

2024 Highlights



ARTIST
TITLE
MEDIUM
DATE
ACQUISITION
COURTESY



Florence Carlyle, *The Tiff*, c. 1902. Oil on canvas, 183.8 x 134.6 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario.
Gift of the Government of the Province of Ontario, 1972.

The Art Gallery
of Ontario
Foundation



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE AGO FOUNDATION

Thank you for your inspiring support of the Art Gallery of Ontario through The AGO Foundation (AGOF). AGOF donors are an important part of a philanthropic community that helps make it possible to create life-changing art and learning experiences for our audiences.

The collective support of The AGOF fuels our vision to lead global conversations from Toronto through extraordinary exhibitions and programming, and by reflecting the people who live here. Each year, we bring hundreds of thousands of visitors together with art that explores a variety of ideas, perspectives and ways to understand our world.

AGOF funds enable the growth of the AGO Collection, which now includes over 120,000 works of art. Endowments held within The AGOF also fund crucial leadership positions, educational activities and opportunities for artists to take meaningful steps forward in their career

These contributions were a key reason for the continued upward trajectory of the AGO's reputation on the global stage in 2024. Your support has helped the museum's leaders, curators, educators and conservators establish themselves among the best in the art world.



The strong investment performance of AGOF funds has long been a hallmark of the Foundation and a major contributor to its impact on the AGO. This continued in 2024, as the total fund balance for The AGOF reached close to \$140 million by the end of the year.

This growth was especially impressive against the backdrop of an economic climate that remained uncertain due to a variety of factors. The AGO is grateful for the prudent strategic management of The AGOF, which is essential to the future sustainability and success of the museum.

The steadfast support of The AGOF is deeply meaningful to everyone at the AGO, particularly during this challenging

financial period for the arts sector in Canada. Your philanthropy ensures that the museum can continue to serve the public as one of Toronto's premier cultural destinations.

We are pleased to share the following highlights of what the AGO and The AGOF accomplished together in 2024. We hope you take pride in the impact you are making every day at the museum and in our community.

With gratitude,

Stephan Jost

Michael and Sonja Koerner Director, and CEO



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As Chair of The AGO Foundation, I feel immense pride and gratitude to be part of such a generous donor community. The AGO is a vital Canadian institution, a place where we can explore who we are and share our voice with the world, and our philanthropic leadership helped the museum play this important role in 2024.

At a time of global economic and political uncertainty, the AGO helped our audiences to better understand our ever-changing world. It was heartening to see the museum welcome 50,000 visitors over Family Day Weekend and March Break, as well as young and diverse audiences through the Free Annual Pass and First Wednesdays Night Free admission programs. It is through these initiatives, and its exhibitions, collections and programs, that the AGO ignites imaginations and brings generations together.

The AGO engaged visitors with exhibitions of extraordinary quality and diversity, shining a light on masterpieces from the museum's collections and introducing new artists to our community. The AGO's holdings continued to grow through acquisitions of remarkable art that is relevant to visitors and sparks global conversations. In addition to all of this, a cornerstone of the AGO's future—the Dani Reiss Modern and Contemporary Gallery—broke ground and completed foundation work. I am very excited for its opening in 2027.

There was much to celebrate, but also many challenges to overcome. Arts and culture institutions worldwide continued to face financial headwinds in 2024, and this is why your donations to The AGOF are so meaningful. Funds held within The AGOF provide a sustainable source of funding for the operations of the museum, as well as its ability to acquire great art. We witnessed the importance

of this funding through the pandemic, and in our current climate of economic volatility it continues to enable AGO leaders and curators to plan with confidence and create world-class art experiences for the public.

I am pleased to share that The AGOF's investment performance remained strong in 2024. Our total fund balances increased by \$14.4 million to reach close to \$140 million by the end of the year. Once again, the wisdom and expertise of our Investment Committee helped to sow the seeds of sustainable success for the AGO.

The AGOF's investment performance is a testament to our financial management. The following report demonstrates the impact of everyone who has established an AGOF fund or contributed to The AGOF's general fund. Collectively, we are helping the AGO change lives through art.

As I write this in 2025—the year of the AGO's 125th anniversary—I feel proud of what we accomplished together in 2024, and even more excited about the future. Philanthropy has been a part of the museum's story throughout its history, and your support will help it continue to write new and exciting chapters. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gale" and last name "Kelly" clearly distinguishable.

Gale M. Kelly
Chair

The Art Gallery of Ontario Foundation

AGOF PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

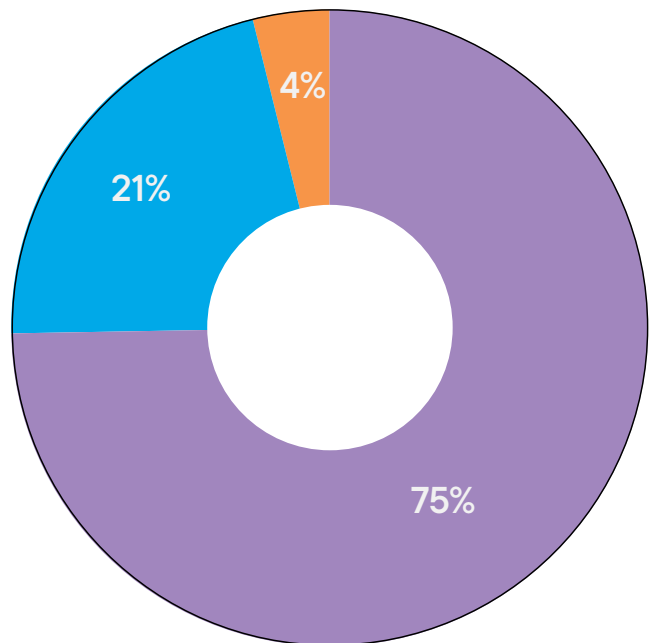
The AGO Foundation's investments saw a net gain of \$25 million in 2024, continuing to perform well in an environment of economic unpredictability. The ongoing growth of fund balances held within the Foundation is a strong sign for the future of the AGO.

The performance and growth reflects both the generosity of donors, who contributed an additional \$1.8 million in 2024, and the experience and expertise of The AGOF's Board of Trustees and Investment Committee. By the end of the year, total fund balances had reached a new high of close to \$140 million.

The support of The AGOF, including the \$11.7 million disbursed in 2024, anchors the AGO's success in times of both challenge and opportunity for the museum. The AGOF helps makes it possible for AGO leadership, staff and volunteers to navigate economic uncertainty and focus on activities that advance the museum's mission and vision.

AGOF Assets

- \$104.5 MILLION**
 in 97 endowment funds
- \$29.9 MILLION**
 in 14 restricted funds
- \$5.29 MILLION**
 in 11 unrestricted funds



\$139.7 MILLION
 Total AGOF fund
 balance as at
 December 31, 2024

\$14.4 MILLION
 Net increase of fund
 balances in 2024 *

\$11.7 MILLION
 Funds disbursed in
 2024 **

\$42.9 MILLION
 Distributions over
 the past decade
 from AGOF

* Comprised of \$25 M net investment gain and \$1.8 M in contributions, less \$11.7 M in distributions and \$854,000 in other expenses.

** Includes \$10 M disbursed to support operations and programming and \$1.6 M disbursed for acquisitions.

CHAMPIONS OF ART AND CULTURE: How Michael and Sonja Koerner Shaped the Arts in Canada Through Philanthropy



Michael and Sonja Koerner at a 2006 event for the Transformation AGO expansion.

The story of Michael and Sonja Koerner’s philanthropic impact mirrors the story of our country over the past century. Like so many newcomers, the couple—Michael born in the Czech Republic and Sonja in Peru—arrived in Canada with a generosity of spirit and a passion for making their new home an even better place.

“We came to Toronto as newcomers and wanted to participate in the life of the city,” says Mr. Koerner. “We quickly became involved in the arts and music because we collected art and I played music.

“We sunk our roots into the city by getting involved.”

In the decades since, they have established themselves among the nation’s most committed champions of culture, supporting organizations such as The Royal Conservatory of Music, the Shaw Festival, Soulpepper Theatre and The Banff Centre—and, of course, the Art Gallery of Ontario.

The Koerners’ relationship with the AGO stretches back to their first donation in 1959. In the early 1970s, the quality of

the museum’s collection and the strength of its leadership inspired their deeper involvement.

“The AGO had strong leadership and board, and an important collection of Canadian and international art, in particular the Henry Moore Collection,” Mr. Koerner says, adding that the first work of sculpture he and Mrs. Koerner purchased was a Moore creation.

Since then, the Koerners have been part of several milestone moments in the AGO’s history, including four capital expansions, the emergence of several new collecting areas and the exponential growth of the museum’s holdings. Their support also includes two crucial endowment funds through The AGO Foundation: the Michael and Sonja Koerner Director, and CEO Fund and the Michael and Sonja Koerner Conservation Initiatives Fund.

“We created these endowments because we recognize the importance of attracting and supporting strong leaders. We wanted to establish a stable source of funding that



Left: Michael and Sonja Koerner at a 2014 Curators' Circle event.



Right: Michael Koerner with daughter and current AGO Trustee Michelle Koerner at an AGO Next event in 2014.

would signal our commitment to the Director and CEO position and the institution.”

Both endowments are essential to the enduring success of the museum. The former sustains the AGO’s most important leadership position, while the latter supports the care of the museum’s collection and enables meaningful research.

“Michael and Sonja Koerner are among the most generous and knowledgeable patrons of the arts in the history of Canada,” says Stephan Jost, Michael and Sonja Koerner Director, and CEO. “They are always eager to learn and are remarkably active in making Toronto an even better city.”

The Koerners have also shaped the evolution of the AGO through volunteer service. Mr. Koerner, now a Trustee Emeritus, chaired the European Curatorial Committee and led the Board as President from 1982-1984.

For Mr. Koerner, giving time was as natural as giving philanthropic support for the museum. “We looked for organizations that were doing important things in the art world and

then volunteered our time to those organizations.”

Canada’s cultural community has taken notice. Over the years, the couple has received honours from the International Society for the Performing Arts, the Governor General’s Performing Arts Awards, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee and Diamond Jubilee medals and the Canadian Conference of the Arts. Mr. Koerner was also appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada in 1984.

The Koerners’ most significant legacy may well be the inspiration they have provided for generations of Canadian philanthropists—among them their daughter, Michelle, who now serves on the AGO’s Board of Trustees.

“My parents have been exceptional role models in philanthropy,” Michelle says. “My dad often says that it is important to express yourself. Through their philanthropy, they have supported countless artists in doing just that.

“It’s a remarkable legacy, and one that inspires me to carry that same spirit forward.”

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

The impact of philanthropy on art and the AGO cannot be entirely captured by statistics. There is no number to represent the thrill of discovering art for the first time, the comfort of revisiting a favourite work or gallery space, the spark of a new perspective on the world, or the joy of sharing all of this with the community. However, the numbers on this page speak to the difference that AGOF donors made in 2024.



703,793

Visitors attended the AGO



74,408

JK-Grade 12 students visited the AGO in person and through Virtual School Programs



2,500

Artworks examined by the AGO Conservation team



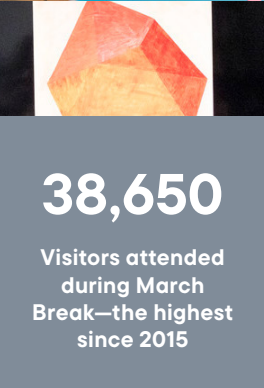
15,394

Visitors attended over Family Day Weekend—a 10% increase over 2023



30+

Artworks acquired using AGOF funds—over 20% of all AGO acquisitions



38,650

Visitors attended during March Break—the highest since 2015



FUNDS IN ACTION



Donors to The AGO Foundation support a wide variety of activities that are central to the AGO's mission and vision. From the acquisition of extraordinary art to its care and conservation, from art education to artist programming, the museum simply could not do all that we do without the generosity of AGOF donors.

In the following pages you will discover several examples of what your generosity enabled the AGO to achieve in 2024.

SPOTLIGHT: FAMILY & SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Supported by AGOF Funds



Intergenerational Connections

The AGO welcomes children and families to experience fun and engaging art experiences all year round. The museum is a cultural destination where multiple generations of visitors can come together to learn, play and enjoy extraordinary art.

This impact is most notable on Family Day Weekend, throughout March Break and during Summer Camp programs. 2024 was no exception, with over 54,000 people coming to the AGO during these peak programming occasions.

Beyond this special programming, family members of all ages had the opportunity to make and experience art together in the Dr. Mariano Elia Hands-On Centre, the museum's hub of play-based learning for our youngest visitors, and our Community Gallery. Also available every day was the AGO Play booklet, which was accessed by more than 10,000 visitors throughout 2024 and enhances family visits via artmaking activities, scavenger hunts and much more.

Bringing families together with art is a daily occurrence at the AGO—and the support of AGOF donors is instrumental in making it happen.



Art Education For Everyone, Everywhere

Art education is deeply woven into the history of the AGO. From Group of Seven artist Arthur Lismer holding art classes in Grange Park close to a century ago to the launch of the museum's Virtual School Programs in 2020, the AGO's learning initiatives continue to evolve and innovate.

As school groups visited the AGO in increasing numbers—over 36,000 students came to the AGO with their schools in 2024—the Education team focused on connecting the in-person and virtual school learning experience. Virtual School Programs shifted to a monthly delivery model, enabling deeper collaborative opportunities with content creation partners and links to a broader range of curriculum goals. At the same time, the enthusiasm and community established through onsite school visits has heightened interest in Virtual School Programs.

This hybrid approach, which includes sessions co-created with partners such as the Toronto Zoo and the Canadian Opera Company, helps the AGO reach participants beyond its geographic location while supporting local schools before, during and after their in-person visits. In a rapidly changing world, the museum remains committed to extraordinary art education.

SPOTLIGHT: ARTIST & ACCESS TO ART PROGRAMS

Supported by AGOF Funds



Supporting Artists

Artists are the lifeblood of the AGO. They create the works in the AGO Collection and share unique perspectives that deepen visitors' understanding of the world. Through initiatives such as the AGO X RBC Artist-in-Residence program and special talks, events and performances, the AGO supports artists in developing and showcasing their work.

A highlight of 2024 was RESPAWN, Miles Greenberg's captivating durational performance in Walker Court, co-presented in June with Luminato. Inspired by first-person shooter video games, the Montreal-born artist choreographed a battle against an imagined adversary located behind a moving, robot-mounted camera that recorded his movements in real time.

Staged on a mirrored floor scattered with silicone replicas of Greenberg himself—representing previously defeated video game avatars—the performance was witnessed by over 5,000 visitors over the course of its nine-hour run. Singular and spellbinding, Greenberg's work confronted contemporary issues and continues to resonate with those who experienced it.



Commitment to Accessibility

Access to art is a central tenet of the AGO's mission, vision and values. The museum is dedicated to welcoming everyone who wishes to experience art and learning, and has taken meaningful steps towards becoming one of the world's most inclusive art museums.

With support from the Matthew Teitelbaum Fund for Community Access Initiatives, the AGO has partnered with several community organizations to facilitate art experiences for visitors of diverse needs and abilities. Collaborations with Autism Ontario, the Alzheimer's Society of Toronto and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind are key examples of partner programming that brought hundreds of visitors to the museum in 2024.

In addition, everyday resources such as multisensory kits, which are available at the AGO's Welcome Desk and roving Art Carts, ensure that visitors in need of support can experience art in comfort.

SPOTLIGHT: EXTRAORDINARY ART

Supported by AGOF Funds

With a strategic focus on quality and diversity of artist perspectives, the museum welcomed important works of art into the AGO Collection in 2024. This page and the next highlight two of the many acquisitions supported by AGOF funds.

Girl in My Dressing Gown (1981) is a rare and significant work in the oeuvre of Mary Pratt, a Fredericton-born artist whose photorealistic creations made her one of Canada's most renowned painters. Based on an image of model Donna Meaney photographed by Mary's husband Christopher Pratt, the painting captures its subject posed against a white wall, caught between fluorescent and incandescent lights.

Beginning in 1978, Mary Pratt made Meaney the subject of a series of figure paintings, despite the model having engaged in an affair with Christopher. This complex history adds emotional tension to the series. In *Girl in My Dressing Gown*, the artist traces the folds and creases of the sheer robe in fine strokes of paint, sensuous golden light standing in gentle contrast against turquoise green glares and shadows, while Meaney's face stares directly at the viewer.

The disquieting and luminescent painting has been interpreted variously as a romantic rivalry between wife and mistress, an artistic rivalry between husband and wife, and an embodiment of the artist's thwarted drive and sexuality. Regardless of Mary Pratt's intention, she presents Meaney not as an anonymous model, but as a complex, thinking woman.

This acquisition adds to the AGO's growing collection of Mary Pratt's work and reflects the AGO's commitment to collecting the work of women artists. Currently, the museum holds 12 works by Pratt.

Adding this work to the AGO Collection enables continued investigation of the role of the model in an artist's practice and feminist explorations of the body and representation. It also serves to further illustrate Atlantic Realism, a term applied to Alex Colville and his students, Christopher Pratt, Mary Pratt, and Tom Forrestall.



Mary Frances Pratt, *Girl in My Dressing Gown*, 1981. Oil on board, 153.7 x 77.5 cm (60 ½ x 30 ½ in.). Purchase, with funds from the Beryl Ivey Fund, 2024

SPOTLIGHT: EXTRAORDINARY ART

Supported by AGOF Funds



Myrlande Constant. *Union des Esprits Sirenes*, 2020. Sequin on fabric, Overall: 208.3 × 261.6 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario. Purchase, with funds from Friends of Global Africa & the Diaspora and the Ivey Foundation Contemporary Art Fund, 2024. © Myrlande Constant, courtesy Central Fine and El-Saieh Gallery. Photo: AGO, 2023/45

The synthesis of Haitian history, Vodou religion and global contemporary culture is manifested to mesmerizing effect in the textile-based artwork of Myrlande Constant, an artist whose use of *drapo Vodou* (Vodou flags) signifies a novel approach to the traditional religious art of Haiti.

Union des Esprits Sirenes (2020) is the first work by Constant to enter the AGO Collection. Composed of solid beads and sequins sewn into canvas, it exemplifies her use of the French technique of tambour embroidery in Haitian artistic contexts. In this work, Constant emphasizes the spiritual dimension of daily life, dissolving concepts of time through visual ideas such as the placement of a bejewelled hand mirror alongside an electric guitar. The figure of the Black deity Lasirèn is central in the composition of a tableau that features symbolic sea creatures

and Constant's engagement with contemporary discourse about gender fluidity, racial ambiguity and identity.

The acquisition of this work reflects the AGO's commitment to art that explores colonial injury, erased African diasporic cultures and the marginalized narratives of the Caribbean—as well as the museum's strategy to grow its holdings of textile art.

“The AGO Collection is growing every year and becoming more reflective of the diverse approaches and perspectives of today's artists. The support of AGOF donors is crucial to our efforts to acquire art that engages our audiences and sparks global conversations.”

- Julian Cox, Deputy Director and Chief Curator



THANK YOU

Thank you for your generous support of the AGO through The AGO Foundation. Your ongoing commitment is a catalyst for the art and learning experiences that the museum shares with the public, and a safeguard for the future of arts and culture in Canada.

We hope this report instills a sense of pride in the impact your support made at the AGO and in our community in 2024.

Thank you.

Installation view, *Moments in Modernism*, Art Gallery of Ontario. Work shown: Alex Colville. *Low Tide*, 1987. Acrylic on untempered hardboard, Frame: 60 x 101.4 cm (23 5/8 x 39 15/16 in.) Overall: 41 x 81.3 cm (16 1/8 x 32 in.). Gift from the Estate of R. Fraser Elliott, 2005. © A.C. Fine Art Inc. Photo AGO

The AGO Foundation Board of Trustees 2024

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Som Seif

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Cassils, *Etched in Light*, 2023. Cyanotype on cotton fabric, Overall: 609.6 × 579.1 cm (240 × 228 in.). Purchase, with funds from the Christian Claude Fund and Martha LA McCain, 2024

* Term ended in 2024



The Art Gallery
of Ontario
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Installation view, Grange Park; Henry Moore, *Large Two Forms*, 1966–1969. Bronze, Overall: 386 x 610 cm.
Art Gallery of Ontario. Purchase from the artist, 1973. © The Henry Moore Foundation. Photo: AGO. 73/82