

2023 Highlights



The Art Gallery
of Ontario
Foundation



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE AGO FOUNDATION

Thank you for supporting the Art Gallery of Ontario through The Art Gallery of Ontario Foundation. You are an important part of a donor community whose generosity enabled the museum to share meaningful art experiences with our public in 2023.

Your ongoing support sustains the AGO and fuels the pursuit of our ambitious vision: to lead global conversations from Toronto through extraordinary exhibitions and programming, and by reflecting the people who live here.

Every year, AGOF donors help the museum grow the AGO Collection by funding the acquisition of artworks that showcase a broad range of media, styles and perspectives. AGOF funds also support several key museum leadership positions and the development of engaging educational initiatives for audiences of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

With your help, the AGO and its curators, conservators, educators and more continue to stand out among international art museums.

The AGOF held a total fund balance of over \$125 million at the end of 2023—a record high following a slight decrease the previous year.

This excellent performance, in the face of a challenging economic environment, demonstrates the resilience and wisdom of The AGOF's investment strategy and the crucial role the Foundation plays in the long-term success and sustainability of the AGO.

We are honoured, inspired and above all grateful for your philanthropic leadership. It is our pleasure to share highlights of what we were able to achieve together in 2023—and how your support is making an impact that will be felt today and for years to come.

Thank you.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It is an honour, a privilege and a pleasure to write this message to The AGO Foundation donor community. Since becoming Chair of The AGOF in 2023, I have come to appreciate, at a deeper level than ever, your collective generosity and the extraordinary art experiences your support helps the AGO create for the public.

As we well know, arts and culture institutions around the world are grappling with significant financial challenges at this moment. From decreasing earned revenues and philanthropic support to government funding that has not kept pace with inflation and rising operational costs, several factors are placing pressure on the budgets of museums such as the AGO. This economic climate only reinforces the importance of The AGOF as a source of stable funding that enables the AGO to sustain its mission and vision.

I saw so much that made me hopeful every time I visited the museum in 2023. The building was teeming with visitors of all ages for programming over Family Day Weekend and March Break. We welcomed several stunning new works of art into the AGO Collection. A series of world-class exhibitions shared the remarkable talents and perspectives of a diverse range of artists with our visitors.

Close to 800,000 people came through the AGO's doors in 2023. Attendance and engagement with the museum

are trending back towards pre-pandemic levels, reflecting the museum's status as the heartbeat of art and culture in Ontario.

The performance of AGOF investments in 2023 was also deeply encouraging. Following a decrease in 2022, we experienced a net investment gain of \$13.7 million and reached a record-breaking high in our total fund balances. This is a credit to the expertise and vision of our Investment Committee, and yet another testament to the important role The AGOF will play in the AGO's long-term success.

I am thrilled to share the following report, which highlights just a few of the many accomplishments that The AGOF helped make possible in 2023. I am so proud of what we've done together, and I hope you feel the same way.

Thank you for your support of the AGO through The AGOF, and for helping the museum share the joy and wonder of art with our community.

Sincerely,

Gale M. Kelly
Chair
The Art Gallery of Ontario Foundation




AGO PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

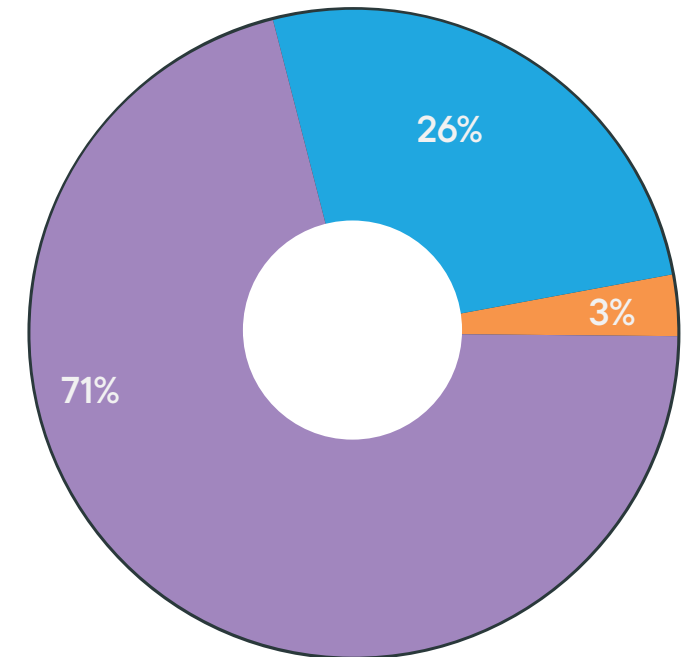
Arts organizations across the globe—the AGO among them—continued to navigate economic headwinds in 2023. However, the year also saw a significant rebound in the performance of The AGO Foundation's investments, with a net gain of \$13.7 million following losses in 2022.

This growth owes to the ongoing generosity of our donors through endowment funds and the shrewd management of The AGOF's investment Committee and Board of Trustees. Total fund balances held within The AGOF have now surpassed \$125 million—the highest in the history of the Foundation.

As ever, The AGOF continues to be a source of stable and sustainable support for the museum. Including endowments and restricted funds, a total of \$7.1 million was disbursed in 2023—enabling AGO leaders and staff to continue to engage in a wide range of mission-focused activities and plan with confidence for the future.

AGOF Assets

-  **\$89.4 MILLION**
in 95 endowment funds
-  **\$32.27 MILLION**
in 14 restricted funds
-  **\$3.63 MILLION**
in 10 unrestricted funds



\$125.3 MILLION
Total AGOF fund
balance as at
December 31, 2023

\$7.5 MILLION
Net increase of fund
balances in 2023 *

\$7.1 MILLION
Funds disbursed in
2023 **

\$32.5 Million
Distributions over
the past decade
from AGOF

* Comprised of \$13.7 M net investment gain and \$1.7 M in contributions, less \$7.1 M in distributions and \$795,000 in other expenses.
** Includes \$6 M disbursed to support operations and programming and \$1.1 M disbursed for acquisitions.

ART, LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY

Reflecting on 40 Years of Service to the AGO

Michael Hasley has had a front row seat for—and an active role in—many of the most significant milestones for the AGO over the past 40 years. As a donor, a volunteer and a champion of art and culture, he has seen the museum through several changes in leadership, capital expansions, moments of adversity and times of triumph.

“Once you get involved, you get involved,” Michael says of his longtime service to the AGO, which includes his contributions to the museum’s Indigenous and Canadian Curatorial Committee, Finance Committee, Governance Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Interested in art for as long as he can remember, Michael began building corporate art collections in the 1970s. This pursuit spanned close to 25 years and two prominent employers, and put him on the radar of AGO leadership.

“By 1986 I was asked if I wanted to join the Board,” he recalls.

Just a few years later, Michael took on the role of Board President. Serving in this capacity from 1991-1993, he helped welcome Glenn D. Lowry as AGO Director and steered a significant building expansion through challenging economic times.

Now a Trustee Emeritus, his philanthropic legacy and passion for art continue to resonate at the AGO. The Michael and Diane Hasley Fund, an endowment established by Michael and his late wife, supports the acquisition of works by artists 35 and under.

In focusing on this segment of the artist community, the Hasleys saw an opportunity to ensure the ongoing growth and relevance of the AGO Collection, and to elevate talented young creators.

“It’s supporting contemporary art—the art of the here and now. I think it’s very important to support artists in that developing part of their careers.”



Michael and Diane Hasley



Duane Linklater, *Kiss*, 2014. Fox furs, garment rack, hangers, 66 x 60 x 20 in. (168 x 151 x 52 cm). Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, purchased with the Michael and Diane Hasley Fund, the Jay Smith and Laura Rapp Fund, the James Lahey Fund, the Kate Subak Fund, the Dr. Michael Braudo Contemporary Canadian Fund, and the support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisitions Grants program, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver. Photograph: SITE Photography.



Theaster Gates, *Houseberg*, from *Progress Palace*, 2016. Mirrored glass, wood, motorized potter’s wheel, Overall: 299.7 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario. Purchased with funds from the Modern and Contemporary Curatorial Committee, the Michael and Diane Hasley Fund, the Molly Gilmour Fund, the Janet and Michael Scott Fund, the David Yule and Mary Elizabeth Hodgson Fund, the Ivey Foundation Contemporary Art. © Theaster Gates. 2017/30

The Hasleys’ generous gift has helped make possible the acquisition of notable works by some of the world’s most remarkable contemporary artists. With Michael and Diane’s support, art by Theaster Gates, Willie Cole, Adrián Villar Rojas, Esmaa Mohamoud, Duane Linklater and other talented creators has entered the AGO Collection.

“The AGO is great at pooling different sources of funds for acquisitions,” he explains. “Many of them are bought by three or four contributors, so our fund doesn’t just work on its own.”

Michael has been a key supporter in this collaborative



Esmaa Mohamoud, *A Seat Above The Table (Warren Moon)*, 2018. found rattan peacock chair, rattan, paint, tape, plastic, adhesive, nails, Base: 172.7 x 55.9 cm, 38 lb. (68 x 22 in., 17.2 kg). Art Gallery of Ontario. Purchase, with funds from Michael & Diane Hasley and Liza Mauer & Andrew Sheiner, 2019. © Esmaa Mohamoud 2019/2264.

effort, adding to his AGO Foundation fund each year. He also believes that great art exists to be seen, which is why he is looking forward to the opening of the Dani Reiss Modern and Contemporary Gallery.

“It’s art that’s driving the expansion, and that to me is the most important thing,” he says. “We want to make sure that art has the chance to be presented for its intended purpose, which is to engage the viewers.”

“It’s ambitious,” Michael says of the expansion and the AGO’s broader vision. “But it’s fitting for the museum to have high aspirations.”

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Art is about much more than numbers and statistics—its meaning lies in the way it captivates, comforts, connects and inspires us, and helps us see the world around us through fresh and diverse perspectives. But even though they may not tell the whole story, the exceptional numbers on this page are a testament to the impact of AGOF donors.



790,937

Visitors attended the AGO

29,103

Children visited the AGO in person with their schools



99,141

Children and families participated in specially curated family programs and events



4,175

Artworks examined by the AGO Conservation team



2,892

Youth participated in the AGO's Youth Programming

35,696

Visitors took part in facilitated activities in the Dr. Mariano Elia Hands-On Centre



FUNDS IN ACTION



Otobong Nkanga (b. 1974, Kano, Nigeria, lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium), *Unearthed - Midnight*, 2021, woven tapestry, 600 x 350 cm, Purchase, with funds from the Modern and Contemporary Curatorial Committee, and the Elcy Wallace Fund, 2022

AGOF donors play an important role in helping the AGO to acquire, care for and present extraordinary art, and in supporting the innovative programming that inspires and engages our diverse audiences.

Every year, the AGO Collection grows through the acquisition of works by artists from across Canada and around the world. These range from breathtaking art that addresses contemporary issues to centuries-old works that enrich our understanding of art history.

At the same time, AGOF donors also support the development of public programs that reflect our core values. With the Foundation's help, we continue to make the AGO a more welcoming, inclusive and educational space for visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to experience art.

The following pages explore just a few of examples of what your philanthropic leadership helped the museum achieve in 2023.

SPOTLIGHT: FAMILY & YOUTH PROGRAMS

Supported by AGOF Funds



Family Events

Family Day Weekend and March Break are among the most joyful—and busy—annual occasions at the AGO. In 2023, the museum engaged thousands of children and their families through a variety of programs, events and activities.

The AGO welcomed over **14,000 visitors** over the four days of Family Day Weekend in February. Those who attended were able to join in family-friendly tours of the *Denyse Thomasos: just beyond* exhibition and celebrate Black History Month with a story reading and dance event led by Valene Campbell, author of *The Amazing Zoe!* book series. Visitors were also invited to a screening of the documentary *Girls/Museum* by filmmaker Shelly Silver.

The following month, a remarkable **33,401** visitors came to the AGO over the nine days of March Break. Children were able to access a free AGO Kids activity booklet that included artmaking challenges, a scavenger hunt and close-looking prompts. Family-friendly tours of the AGO's Indigenous and Canadian Collection and drop-in film screenings were also on offer.

Inspiring the Next Generation

The AGO is dedicated to offering youth aged 14-25 an inclusive place to explore their creativity and connect with their peers. The museum's programs prioritize fostering community, artmaking and helping members of this emerging generation find their voice.

Youth programs in 2023 included several drop-in events at the AGO. The year also featured the premiere of the second season of *Inner Space*, a web series in which young artists offered virtual tours of their creative spaces. The six episodes earned more than 63,000 views over the course of the series.

Infusing contemporary art practices and popular culture, youth programs engaged young people from diverse communities in 2023. In tandem with the AGO's Free Annual Pass for visitors under 25, these programs help youth develop a broad range of important life skills—and nurture the AGO's audience of tomorrow.

SPOTLIGHT: SCHOOL & ACCESS TO ART PROGRAMS

Supported by AGOF Funds



Engaging Students and Teachers

The AGO continued to support students and educators through a variety of learning programs in 2023—both online and in the museum. Between on-site school visits and our Virtual School Programs, approximately **120,000 students** experienced high-quality, curriculum-linked art education at the AGO.

In addition to ongoing programming, the AGO partnered with the Urban Indigenous Education Centre to host The Indigenous Hip-Hop Symposium in March. The two-day event welcomed **700 high school students** to learn from artists, musicians, dancers and others from Indigenous communities.

Highlights included panel discussions and hands-on workshops that explored creative processes, teacher learning about how hip-hop pedagogies can inform education, and Indigenous connections to hip-hop culture.

Art for Everyone

The AGO remains committed to welcoming and including visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities at the museum. In 2023, we partnered with several community organizations to design programs for neurodiverse individuals and those living with conditions such as Parkinson's Disease and dementia.

Among the most memorable moments was Celebrate the Spectrum, an April event created in partnership with Autism Ontario. The initiative invited visitors on the spectrum and their families to enjoy special tours and artmaking opportunities, with support in the form of multisensory kits that included museum maps, noise-reducing headphones and fidget toys.

The AGO also partnered with organizations such as The Alzheimer Society of Toronto, SickKids Hospital, Xenia Concerts and Keys to Inclusion to offer events and programs that exemplified the museum's belief that art belongs to everyone in our community.

SPOTLIGHT: EXTRAORDINARY ART

Supported by AGOF Funds



Kapwani Kiwanga. *Glow #10*, 2020. Marble sahara noir, wood, LED lights, acrylic glass. Sculpture: 180 x 40 x 60 cm. Purchase, with funds from the David Yule and Mary Elizabeth Hodgson Fund, 2023. © Kapwani Kiwanga, courtesy Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin. Installation view Weserburg - Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen, 2020. Photo: Tobias Hübel, 2023/24

Known for deeply researched multimedia works that explore anti-colonial struggles, Kapwani Kiwanga is fast emerging as one of Canada's leading contemporary artists. *Glow #10* (2020) is the first work by the Paris-based artist—the first Black woman to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale—to enter the AGO Collection.

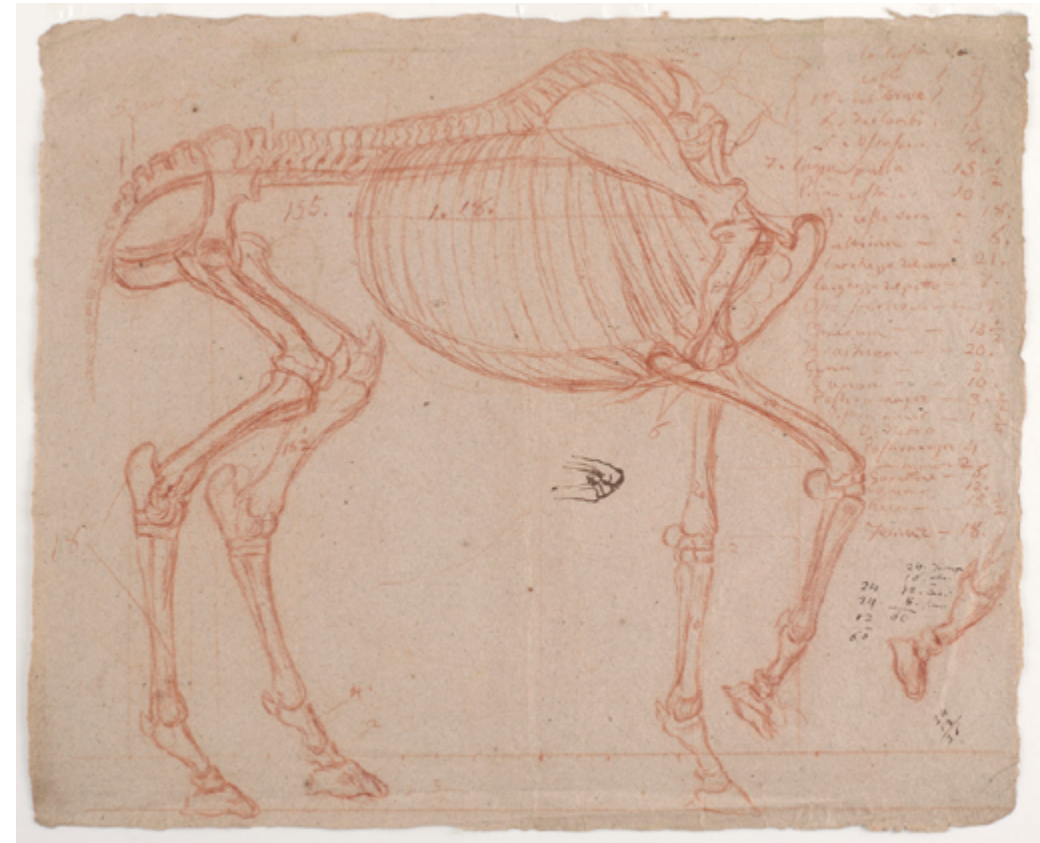
Kiwanga's Glow series of sculptures are life-sized and asymmetrical, conveying a dynamic sense of bodies in motion. They are influenced by the 2015 book *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* by scholar Simone Browne, which traces the history of surveilling margin-

alized populations through measures such as the Lantern Laws that required Black and Indigenous people to carry lanterns or candles after sunset in 18th century New York. Kiwanga's use of minimalistic shapes and polished surfaces evokes modernist sculpture and a tangible materiality.

The powerful aesthetics of *Glow #10*, as well as the provocative questions Kiwanga raises about the politics of visibility, makes this work an important addition to the AGO Collection and ongoing conversations about colonialism and oppression.

SPOTLIGHT: EXTRAORDINARY ART

Supported by AGOF Funds



Baldassare Franceschini, called il Volterrano (Italian, 1611-1690), *Study of the Skeleton of a Horse*. Red chalk with pen and brown ink on coloured paper, sheet: 35.7 x 43.3 cm. Purchase, with funds from the Marvin Gelber Fund

Baldassare Franceschini, better known as Il Volterrano after his city of birth, was a prolific artist in Tuscany during the 17th century. Drawing was integral to his process, and more than 400 drawings attributed to the artist still survive.

This unusual sheet captures an artist's observation on the skeletal anatomy of a horse and shows the important role that anatomical study played in artistic practice in 17th-century Italy. The sheet appears to be a true rarity, as no other comparable anatomical drawing is known in Franceschini's vast output. The drawing is most likely connected to his pivotal commission at La Petraia, in which two horses are included, each with one front leg raised.

This work will be of great interest to scholars and artists,

as it enriches our understanding of how artists used drawing to understand proportion in early modern Italy. It joins two other red chalk drawings by Il Volterrano, *Studies for the Head of the Virgin (recto)*; *Right Arm and Hand (verso)*, c.1680 and *Hercules Subduing the Nemean Lion*, (undated) in the AGO Collection.

“AGOF donors are integral to our ongoing efforts to build a diverse collection that engages our audiences and helps the museum to lead global conversations through art. It means the world to have this sustained support for significant acquisitions year after year.”

- Julian Cox, Deputy Director and Chief Curator

The AGO Foundation Board of Trustees 2023

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* Terms ended in May 2023



Amélie Legrand de Saint-Aubin, French, 1797 – 1878. *Portrait of a young artist drawing in her sketchbook*, 1831. Oil on canvas. Overall: 81.8 × 65.7 cm (32 3/16 × 25 7/8 in.) Purchase, with funds from the Gail and Terence Sheard Endowment Fund, 2023. 2023/51



THANK YOU

The AGO is deeply grateful for your generous support of the museum through The AGO Foundation. Your enduring commitment is integral to the meaningful art and learning experiences the AGO creates for its diverse audiences, year after year.

We hope you take pride in the impact that you and your fellow AGOF donors make in our community, and that you enjoyed reading the preceding highlights of what we achieved together in 2023. **Thank you.**

The Art Gallery
of Ontario
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