

*For Immediate Release*

## New Exhibitions in Arts Commons Galleries Energize Winter Months Indoors with Award-Winning Mini Films to Traditional Ukrainian Craftsmanship

**February 15, 2024** - CALGARY – In a fresh start to the new year, Arts Commons unveils new exhibitions in the eight free galleries within the building. Featuring 15 local artists working in photography, illustration, videography, textiles, paint on canvas, and mixed media, the artworks explore questions of identity, cultural and social belonging, personal journeys, and playfulness. **Current exhibitions run now until May 5, 2024, at Arts Commons.** For more information, visit [artscommons.ca/galleries](https://artscommons.ca/galleries).

The **Lightbox Studio at Arts Commons** is home to experimental, studio-based projects. Exploring themes of identity and environmentalism, Ukrainian-born, Calgary-based artist **Noble** shares their exhibition *Pysankarstvo; to write upon eggshells*, an evolving project that will result in 30 to 60 pysanky (Ukrainian Easter eggs) using wax resin. Sharing the creative process of this art style is intended to bring new understanding and appreciation to traditional Ukrainian artistic practices while Ukrainian culture and history is being actively oppressed.

The **Ledge Gallery at Arts Commons** is the largest gallery and public studio space in Arts Commons and is home to an eclectic range of art installations, performative, and sculptural works. **Evelyn Mikayla Martin (Itsooakii)** returns to Arts Commons Galleries with a new exhibition, *NDN Girlhood*. Mikayla is an art educator and visual artist who works to center her own personal narrative regarding the processes of mental health, cultural identity, and reclamation of space as a Pikani'aakii (Blackfeet woman). Her work takes many forms including self-portraits, billboards, and projects of reclamation.

The **Window Galleries at Arts Commons** proudly display two-dimensional and sculptural artworks in a series of seven unique spaces. The exhibition pieces shared highlight the process of creation from the perspective of four different artists: photographer and glass artist **Leia Guo**, filmmaker **Markes Kandimba**, pop art duo **Rawry & Powly Art**, and painter **Derian Valdes**. From the dynamic to whimsical, the artists in the Windows Galleries invite you to engage with *Somewhere in Nowhere*, *Pink Friday*, *Childhood*, and *Somewhere in Between*.

The **+15 Galleries at Arts Commons** consists of eight spaces that create the ideal platform for collaboration. The Immigrant Council for Arts Innovation (ICAI) is an Alberta-based arts council that connects newcomer artists and creative professionals to the existing arts community of Alberta. Their exhibition in the +15 Galleries features the work of **Liss Febero**, **Alex Herman**, **Bijila Nishanth**, **Yiyo Partida**, **Mitra Samavaki**, **Saloni Sharma**, and **Sara Sibrián** exploring cultural identity and belonging through mediums of ceramics, drawing, and installation work.

The **Broadcast Lab at Arts Commons** brings experimental, eccentric, and thought-provoking films to three media monitors located throughout Arts Commons. This micro-cinema is now showing the award-winning

# MEDIA RELEASE



short film *Sensei* from filmmaker **Jill Roberts**, telling the story of Natalie Olson, the first Canadian with Down syndrome to achieve her black belt in karate.

The **+15 Soundscape at Arts Commons** is one of the few multichannel sound galleries in Canada, immersing listeners in experiential sound as they walk from one end of the +15 corridor to the other. In her exhibition *Immigrant Story Project: Experiment No. 1*, **JiaJia Li** (flautist and founder of the band Ginger Beef) experiments with speech, field recordings, and technology to create a piece that expresses the immigrant experience through layered audio snippets of stories, music, and sound.

*"This is your chance to come in and warm up, or arrive before showtime, and experience immensely talented artists sharing their truth," says Sanja Lukac, visual and media arts curator at Arts Commons. "Not everyone has the opportunity to engage with visual and media art on a regular basis and all of our four visual art galleries and two media galleries are showcasing fresh, new exhibitions from local artists, for free!"*

Arts Commons Galleries energize the public spaces of Arts Commons, providing exhibition opportunities and studio space for local artists, as well as free access to visual and media arts for the greater Calgary community. All exhibiting artists are also members of the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program or the TD Incubator program, giving them access to professional development, networking, and artistic mentorship opportunities. The media galleries are curated through Arts Commons' TD Incubator program under the artistic vision of Wakefield Brewster, Poet Laureate of Calgary and the 2023-24 TD Incubator Fellow.

**What:** Arts Commons Galleries – Winter Exhibitions  
**When:** January 22, 2024 – May 5, 2024  
**Where:** Arts Commons  
**Info:** [artscommons.ca/galleries](https://artscommons.ca/galleries)

Arts Commons Presents wishes to express our sincere appreciation to Naming Partners the RBC Foundation, and TD Bank Group as well as our friends at the Canada Council for the Arts.

**For media inquiries or more information contact:**

Alex Bonyun, Communications Manager  
403-294-7429 [abonyun@artscommons.ca](mailto:abonyun@artscommons.ca)

Arts Commons Galleries are proud to showcase impactful work of the visual and media artists engaged in our RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program and TD Incubator program. These galleries offer key exhibition opportunities to local artists and showcase the talent that our community has to offer in the Lightbox Studio, Ledge Gallery, Window Galleries, +15 Soundscape, Broadcast Lab, and +15 Galleries at Arts Commons.

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.