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For Immediate Release

Arts Commons Education Announces Inspired Keynote Speaker – Kid Koala – to Open 2025 Arts ReimaginED Summit

May 13, 2025 - CALGARY – Returning for its third year, Arts ReimaginED is a month-long festival dedicated to transforming the role of arts education in Calgary and beyond. Based on the findings of a comprehensive Stone-Olafson survey, Arts ReimaginED engages the community with three key stakeholders – educators, parents and caregivers, and teaching artists. Arts Commons Education is excited to share that award-winning multidisciplinary artist Kid Koala will deliver the keynote address at the 2025 Arts ReimaginED Summit on Friday, May 23 at Arts Commons.

With a comprehensive schedule that includes student and family workshops (in-school, online and in community), professional development sessions for teaching artists, and networking opportunities for educators, Arts ReimaginED addresses key needs in our city's arts ecosystem. The final event of the Arts ReimaginED festival, The Summit, immediately follows UNESCO's International Arts Education Week and leads into in-class workshops delivered by Arts Commons teaching artists across Calgary. This year's Summit, titled The Remix, invites the educators, parents and caregivers, and teaching artists to come together for a powerful weekend of collective creativity and inspiration. Kid Koala will launch the first event with an energizing keynote address, *What's Possible When We REMIX the System?*

Eric San, better known as Kid Koala, is a multi-award-winning artist, DJ, writer, filmmaker, composer, and illustrator who has made his mark on the Canadian cultural scene by elevating art for young people to another level. His mantra of "Keep it weird - they'll get it later" speaks to his philosophy of challenging children with complex content and allowing them to determine the meaning themselves. His lauded stage performances are true to form, delivering multi-layered stories that are universally appealing.

"There is so much to learn in a process, especially a creative process. Imagination and curiosity lead to breakthrough moments that can be pivotal in a young person's life or in modeling new systems," says Karen Youngberg, Associate Director of Education. *"Kid Koala's practice aligns perfectly with Arts ReimaginED."*

The Arts ReimaginED Summit takes place over two days, opening with a powerful keynote address by Kid Koala, followed by artmaking, presentations by professional teaching artists, guiding conversations, and expert-moderated panel discussions.

Under the leadership of Arts Commons President and CEO Alex Sarian, Arts Commons led the 2022 Benchmark Survey to discover why, despite overwhelming research that supports the long-term benefits of arts education and its positive role in youth development, these benefits are not widely recognized by local teachers and parents. In response to the findings, Arts Commons began the comprehensive work of building Arts ReimaginED, a program to support educators, teaching artists, parents, caregivers, and students through a wide variety of free workshops and creative opportunities. 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.

"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. *"As Calgary continues to grow, so too must*

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our commitment to the systems that support the emotional health and wellbeing of our city's young people and their families."

Special thanks to Lead Sponsor Calgary Arts Development and then the Teatro Fund for Arts Commons Education.

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.

Arts Commons Education, the education arm of Arts Commons, welcomes over 16,000 students each season, ensuring that young people and teachers have immersive, engaging arts education opportunities in Calgary. Our programs include the award-winning ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning, the newly launched Arts ReimaginED festival, and the impactful National Geographic Live student presentations.

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