

For Immediate Release

Arts Commons Announces Lineup of Free Events in Recognition of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 6, 2023 - CALGARY – Arts Commons is offering the opportunity to engage with Indigenous storytelling, culture, and history in commemoration of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. A day for reflection, learning, and celebration, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is in its third year as a federal statutory holiday in Canada. You can learn more about all of the free events taking place at **Arts Commons on Saturday, September 30** at artscommons.ca/ndtr.

In collaboration with the **National Film Board of Canada**, Arts Commons is hosting [three films about Indigenous life, history, and reconciliation](#) in the Engineered Air Theatre. As the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Senator Murray Sinclair was a key figure in raising global awareness of the atrocities of Canada’s residential school system. In the film, [Honour to Senator Murray Sinclair](#), the legacy of the Residential Schools is honoured, acknowledging the atrocities of the past while leaving us with a profound hope for the future. [Keepers of the Fire](#) tells the story of Indigenous “warrior women” who continue to fight against cultural assimilation and defend the land of their forebearers. And in the afternoon, [Inconvenient Indian](#) brings to life Thomas King’s brilliant dismantling of North America’s colonial narrative, reframing this history with the powerful voices of those continuing the tradition of Indigenous resistance. This film is followed by a short discussion, facilitated by Kelli Morning Bull, a Piikani filmmaker, activist, and the Indigenous Service Design Lead at the Calgary Public Library.

Starting at noon, Arts Commons invites you to experience the [Indigenous Makers Market](#), curated by [Four Winds YYC](#) and hosted in the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby. Featuring the creative work of Indigenous artists and artisans from around Treaty 7 and beyond, as well as live performances, the public is invited to browse all of the food, beadwork, clothing, and fine art that the market has to offer.

The [Elders Story Project](#) is the final event of the evening, taking place in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. The public is invited into an intimate traditional ceremony where Elders will share deeply personal experiences that touch on the Residential Schools and the Elders’ personal healing journeys. This is the first public event of the Elders Story Project. The Elders Story Project is not a live performance, but rather a sharing circle where the public can observe, listen, and learn in a safe space. Tickets are free or by donation to the Elders Knowledge Circle Society.

The day’s events are outlined below.

National Film Board Films*

Honour to Senator Murray Sinclair (runtime: 29m)

Keepers of the Fire (runtime: 59m)

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Inconvenient Indian (runtime: 1h 28m with discussion to follow)

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

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Indigenous Makers Market

12:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Jack Singer Concert Hall Lobby

Elders Story Project*

7:00 pm

Jack Singer Concert Hall

**Registration is required to secure a seat for the films and the Elders Story Project. Please visit: artscommons.ca/ndtr.*

Arts Commons launched its Reconciliation Strategy in 2020, embarking on what has become an ongoing journey for the organization. Working with Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Elder Rose Crowshoe, Arts Commons has committed to learn the diverse Indigenous perspectives of our shared history and provide a platform for Indigenous voices. This commitment has also been reflected through the engagement of Tawaw Architecture Collective headed by former Calgarian and Canada's first female Indigenous architect as part of the Arts Commons Transformation Project. This September, Arts Commons is proud to be hosting the first public sharing of the Elders Story Project and looks forward to continuing to play a role in bridging the gap of cultural understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives.

Arts Commons acknowledges the Elders Story Project partners who together are facilitating this Elder-led project. The Circle of Relatives includes: Calgary Counselling Centre, Calgary Public Library, Elders Knowledge Circle Society, EY, University of Calgary, and the United Way of Calgary and Area. Special thanks to the Circle of Supporters Anh Au Design, ATCO, Heritage Park, Nutrien, and TC Energy as well as public supporters of this day - the Government of Canada through Canadian Heritage and the National Film Board of Canada.

For media inquiries, high resolution images, or more information contact:

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Arts Commons is the steward of Western Canada's largest arts centre, and the artistic and civic cornerstone of Calgary's downtown core. For over 35 years, it has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians. It is home to six resident companies, including Alberta Theatre Projects, Arts Commons Presents, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit, and Theatre Calgary. It houses six gallery spaces, five theatres, and the Jack Singer Concert Hall, and promotes local, national, international, emerging and established artists with a focus on championing inclusion and reconciliation, ensuring the arts' rightful place at the centre of civic life. In 2024, Arts Commons will be breaking ground on the Arts Commons Transformation project, the single largest cultural infrastructure in Canadian history.

The Elders Knowledge Circle Society (EKCS) gained official Society status in June 2022 and has grown in membership to 33 Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The EKCS is a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Elder-led collective with the goals of creating a sustainable model to protect, revitalize, and share stories, language, oral knowledge and practice; bridge the gap in cultural understanding to allow knowledge transfer to future

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generations; and to serve as a centralized resource for Western organizations on their reconciliation journey. The lead Elders on the project are Order of Canada members Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Elder Rose Crowshoe.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that Arts Commons is located on the sacred land that is the original home of the Niitsitapi from the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Piikani, and Kanai First Nations); the Îyârhe Nakoda (Chiniki, Goodstoney/Kichipwot, and Bearspaw First Nations); and the Dene of the Tsuut'ina First Nation. This territory is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 within the historical Northwest Métis homeland. We thank these Nations for sharing this land with us and commit to being good stewards of this land, while we are here. We welcome all who work, live, and play in, as well as honour and celebrate this historic territory.