in their respective fields. We want Black creatives to know that they are more than just objects that lend legitimacy to companies that fail to live up to principles of diversity and inclusion. We are immensely proud of what we were able to accomplish with the funding we received and the support from our community. We are keeping sustainability at the forefront of our pursuits. We ask that institutions and funding bodies do the same.”



Devon Cooper, Busker series at the National Music Centre | Photo provided by NMC

National Music Centre

By Meghan Power

“For any community to be vibrant, music is essential, in my opinion,” says Adam Fox, director of programs at the National Music Centre. “It’s a universal language.”

For NMC, being located on Music Mile, the musical heart of Calgary, it’s only fitting that you should turn a corner and discover music that might be outside of the genre that you normally listen to, or the type of concert, or music event you might choose to attend. It opens the door to discovery and ultimately expands people’s musical tastes.”

Unfortunately, at the height of the pandemic, NMC was forced to lay off approximately 70% of its team, and scale back their programs, performances, and exhibitions due to Covid restrictions. Along with all live music venues being shut down in 2020, many of Calgary’s and Alberta’s musicians who relied on live shows and making their living in a gig economy, struggled to support themselves during the pandemic.

Fortunately, for the NMC, they were able to apply for funding through CADA’s Rise Up grant, specifically designated for pop-up style performances. This allowed NMC to not only help musicians continue to perform and get paid, but it also helped NMC keep its doors partially open during a very difficult time and help to bring vibrancy to the city during a time when the general morale was low. And made performances accessible and free to those who, in the past, may not have been able to afford or access NMC. Rise up funding helped to cover overhead (venue) costs and collaborate with cultural presenters that NMC had not partnered with before, like Calgary Pride and Casa de Mexico.

“The funding we received for these programs allowed us to connect with the local music scene on a deeper level,” says Adam. “As a nationally mandated organization, it is important for us to remain committed to our hometown and the fact that we also serve the communities of Treaty 7. Our ability to keep our doors open to the local community, in turn, helps to keep the community engaged and supporting local artists.”

According to Fox, NMC and many other arts organizations were drastically diminished by Covid. Financial losses and the inability for live community engagement made it difficult for NMC to present live music and offer a variety of programs for artists, which affected how some musicians sustain their craft: “We can’t quite talk about growth (in the music and cultural sectors) yet. But funding like this has been a triage—and will be important in helping new growth take hold and flourish. But for now, this is about re-establishing connections and engagement.

“Looking forward, it’s good to see how traditional arts funding bodies have started to understand and see the specific and changing needs of music organizations and music venues, in comparison to some of the more traditional performance venues,” says Adam. “And that, in my opinion, is very encouraging for the future of music in Calgary and Alberta.”

Carlos Foggin | Photo by: Phil Crozier

Rocky Mountain Symphony Orchestra (RMSO)

By Meghan Power

Rocky Mountain Symphony Orchestra (RMSO), established in 2016, seeks to grow and serve communities of Orchestral Music lovers in small towns by delivering engaging Orchestral experiences in unique ways and places.

"We have a wide range of musicians, of all ages and all walks of life," says Carlos Foggin, founding member and conductor. "This is just one of many things that makes RMSO unique compared to professional Orchestras. Many of our musicians have other jobs, but music is their passion and they have studied it all their lives. Our youngest performer is 19 and our oldest performer is 80. We also have many student-performers who are on the path to being professional Symphony orchestra musicians. In the last six years, five of our younger members have been hired by professional orchestras."

This funding was particularly important to RMSO, in 2021, because of how deeply impacted they were by the restriction of public events and performances due to the pandemic. Thanks to CADA's Rise Up funding, RMSO was able to cover the cost of the venues and performers. "Being able to host smaller events was essential for many small community venues that ran the risk of bankruptcy," explains Carlos. "And allowed us to guarantee our performers were paid regardless of ticket sales." They were also able to offer a special concert that was free for essential service workers and helped to bring a bit of respite for many workers who had been working over-time, fighting burn-out and risking their personal health in unprecedented conditions.

"This type of funding is important to an organization like RMSO. Generally, traditional symphony orchestra events happen in large city centres and due to the huge scale of the art form, tickets are prohibitively expensive and not accessible to everyone who may want to experience the beauty of a live classical concert," says Carlos. "RMSO strives to ensure that live classical performances are accessible to those who may have felt like larger symphony concerts were inaccessible to them for any number of reasons: financial, status, education, or transportation.

"Our work helps contribute to local economies. Most orchestras are in a city and perform in one main, large performance venue, or perhaps they tour a symphony circuit that only features them at large concert halls. So, in turn, it's always nearby businesses that reap the benefit of pre and post concert business. RMSO allows for local businesses, within the community they are performing, to also reap the benefits of pre and post concert business."

One of RMSO's main goals is to make western classical music more accessible. Carlos feels that the funding opportunity that CADA offered made a big impact for the orchestra, "It's amazing to see how this new funding model, from CADA, opens opportunities for new performing venues, and audiences who may have never considered attending a classical concert before. Also, CADA made the process from application to cheque-in-hand very easy and quick, which helped us keep our programming relevant to changing times."



Camp Sled Island | Photo by: Elyse Bouvier

Sled Island

By Meghan Power

Sled Island Music and Arts Festival has been around since 2007; it features live music, visual artists, film, and comedy, featured at approximately 20 different venues within Calgary’s downtown core.

“We program artists from all over the world,” says Executive Director, Maud Salvi. “While most of them are already established artists, we are known as a discovery festival, meaning that we also invite many emerging artists from Calgary, Alberta, and from across the country. When people come to Sled Island, they expect to be exposed to, and discover new music as part of their experience.”

Maud believes it would be almost impossible for festivals like Sled Island to exist without funding from organizations like CADA. “It allows us to hire local artists, which helps them feel valued and part of the local community and economy. If these types of creative opportunities for artists in Calgary or Alberta aren’t available, we’ll lose them to the cities that have more music infrastructure and opportunities like Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver—that’s a huge loss for Calgary and Alberta.

Like many music festivals, Sled Island was forced to cancel the festival due to the pandemic. “We were fortunate enough to retain our funding from CADA to support various new initiatives like our Rock Lotto,” says Maud. “Normally the Rock Lotto happens as one of our annual fundraisers, we invite 45 local artists to put their names in a hat – we pull names and create bands. These random bands have the rest of the day to meet and collaborate, creating three or four original songs that they perform live later that night. It’s a completely unique experience for the artists and audiences.”

Because of the pandemic, and in lieu of the festival, Sled Island decided to experiment and try holding the Rock Lotto remotely and on a much grander scale and instead of only inviting local artists they decided to invite musicians from across the country to play. “Offering the Rock Lotto during a time when we couldn’t run our festival gave us a unique and creative way to help artists make money during a time when live shows weren’t happening,” explains Maud. “It was a unique opportunity for us to create collaborative moments for musicians nationally. Many of the artists involved didn’t know each other, nor were they familiar with each other’s music and so we ended up with bands that had truly diverse music styles.”

“It was important for us to make sure that the Rock Lotto was a paid gig for the musicians involved. This project had a high-value impact creatively, socially, and artistically. The funding was critical. Without it this programming would not have happened. It was so great to be able to offer a different way for musicians to come together and create an album, at the height of the pandemic, that just wouldn’t have happened otherwise. CADA’s funding fully supported the infrastructure needed to make this happen.”



Perspectives-From-Within (Installation view) with Brad Neczyk Sharon (Head and Neck Cancer) and Richard Boulet (background) | Photo by: Dick Averno

The Organization for Bipolar Affective Disorders (OBAD)

By Meghan Power

“Many people find it difficult to talk about mental health, depression, or suicidal ideation, and may also find it difficult to attend a support group with strangers,” says Dick Averno, artistic director for creative projects led by The Organization for Bipolar Affective Disorders (OBAD).

“Conversely, art can visualize and portray mental health in a non-judgmental setting, opening doors to peer support for people who may previously have struggled with finding help. Creativity and self-expression are powerful tools to promote mental wellness, build self-esteem and reduce stigma, both for artists and community members who can benefit from shared experiences.”

A non-profit organization and registered charity, OBAD has undertaken numerous art-based public programs, through their creative arm SITEc PROJECTS, also providing access to free peer support groups for anyone, including family members, who may be impacted by mood disorders. With funding from CADA, OBAD has been able to break new ground by programming larger arts projects such as the major art exhibition *Perspectives From Within*, featuring visual artwork that critically engages with mental health. Curated by Dick Averno in partnership with Contemporary Calgary, the exhibit was about promoting individual and collective mental wellbeing by fostering personal self-reflection.

The potential for art to help optimize mental health is clear, says Dick. “Although one’s mental self-expression is often invisible, visual art, which also hinges on self-expression, can make mental wellness visible.” All artworks were based on lived experience of mental illness, with six Albertan artists sharing insight to the highs and lows of their circumstances. Depression, anxiety, addiction, self-harm, bipolar disorders, and schizophrenia were some of the realities laid bare.

Being able to support neurodivergent communities in a non-reactive way is important: “Many people seek out the services of OBAD in times of crises, for which most of their funding comes from Alberta Health Services. Mounting creative programs proactively, through funding from granting bodies like CADA is instrumental in reaching new audiences and supporting artists, many of whom are disadvantaged or marginalized. In this sense, CADA’s role is also vital to making sure artists whose work is valued yet often remains unseen, receive remuneration.”

Research indicates that 20% of people face mental distress, with COVID-19 having additional negative impacts on our broader community. Dick indicates that OBAD’s creative community engagement has played a meaningful and significant role at a crucial time: “Firstly, *Perspectives From Within* is a notable example of public programming that would not have been possible without funding from CADA. Secondly, this style of programming is essential in providing a wider understanding of mental wellness, and how to improve community wellness beyond formal supports such as doctors or medication.”

Building informal supports through art-based activities, with peers or family members, can act as a catalyst for difficult conversations and help reduce stigma. OBAD’s art-driven community engagement has fostered connections that formal supports such as medication or therapy may not always reach, helping build a wider understanding of mental health, and how to improve community wellness.



Behind the scenes photo of *The Strid* | Photo by Mike Tan

The Strid

By Meghan Power

For her one-act play, playwright and producer, Kiana Wu wanted to explore questions about how we relate to the land. And, when we're scared, who can we rely on? It was out of these questions that *The Strid* was born.

"To me, *The Strid* represents deep love for where we find ourselves and the ones closest to us," says Kiana. "As a producer, I wanted to create a space where people could simply come as they are. I knew that the final presentation was going to be a variable, but if artists could feel empowered and valued at the end of the day, that was what I wanted. This project was a culmination of the writing I wanted to write, the diverse skill sets that came together over a shared story, imaginative collaboration, and intentional decision-making, for community well-being."

The Strid is about a small rural town, its residents, and their relationship to a deadly river. When Rachel and Leon's child, Eli, decides that he wants to take art classes, they extend a sympathetic hand to outcast and eccentric artist, Meena. After losing her child, and consequently, her partner, Meena finds refuge and healing in Eli's company. A reimagining of English folklore and mystery, with racialized experiences at the centre, it is a play about class, rebirth, sharing, family, and community healing.

The Strid changed drastically, as a play, between the summer of 2020 and May 2021. Originally it was written to be performed in front of a live audience, but the pandemic forced Kiana to rethink the entire production, and how it would be experienced by audiences: "There were many moving parts that helped this one-act theatre show, originally intended for live presentation, transform into a multi-media production—part film, part audio-play, part zine." Kiana credits the entire creative process with keeping her afloat during the pandemic and showing her what she is capable of as a playwright, producer, and artist. "I now know that I can manage thousands of dollars, lead a team of multi-disciplinary artists, and write a play."

"This project reflects the vibrant, vast, and incredible talent of the racialized artists in Mohkinstsis and welcomes people from various practices to come together over a story of land, family, and how we look out for each other. When we invest our time, money, access, and effort into equity deserving communities, stunning relationships and innovative work happens."

And even though the production of the play was forced to evolve due to the on-going pandemic, it was always intended as, and remained, a means for artists to feel valued in their medium, meet new people and get paid: "I feel like we did that, and a lot more," says Kiana. "Without CADA's funding, *The Strid* wouldn't have been able to accomplish all of this."

Screenshots from Deep/Fake-post/Humyn | by: Uii Savage

Uii Savage

By Meghan Power

Deep/Fake-post/Humyn is a 3D animated video and performance work, by emerging artist Uii Savage: “This work was primarily about the unease, tension, and isolation felt during the height of the pandemic, as well as experimenting with 3D technology and exploring surreal landscapes.

Through the process of photogrammetry, my body was captured first in 2D, through photographs from all angles and then that 2D data was converted into a 3D object file.”

The exhibit was presented in real life at Broadcast Labs, Arts Commons, Calgary and online, as a digital exhibit, in a virtual reality space, an alternative for those who didn’t feel safe attending a public event during the pandemic. The in-real-life gallery space was photo captured through photogrammetry and then converted to a 3D virtual space that could be “walked through” and experienced in a more immersive way than just watching a YouTube video.

Photogrammetry literally means the act of deriving precise measurements from photographs. It involves taking a set of overlapping photos of an object, building, person, or environment, and converting them into a 3D model using several computer algorithms. Originally developed by the military, today it’s being used by architects, interior designers, in film, by celebrities, and by people who have a presence in the metaverse. According to Uii, this technology is still relatively new: “There are no studios in Calgary that can do photogrammetry. I had to work with specialists at Scanlab, a studio in Vancouver. The body scan took about 30 seconds and cost about \$2200.”

“Without this funding, this project wouldn’t have happened. Digital mediums are expensive—there’s specialized equipment, technology, software, and sometimes an artist needs the assistance of a digital specialist. CADA’s funding was essential in allowing me, an emerging artist, to explore and push boundaries with digital mediums and virtual spaces.”

Uii feels an immense amount of gratitude for the funding received: “This funding gave me the ability to push the boundaries of a medium that’s new for me, in a way that aligned with my artistic integrity. I think I was also looking for a sense of justice, as a queer artist who felt particularly vulnerable during the pandemic, having to adjust to being in a constant state of physical restriction—how I navigated real-life space. And, on another level, the distorted, blurred reality between real life and the soft-core metaverse that we have all been living in, through our social media networks.

“I’m excited to see the interest growing around photogrammetry. There are still no studios in Calgary, but I think my work has helped to generate curiosity around the technology and generate conversations amongst my peers, who may not have considered it as an artistic medium before. I’ve met a lot of folks through this work who are interested in exploring how to bring 3D into their artistic practice. I feel like my work is helping to make way, in the Alberta arts sector, for new ideas about how 3D technology can be used by artists.”

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