Werklund Centre

For Immediate Release

Werklund Centre Kicks off 2026–27 TD Incubator Season with Multidisciplinary Artist and Community Advocate Wilmer Aburto

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Entering its sixth season, Werklund Centre's TD Incubator program continues to champion Calgary's creative community, having supported hundreds of artists through professional development, mentorship, and opportunities for artistic collaboration. For the 2026–27 season, Werklund Centre is proud to announce multidisciplinary artist, photographer, curator, and community advocate Wilmer Aburto as the new TD Incubator Fellow.

A Nicaraguan-born artist, Aburto has spent his career using art to amplify underrepresented voices and create space for meaningful representation. His photography has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, featured on the cover of Freq magazine, and selected for Imago Mundi, an Italian publication whose collection was exhibited alongside the Venice Biennale.

His curatorial practice spans Queer-focused exhibitions, film programming, public art, and community projects celebrating identity, resilience, and belonging. Wilmer has served on advisory boards advancing gender and sexual diversity in public safety and expanding opportunities for Latino artists. His leadership has been recognized through awards for inclusivity, community partnership, and contributions to arts and culture.

"We are thrilled to welcome Wilmer Aburto as the lead for this season's TD Incubator cohort," says Jonathan Love, VP of Programming at Werklund Centre. "Wilmer is a passionate advocate for artists from all walks of life, consistently sharing his resources, space, and knowledge to help fellow creatives thrive. His generosity, commitment to community, and belief in the power of artistic collaboration make him an exceptional fit to lead Werklund Centre's artist development program."

Launched in 2021, the TD Incubator program offers meaningful opportunities for local artists to expand their professional portfolios, engage in mentorship and networking opportunities, and grow their knowledge through curated workshops. "This is an opportunity for audiences to discover a wider range of identities, different perspectives, and various lived experiences," says Wilmer Aburto, 2026-27 TD Incubator Fellow. "These artists will be taking the stage and seeing themselves represented in the galleries, studios, and spaces of Werklund Centre. That sense of belonging and possibility is at the heart of this year's TD Incubator."

Each season, TD Incubator is shaped by the creative vision of an exceptional artistic Fellow. Past Fellows include Canadian soul music duo Sargeant X Comrade, BUMP Festival Creative Director Priya Ramesh (CONTRA), songwriter Kenna Burima, and Calgary Poet Laureate Wakefield Brewster, among others.

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For the 2026–27 season, Kenna Burima will return to support Aburto as he takes on the leadership of a cohort of 76 participating artists.

Beyond offering professional development and meaningful networking, TD Incubator helps artists reach audiences through the TD Amplify performance series and exhibitions in Werklund Centre's six galleries. By fostering connections among artists, mentors, arts leaders, and the public, the program builds a vital support system that empowers Calgary artists to deepen and expand their practice. It also ensures that local artists play an active role in shaping the future of Werklund Centre itself, informing how our spaces and programs evolve.

Werklund Centre extends its sincere gratitude to TD for its steadfast commitment as Naming Sponsor of the TD Incubator program. This valued partnership plays a pivotal role in advancing artist development and strengthening Calgary's vibrant arts and culture community.

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Werklund Centre (formerly Arts Commons) is the steward of Western Canada's largest arts centre and the artistic and civic cornerstone of Calgary's downtown core that fosters the arts through live performance, educational opportunities, and artist development programs. For 40 years, it has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians—a commitment that is being renewed through the Werklund Centre Transformation project, the largest cultural infrastructure project in Canadian history. It is home to five resident companies, including Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit, and Theatre Calgary. It houses six gallery spaces, five theatres, a concert hall, rehearsal and education spaces, costume and scene shops, and a restaurant.