

MEDIA RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Arts Commons Education Announces Esteemed Keynote Speaker for Calgary City Teachers Convention, Dr. Christopher Emdin

January 30, 2024 - CALGARY – Bringing renewed attention to arts education in Canada, **Arts Commons** is excited to announce an exclusive keynote address, ***Education is not memorization. It is the activation of the imagination and a path towards liberation***, by luminary, author, and leading arts educator **Dr. Christopher Emdin** in the **Jack Singer Concert Hall at Arts Commons** on **Friday, February 16 at 2:00 pm** as part of the [Calgary City Teachers' Convention](#). This opportunity for Calgary educators is made possible through Arts ReimaginED – Arts Commons Education's first-of-its-kind program to deliver year-round arts education support, advocacy, and hands-on learning for teachers, teaching artists, parents and students. **Limited passes are available for media attendance.**

Internationally recognized as one of the most innovative voices in education, Dr. Christopher Emdin is the Robert A. Naslund Endowed Chair in Curriculum Theory and Professor of Education at the University of Southern California where he also serves as Director of youth engagement and community partnerships at the USC Race and Equity Center. He is also Scholar/Griot in Residence at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. He founded the #HipHopEd social media movement and was recently named one of "27 People Bridging Divides Across America" by Time magazine. His award-winning written works include the New York Times bestseller *For White Folks Who Teach In the Hood and the Rest of Ya'll Too* and *Ratchetdemic: Reimagining Academic Excellence*.

"Dr. Emdin's research, his sharp and inspiring words, and his passionate delivery have a way of reaching and empowering all who experience his talks. There is no stronger advocate for the importance and power of arts education," says Karen Youngberg, Associate Director of Education at Arts Commons. "I am thrilled that Dr. Emdin is joining us in Calgary, elevating the conversation about arts education and finding the unique genius in all of our students."

A highlight of the Arts ReimaginED Summit in May 2023, Chris Emdin delivered a virtual keynote presentation to a group of arts education advocates including teachers, parents, and arts facilitators.

"The arts are the basic building blocks of all humanity. There is no science without the arts. No scientific or mathematical thought is constructed without first moving beyond the binaries of the world and leaning into an artistic sensibility," Dr. Christopher Emdin delivered passionately to the Calgary audience. *"If you can't dream, you're just replicating someone else's vision."*

Since his appointment in Spring of 2020, Arts Commons President and CEO Alex Sarian has championed Arts Commons Education, drawing on his background in arts education. Under his leadership, Arts Commons backed the 2022 [Benchmark Survey](#) to discover why, despite overwhelming research that supports the long-term benefits of arts education and its role in youth development, learning, community building and employment, these benefits are not widely recognized by local teachers and parents. In response to the findings, Arts Commons launched Arts ReimaginED, a year-round program to support teachers, teaching artists, parents and students through professional development opportunities, in-classroom workshops, and arts education activities for the public. As Western Canada's largest arts centre, Arts Commons is uniquely situated to champion this work and support arts education on a broader scale. Learn more about Arts ReimaginED at artscommons.ca/artsreimagined.

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“Arts education has the power to transform lives—and in doing so, make our city a more dynamic, empathetic, and creative community,” says Alex Sarian, President and CEO of Arts Commons. “At Arts Commons, it is our responsibility to engage all Calgarians in a conversation that highlights and celebrates the benefits of arts education on the emotional and mental health of the young people in our city.”

Limited media passes are available for ***Education is not memorization. It is the activation of the imagination and a path towards liberation.*** Interviews with Alex Sarian, Karen Youngberg and Dr. Christopher Emdin are available upon request.

To book a media opportunity, reserve a media pass, or for more information:

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Arts Commons is the largest performing arts centre in Western Canada located in the heart of downtown Calgary. 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 inclusion, diversity, accessibility, and equity. Under the Arts Commons umbrella are Arts Commons Presents, Arts Commons Education, Arts Commons Galleries, and Arts Commons Connects which encompass all of the presenting, education, outreach, and artist development work that Arts Commons engages in.

Arts Commons Education, the education arm of Arts Commons, offers diverse programming ensuring that students and teachers have immersive, engaging arts education opportunities in Calgary. These include the award-winning ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning, the newly launched Arts ReimaginED, and the impactful National Geographic Live student presentations and welcome over 13,000 students each season to the theatres and learning spaces of Arts Commons.

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