

**REFLECTING THE PEOPLE  
WHO LIVE HERE**



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Art Gallery of Ontario operates on land that is the territory of the Anishinaabe (Mississauga) nation and is also the territory of the Wendat and Haudenosaunee. The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant is an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishnaabe Three Fires Confederacy to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Toronto is also governed by a treaty between the federal government of Canada and the Mississaugas of the New Credit (Anishinaabe nation). Toronto has always been a trading centre for First Nations.



© Joanne Tod



## OUR VISION

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

Our vision is anchored by our 4 pillars:

1. Art - strengthening our art holdings
2. The Dani Reiss Modern and Contemporary Gallery - expanding space for modern and contemporary art to better reflect cultures represented in our city
3. Exhibitions and Programs - extraordinary exhibitions and programs that lead global conversations
4. Audience - growing and remaining relevant to our audience.

Cover image: Installation view, Galleria Italia: Zak Ov . Moko Jumbie (detail), 2021. Mixed media, Overall: 560 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario. Commission, with funds from David W. Binet and Ray & Georgina Williams, 2021.   Zak Ov . 2021/70

# WORDS FROM THE MICHAEL AND SONJA KOERNER DIRECTOR, AND CEO

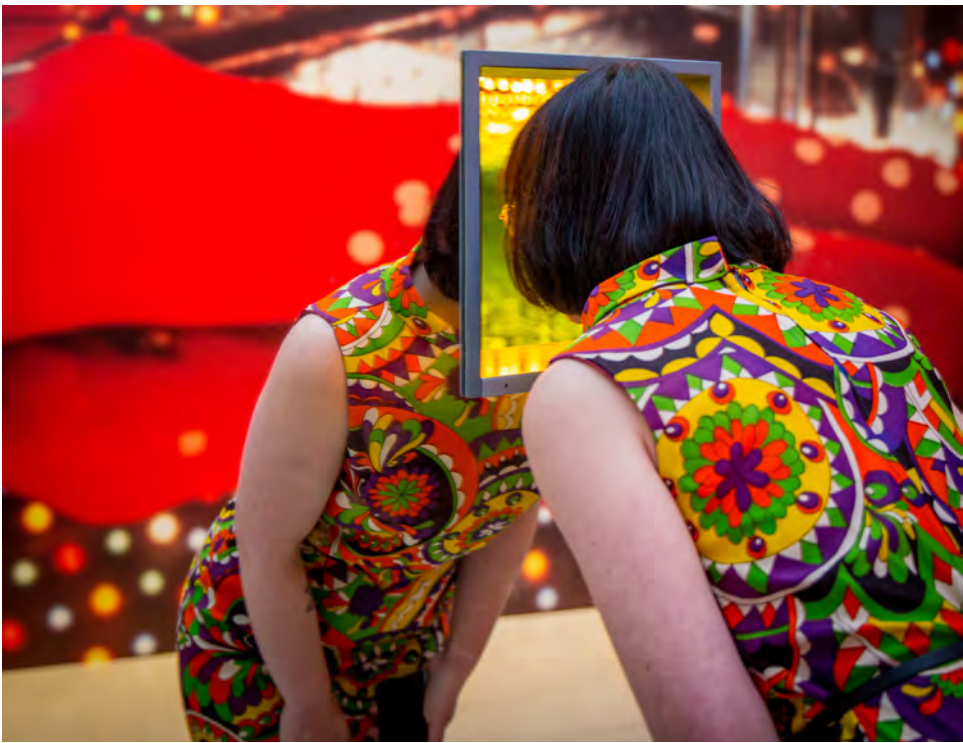
Several years ago, the Board of Trustees of the Art Gallery of Ontario endorsed a vision statement for a strategic plan entitled AGO 2028: *The AGO will lead global conversations from Toronto through extraordinary collections, exhibitions, and programs, and by reflecting the people who live here.* This simple statement does several things: it projects our global ambition, it reaffirms our commitment to the traditional functions of being an art museum (collections, exhibitions, and programs) and it states that the AGO will reflect the people of Toronto. The last part of our vision statement is ambitious as Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world. We understand that our art and audience must mirror the diversity of our city and province if we are to thrive and grow in the future to become a global museum leader.

This brochure records some of the steps we have taken in the last five years (2018-2023) to become reflective of our community in our collections, exhibitions, programs, staff and our audience. It is a progress report as the AGO is committed to continuing its DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility) journey as this work is central to our strategic plan. I am very aware that the process of engaging more diverse communities is not a recent move – indeed successive generations of museums staff and volunteers have worked to be more inclusive. What has shifted is that we are being much more intentional and transparent about our aims and sharing the results of our DEIA work. The successes we have had are a result of many people working in concert at all levels of the AGO. The shifts we have seen have not been accidental – I am very proud of the progress we have made – and it is important that we share the results.

I want to thank the many people who have dedicated themselves to the changes we have committed to achieve. There have been many initiatives, both large and small – and not all successful. There have been many conversations – both joyful and painful. There has been – which is perhaps most important - an openness to learning and growth. We have found that together great works of art, exhibitions, and programs – purposely curated – will inspire engagement from the people who make Toronto their home.

*Stephan Jost*  
Michael and Sonja Koerner Director, and CEO





## AGO'S 2028 COLLECTION STRATEGY

Art is at our core. Extraordinary art often inspires people for generations. We need to ensure that our collections reflect the people who live here.

1. Collect masterworks
2. Selectively add significant collections
3. Diversify our holdings by adding works from Indigenous, the Global African and Diaspora, and Contemporary Asian, and Women artists.
4. Focus on Global Contemporary
5. Deaccession lesser quality works

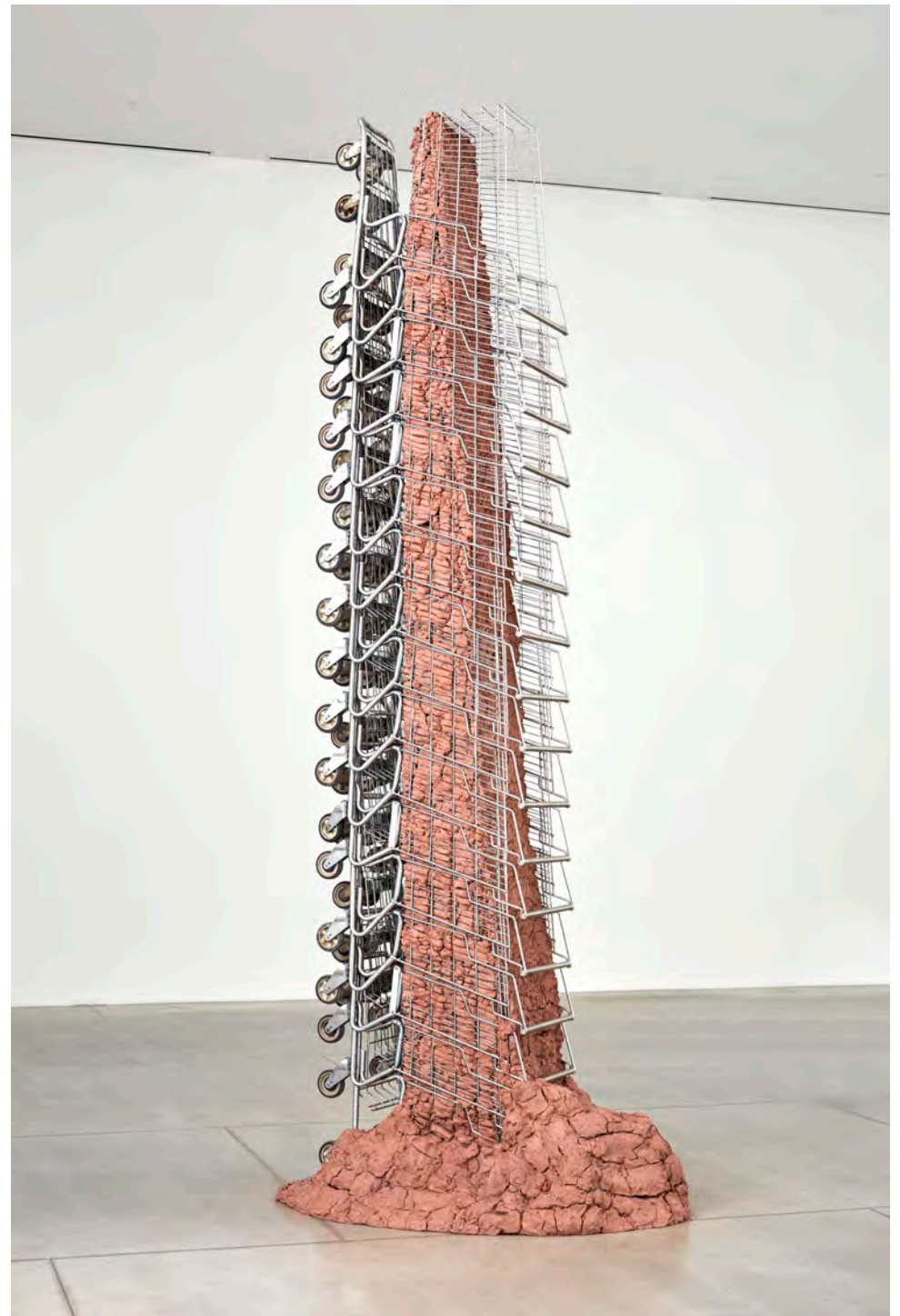


In the past five years, the AGO has presented 50 major high quality exhibitions – many of them featuring artists of non-European descent and women artists. Several of the exhibitions, and their supporting scholarship and publications, have traveled to major museums around the world, helping to shape our increasingly global culture.

## INDIGENOUS ART

The AGO created the Department of Indigenous & Canadian Art in late 2017. Visitors to the renovated J.S. McLean Centre for Indigenous & Canadian Art can view contemporary and historical works organized thematically in dialogue, with label text in Anishinaabemowin, English, French and Inuktitut where relevant. In 2022, the AGO hired Taqralik Partridge, Associate Curator of Indigenous Art, with a focus on Inuit exhibitions and acquisitions. The AGO published *Moving the Museum: Indigenous & Canadian Art at the AGO in 2023*, which explores a new way to present, celebrate and honour Indigenous art along with Canadian art.

- Total of 100 acquisitions by artists who identify as Indigenous
- Total of 41 exhibitions by artists who identify as Indigenous
- Total of 6 publications showcasing artists who identify as Indigenous



Rebecca Belmore

# INDIGENOUS ART

## SELECTED ACQUISITIONS



Robert Kautuk



Kablusiak



Michael Belmore



Brian Jungen

## INDIGENOUS ART

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS



Radical Remembrance: The Sculptures of David Ruben Piqtoukun, January – June 2023



Rebecca Belmore: Facing the Monumental, July – October 2018



Brian Jungen: Friendship Centre, June – August 2019



Tunirrusiangit: Kenojuak Ashevak and Tim Pitsiulak, June – August 2018



Lisa Reihana: In Pursuit of Venus (Infected), September 2019 – June 2022



Robert Houle: Red is Beautiful, December 2021 – April 2022



Tarralik Duffy: Let's go Quickstop, June 2023



## GLOBAL AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA

In 2020, the AGO established a collecting area focusing on art from the global African diaspora. A group of donors subsequently came together to form the Friends of Global Art from the African Diaspora, which has helped support new acquisitions for the AGO as well as exhibitions and publications.

- Total of 33 acquisitions representing artwork and artists from Africa and its diasporas
- Total of 5 exhibitions showcasing artists from Africa and its diasporas



Isabel Okoro

## GLOBAL AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA SELECTED ACQUISITIONS



Kara Walker (detail)



Theaster Gates



Mridja Kitenge Banza



Otobong Nkanga



Naudine Pierre



John Edmonds

## GLOBAL AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA SELECTED EXHIBITIONS



Free Black North, April – October 2017



Fragments of Epic Memory, September 2021 – February 2022



Mickalene Thomas: Femmes Noires, November 2018 – March 2019



What Matters Most: Photographs of Black Life, August 2022 – January 2023



Et la lumière fut (And there was light), November 2021 – November 2022



You Look Beautiful Like That: Studio Photography in West and Central Africa, December 2022 – June 2023

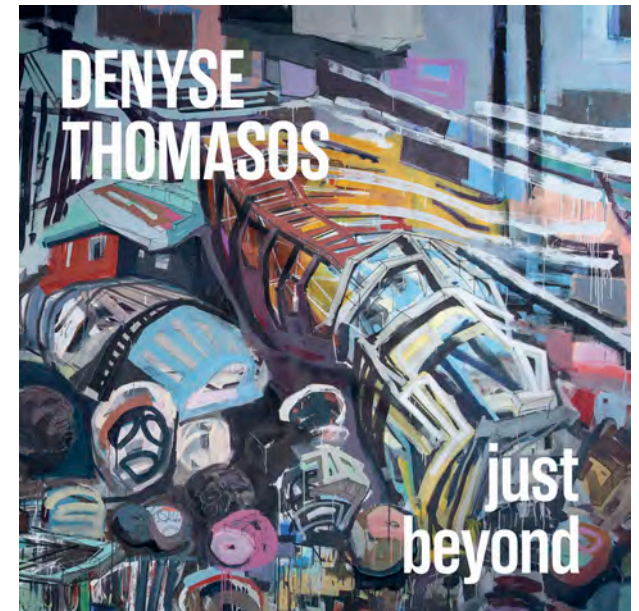
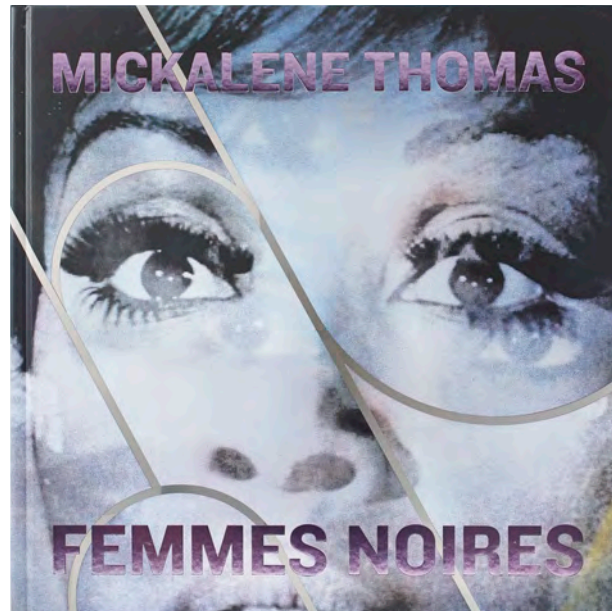
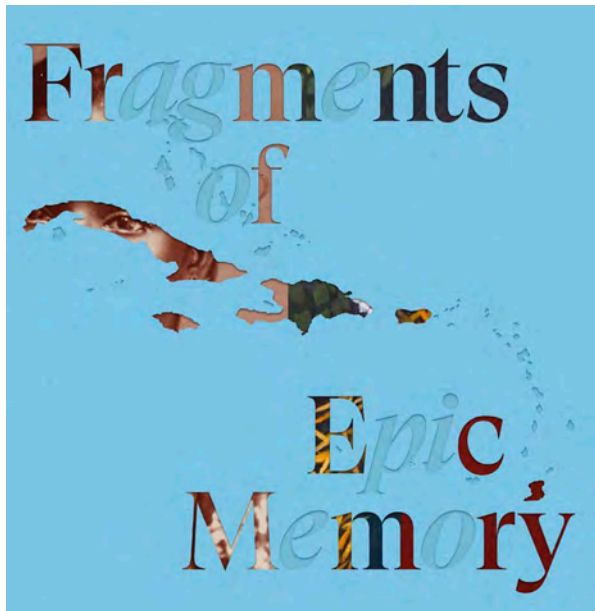
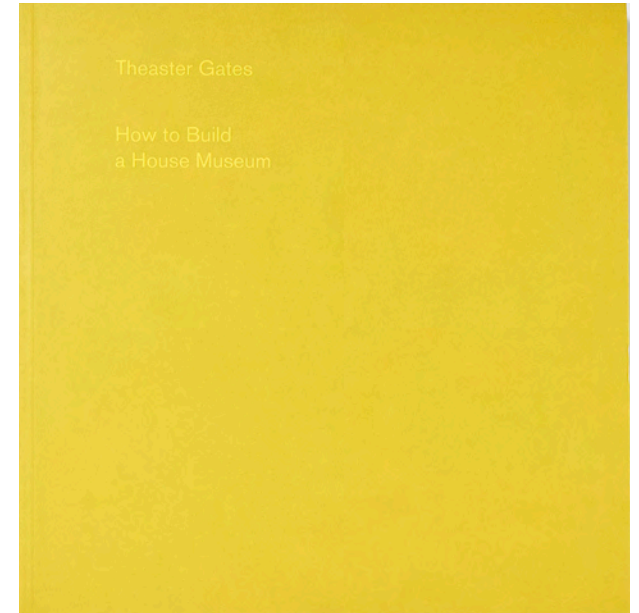


Denyse Thomasos: just beyond, October 2022 – February 2023



Jorian Charlton: Out of Many, December 2021 – April 2022

GLOBAL AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA  
SELECTED PUBLICATIONS



## CONTEMPORARY ASIAN

In addition to art from the global African diaspora, the AGO has made a concerted effort to diversify the collection by adding works by Contemporary Asian artists.

- Total of 8 major exhibitions showcasing Contemporary Asian artists
- Total of 3 publications showcasing Contemporary Asian artists



Yayoi Kusama



Danh VO (promised gift)



Hito Steyerl

## CONTEMPORARY ASIAN SELECTED ACQUISITIONS



Sarindar Dhaliwal



Haegue Yang



Gauri Gi

## CONTEMPORARY ASIAN SELECTED EXHIBITIONS



Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors, March – May 2018



Sarindar Daliwal: When I grow up I want to be a namer of paint colours, July 2023 – January 2024



Haegue Yang: Emergence, October 2020 – April 2021

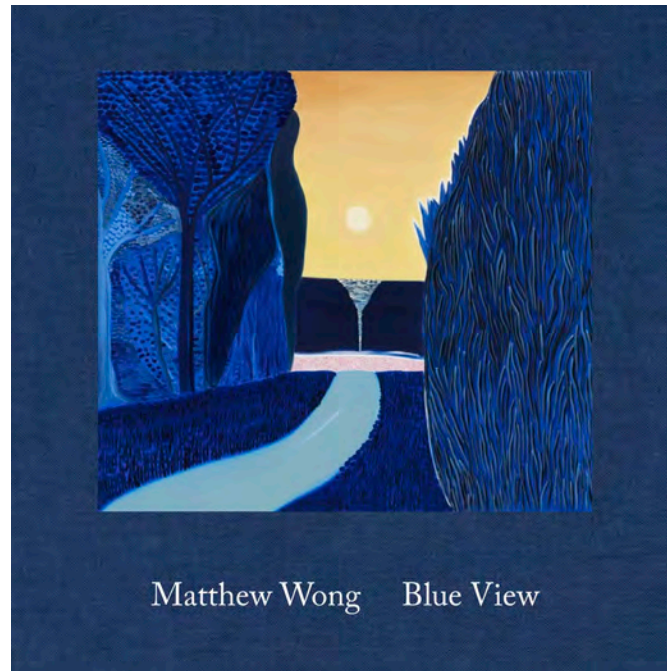


Hito Steyerl: This is the Future, October 2019 – February 2020



Matthew Wong: Blue View, August 2021 – May 2022

CONTEMPORARY ASIAN  
SELECTED PUBLICATIONS



## WOMEN ARTISTS

The Women's Art Initiative, formed in late 2017, was established to support acquisitions, exhibitions and publications featuring art by women artists.

- Total of 2,313 acquisitions by artists who identify as women
- Total of 75 exhibitions by artists who identify as women
- Total of 8 publications showcasing artists who identify as women



Florence Carlisle

**WOMEN ARTISTS**  
**SELECTED ACQUISITIONS**



Julie Voyce



Elizabeth Catlett



Tacita Dean

## WOMEN ARTISTS SELECTED EXHIBITIONS



Sandra Meigs: Room for Mystics, October 2017 – January 2018



Vija Celmins: To Fix the Image in Memory, May – August 2018



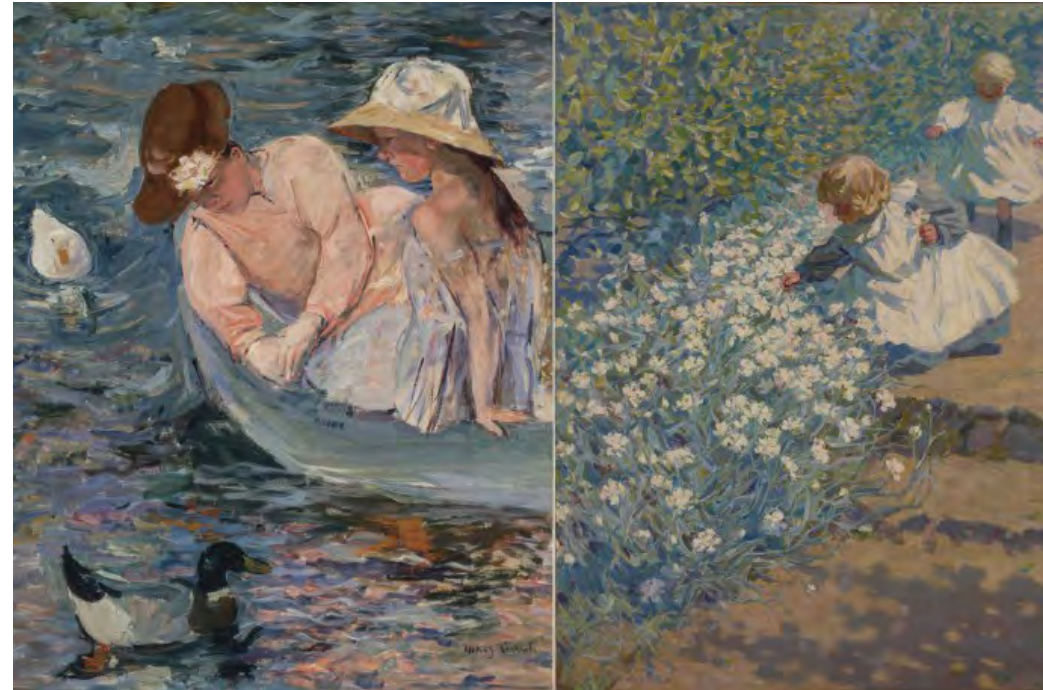
Florine Stettheimer: Painting and Poetry, October 2017 – January 2018



June Clark, June – December 2018



Her Blood Spoke: Joscelyn Gardner, Kara Springer, Alberta Whittle, April – October 2023

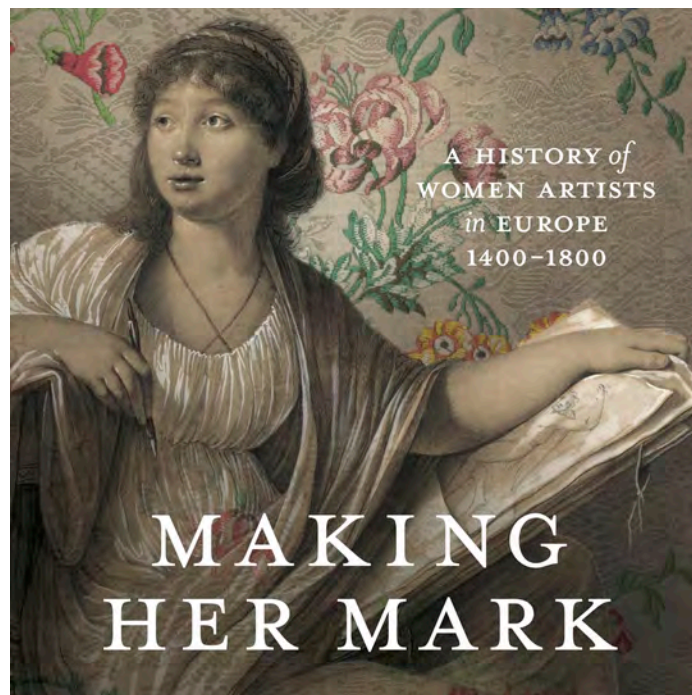
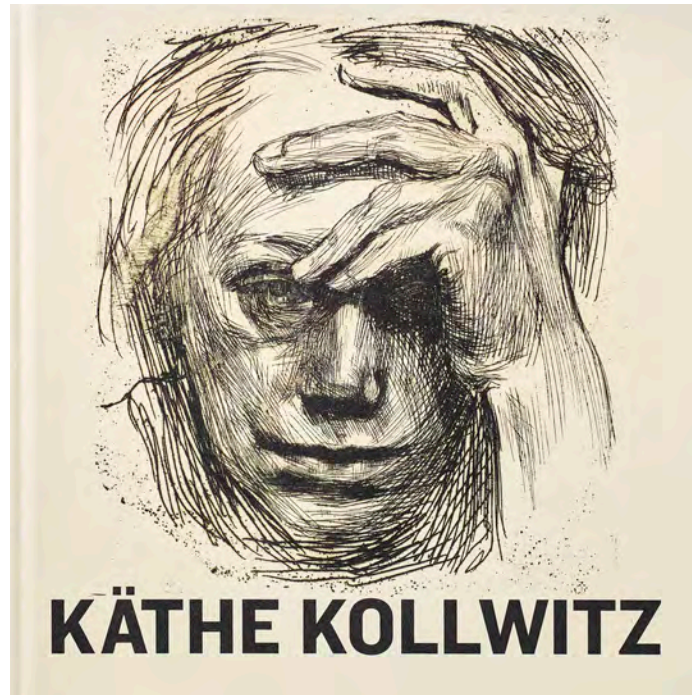


Cassatt-McNicoll: Impressionists Between Worlds, May – September 2023



Diane Arbus: Photographs, 1956 – 1971, February – November 2020

**WOMEN ARTISTS**  
**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**



# EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Over the past decade, the AGO has partnered with the Toronto District School Board and Urban Indigenous Education Centre to deliver curriculum-aligned programming on Indigenous art and artists. Currently, our Indigenous Art Educators deliver the grade 9 NACIO: Expressions of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Cultures program. This work led to the development of guidelines for smudging in the galleries. This summer, the AGO co-developed and co-hosted an Indigenous Hip Hop Symposium that brought in 400 grade 9/10 students to learn from Indigenous artists, with an acknowledgement of the African American roots of the art form.

In 2020, the AGO introduced free, fully immersive virtual school programs focused on wellness and art. Virtual School programs bring engaging learning on Indigenous Art and Art of the African Diaspora. More than 1 million students from across Canada and globally have attended classes to date.

Virtual School Attendance	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023	Overall
Total Participants	1,218,022	304,663	133,817	1,656,502



# EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

As part of the AGO's commitment to provide accessible ways for visitors to experience great art and programming, the Access to Art Resource Hub – a platform for online programs and resources – was created in 2020 to lower any perceived or physical barriers to AGO collections. This hub features a partnership with Tangled Art + Disability, Seniors Social Programming and information about our Multi-sensory Program Research. We also offer art-making courses for participants who identify with intellectual disabilities.

In 2021, the AGO hosted a variety of talks and performances featuring leading artists and writers who are voices for change, including Desmond Cole, Rajni Perera, Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory, Syrus Marcus Ware, and Tanya Tagaq.

Earlier this year, our Black History Month program included presentations of new art acquisitions; a partnership with RISE Edutainment, whose mandate is to empower youth through creative practices; music by Canadian jazz great, Molly Johnson; story time and music on Family Day weekend with children's book author Valene Campbell; and a marketplace with Black Owned Toronto.



# EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING

## FAMILY PROGRAMS

Our family programs are offered for all ages, including babies and families, children and youth – throughout the galleries, in the Weston Family Learning Centre and through online Learning Resources.

- 176,587 total family participants
- 99 total family programs offered



## EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING

### COURSES & CAMPS

The AGO offers a range of courses in photography, printmaking, drawing, painting and mixed media. Our studio has recently conducted an evaluation of our model roster for Life Drawing programs to see if our list reflected the diversity of our students and general AGO audience.

#### Courses

- 32,000 total participants
- 2,037 total courses offered

#### Camp

- 4,842 total camp participants
- 684 total camps offered



## AUDIENCE

Our audience has shifted dramatically over the past several years – it is now much younger and more diverse reflecting the people who live here.

In addition to changes to our content strategy, this shift has been largely a result of our Annual Pass, introduced in mid-2019. Anyone who is 25 or under can visit the AGO for free. Anyone who is 26 and older can receive unlimited access to the AGO for \$35 per year. The Annual Pass has made the AGO much more accessible to a younger and more diverse demographic.

Over the past five years our audience has become more diverse:

- 60% of our audience identify as non-White, which is 4% greater than the Census Metropolitan (CMA) of Toronto.
- 58% of our audience are in their 30s or younger. 33% are millennials (25-39 years), which is 10% greater than Toronto CMA.



## AUDIENCE

We are continuously learning about our audiences so that we can engage and grow our public. We have increased inclusivity and accessibility for our visitors through initiatives such as creating a new AGO map in both print and digital formats to improve the visitor navigation experience, and expanding on washroom options by introducing Everyone Washrooms. Our weekly art magazine, *Foyer*, reaches approximately 323,000 subscribers and continues to evolve, emphasizing stories about diverse artists and the social impact of art.



## DANI REISS MODERN & CONTEMPORARY GALLERY

Thanks to a monumental lead gift of \$35 million from Dani Reiss, the AGO is launching an expansion project to significantly increase gallery space for its growing collection of modern and contemporary art, making it more accessible to our public. This monumental expansion will enable us to show art works that better reflect global cultures and the diversity of Toronto.

The new zero-carbon building, designed by Diamond Schmitt, Selldorf Architects and Two Row Architect, will add 40,000 square feet of gallery space across five floors.





Led by Two Row Architects, an Indigenous Advisory Circle was established comprised of Indigenous leaders, artists, curators, governance consultants and educators. Some examples of wisdom shared include ensuring visitors have views to the four cardinal directions, incorporating an oculus in the public staircase that connects the ground to the sky, and the choice of exterior cladding materials. Guided by engagement with this group, the design approach ensures adaptability, accessibility, inclusivity, meaningful thresholds, and a welcoming environment that feels connected to this space.

Members of Indigenous communities have been and will be involved with this project, beyond its opening. The AGO is grateful for the support of Chief R. Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.



## STAFF AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

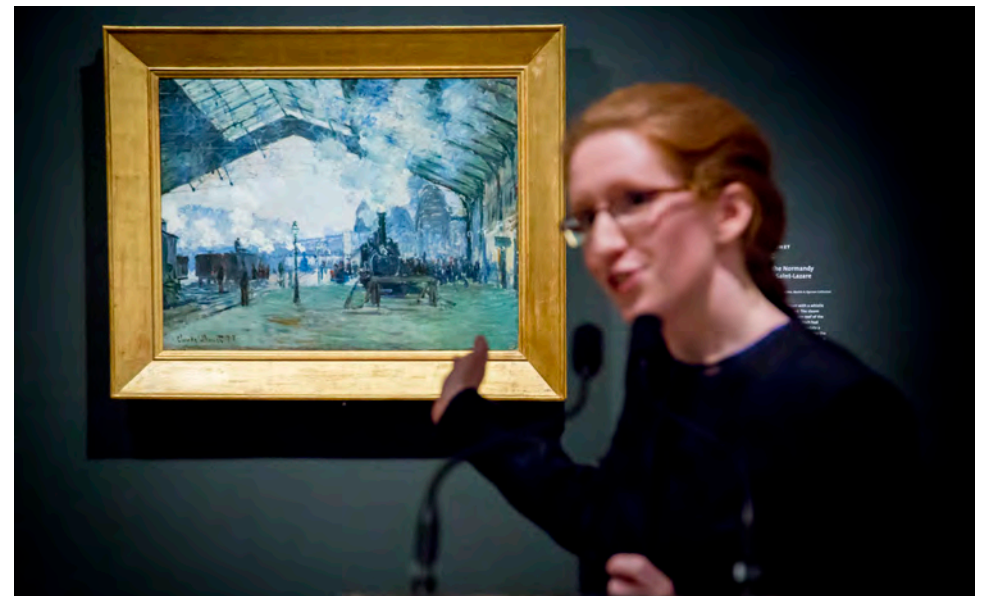
The AGO Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Group, a voluntary employee-led group formed in 2017 following a talk at the AGO by Dr. Johnnetta Cole, an educator and museum professional; speaker and author on issues of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion; and advocate for social justice. The group was reorganized and developed a new mandate in 2020 to support initiatives for an inclusive organizational culture and aid in identifying recommendations for institutional change.

In 2020, the AGO established an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility learning program to provide training and ongoing learning for employees and volunteers and trustees. We continue to provide learning opportunities to support the development of DEIA skills and competencies for staff and volunteers on a variety of topics including anti-racism, anti-Semitism, anti-bias, arts accessibility, and communication for inclusive spaces.

In 2021, Cian Knights was hired in the new role of Manager of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to support driving the AGO's DEIA strategy.

Fall 2021, the AGO partnered with the Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO) to embark on its first-ever internal DEIA organizational assessment to identify what we are doing well, our strengths, gaps, and the areas of improvement needed across Organizational Culture, People, Planning and Policy.

We completed a seven-month long data-driven process that yielded a 75% staff engagement rate. CPAMO provided an extensive report that was shared broadly with all staff. Following that review, each area of the AGO was charged with developing an Action Plan of clear measurable goals to help advance DEIA throughout the museum.



In recent years, the AGO has experienced significant changes in its labour force. Roughly 50% of our current employees are new to the AGO within the past three to five years, with 31% of our Management group identifying as being non-White. Data from our applicant pool affirms that 54% of current applicants are non-White.

The AGO's People department has implemented inclusive and anti-bias recruitment approaches that have led to:

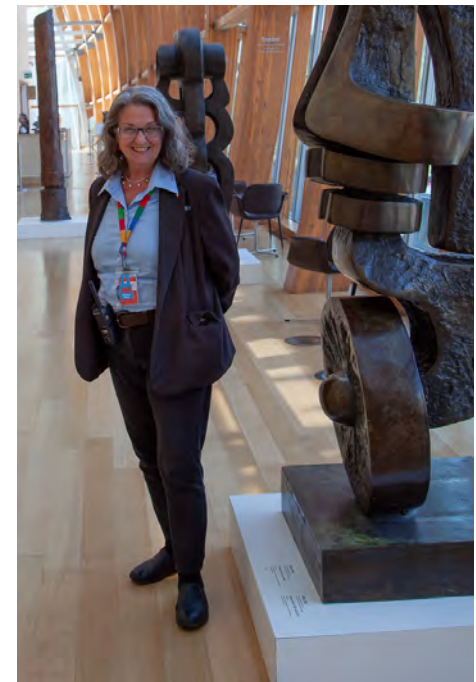
- Revised job descriptions with terminology aligned with DEIA principles
- Expanded talent pipeline strategy to reach a broader community of diverse potential candidates by partnering with organizations that focus on the recruitment of Indigenous, Black and racialized candidates
- Improved application and interview processes
- Collection of talent pipeline data to inform recruitment and retention approaches

Over the last 5 years, the AGO's Leadership Team of 9 people has become more diverse:

- Non-White – 33%
- LGBTQ2S – 33%
- Women – 56%

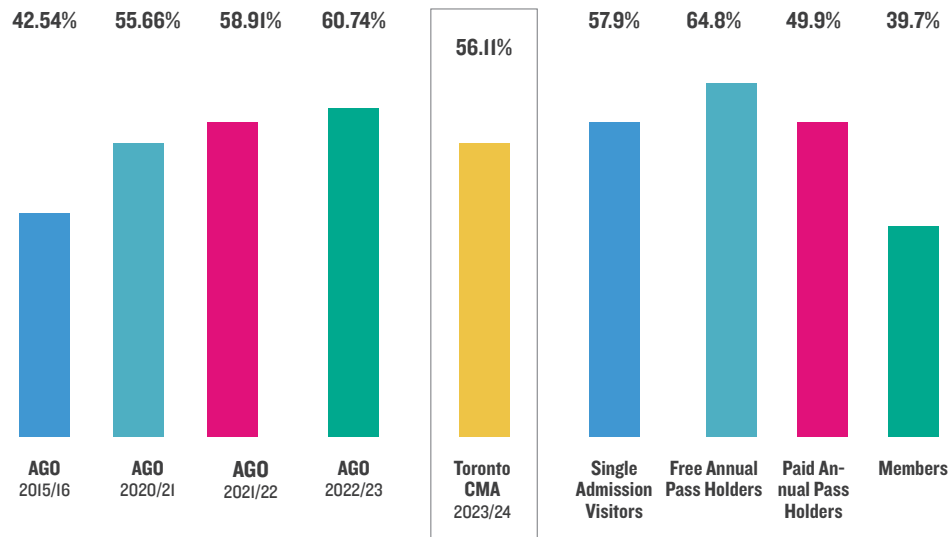
We work closely with our unions, OPSEU and UNIFOR, to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility principles.

Our trustees are committed to DEIA at the board level and have created a committee that focuses on advancing our strategy. The board regularly engages in DEIA conversations across all collecting committees as well as with peer museums on annual board trips.

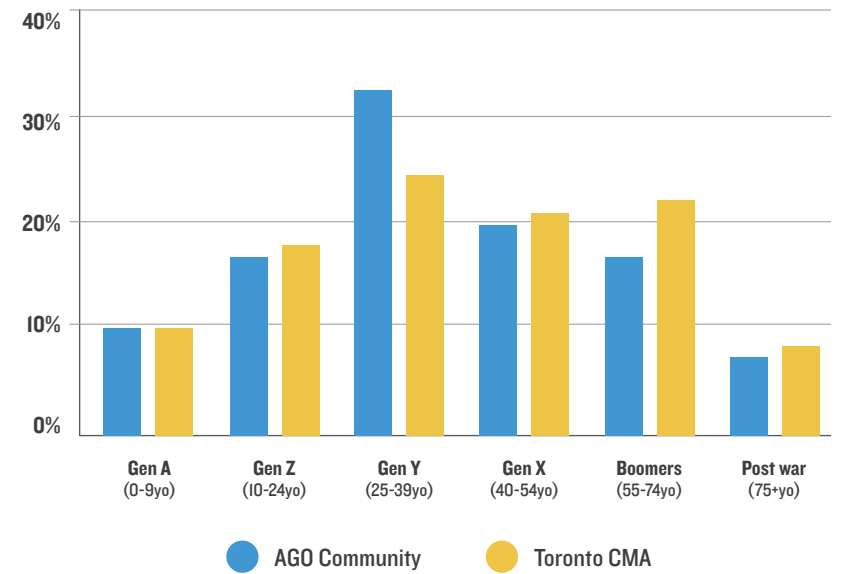


# AUDIENCE DATA

% NON-WHITE | By Previous Years Comparison & Current Fiscal by Segment



AGE



## NEXT STEPS

### AUDIENCE

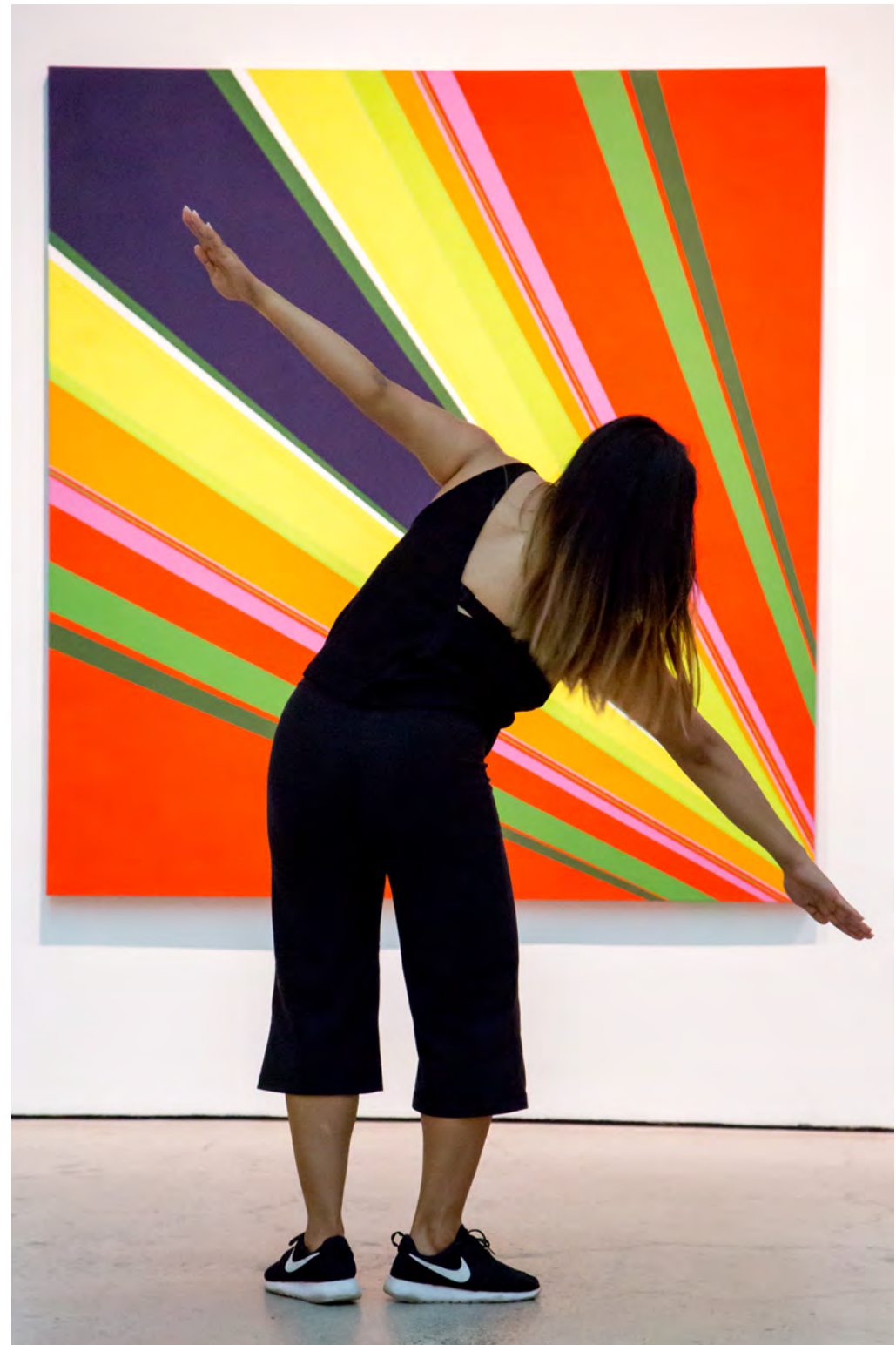
We will continue to grow and engage with our diverse audiences by deepening our relationships with them as well as our understanding of their behaviours.

### STAFF

The AGO's museum-wide DEIA Action Plan and integrated strategic pillars form the basis of a comprehensive approach for current initiatives and provide a roadmap for furthering our efforts.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The board will remain engaged with AGO 2028 and the achievement of our vision to lead global conversations and reflect the people who live here. This work will continue to be at the forefront of committee topics, including the Audience & Data Committee, curatorial and public programming committees as well as the Governance & Nominating Committee, which is focused on the evolving work and strategic needs of the board.







Jeremias Schultze



THE POLAR BEAR

Tim Pitsiulak 2002

Tim Pitsiulak