SPARK Disability Art Festival is currently accepting Expressions of Interest from artists who self-identify as emerging/disabled to take part in an upcoming Solo Artist Series, presented in collaboration with the RBC Emerging Visual Artists program at Arts Commons.

Background:
The RBC Emerging Visual Artists program at Arts Commons provides an exceptional opportunity for emerging visual artists to develop their artistic practice, showcase their work to the public, and hone their professional skills in order to build a solid foundation for a successful career. The goal of the RBC Program is to advance the careers of Calgary artists by helping to bridge the gap between ‘emerging’ and ‘established’.

As part of this program, SPARK artwork will be exhibited in the Arts Commons Window Galleries (main level, across from the Max Bell Theatre) from June through August 2020. Artists will receive an exhibition fee for sharing their work, and will have opportunities to participate in free, ongoing mentorship and professional development sessions September 2020 through August 2021.

SPARK’s Involvement:
The SPARK Disability Art Festival understands that, as an artist with a disability, you may face unique barriers when it comes to experiencing equal access to resources, opportunities or benefits in the art sector. For this reason, we are proud to partner with Arts Commons and RBC in order promote fair conditions for all persons (especially persons with disabilities) to participate fully in the arts.

SPARK’s responsibilities with this initiative will be as follows:
- To apply on your behalf to the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program.
- To liaise with Arts Commons on issues relating to accessibility or accommodation.
- To install your artwork for the Window Galleries showcase.
- To un-install your artwork (teardown the exhibition) after the showcase has concluded.

Artist Involvement:
By participating in this program as a SPARK artist, you must SELF-identify as an emerging artist, and feel you stand to benefit from the opportunities described. SPARK has made arrangements to apply to Arts Commons on your behalf. You DO NOT need to contact Arts Commons, complete Arts Commons’ application questionnaire or apply to Arts Commons directly. To learn more and/or for details on how to apply, see the reverse or visit: www.sparkdisabilityartfestival.com

Artist’s responsibilities with this initiative will be as follows:
- To create new work (or assist in the curation of an existing body of work) for display June through August 2020.
- To deliver artwork (ready to hang) to Arts Commons prior to the showcase. You will not be required to assist in the installation of your work.
  - To collect artwork from Arts Commons after the showcase closes.
- To attend an Artist Reception presented by Arts Commons for all RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program participants (date TBC).

Additional requirements: In order to participate in the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program, you must be able to attend (where appropriate) 4 (four) professional development sessions and 4 (four) Artist Talks (including arranging for your own transportation and/or personal supports as needed). Where appropriate, you may also be able to send a representative/note-taker on your behalf. SPARK will not be present at these events. Should you experience other barriers which require accommodation, SPARK will work collaboratively with you and Arts Commons to explore accessible and/or alternative formats or services.
Are you a Calgary artist with a disability? Be a part of this year’s SPARK Summer Festival presented in collaboration with Arts Commons.

**Eligibility:**
SPARK’s visual art exhibitions are open to all emerging** artists pan-disability*. Artists must reside in the greater Calgary area.

**Note:** For this call there are no restrictions on theme, subject matter or eligible media. Installation-based art is encouraged. Visual artists are therefore encouraged to consider SPARK as an opportunity to take risks, push boundaries and celebrate a lived experience of disability.

**TERMS**
*Pan-Disability:* The SPARK Disability Art Festival is committed to equity and inclusion and welcomes all artists who self-identity as Deaf, having a disability or living with mental health barriers. This includes: artists with developmental, physical, or sensory disabilities, mental health barriers, brain injury, and/or chronic illness.

**Emerging:** SPARK recognizes an emerging [ee-mer-jing] artist as someone who is just starting their career (in their art form). They may also have been marking art for a long time, but are just starting to share their art, or are considering how to grow their art practice as a career path. Age and education are not considered relevant.

Not sure if you are an emerging artist? Contact sparkfestival@icloud.com with questions.

**Guidelines:**
To be considered, please email an Expression of Interest to sparkfestival@icloud.com including the following:

- **Contact Information** (Name, Email, Phone, Preferred Pronouns - she/he/they)
- **Do you have an online platform that you share your work on?** Please specify (e.g. website, Facebook, Instagram)
- **Artist Statement and/or Biography** (150 words max)
- **Why you would like to participate in the RBC Program** (50 words max)
- Please also include 3 to 5 jpeg images of past work.

*Examples (In answering the questions above, please consider the main reason you wish to apply to the RBC Program with SPARK)*
- e.g. Learn something new
- e.g. Inspire your creativity
- e.g. Build your professional network
- e.g. Exhibit publicly
- e.g. Receive Artist Fees
- e.g. Grow your career

**How to Submit:**
Expressions of Interest will be accepted until 11:59pm on April 10, 2020. Please email all submissions to: sparkfestival@icloud.com. Text may be included in the body of the email, or as a separate attachment (PDF files preferred). Images may be emailed as separate attachments. Please include the Artist’s name, as well as the text ‘RBC Expression of Interest’ in the subject of the email.