

Media Advisory
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Community Arts grants invest in inclusiveness, diversity and mentorship

Edmonton... Alberta Avenue's multicultural business owners share their stories on film; free contemporary dance classes activate Boyle-McCauley; inner city youth perforate the sonic soundscape with a compilation of songs recorded at CJSR. These, and eight other projects, have received funding from the Edmonton Arts Council, the City of Edmonton, and the Edmonton Community Foundation, ensuring that Edmonton will experience inclusive community art over the next year.

The 11 selected projects range in discipline, including visual art, music, theatre, storytelling, photography, and film, and afford opportunities for collaboration with diverse Edmonton communities, such as immigrants to Canada, at-risk youth, and adults living with developmental disabilities. Through these projects, professional artists collaborate with Edmontonians who may not regularly engage in the arts. Sharing stories, investing in the creative talents of Edmonton's unique communities, and fostering a sense of belonging is key to community arts.

"Through community art we are able to inspire, educate, heal, entertain and express love in ways that are dampened by the commercial world," says Kaz Mega, the coordinator for the **Hip Hop in the Park Foundation's Kulture Hubs Pilot Project**. "Empowering those who are afforded less voice... empowers us all."

Through this project, professional artists provide art-based workshops on recording, social entrepreneurship, community organizing, leadership, and project development for youth in hip hop culture. The group of young participants will then demonstrate their leadership skills by planning a workshop for approximately 20 of their peers.

Other upcoming Community Arts projects to look out for include:

- A collaboration between visual artists Brittney Roy and Leanne Olson and the Bissell Centre to provide print-making workshops to inner city artists.
- Boyle Street Community Service's *Underground City* project encouraging youth to express themselves through music, in weekly songwriting sessions and facilitated workshops. The written songs will then be recorded in the CJSR studios.
- Tim Folkmann and Matthew Wood will lead the creation of a series of short videos to commemorate both past and present stories of the Boyle Street Education Centre, to be featured at a "homecoming" street party with the community.

- A theatre project facilitated by theatre artist Dhana Cartmell, engaging older adults afflicted with Alzheimer's or dementia at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital.
- Future Visions at FAVA, a three-week video production intensive workshop for at-risk and barriered youth to create their own individual artistic videos.
- A collaboration between artist Michelle Lavoie, Camp fYrefly (iSMSS), and SNAP to provide art workshops to LGBTQ youth.
- Mile Zero Dance plans to provide free contemporary dance education to over 2,000 members of the neighbourhoods of McCauley and Boyle Street, and host four free dance days.
- Rising Sun Theatre, in collaboration with SKILLS will work alongside artists with developmental disabilities to script, rehearse, produce, and perform *Sparks*, a theatre piece utilizing physical movement, dance, and improvisation.
- The Edmonton Centre for Newcomers and artist Elsa Robinson will lead "My Journey" exploring the stories of newcomer youth by providing opportunities to to express their stories through acrylic painting, collage, clock printing, journaling, spoken word, and movement.
- Arts on the Ave's "Avenue of Champions" project celebrates the stories of Alberta Avenue business people who originate from other countries through film, photography, and writing.

The Community Arts Program is funded through the City of Edmonton Community Investment Program and the Edmonton Community Foundation (through The Lee Fund for the Arts). For more information on the Community Arts Program or the Edmonton Arts Council, please visit edmontonarts.ca

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The Edmonton Arts Council is a not-for-profit organization that supports and promotes the arts community in Edmonton. The EAC works to increase the profile and involvement of arts and culture in all aspects of our community life.

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