



Media Release

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CIFF Announces Bold New Vision for the Future of Cinema in Downtown Calgary Including Details of CIFF 2024 and 25th Anniversary!

Calgary, AB - As The Calgary International Film Festival prepares for its 25th Anniversary this year, it also looks ahead with a three year strategic plan that will ensure the vitality of cinema in downtown Calgary. CIFF will support cinematic arts with the introduction of a new “Constellation” of venues and activities to connect and animate downtown. Their vision for the future will activate cinema capacity in arts and multi-purpose spaces, theatre venues, public plazas, and other partner spaces.

CIFF is faced with one of the biggest challenges in its history with the closure of Cineplex Eau Claire Market Cinemas, which has served for over a decade as the festival's central hub. This adds to the diminishing cinema capacity over the past 25 years as over 85% of cinema-ready screens have been closed in the downtown core.

Many factors are converging to disrupt and transform art festivals and the entertainment industry, from technological innovations to changing public behaviours and tastes. Meanwhile, Alberta’s film industry is experiencing unprecedented growth and investment, opening the door to new opportunities.

The new vision is a Constellation of downtown venues that draws Calgarians into a vibrant experience in the city centre, with three key components: flexibility, mobility, and collaboration. “Downtown” means the core and adjacent districts (Kensington, East Village). These venues will form Calgary’s central cultural corridor.

“This plan has been in development for over two years, and I’m so thrilled to finally be able to share it publicly. It’s bold, it’s audacious, yet it’s incredibly realistic and attainable,” said Katherine Penhale, CIFF’s Acting Executive Director. “What I think makes this project so exciting is that it’s not a monolith — this isn’t a plan that focuses on any one space or a single solution. This approach is exciting to me because, at its core, it centres on community and collaboration.”

“By pursuing the Constellation, we’re changing the infrastructure of the media arts in Calgary, and creating access to equipment that brings people together around cinematic experiences. It also allows us to mitigate the risks that threaten screening capacity, particularly in the core of Calgary and remain agile and flexible in how we

deploy and manage equipment. It creates natural partnerships with the venues harbouring these projectors, and allows us to collaborate in new and exciting ways, in new and exciting spaces.”

NEW VENUE CONSTELLATION

2024 will kick off with the West Constellation, anchored by Contemporary Calgary, the Globe Cinema, and the Plaza Theatre. Cineplex Scotiabank Chinook Theatre will be the fourth venue in 2024 to facilitate the screening capacity CIFF needs to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the festival.

CONVERTING EXISTING SPACES INTO NEW SCREENING VENUES

The Constellation model will see CIFF’s acquisition of a fleet of six DCI (Digital Cinema Initiatives)-compliant projectors and other related equipment. Projectors sporting this proprietary technology is vital for the exhibition of modern cinema. CIFF has experience with this technology as it retains ownership of one such projector currently housed at the Globe Cinema. This projector is deployed to the Jubilee Auditorium, Jack Singer Concert Hall, and other venues as required. The new fleet will have the flexibility to be redeployed across a range of scenarios, including indoor spaces of a varying size, or in collaboration with partner groups.

CIFF’s vision is for the projector fleet to become a CIFF-managed community resource, accessible year-round to a wide range of arts and community organizations. 2025 to 2027 will be focused on the acquisition of new projectors, creating new venue partnerships, collaboration with local arts and non-profit organizations, and amplifying Calgary’s reputation as a great festival city. CIFF’s three year plan looks to grow their collective sense of place by transforming spaces and invigorating downtown, while expanding opportunities to create community and share ideas and perspectives through the arts.

“This strategic plan is bold and will require massive change and we need support from our community and audience members to execute it effectively. Calgary’s arts community has always demonstrated an incredible willingness to come together, and this strategy imagines how that collaboration can look on a truly grand scale,” added Penhale.

“When we talk to people about this plan, it prompts big excitement, and inevitably, a lot of big ideas - seeing how readily people understand the potential of this approach really speaks to how ready we are for this. This plan lays out a roadmap for how to support media arts in Calgary and how to continue to invest in our burgeoning screening industry & infrastructure.”

CIFF aims to acquire these projectors gradually over the next three years, allowing the Constellation to expand in lockstep with venue availability, and by 2026, there will be a string of venues across downtown in a way never seen before in Calgary.

“Since joining forces on May 1, Connect First and Servus Credit Union Ltd. is now the largest credit union in Alberta. We’re inspired to dream big and reimagine what’s possible, much like the talented folks who will be celebrated at CIFF this year,” says Ian Burns, President and CEO of Connect First and Servus Credit Union. “We’re excited to be back as presenting partner for CIFF, to support local filmmakers and artists in telling their stories and honouring their successes. As an Alberta-grown credit union, we’re proud to welcome the world to our local stage and pave the way for our homegrown talent to shine as brightly as we know they can.”

MORE INFORMATION: [CIFFCalgary.ca/Constellation](https://ciffcalgary.ca/Constellation)

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For Media Inquiries, please contact:

Aldona Barutowicz, Publicist

Telephone: (403) 471-5308

Email: publicist@ciffcalgary.ca

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#260, 999 8 St. SW Calgary, AB

About the Calgary International Film Festival

Running annually since 2000, the Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) is a not-for-profit charitable organization that brings films and filmmakers from around the world to Calgary for its annual Fall festival and year-round programming. CIFF is now the largest event of its kind in Alberta and the Prairies, bringing audiences together for remarkable and engaging cinematic experiences.