



## **2021-22 BUSINESS PLAN**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020 was a challenging year due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. On the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) announced its first temporary closure on Friday, March 13, as part of the broader provincial suspension of all gatherings over 250 people. The museum reopened and welcomed our community back in a safe and capacity controlled environment between July 2 and November 22. As of November 23, the AGO is closed temporarily again pending further guidance from the government and public health officials. The lockdown of the AGO as well as those of our cultural partners, lenders, and the broader corporate and business communities have created tremendous challenges to our overall fiscal operations, exhibition and programming schedules.

Despite the COVID-19 challenges, the mission of the AGO remained the same – to bring people together in-person or virtually with art to see, experience and understand the world in new ways, while always building on a foundation of our core values of Art, Audience and Learning. The museum has worked closely with artists, governments, communities and corporate partners to become one of the world's leading art museums, known for its world-class exhibitions, unique collections and innovative outreach and educational programming.

The health and safety of our employees, volunteers, visitors and our extended AGO community is always our top priority. For 2020/21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AGO has a scaled back operation. During the brief reopened period from July 2 to November 22, 2020, the AGO continued to share its remarkable Collection with the public as well as a series of special exhibitions in a safe and capacity controlled environment:

- *Illusions: The Art of Magic, February 22 – November 8, 2020*
- *Diane Arbus: Photographs, 1956-1971, February 22 – November 8, 2020*
- *Haegue Yang: Emergence, October 1, 2020 – February 21, 2021*

Total operating revenues for 2020/21 are \$50,342,526; total operating expenditures are \$50,027,784 before net amortization. More details on the impact of COVID-19 and the museum's proactive initiatives are outlined in subsequent sections of this document.

For 2021/22, the following exciting exhibitions will bring works from around the world to the AGO:

- *Andy Warhol: May 22, 2021 to August 29, 2021*
- *Fragments of Epic Memory: July 31 to October 24, 2021*
- *Picasso: Painting the Blue Period: Opening Fall 2021*
- *Robert Houle: Red is Beautiful: Opening Winter 2021*

With our robust and diverse programming, the AGO is ready to play a strong role in the recovery of our cultural tourism sector and to contribute to a marquee year of events for Ontarians and visitors in 2021.

Total operating revenues for 2021/22 are projected to be \$52,365,595; total operating expenditures are projected to be \$53,518,040 before net amortization.

The AGO is proud of our historical track record of a balanced budget and responsible fiscal management. However, due to the current pandemic and the uncertainty of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program and related pandemic restrictions, the AGO is projecting an operating deficit of approximately \$1.45 million in 2021/22.

The Government of Ontario is a vital partner to the AGO, providing annual operating support of approximately \$21 million. This support is always critically important to our operation, but has become absolutely essential during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. A long-term and stable base of government support sustains many of the non-discretionary costs required for the AGO to fulfil its legislated mandate: protecting and preserving the AGO Collection; managing a safe and secure environment for storage and public display; and making the AGO an accessible and attainable destination for the people of Ontario.

The AGO was grateful to receive capital repair and rehabilitation support from the Government of Ontario in the amount of up to \$1,730,000 for five (5) projects in 2020/21. The museum is very mindful that parts of its physical plant were built as early as the mid-1920s (1820, in the case of its historic house, The Grange). Ensuring the ongoing safety of visitors, employees and volunteers is paramount. As an art museum, the AGO must also keep current with recent developments in security systems and temperature/environmental controls to safeguard its significant Collection.

The AGO is well prepared to lead by example; we will showcase and role-model innovative business approaches that will be entrepreneurial and creative to build consumer and cultural confidence. The museum shares a commitment to providing public access to our programming and collections onsite and online. We have the opportunity for a greater economic impact and to lead the recovery with stimulus funding ranging from programming support to infrastructure projects.

The challenge of unpredictable consumer and corporate revenues post COVID-19 makes the ongoing stability of government support even more critical. We understand and support the Government of Ontario's decision to address the immediate health and well-being of Ontarians and we are committed to do our part. While the impact of the pandemic has been immense, with stable and enhanced funding the museum would be well positioned to lead and support the province's economic and cultural recovery, and to welcome the eventual return of tourists from across Ontario, Canada and around the world.

The AGO looks forward to continuing to work in strong partnership with the Government of Ontario to enable Ontarians to fully benefit from the museum's many programs and resources.

## **MANDATE**

As cited in the *Art Gallery of Ontario Act*, the objectives of the AGO are:

- (a) To cultivate and advance the cause of the visual arts in Ontario;
- (b) To conduct programs of education in the origin, development, appreciation and techniques of the visual arts;
- (c) To collect and exhibit works of art and displays and to maintain and operate a gallery and related facilities as required for this purpose;
- (d) To stimulate the interest of the public in matters undertaken by the Gallery.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission statement of the AGO is:

*We bring people together with art to see, experience and understand the world in new ways.*

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The vision statement of the AGO is:

*AGO will lead global conversations from Toronto through extraordinary collections, exhibitions and programs, and by reflecting the people who live here.*

## **VALUES**

The AGO's operation is grounded in the following values:

- *We believe the experience of our visitor is paramount.*
- *We commit to excellence in the acquisition, collection, preservation and presentation of art in our care, in our time and for future generations.*
- *We commit to the highest standards of scholarship while engaging new methodologies and welcoming new points of view.*
- *We celebrate art and artists as central to our sense of who we are.*
- *We listen and contribute to our communities.*
- *We foster respect and recognition for all who visit and work here.*

## **SUPPORTING MINISTRY OBJECTIVES**

The AGO is proud to support the priorities of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries by:

- Building economic and cultural tourism recovery post COVID-19.
- Being accessible and attainable to visit for Ontarians.
- Promoting the arts and the creative economy.
- Bringing world-class exhibitions and programming to the province.
- Encouraging active participation in arts and culture activities.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN**

### **External Factors:**

- COVID-19: On the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, the AGO announced its temporary closure on Friday, March 13, 2020. The museum reopened in stages: on July 2 to Members and Annual Pass Holders, and to the public on July 23, strictly following government guidelines and directives that mandated severely reduced capacity in order to maintain physical distancing. On Monday, November 23, the museum closed temporarily again as the City of Toronto was moved to Lockdown stage by the Government of Ontario. The AGO will continue to monitor the situation and looks forward to welcoming visitors back to the museum once a reopening date has been confirmed. This ongoing pandemic and the uncertainties of potential future waves and social restrictions may force the museum to scale back or shut down operations again.
- Visitor leisure spending: the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and the unpredictable visitor leisure trends continue to make it difficult to accurately predict revenues from admission and visitor spending. The AGO relies on tourists to visit each year, particularly in the summer. Closed borders and other restrictions have resulted in virtually no tourist season in 2020/21.
- Private sector support: COVID-19 has had a deep and prolonged impact across the economy, and private sector support is becoming a less stable source of revenue, making it more difficult to project future year budgets.
- Government support: The AGO is committed to fiscal prudence and maintaining a balanced operating budget. With the effects of COVID-19, stable and predictable funding from the government will enable the museum to deliver a safe and welcoming environment for employees, volunteers and visitors.
- Public awareness: Growing competition to be "top of mind" for leisure activity is driving increased investment in communication and marketing strategies.
- Growing consumer use of digital technologies: Digital technologies provide a wider and more versatile spectrum of vehicles to connect with audiences, both on-site and virtually.
- Insurance for major travelling exhibitions: Rapidly increasing values of artworks are dramatically increasing insurance costs for major travelling exhibitions. *The Canada Travelling Exhibitions Indemnification Act* sets a per exhibition indemnification limit of \$600M. This covers less than half the value of some of our major exhibitions. The AGO must purchase commercial insurance to cover the remaining value of the exhibition.

### **Internal Factors**

- Protection/preservation of art: The AGO's primary asset is its collection of more than 120,000 works of art. We must continue to invest resources to ensure that security control systems, temperature/environmental control systems and management protocols provide the optimal protection and ongoing preservation of this asset.
- Investment in future programming: An ongoing challenge to allocate funds to major exhibitions and other programs that require multiple years to plan and develop.
- Digital and information technology: These applications have the potential to be our most effective tools in reaching larger, more diverse audiences. We are seeking avenues of support to develop these significant and sustainable links with the public. Many of our existing systems are aging and no longer provide us with adequate support. It is critical to have the technology that will allow us to reach our audiences through digital means. Online programming also offers the opportunity to reach far more Ontarians than onsite.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

The AGO is in the fourth year of a ten-year strategic vision (2018–2028) that will provide a clear path forward to grow the museum as an ambitious, innovative, forward-looking and impactful organization.

The strategic vision is centred on five key objectives and four drivers that are embedded in, and cut across, the entire plan. Our vision confirms a dynamic programming direction to guide our planning over the next ten years and includes an ambitious fundraising campaign.

The ambitious plan is based on the following key objectives:

- We will lead with quality.
- We will achieve financial equilibrium.
- We will be adaptable and flexible.
- We will lead with contemporary relevance.
- We will be inclusive and accessible.

### **Driver #1: ADMISSION MODEL:**

- Simplified pricing with affordable and attainable options
- Break down financial barriers to visiting
- Make the AGO a habit
- Foster a stronger relationship with visitors

### **Driver #2: CONTENT AND PROGRAM:**

- Generate and present vital and relevant exhibitions and programming
- Lead the global conversation from Toronto with contemporary relevance
- Provide programming that creates a hub for conversation in the City of Toronto
- Partner with global peer museums

### **Driver #3: BRAND AND AUDIENCE:**

- Boldly convey our purpose: Art, Audience and Learning
- Memorable brand that resonates with our target audiences
- Inclusive and welcoming, smart and accessible, conversational

### **Driver #4: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:**

- Visitors see themselves reflected in the diversity of the AGO's collection, exhibitions and programming, finding relevance in how it is interpreted and presented
- Actively welcome new audiences and ensure they feel a sense of belonging
- AGO employees, staff and volunteers reflect the diversity of Toronto, Ontario and Canada

The museum will continue to invest in its people as one of the important assets and enablers, it will leverage technology and make key capital investments to support all four strategic drivers. This vision will be integrated into its operational plans and budgets over the ten-year period to ensure the successful completion of the plan. Now, more than ever, this strategic direction and vision will see the AGO leading global conversations from Toronto through extraordinary collections, exhibitions and programs, and by reflecting the communities we serve. Looking beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, this strategic direction will enable the museum to develop deeper connections with existing visitors, reach new audiences with similar interests, and strengthen and grow the AGO Community.

## **ACCESS STRATEGY**

Art is for everyone. In May 2019, the AGO announced bold and exciting changes that will ensure greater museum access than ever before. With the introduction of the new Access Strategy, admission for visitors 25 and under is free – all year, anytime. For visitors over 25, the AGO offers a new Annual Pass that provides unlimited admission for a year for \$35.

Since the launch of the new pricing model, the museum has received tremendous positive feedback from our Members, community partners, donors as well as arts and culture supporters. The new admission model has been a game-changer, opening our doors wider than ever before to everyone. Public reception of this initiative has been overwhelmingly positive, and it has received attention internationally.

As an important cultural asset of Ontario, the AGO is committed to presenting world-class exhibitions and engaging public programming in an affordable, attainable, safe and welcoming environment for all Ontarians. This landmark admission initiative improves access for our youth and families and leads to an even stronger cultural sector for Ontario. Since May 2019, more than 192,000 people have signed up for an Annual Pass, and the museum can directly communicate with more than 301,100 people. The museum is also seeing marked increases in the diversity of visitors by age, as well as geographic, ethno-cultural and socio-economic background. We believe this strategy will continue to strengthen our relationship with visitors, grow our membership base, foster our position as a cultural and tourism leader and contribute to our long-term financial equilibrium.

The AGO is proud to celebrate Ontario and Canada by sharing our history and stories in an accessible and attainable way for families across our province. This initiative would not be possible without the generosity of our donors and supporters, and the steadfast support of the Ontario government. The AGO looks forward to working with the province to share our learning and to explore further collaboration and partnership. By working together, we can deliver transformative experiences for Ontarians, reduce barriers and improve access for everyone, and rebuild our position as a global cultural leader in a post COVID-19 economy.

## **OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES – 2020/21**

On the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, the AGO announced its temporary closure on Friday, March 13, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown of the AGO as well as those of our cultural partners, lenders, and the broader corporate and business communities created tremendous challenges to our overall fiscal operations, exhibition and programming schedules.

All non-critical full-time staff have worked from home as of March 17, 2020; while critical staff continued to patrol the building to ensure the safety and care of art and to conduct essential administrative duties that can only be done onsite. Part-time staff, for a brief period, were placed on Declared Emergency Leave (DEL) in an effort to protect their jobs until they could be brought back into the fold. Part-time employees on DEL and full-time employees were presented with an option:

- The AGO Plan (between April 15 and September 15, 2020): full-time and regular part-time employees who agreed to participate had their workload (and subsequent pay) reduced by 25%; and those who were unable to work from home at that capacity would supplement their workload with various training opportunities such as the new AGO U learning initiative.

- AGO U included five modules delivered over two semesters about eight weeks in duration. The five modules were art history, artmaking, language, self-care and job-specific electives.

From the beginning of COVID-19, we recognized that support from all stakeholders was critically important to the short- and long-term financial health of the organization. April 24, 2020 marked the beginning of the first pay period of our AGO Plan, which was comprised of a \$5 million donation from private donors, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Program and a 25% pay reduction from AGO staff – a huge sacrifice for everyone and one of the necessary measures that helped to keep the team together during the first closure period. The AGO would not be able to achieve this business contingency plan without the generous support from our donors and government initiatives as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The AGO Plan gave us time as health and public officials learned more about the virus and we learned more about how the virus would impact our operations. Limits on the number of people who can gather in one place, physical distancing rules, a slow return to physical spaces and restrictions on travel have had – and will continue to have – a significant impact on our attendance and ability to generate revenue. Our attendance numbers are down drastically, and we simply do not have enough people visiting the AGO.

COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, unforeseen and prolonged effect on the AGO's operations. Some of the important underlying assumptions are:

- The economic outlook will continue to negatively impact philanthropy, corporate sponsorship and we will not be able to hold major fundraising events.
- Since reopening on July 2, 2020, we are working with revised attendance projection of up to 1,000 visitors a day, compared with the pre-COVID-19 level of 2,400. Our exhibition schedule has been significantly impacted due to the pandemic (see details below).

The AGO reopened its doors on July 2, 2020 to Members and Annual Pass holders, and to the public on July 23, 2020. Visitors needed to book timed-entry tickets in advance on the AGO ticketing website prior to their visit. This enabled the museum to limit the number of people in the museum at any one time to allow for physical distancing.

On Monday, November 23, the museum closed temporarily again as the City of Toronto was moved to Lockdown stage by the Government of Ontario. The AGO will continue to monitor the situation and looks forward to welcoming visitors back to the museum once a reopening date has been confirmed.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The closure due to COVID-19 resulted in losing the last 2.5 weeks of visitor attendance for the 2019/20 fiscal year, including the cancellation of our very popular March Break programming and summer camps. COVID-19 negatively impacted our exhibitions and public programming schedule and other self-generated revenues.

2019/20

- *Diane Arbus: Photographs, 1956–1971*: Lost last three weeks of fiscal 2019/20 attendance.
- *Illusions: The Art of Magic*: Lost last three weeks of fiscal 2019/20 attendance.



## 2020/21

- Potential Revenue Losses (travelling exhibitions): Approximately \$50,000
- *Diane Arbus: Photographs, 1956–1971*: \$30,000 in exhibition fees (Montreal hopes to postpone to fiscal 2021/22, or 22/23 but this is not yet confirmed.)
- *Diane Arbus: Photographs, 1956–1971*: \$50,000 in exhibition fees (Vancouver has cancelled 2020/21 presentation. Hopes to reschedule for fiscal 2021/22 or 2022/23).
- *Anthropocene*: loss of approximately \$27,900 in exhibition fees (Antwerp venue likely delayed to 2020/21).
- *Anthropocene*: loss of \$50,000 in anticipated exhibition fees (Munich, Fall 2020). Ideally will be rescheduled for Fall 2021.

## Postponements:

- *Haegue Yang: Emergence*: postponed; lost 8-10 weeks' worth of potential fiscal year attendance.
- *Picasso: Painting the Blue Period*: postponed until Fall 2021.
- *I Am Here*: postponed until Spring 2022,
- *Andy Warhol*: postponed by two months.

All public programming such as seniors' events, talks, films, performances, school visits, and adult courses were cancelled since the first temporary closure with more than \$1,041,354 in anticipated loss of revenues to date.

The museum is also unable to operate our Food and Beverage Events rental program. This program not only directly supports public programming activation and fundraising initiatives but also drives revenues of approximately \$7 million annually by selling our space and services to our social and corporate partners. We experienced a loss in the second half of March 2020 and expect to lose all revenue through our 2020/21 fiscal with the cancellation of more than 300 events at approximately \$6.5 million. In addition, we also lost business in all Food and Beverage Outlets (AGO Bistro, Members Lounge, Café and Espresso Bar). 2020-21 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter results alone show a loss of \$780,000 – total revenue contribution from all Food and Beverage Outlets is approximately \$3.7 million annually – this business comes directly from AGO attendance. At this moment, we are projecting that Food and Beverage would incur a total revenue loss of \$8,000,000 or 78% of budget. We have re-opened the AGO Bistro for takeout and limited dine-in service (when permitted), with a limited menu, following current government guidelines and protocols. We are unable to start up events at the moment.

In September, due to the ongoing significant impact of the pandemic on the AGO, the museum made the difficult decision of laying off approximately 110 staff. We carefully reviewed our needs over the next 12 to 18 months in line with our mission, 2028 vision and our goals. The museum tried to find meaningful, productive work for employees in order to meet these needs and have kept as many employees as we can based on the work there will be going forward. The reality is that some work is completely dependent on activities and attendance onsite at the AGO and not all employees will have work for the foreseeable future. The museum will continue to monitor this and review our operational needs. Should pandemic restrictions lift and our revenue increase to normal levels, then there could be opportunities to recall employees who have been laid off.

In December, as a result of the second provincewide shutdown, approximately 10 staff primarily from Food and Beverage and approximately 12 staff from Visitor Experience were placed on temporary layoff status.

The reduced visitor attendance the AGO is expecting for the current 2020/21 fiscal year (and possibly longer) will have a substantial direct impact on our annual earned revenues. Even if attendance returns to “normal” levels, the museum will likely need to reduce capacity due to social distancing protocols. Like many other cultural institutions, the AGO will not only need to manage capacity through technology and other measures, but also adjust our financial model due to the continuing loss of revenue.

Despite the closure, the AGO has remained engaged with our audiences across the province to support public education by offering robust web and social media content for free.

## **AGO from Home**

While group courses, tours and programs, including the Dr. Mariano Elia Hands-On Centre, remain closed or suspended, the AGO continues to bring free talks, performances, tours and art-making experiences to visitors virtually at [www.AGO.ca](http://www.AGO.ca). The AGO is committed to maintaining an increased online presence to build upon the digital engagement enjoyed by tens of thousands since we closed our doors to the public. Online learning was a major component of the AGO from Home content strategy.

- More than 15,800 unique viewers tuned in for the more than 100 livestreams hosted by the AGO between April and December 2020. Videos produced for Facebook and Instagram received over 398,000 views. More than half of the viewers were not part of our email community.
- The AGO’s weekly newsletter (The Insider) received more than 313,400 visits during AGO from Home. Visits and new visitors to the Insider increased by 8% and the number of return visits increased by 13% over the previous period as a result of our strategy.
- We saw an 827% increase in traffic to our existing online resources page and launched the AGO Makes initiative on April 28, 2020, a new video series by the AGO’s Education & Programming team. The first AGO Makes video experience features a project all about monochromatic colour schemes. The teacher’s resource newsletter list grew by 163%.
- The Monochromatic Composition activity was the top-performing learn content with more than 4,700 views and an average time-on-page of over 4-minutes, indicating that people were engaged with the activity. The embedded YouTube video was viewed more than 3,000 times and had a 66% audience retention rate, the average for a YouTube video is 30%.
- AGO Makes content received more than 33,000 visits from over 25,600 unique visitors.
- In response to the global protests against racism, we created more than 60 new stories that featured BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) artists or addressed themes of racism.

## **First Reopening**

The AGO welcomed our community back in stages and with reduced days and hours: On July 2, 2020, the AGO opened to Members and Annual Pass Holders who booked timed-entry tickets in advance. On July 16, 2020 the public was able to purchase timed-entry single tickets in advance and started coming from July 23, 2020. To help us maintain our high standards of cleanliness and give visitors a safe and enjoyable experience, the museum was open Thursday through Sunday, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Health and safety of employees, volunteers and visitors is a top priority for the museum. Everyone entering the AGO over the age of two is required to wear a mask or face covering and social

distancing measures have been implemented. A limited number of tickets are available for each 30-minute entry timeslot to help control the flow of visitors entering the museum.

Three levels of the AGO opened on July 2, 2020, including the J.S. McLean Centre for Indigenous & Canadian Art, The Thomson Collection of European Art, the Thomson Collection of Canadian Art and the Henry Moore Sculpture Centre.

COVID-19 has had an impact on exhibition planning at museums around the world, and exhibition schedules at the AGO have been adjusted.

- Originally scheduled to close in May 2020, the AGO's special exhibitions, *Diane Arbus, Photographs: 1956-1971* and *Illusions: The Art of Magic*, was extended until November 8, 2020.
- *Haegue Yang: Emergence*, originally scheduled to open on April 30, 2020, was delayed until October 1, 2020. Renowned for her moveable sculptures, *Emergence* highlights twenty-five years of art making by the acclaimed South Korean artist, including two new installations commissioned by the AGO: a large-scale venetian blind work in the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Sculpture Atrium and a mural-like wallpaper at the AGO's South Entrance.
- *Andy Warhol*, organized by Tate Modern, London in collaboration with Museum Ludwig, Cologne, the Denver Art Museum, and the AGO, will open in spring 2021.
- *I am Here: Home Movies and Everyday Masterpieces* will open in spring 2022.
- The culmination of a multi-year international research project, *Picasso: Painting the Blue Period* will now open in Toronto in fall 2021. Organized in partnership with the Phillips Collection, Washington D.C., the exhibition will bring together more than 80 works by Picasso from 12 countries.

On July 2 we opened shopAGO's physical store to visitors with a timed-entry ticket every Thursday to Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Social distancing measures were in effect in store, and a curated selection of merchandise was available for purchase.

The museum has re-opened the AGO Bistro for takeout and limited dine-in service (where permitted), with a limited menu, following current government guidelines and protocols. We are unable to start up events at this moment.

The AGO's reopening plans are guided by government and public health officials and are designed to remain responsive. Decisions about when and how the AGO will welcome more visitors, and resume its popular free Wednesday nights, will be made in the near future.

On Monday, November 23, the museum closed temporarily again as the City of Toronto was moved to Lockdown stage by the Government of Ontario. The AGO will continue to monitor the situation and looks forward to welcoming visitors back to the museum once a reopening date has been confirmed.

### **Thanking our front-line workers with a year of free admission**

On July 16, 2020, the AGO extended a "thank you" to the many front-line workers — in hospitals, grocery stores, on public transit and elsewhere — who kept Ontario's essential services running during the onset of COVID-19. Between July 16 and August 16, 2020, front-line workers residing in Ontario were invited to sign up for a free Annual Pass. Valid for one year, the Annual Pass will allow front-line workers to book a timed-entry ticket for free, whenever they wish. By the end of the promotion, more than 27,590 Frontline Workers Annual Passes were issued.

## **Virtual School Programs**

Launched on October 13, the AGO invited students in the classroom or at home, to connect via Zoom for a new series of free guided art conversations, happening every weekday, Monday to Friday, in real time. Designed to bring the AGO to students, each 30-minute conversation is led by a trained art educator and highlights artwork and artists from the AGO's Collection, includes a mini creative exercise and features opportunities for discussion. These curriculum-based conversations emphasize the role of art in promoting wellness and connect to contemporary subjects including the art of the African Diaspora, art and the senses, and Indigenous Art.

Registration for each or all of these conversations is free of charge. Teachers, parents and caregivers are invited to register and share with one child or a classroom of students. Understanding the distinct needs of various grade levels, three versions of each conversation are offered daily - one tailored specifically for students in JK to Grade 3, one for Grades 4 to 8 and another for Grades 9 to 12. While each day's conversation is unique, the material being discussed has been organized thematically to help teachers and parents select the best conversation for their students. The various themes are *AGO Highlights of the Collection*, *Introducing Art of the African Diaspora*, *Art and the Environment*, *Art and the senses*, and *Indigenous Art and artists*. The program will also include a few specialized conversations, including *An Introduction to Haegue Yang* and *The Art and Science of Conservation*. In addition to these free daily conversations, the AGO is also offering customizable virtual school programs. Designed in tandem with an art educator, these bespoke experiences include facilitation and an art making component.

Since the introduction in October, we have reached over 120,000 students all across the province, country - and even the world – with more than 51% of participants from outside of the Toronto CMA (Census Metropolitan Area). Students in Ontario now have access to high quality art education, no matter their geographic location. With daily workshops and the wonder of the internet, art educators have been having conversations with students about the AGO Collection and reaching much farther than we could before. This program solidifies the AGO as an innovative leader in museum education and as a partner for educators and families across the province.

## **New Department of Arts of Global Africa and the Diaspora**

On October 29, the AGO announced the establishment of a new Department of Arts of Global Africa and the Diaspora, which will focus on expanding both the museum's collections and its exhibitions and programs of historic, modern and contemporary art from Africa and the African diaspora. The Department is led by Dr. Julie Crooks, Curator, Arts of Global Africa and the Diaspora, formerly the AGO's Associate Curator of Photography. Simultaneously, a new support group, Friends of Global Africa and the Diaspora has been formed with the dual goals of supporting the Department's work in this area, as well as creating a more dynamic forum for community voices.

The creation of this new Department expands and formalizes work that has been underway at the AGO for several years. For example, in 2019 the museum was able – with strong community support – to acquire The Montgomery Collection of Caribbean Photographs, a singular collection of more than 3,500 historical images from island countries including Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. Perhaps the largest collection of such images, this incredible visual record contains studio portraits, landscapes and tourist views. The AGO has also significantly expanded its holdings of photographs by African and diasporic artists, including artworks by Malick Sidibé and Paul Kodjo. These recent acquisitions will feature prominently in the upcoming Collection-based exhibitions, Documents, 1960s – 1970s and Dawoud Bey, John Edmonds and Wardell Milan.

## Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

The AGO is committed to providing platforms for artists who are voices of change in our culture and to better reflect the diversity of our community. The AGO supports a culture of inclusion and diversity. Discrimination should never happen to anyone at the AGO, or anywhere else. Started prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the museum is developing a strategy, via an inclusive process, that will reflect this commitment.

### ART & LEARNING:

- Over the last several months, the AGO has focused on hosting virtual talks and performances featuring leading BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) artists.
- The AGO's weekly newsletter (The Insider) read by approximately 250,000 subscribers, continues to feature profiles of artists and programs in the museum and increasingly, outside its walls.
- Work is ongoing to ensure that the AGO Collections, its exhibitions and programs reflect our diverse communities.
  - In 2017, the AGO announced the wholesale reorganization of the department of Canadian art. The newly created Department of Indigenous & Canadian Art, would be co-led by curators of Indigenous and Canadian art, organized on a nation to nation basis. Visitors to the renovated J.S. McLean Centre for Indigenous & Canadian Art can see contemporary and historical works organized thematically in dialogue, with label text in Anishinaabemowin, English, French and where relevant Inuktitut.
  - In 2019, we hired Indigenous Art Educators to deliver the grade 9 NAC10: Expressions of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Cultures, a school program focused on Indigenous art as part of our dedicated partnership with the Toronto District School Board and the Urban Indigenous Education Centre.
  - In February 2020, our curatorial and programming teams collaborated to create a month-long inter-generational celebration of Black History Month.
  - We have created Teacher Resources on a number of works by Black, Indigenous, People of Colour artists.
  - This fall, School program offerings will be digital. For the first time ever, we have a program focused to teach students more about Black histories and futures. In the Getting to Know Black Canadian Artists program, students will explore the works of Black artists in the Collection and explore concepts of identity through the history and presence of Black communities in Canada.

### OUR PEOPLE:

- The AGO is committed to making our workplace more diverse and inclusive and ongoing learning is taking place with employees and volunteers, including through AGO U. The AGO's standard for a safe and inclusive work environment is one where everyone can be their true self.
- Our Board of Trustees has established a new Diversity & Inclusion Board Committee. They have now met a number of times and have established a mandate.
- Established in 2017, the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA) group is comprised of employees from across the AGO who have been advocating for a more equitable and inclusive culture. This fall, the group has formalized its mandate.
- The AGO is investing in a robust anti-oppression training program and requires that all employees and volunteers complete the training by October 2020. This training will launch a regular and ongoing program of mandatory diversity and inclusion training sessions and will be

included in all staff and volunteer onboarding. New sessions are being scheduled for 2021. To date, sessions have included:

- *An Introduction to Diversity & Inclusion*
- *Anti-Racism 101 - Moving from 'Not Racist' to 'Anti-Racist'*
- *Anishinaabe Philosophy and Land by Anishinaabe*
- *Sharing Knowledges – A Conversation with Indigenous Art Educators*
- The AGO is in the final stages of hiring our first-ever Manager of Diversity & Inclusion. This position will report into the Director's Office.
- The overall hiring process is currently being reviewed and will be reconstructed to include a diversity and inclusion lens on all aspects including, interview questions, where jobs are posted, who is involved in the hiring process and mandatory Diversity and Inclusion training upon onboarding.

#### OUR AUDIENCE:

- The introduction of the AGO Annual Pass in May 2019, and the sweeping admission changes that came with it, including free admission for all visitors age 25 and under, has meant that the AGO audience is more diverse than ever and more accurately reflects the people who live in our community.

#### Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

On December 7, the Auditor General of Ontario released her Annual Report, which includes a section on the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Culture Industries, and specifically the AGO, the Royal Ontario Museum and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. This value for money audit was conducted between December 2019 and November 2020 and the final report made 19 recommendations for the AGO. The museum will review and work with the ministry on these recommendations and in the context of the broader recovery of the sector.

#### **OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES – 2021/22**

The health and safety of our employees, volunteers, visitors and our extended AGO community is always our top priority. The AGO will continue to be guided by the advice of local, provincial and national public health officials, consider all government recommendations and will make decisions as needed regarding any additional measures.

In 2021/22, the AGO will continue to offer a diverse schedule of exhibitions, programs and activities that focus on the guiding principles of Art, Audience and Learning.

The following exciting exhibitions will bring works from around the world to the AGO:

*Andy Warhol* – May 22, 2021 to August 29, 2021

A career retrospective, this blockbuster exhibition reconsiders the personal, social and political backdrop that influenced Warhol's ground-breaking art. A 20th-century icon at the centre of Pop Art, featuring loans from museums and private collections in Europe and North America, *Andy Warhol* spans all four decades of the artist's career. Key works from Warhol's Pop period include *Marilyn Diptych* (1962) from Tate Modern, *100 Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) from Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, and the AGO's *Elvis I and II* (1963/4). Also, to be included are Warhol's experimental installations. *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (1966), an immersive, psychedelic multimedia environment that involves film projections, disco balls, and the sounds of the experimental rock group

The Velvet Underground, encourages audience participation, while Warhol's *Silver Clouds* (1965-66) invites visitors to play with metallic pillows that float about the museum space. This exhibition is organized by Tate Modern, London, in collaboration with Museum Ludwig, Cologne, and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

*Picasso: Painting the Blue Period* – Opening Fall 2021

This multidisciplinary exhibition celebrates Picasso's iconic works and his working method. This exhibition will feature paintings, sculptures and works on paper totaling up to 90 pieces, including work from Picasso's Blue Period (1901-1904) and Rose Period (1904-1907), featuring works never before exhibited in North America and major loans from at least nine countries, such as Japan, Israel, France, Spain, England and others. In complement to the exhibition, the audio guide will tell the story of this exhibition – available online and accessed through visitors' personal devices. Three dedicated learning "labs" that will focus on the conservation science behind three key paintings. Access to special exhibitions is now included with entry to the Gallery under our new admission model, alongside access to the AGO collection and smaller exhibitions.

*Fragments of Epic Memory* – July 31 to October 24, 2021

This exhibition is an AGO-organized exhibition that will be anchored by an extensive selection of photographs from the Caribbean dating from the 1840s to the 1940s culled from the AGO's Montgomery Collection of Caribbean Photographs. Notably, The Montgomery Collection – one of the world's most significant collections of its kind – was acquired with the support of individuals from Toronto's Black and Caribbean communities. This collective effort, unprecedented in the history of the AGO, underscores the community support for the AGO to reflect the diversity of our city in this Collection and programming.

*Robert Houle: Red is Beautiful* – Opening Winter 2021

Robert Houle is one of the most influential First Nations artists to break into the contemporary art world. His work blends abstraction, postmodernism, and conceptualism with First Nations aesthetics and histories. Houle went from residential school to art school to museum boardrooms and on to the art world stage as an artist, curator and writer. The exhibition will debut at the AGO in December 2021 and show until March 2022. *Robert Houle: Red is Beautiful* consists of large installations, paintings, and drawings created during.

The active virtual schedule of education and public programming will continue for the coming year, including online talks, virtual school programs, courses, workshops, performances, AGO Makes, Access programs and including events and workshops for seniors.

New this year, due to COVID-19 related restrictions, Family Day and March Break will offer online experiences and resources for families and children including maker activities and performances. As permitted, the museum will continue with our successful "Hello from the Other Side" Performance series, inviting other cultural institutions such as Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Royal Conservatory of Music, Small World Music and Soundstreams Toronto to perform in gallery with limited audiences, based on new COVID-19 capacity regulations.

The Virtual School programs will continue to offer curriculum-related themes geared to junior kindergarten through Grade 12. In this unprecedented time, school programs at the AGO continues to provide live art education program, happening daily, Monday to Friday via Zoom, free of charge.

Our RBC Artist in Residence program also turns to online with an innovative program series for 2021 focused on emerging artists (up to age 35). In partnership with RBC, the AGO launches an experimental, digital program for 2021 focused on young emerging artists (up to age 35). This new

approach incorporates three streams, including a micro-residency, the established artist-in-residence (AiR) program, and a suite of mentorship workshops for the aspiring new generation of artists. Focused on artistic growth and presentation opportunities, the AGO commits to deepening its relationships with artists across Ontario. Through this program, we encourage artists to push the boundaries of their artistic practices into a digital landscape. This Program initiative connects emerging Ontario artists to art, audience and learning priorities at the AGO. It will engage artists to co-create and generate meaningful, experimental and a wide range of experiences connecting people, art, and contemporary ideas.

We will continue to grow our offerings on our Access to Art Digital Platform. This page highlights programming co-created with community partners and focuses on lowering any perceived or physical barriers to the AGO and its exhibitions.

A robust suite of public programming – special talks and events, fun family programs, as well as great courses and workshops will be presented around a number of exhibitions including:

#### 2021 Summer Season:

- AGO Camps will shift to an online model of courses and programs for children in addition to a robust schedule of adult studio programs
- Multisensory Museum videos that share verbal descriptions and multisensory translations of artworks in our collection.
- Workman Arts Partnership, artist response series to the AGO and our collection
- It Can Be Anything Film Premiere and workshops for participants who identify as neurodiverse
- Deaf Culture Moments

#### *Warhol: May – August 2021*

Programming will appeal to and connect with the arts community by positioning Warhol's expanded artistic practice against the backdrop of pressing contemporary social issues.

- Programming will include:
  - Keynote presentations by leading artists/writers/thinkers on Warhol's continued legacy.
  - Talks by Warhol specialists, and an exploration of the ethics of representation
  - On-line studio and ideas courses and art-making activities inspired by Warhol, across all ages inclusive of families, children, youth, adults and older adults.
  - Potential Diabetes Canada partnership to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invention of insulin, they are creating an art competition, asking people to create portraits and share their lived experiences in a creative way.
  - Verbal description of Andy Warhol Artwork

#### *Fragments of Epic Memory: July – October 2021*

- Programming will include:
  - Keynote talks by leading artists and writers of the Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora
  - On-line studio and ideas courses and art-making activities inspired by the photography collection, across all ages inclusive of families, children, youth, adults and older adults.
  - Musical moments in gallery that respond to the exhibition
  - Specialized virtual school program focused on select photographs from the exhibition



*Picasso: Painting the Blue Period: October – January 2022*

- Programming will create engaging opportunities for first time viewers to explore the artist and his work and provide ways for audiences with some knowledge of Picasso to look at the artist in a new light. Programming will include:
  - Thematic Curator and Artist talks including a Lecture Series: contemporary painters speak about Picasso
  - A film series inspired by the colour blue
  - Two Study Days (*Contemporary Practice in Conservation* and *Who is Picasso?*)
  - Relaunch of onsite school programming with tours of Picasso
  - Blue Jays Baseball Team Partnership - video response to Picasso

## **STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES GOING FORWARD**

The AGO is more than just a place where art is preserved and promoted, we are also a space of learning, inspiration and a place that leads global conversation. At a time when many people are separated from one another, arts and culture can bring us together. The importance of cultural content and accessibility for the public is clear – it contributes to mental health and well-being of our society. The AGO offered a range of digital content prior to COVID-19 and we have further revamped and expanded our programming in recent months. From AGO Virtual School programs to Zoom talks, Facebook and Instagram live events, online courses to digital collections content, we are striving to be more resilient, resourceful and innovative in this unprecedented time.

Despite the multiple challenges of the current pandemic; support for staff and volunteers, maintaining financial and operational stability, protection and preservation of our collections, the museum has continuously stayed engaged with our public and the broader AGO community. The museum is pleased to do our part in contributing to our society and inspiring Ontarians in this difficult and uncertain time. The AGO has swiftly and creatively responded with ways to serve our communities and to carry out our missions and mandate. Some changes might be short-term while others such as Virtual School programs will be successful strategies that become permanent. It is critically important to have sustained support to maintain our infrastructure during and after COVID-19 is over as long-term effects of the pandemic may yet to be fully realized.

The gallery has discovered new audiences and new opportunities to expand the AGO community. Some operational procedures and programming may be refined and reinvented but our commitment striving to serve our public remains the same.

## **RESOURCES NEEDED TO MEET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The AGO's annual operating revenues come from three main sources:

- Government funding: The Government of Ontario is a vital partner in the AGO's operation, providing annual operating support of approximately \$21 million, representing 33% of our total operating revenues. Financial support from other levels of government includes an annual operating grant of approximately \$698,000 from the City of Toronto and an annual programming grant of \$490,000 from the Canada Council for the Arts. All other government funding is project based. Funding from all levels of government represents approximately 35% of the AGO's total operating revenue. In 2020/21, support from the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) program is projected to be approximately \$9.8 million. CEWS has been instrumental to the museum in order to maintain as many staff as possible through the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Self-generated revenues: Prior to COVID-19, admissions, food and beverage, retail and program sales represent approximately 33% of total operating revenues. It is expected that self-generated revenues will be seriously impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the relevant operational restrictions.
- Private sector revenues: Prior to COVID-19, memberships, individual/corporate giving, sponsorships and fundraising events represent approximately 32% of total operating revenues. It is expected that private sector revenues will be critically impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The combination of public, self-generated and private sector revenues provides a strong and diversified revenue base for the AGO's operation. A number of external factors, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, can and most likely will negatively impact self-generated revenues and private sector revenues, ranging from economic instability to increased competition for leisure activities and world issues/events that interfere with normal tourism and local consumer activity. For this reason, the base operating support from the Government of Ontario provides the AGO with a level of stability that is particularly critical during times when other sources of revenue are unpredictable.

The AGO's most essential resource is the AGO Collection of more than 120,000 works of art. The AGO is constantly challenged to maintain the most modern and innovative systems to protect works of art. Theft prevention systems must be kept at the most current and secure levels. Temperature and environmental control systems must also be continually upgraded to prevent deterioration to the works. Any shortcoming in either system could result in theft or damage to the works, ruining the AGO's reputation as a top calibre art museum and compromising its ability to compete for international travelling exhibitions.

The AGO must also ensure that visitors who come through our doors each year are provided with a safe and accessible experience. The museum must provide our staff and volunteers with a safe and accessible work environment. With areas of the AGO's building dating back to the 1920s, (and in the case of The Grange house – a national heritage building – back to 1820) unscheduled capital repairs are an ongoing challenge. Provincial capital renewal funding is a key resource for the AGO to respond to capital repairs in a timely fashion, and keep our security and environmental control systems up-to-date.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

In 2021/22, the AGO plans to operate with FTE staffing level of 380. Due to the pandemic, the AGO volunteer program is currently on pause pending further review based on the evolving pandemic situation.

During these changing and unprecedented times, the gallery will continue to monitor staffing requirements and work closely with our union partners to implement timely and responsible action to ensure the long-term health and financial strength of the organization.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The AGO is committed to the following performance measures that reflect our guiding principles of Art, Audience and Learning:

- **Access to art:** The AGO will make great works of art available to the public on an ongoing basis, through installations of the AGO Collection and temporary exhibitions of works from private and public collections from around the world.
- **Protection and preservation of the AGO Collection:** The AGO will continue to maintain its high standards of excellence to protect the Collection and preserve it for future generations.
- **Access to learning:** The AGO will provide programming that will enable audiences of all ages to engage with and learn about art.
- **Visitor satisfaction:** The AGO will continue to monitor the satisfaction level of our visitors.
- **Staff satisfaction and engagement:** The AGO will continue to monitor the satisfaction and engagement levels of its staff.
- **Fiscal prudence:** The AGO has a proven track record of responsible and disciplined fiscal management. The museum aims to maintain a balanced operation.

## **FINANCIAL BUDGET**

In 2021/22, the AGO will manage an operating budget of approximately \$53 million

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DATA ANALYTICS PLAN**

Technology is a key enabler to achieve the goals of the museum's strategic vision. The priorities for Information Technology focus on the following areas to shape our content and grow our audiences.

### **Digital Content Strategy**

In response to the pandemic, the AGO has developed an organization-wide content strategy to engage the province at home. The plan includes:

- Online programming focused on our collection, exhibitions, artists and the role the arts play in shaping our culture.
- Digital learning activities and live virtual classrooms that connect the AGO collection with schools and at-home learners.
- Leverage innovative technology and digital media to help visitors engage more deeply with the AGO at home and in-the-museum.

### **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System**

Develop a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, beginning with the creation of an integrated customer data platform that will support:

- Customer journey mapping
- Lifecycle management customization by segment and communication channel

- Integration of data across all visitor-facing touchpoints for better data capture, personalized and customer experience.

### **Technology Upgrades and Improvements**

The AGO is actively engaged in updating its technology systems for staff and visitors to simplify processes and create efficiencies. These improvements include:

- Participation in the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries tender for a new ticketing and reservation management system for provincial agencies and attractions.
- The launch of digital cards in early 2021 for AGO members of all levels.
- Internal system upgrades in our Food & Beverage outlets, Retail store and Human Resources department.
- The release of the AGO's Content and Collection Management System (CCMS), as part of the Canada Council for the Arts Digital Strategy Fund grant program, enabling other museums to leverage the AGO's technology investments to engage their visitors.

### **INITIATIVES INVOLVING THIRD PARTIES**

The AGO partners with other art museums to bring exhibitions to the AGO – either as a borrower of an exhibition organized by another art museum or as a co-organizer. These partnerships are carefully defined by contractual agreements that clearly specify the responsibilities and deliverables of each institution.

The AGO also partners with organizations and individuals to develop and deliver programs. Written agreements signed by all parties define responsibilities and deliverables of each partner.

Partnerships with individuals and corporations who commit financial support towards AGO exhibitions, programs and capital initiatives are also defined in detail with written agreements.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The AGO runs a year-round operation, with an ongoing schedule of collection displays, exhibitions, programs and activities for the public both onsite and virtually. The 2021/22 year also includes the implementation of the following strategic initiatives:

- Diversity and Inclusion is one of the museum's key strategic drivers. The AGO will develop and implement strategic initiatives that explicitly address equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility both internally for staff and volunteers and externally in our programming.
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing and communications plan that ensures the AGO speaks with one voice to all of our audiences
- Maintain and strengthen the various affordable options to visit the museum both onsite and virtually

## **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

The AGO maintains ongoing communications with the public about its programs and activities through the following mechanisms:

- The weekly AGOinsider e-newsletter is sent to over 252,000 subscribers, highlighting stories that reinforce the AGO's brand and highlighting a range of museum programs and events
- The biweekly What's On email is sent to over 245,000 subscribers, listing exhibitions, programs, events and activities both inside and outside the museum
- A Members' magazine is produced two times a year and mailed to all AGO Members. The spring 2020 issue was cancelled due to COVID-19
- The AGO website ([www.AGO.ca](http://www.AGO.ca)) provides comprehensive information about the AGO, including history, how to plan your visit, current and upcoming exhibitions, programs, events and stories
- The AGO regularly issues press releases, listings and PSAs and cultivates close working relationships with members of the media (TV, radio, print, social media) to ensure media coverage of the AGO's exhibitions, programs and activities, as well as to promote AGO as a key tourism and leisure destination in local, national and international media
- Advertising campaigns using print, TV, radio and social media for major exhibitions
- Social media: the AGO operates a Facebook page (over 145,000 followers), a YouTube channel (over 3,300 subscribers), Twitter (over 315,900 followers) and Instagram (over 154,000 followers) accounts. A variety of blogs are active through the AGO website.