

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

Red Deer Arts Council and Red Deer Public Library are pleased to present, **"The Canadian Landscape Abstract Paintings"** artworks by John Bladek running from December 2nd until February 8th, 2026, in the Kiwanis Gallery.

This exhibition includes paintings of



Castle Mtn., AB
Oil on Canvas
John Bladek

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



Orange Poplars, NS, 2021
Oil on Canvas
John Bladek

Red Deer Arts Council is pleased to present

Mini Masters

A Fundraising Gift Market Exhibition featuring local artists for the Holiday Season

Looking for a gift for the upcoming holidays? Can't find that unique piece of for that special individual that has everything? Come and celebrate creativity, community, and connection at the **Mini Masters Pop-Up Gallery**, the Red Deer Arts Council's Year-End Fundraiser. The Gallery will be open for First Fridays December 5th, from 5:00pm – 7:00pm.

Each miniature masterpiece you purchase helps **support local arts in Red Deer and Central Alberta**, sustaining the vibrant programs that keep our creative community thriving.

Every artwork sold directly funds Red Deer Arts Council programming helping us bring visual art, music, performing, writing, and creative expression to life across our region. Come discover **small works with a big impact** and take home a piece of Red Deer's creative spirit while supporting the arts in your community.

Community Gallery Hours: Mon to Fri 10am – 5pm

#FirstFridaysRedDeer Opening reception December 5 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm



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

Local Arts & Culture Sector Funding Crisis

Red Deer's arts, culture, and heritage organizations are raising urgent concerns regarding the results of the City of Red Deer's 2026–2028 Community Culture Development Fund (CCDF). For the third consecutive cycle, the total funding pool has remained frozen at \$380,000 per year, despite significant population growth, rising costs, and a rapidly expanding cultural sector. This year, community organizations collectively requested over \$1.1 million—demonstrating clear need and demand for arts and culture programming across Red Deer.

While all available dollars were allocated, the current funding level is insufficient for a growing city of nearly 110,000 residents. Many longstanding organizations received sharply reduced funding, and several received no funding at all, resulting in cancelled programs, reduced services, staff layoffs, and in some cases, potential closure. This is a three-year funding cycle, meaning the impacts are not temporary—they will affect community programming throughout 2026, 2027, and 2028.

A central issue raised by the sector is the lack of operational funding. While program funding supports individual activities, it does not allow organizations to retain staff, maintain facilities, manage volunteers, operate cultural spaces, or provide the foundational support necessary to deliver programs effectively. Many organizations report that even where they received partial programming funding, they now lack the staffing or operational capacity to deliver the programs the City has funded.

This reveals a structural challenge: a program-only funding model is not viable for arts and culture organizations. Sustainable cultural programming requires sustainable organizations.

Additionally, a number of groups have expressed concerns about the adjudication process. For the 2026–2028 cycle, the assessment appears to have been conducted entirely in-house by City staff, rather than through an arm's-length jury process that reflects specialized arts, culture, and heritage expertise. Many organizations believe the results suggest an evaluation lens misaligned with the realities of the arts sector—one that may have unintentionally prioritized other criteria (e.g., “dollars per head”) over artistic impact, cultural value, heritage preservation, or community identity.

Twenty-five organizations surveyed by Red Deer Arts Council reported a combined requested amount of \$1,100,000 from the CCDF Development stream alone, while only \$380,000 was available. This gap demonstrates significant unmet need and highlights that the current funding model no longer reflects the size or scope of Red Deer's cultural community.

As a result of these concerns, multiple organizations have submitted formal appeals through the City's established review process. They are asking for a reassessment of the funding decisions and a review of the adjudication approach to ensure transparency, consistency, and alignment with industry standards.

The sector is also urging City Council to consider these issues during the upcoming Budget Deliberations, scheduled for December 8–12, where decisions may be made regarding future investment in community culture. Without increased support, Red Deer risks losing vital artistic, cultural, and heritage programs that contribute significantly to quality of life, economic vibrancy, community belonging, and the attractiveness of the city for current and future residents. **Scan the QR Code below to find out more.**

**Imagine Red Deer
Without Arts & Culture
SAVE Arts & Culture in Red Deer
The Time is NOW!**



Red Deer's Scott Block Theatre is Under New Management

The ground is once again shifting in Red Deer's creative community.

As of December 1, the Red Deer Arts Council has become the new operator of the Scott Block. The group has taken over the role of managing the Artifacts Properties-owned building from former manager Creative Twist Inc.

The council's Executive Director, Suzanne Hermary, sees this as a very exciting opportunity to further diversify the council's offerings.

The group already runs two visual arts spaces — a Community Gallery at its 49th Street office, as well as the Kiwanis Gallery in the downtown Red Deer Public Library. Hermary said managing the Scott Block will be a chance to shape the future of a performing arts space.

"It's fully aligned with our mandate to diversify what we can offer the community," she added.

Seeking to "inspire, support and stimulate arts and culture through education, advocacy and programming," the social profit group has forged ties with many musicians and arts groups in the area. The council's new role of managing the Scott Block should, therefore, increase the number of local concerts and plays that are staged there, said Scott Barnabe, the council's performing arts lead.

"We can even reach out to arts organizations in other communities — Lacombe, Innisfail or Sylvan Lake — to see if they want to do a show in Red Deer," he added. "This will expand our cultural scene."

The Scott Block, in a former 1946 commercial building on Little Gaetz, is already home to Bull Skit theatre, as well as shows by Tree House Youth Theatre, Red Deer Players and Prime Stock Theatre. Some candlelight concerts and other music productions are also being held there.

December events include the Made With Magic Market on Dec. 13 and 14, as well as the Red Aces Social on Dec. 12.

Ula Chauvet, chair of the council's board, said discussions will be had about other future uses of the space. She expects more performing arts classes, playwriting and theatre technician workshops will be held, as well as markets, out-of-town entertainment and conferences.

The Red Deer Arts Council fulfills many roles, including providing scholarships and learning opportunities for literary, visual and performing artists.

The group plans local Alberta Culture Days and other inclusive events. The council organizes a community choir, drum circle, pop-up concerts, open studio tours, the First Friday extended gallery openings etc.

Having just celebrated a half-century anniversary, the council has actually been around for much longer. Hermary found archival evidence of an alliance-type arts group operating here since at least 1959. The current Red Deer Arts Council was formed with the 2010 merger of three organizations — the Red Deer and District Allied Arts Council, Cultural Charter Partners of Red Deer and Culture Link.

New goals for 2026 include improving the Scott Block experience by launching a raffle fundraiser for new seating to replace the variety of folding chairs now in use, said Hermary.

More information will be available in the new year. Visit ScottBlock.ca.



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