JANUARY 2026 VOL XVII ISSUE I

Red Deer Arts Council
literary | performing | visual

A vibrant community celebrating and supporting Arts, Culture, and Creativity!

Red Deer Arts Council & Red Deer Public Library are delighted to present

The Canadian Landscape:
Abstract Paintings by John Bladek

Castle Mtn., AB
Oil on Canvas
John Bladek

running from December 2nd until February 8th, 2026, in the Kiwanis Gallery at Red Deer Public Library – Downtown Branch. This exhibition includes paintings of Canadian landscapes that John paints from where he lives and travels, from Nova Scotia to the Rocky Mountains and Alberta prairie scenes, as well as from Newfoundland to the Yukon and Northwest Territories. John finds inspiration from his appreciation of the natural environment. Many of his paintings are of "iconic" Canadian scenes (Peggy's Cove, Moraine Lake, etc.) and his hope is that people who view them will appreciate the fact that his interpretation is different and imaginative.

#FirstFridaysRedDeer Opening reception December 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm with the artist in attendance.
Gallery Hours: Mon to Thurs 9am–8pm, Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–3pm

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Red Deer Arts Council is pleased to present

Februllage: Scavenging Through the Years

Collage works by Jaclyn Bell
The Red Deer Arts Council Community Gallery, Suite 6–4919 49 Street
Exhibition Dates: January 5th – February 20, 2026
#FirstFridaysRedDeer January 9th, 2026 from 5:00 – 7:00pm
Community Gallery Hours: Mon to Fri 10am – 5pm

Februllage: Scavenging Through the Years showcases a collection of daily collages created in response to one-word prompts from the global February art challenge, Februllage. Built from found magazine images and guided by instinct, humor, and the joy of spontaneous creation, these works capture moments of curiosity and play across multiple years of participating in the global challenge. Viewers are invited to interact with the exhibit in their own way—by guessing the prompts behind each collage or using the provided guide to uncover them as they explore.

Ghosts
Collage, Magazine
Jaclyn Bell

Artist Biography: Jaclyn Bell is a self-taught collage artist, currently based in Edmonton, Alberta after calling Red Deer home for the past few years. Her love for collage began in high school, where she eagerly filled homework pages with magazine clippings. These early works weren't about composition so much as the joyful obsession with leaving no white space behind. She even remembers making a collage for a friend's homework, simply because she loved it that much. Years later, while visiting an architecture museum in Montreal, Jaclyn stumbled upon a collage station. Bored by the rest of the museum, she sat down alone and created three pieces inspired by schoolboys and architectural forms.

Alberta Government · BP · The City of Red Deer · Rotary Club of Red Deer · Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery · RDPL Red Deer Public Library · ROZSA Foundation · Benjamin Moore · Alberta Foundation for the Arts · servus credit union

~ Celebrating more than 50 years of Arts and Creativity in Central Alberta ~

A New Year of Gratitude and Collective Action

Dear Friends of Arts and Culture in Red Deer and Central Alberta,

As we close out the holidays and look towards 2026, I want to pause and speak directly to you—the arts supporters and community members who showed up when it mattered most.

Over the past six weeks, our community demonstrated something powerful: that when people care deeply and speak clearly, change is possible. During City budget deliberations, Council made the decision to increase the Community Culture Development Fund by $150,000. That choice required courage, listening, and a willingness to respond to community voices, and we are deeply grateful for it.

We are equally thankful to City Administration for the professionalism shown throughout this process. Their work to re-adjudicate funding following Council's decision with a limited timeframe ensured that the additional investment reached organizations and projects where it will have real impact.

For our Red Deer Arts Council, this change has been significant. The increased funding means greater stability across our programs for the next three years and the ability to continue supporting artists, audiences, and creative spaces in Red Deer. But what matters most is how we arrived here.

Hundreds of you took the time to write letters, send emails, and share personal stories about what arts and culture mean in your lives. You spoke about belonging, about opportunity, about the ways creativity connects us to one another and to our city. Those words were read. They were heard. And they helped shape the outcome.

I also want to acknowledge the quieter forms of support—messages of encouragement, check-ins, and steady belief during what was, at times, a challenging and emotionally demanding process. Advocacy can be exhausting, especially when the stakes are high. Knowing that this work was being carried by many, not just one voice, made all the difference.

This moment is worth celebrating. In a season that can feel heavy and uncertain, this outcome felt like a Christmas miracle, one built through persistence, care, and collective effort.

At the same time, we know the work is not finished. Some organizations in our community remain unfunded, and broader conversations about operating support and funding policy still need thoughtful attention. Advocacy does not end with one decision; it continues through staying engaged, informed, and ready to speak up when needed.

As we look toward the new year, we will keep encouraging dialogue with Council and Administration, supporting our peers, and inviting community voices into the conversation. Together, we can continue shaping a cultural landscape that is resilient, inclusive, and reflective of the community it serves.

Thank you for believing in this work. Thank you for standing up for arts and culture. And thank you—for your voices, your time, and your care.

We hope you've had a warm and peaceful holiday season, and we look forward to the year ahead.

Yours in Creativity,
Suzanne Hermary, Executive Director
Red Deer Arts Council, on Behalf of the Board of Directors

What's We're Looking Forward to in 2026

We have many events happening across the city, some monthly, weekly, and more special events, seasonally. Follow *Red Deer Arts Council* on Facebook or visit our website for more:

First Fridays Gallery Opening Art Receptions at the Kiwanis and Community Galleries – these monthly events are hosted by every art gallery in the city, and we hope you'll enjoy a stroll through these spaces, checking out new art, meeting artists who are exhibiting, and getting connected with other visual arts enthusiasts. These events are open to the public and everyone is welcome to come as they are and meet likeminded folks. Visit https://www.RedDeerArtsCouncil.ca/First-Fridays for each month's schedules and rotating exhibition details.

- **Community Drum Circles** – these events happen on the FIRST SUNDAY of each month at Vin-L-Den, from 2–4pm, next door to our office on 49th Street. Drums are provided, or Bring Your Own! All are welcome, no experience required. A drum leader will guide you to experience the rhythm of life with new friends!
- **Ross Street Singers** – our weekly community choir for everyone is returning on January 21st at Festival Hall. Each Wednesday from 10–11:30am, join Annette Bradley and a wonderful group of singers with all levels of experience as they join their voices together in song. No experience required. Spring sessions have an administrative fee of $60, but please reach out if this is any financial barrier to participation.

- **The (Creative) Hub** – Join dozens of friends at the YMCA each Wednesday for a day full of arts and culture activities accessible to people of all abilities. Art with Wendy in the mornings from 10:30am-12pm, and a variety of performing arts activities from 1–3:30pm (Dean Ray for Strum & Drum, Karaoke with Jason, and adaptive Movement activities on rotation.) Follow ***The HUB Red Deer*** on Facebook for program updates. Bring your own Lunch to dine with friends at this cross-agency program for people with disabilities. $5 fee to attend, cash accepted and receipts provided.
- **Our Scholarships & Awards Program** – opening for submissions on January 12, applications are due April 1st at 5pm. We have 5 Scholarships valued at $1000 each, and two Awards for practising artists and one for volunteer recognition are available: the Emerging Artist Award for $1000, the Artwalk Developing Visual Artist Award for $1500. The Diane Hermary Volunteer Spirit Award honours an outstanding individual who is volunteering their time and talent in the arts community. Find out fuller details at https://www.RedDeerArtsCouncil.ca/Scholarships-Awards once launched.
- **What's On Stage Central Alberta –** we've been working with several area theatre companies on a collaborative effort to promote live theatre. www.WhatsOnStageCentralAlberta.ca/ is a one-stop destination for shows and tickets, learning opportunities and classified ads about submissions, auditions, jobs, and more related to theatre events in and around town. Participating companies include: Bull Skit Comedy, Central Alberta Theatre, Innisfail Town Theater, Prime Stock Theatre Co., Red Deer Players Society, and Sylvan Lake Theatre!

- Our newest endeavour is taking over management of **The Scott Block Theatre & Event Venue** in downtown Red Deer. We'll be hosting events, renting out the venue, and ensuring it's lively and full of exciting cultural activity! www.ScottBlock.ca/
- Some other things we offer to support the arts in Red Deer: member discounts on printing services, e-communications, equipment and resource rentals, summer concerts, Alberta Culture Days events in September, plein air painting. Join us and live creatively! RedDeerArtsCouncil.ca/Membership