



sculpture Joey & Tom Tanenbaum Sculpture Studio

The Art Gallery of Ontario  
**FOUNDATION**  
2020 HIGHLIGHTS



# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE AGO FOUNDATION

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Thank you for supporting the AGO through The Art Gallery of Ontario Foundation (AGOF).

You help the AGO bring people together through extraordinary art and learning experiences. You make it possible to grow and care for our collections, develop innovative programs and connect with new audiences. You enable us to lead global conversations from the cultural heart of Toronto.

As an AGOF donor, you are part of a visionary community of philanthropists dedicated to making a meaningful impact in our city, across Canada and around the world through art and learning.

Steady and sustainable growth in 2020 increased the total balance of AGOF funds to \$107.7 million. This strong performance helped the AGO continue to plan for an exciting future, even as the museum navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The AGO is grateful for your generosity—and the impact it will make for years to come.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I have never been more proud to be a part of The AGO Foundation than I have in the past year. The AGO was closed for more than half of 2020, resulting in a dramatic decrease in revenues—but your generosity helped the museum find new and innovative ways to bring art and learning to audiences around the world.

AGOF funds provided a much-needed pillar of stability, and continued to support the acquisitions, exhibition planning and program development that will help our museum emerge with strength from a challenging time.

It is my pleasure to share this report highlighting the activities you helped make possible through your philanthropic support, as well as the Foundation's financial results in 2020. As this report shows, AGOF funds continued to grow thanks to donor contributions and strong investment performance.

By the time you read this, the AGO will have welcomed visitors back to the museum. I know my family has been enriched by our continued engagement with the AGO, including the virtual experiences that have kept us connected to art over the past year. My children have

particularly enjoyed AGO Virtual School Programs, which launched in October and reached hundreds of thousands of young learners throughout the 2020–21 school year. Still, stepping back into the building will feel like returning to a home away from home—a feeling I know that you and many others share.

I am honoured to be part of the incredible community of AGOF donors, and I hope you take great pride in what the museum and the Foundation were able to achieve together in 2020. Please know how deeply everyone at the AGO appreciates your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darcy Morris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darcy Morris  
Chair

The Art Gallery of Ontario Foundation

# A FAMILY TRIBUTE

## Elaine Ling's Inspiring Life and Legacy



Elaine Ling, Self-Portrait, Mongolia (2004)

When Edward Pong and his family established the Elaine Ling Fund for Women in Photography in 2019, their goal was equal parts simple and profound: to honour Edward's sister, whose passion for life, family and photography was an inspiration.

Working in a documentary style, Elaine was particularly drawn to nature and the environment. She travelled the world to countries ranging from Mongolia to Ethiopia to Peru—and many more—creating breathtaking images of massive stone monuments and wide-open spaces. Through her photographs, she often considered the relationship between humankind and the landscape. Several of her works are in the AGO Collection, and her photographs have also been collected by institutions around the world, such as the Bibliothèque Nationale,

Paris, the Scavi Scaligeri International Centre of Photography, Italy, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the National Gallery of Canada.

“She just loved photography,” Edward says. “My sister was amazing to watch, and as I step further back I realize how amazing she was.”

Indeed, photography was hardly Elaine's sole area of expertise. She practiced as a medical doctor, initially in First Nations communities and later in a private family practice in Ajax, Ontario. She was also an avid classical musician and played cello in Orchestra Toronto. “Everything she did, she did it passionately and incredibly well,” Edward says.





Elaine Ling, *Baobab #25, Madagascar*, 2010. From the Baobab portfolio Platinum prints: II, 45.6 x 57 cm each. Anonymous Gift.

As a result of this endowed fund, the AGO will be able to acquire great works by talented women photographers. Edward hopes these works will help audiences experience the joy and wonder Elaine found in photography.

In addition to highlighting Ling's legacy, Edward says the fund is a way of celebrating their family's journey from Hong Kong in the 1950s and the opportunities and successes they found in Canada. This sense of family is what motivated Edward to involve his children in creating the fund.

"My kids had a real connection to their aunt," says Edward. "I want them to see this (endowment) as a way to keep her impact alive."

*Knowing that the Baobab had a thousand-year lifespan, Elaine referred to baobabs as the Tree of Generations and approached photographing the majestic trees she encountered in South Africa, Mali and Madagascar with a sense of reverence.*

When he thinks back to the childhood he shared with Elaine, Edward fondly recalls that "she was always an artist." Knowing how passionate she was about her art, he also knows how she would feel about being associated with the acquisition of extraordinary photography.

"She would love it."




# AGOF Performance Summary

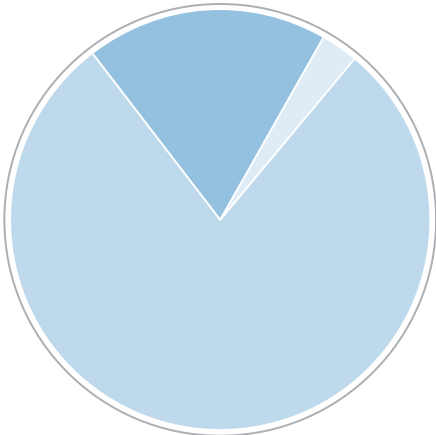
Donor contributions, strong investment performance and nimble leadership allowed The AGOF to continue growing its funds in 2020. In a global pandemic, this growth is a notable achievement for The AGOF and its donors.

In the early weeks and months of the pandemic, uncertainty in global markets led to a downturn in AGOF investments. In keeping with their proven track record of financial stewardship, however, The AGOF Investment Committee and Board of Trustees managed this risk effectively, returning an investment gain of \$6.9 million (6.7%) in 2020.

The generosity of donors and the resilience of The AGOF helped make it possible for the AGO to continue focusing on our mission and our vision for the coming years.

## AGOF ASSETS

- 
**\$84.4 MILLION**  
 in 91 Endowment funds
- 
**\$20.3 MILLION**  
 in 12 restricted funds
- 
**\$3.0 MILLION**  
 in 9 unrestricted funds



**\$107.7 MILLION**

Total AGOF fund balance as at December 31, 2020

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

<b>\$3.0 MILLION</b> Net increase of fund balances in 2020*	<b>\$5.6 MILLION</b> Funds disbursed in 2020 **	<b>\$22.52 MILLION</b> Distributions over the past decade from AGOF	<b>9.6 PER CENT</b> Average annual return over 10 years
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\* Comprised of \$6.9 M net investment gain and \$2.2 M in contributions, less \$5.6 M in distributions and \$0.53 M in other expenses.  
 \*\* Includes \$5.1 M disbursed to support operations and programming and \$0.5 M disbursed for acquisitions



# IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Your generosity makes meaningful things happen at the AGO. AGOF funds support the acquisitions, programming and leadership that make the museum a premier global cultural destination. AGOF donors helped the AGO achieve the following in 2020:



many ways been having these kinds of conversations  
our own lives. So very thankful to be here

**200,000+**

Participants engaged  
in AGO online  
programming\*

\*Not including Virtual School Programs



**1,250+**

Artworks examined  
by the AGO  
Conservation team



**150+**

Virtual programs  
and events



**1**

New collecting area:  
Arts of Global Africa and  
the Diaspora



Works in the AGO  
Collection after new  
acquisitions in 2020

**120,000+**



**27,000**

Free Annual Passes  
distributed to  
frontline workers



**180,000+**

Participants in Virtual  
School Programs  
(680,000 over the  
2020-21 school year)



**289,000+**

People reached through  
regular AGO email  
communications

# Funds In Action

AGOF donors make an invaluable impact in the AGO community. Your support helps the museum plan, develop and implement initiatives that engage audiences through art and learning. The following pages feature a selection of acquisitions, programming and conservation highlights—a glimpse of what the AGO and AGOF donors were able to achieve together in 2020.

## SPOTLIGHT: EXTRAORDINARY ART

### Supported by AGOF Acquisition Funds

The AGO continued to acquire remarkable works of art in 2020, and many of the most exciting additions to our Collection were made possible by AGOF acquisition funds.

Among the highlights is Moridja Kitenge Banza's *Christ Pantocrator No 13* (2020), the first acquisition by the newly formed Arts of Global Africa and the Diaspora curatorial department. The work depicts Jesus, in the style of European religious portraiture, wearing a mask from the Dan people of Liberia—complicating our ideas about sacredness and the relationship between African artifacts and museums.



Moridja Kitenge Banza, *Christ Pantocrator No 13*, 2020. Acrylic and gold leaf on wood, 40 x 30 cm. Purchase, with assistance from the Christian Claude Fund. © Moridja Kitenge Banza. Photo courtesy of Galerie Hugues Charbonneau.



# SPOTLIGHT: EXTRAORDINARY ART

Supported by AGOF Acquisition Funds



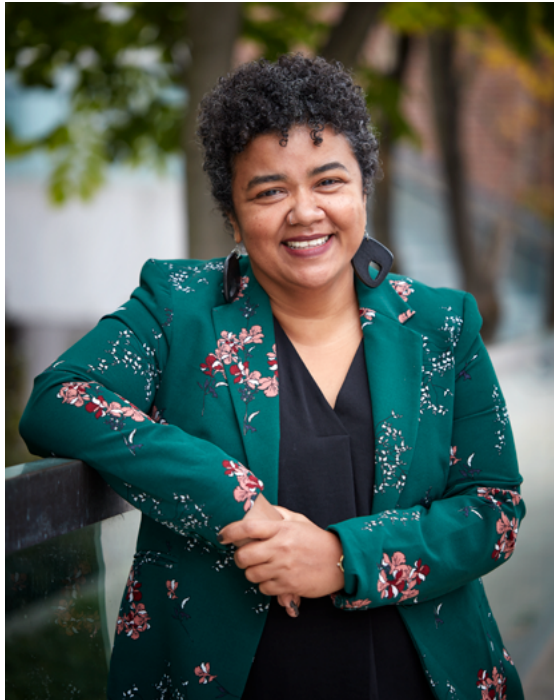
Shuvinai Ashoona *Curiosity*, 2020. Coloured pencil, graphite and ink on paper. Overall: 127.5 x 268 cm. Purchase, with funds from the Joan Chalmers Inuit Art Fund, 2020. © Shuvinai Ashoona.

In 2021, the AGO presents *Shuvinai Ashoona: Beyond the Visible*. The exhibition features *Curiosity* (2020), a work that celebrates the artist's community of Kinngait (Cape Dorset) and her own imagination. The nearly nine-foot drawing is grounded in Inuit stories and captivates viewers with its epic scale and sense of playfulness.

The AGO also commissioned an extraordinary work from Haegue Yang to coincide with her exhibition *Haegue Yang: Emergence*. Now hanging in the Joey & Toby Tanenbaum Sculpture Atrium, *Woven Currents—Confluence of Parallels* (2020)—pictured on the cover—is composed of hanging venetian blinds and LED tubes. Yang was inspired by the AGO Collection, the architecture of our building and the Two Wampum Belt treaty established between the Five Nations of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) and Dutch settlers in 1613.

# SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATION IN ART & LEARNING

Supported by AGOF Learning & Accessibility Funds



The AGO's Education & Programming team kept audiences connected to the museum throughout a challenging year. Under the leadership of Dr. Audrey Hudson, the new Richard & Elizabeth Currie Chief, Education & Programming, the AGO adapted several programs—and created several more—for delivery online.

Among the new innovations were AGO Makes, a video series that inspired participants to make art at home; Neighbourhood Walks, in which youth joined their peers on virtual tours of Toronto neighbourhoods; and Virtual School Programs—a groundbreaking initiative in art education.

Top: Dr. Audrey Hudson  
Below: Screenshot from AGO Makes: Summer Edition video





# SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATION IN ART & LEARNING

## Supported by AGOF Learning & Accessibility Funds

Launched in October 2020, Virtual School Programs provided much-needed support to students, parents and teachers. Featuring three live sessions a day, five days a week, Virtual School Programs were delivered by our expert Art Educators and were tailored to different age groups from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12.

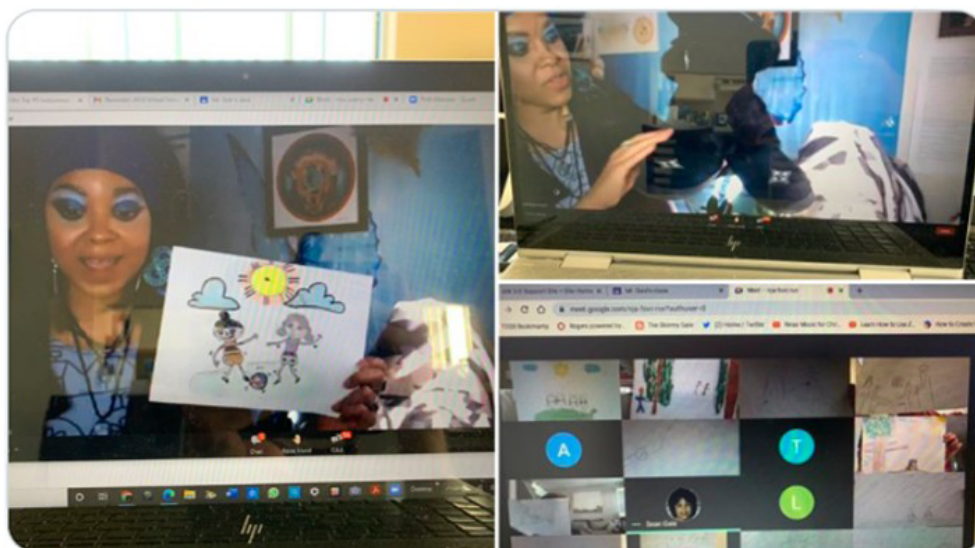
Each half-hour program linked to the Ontario curriculum, explored relevant themes in art and culture and featured highlights from the AGO Collection. Virtual School Programs were also free of charge—reinforcing the AGO’s commitment to making art accessible to everyone.

By the end of 2020—just a few weeks after launching—Virtual School Programs had engaged more than 180,000 learners. In doing so, the initiative also expanded the museum’s geographical reach, with participants signing in from all over Canada and the world beyond.



Above: A student learns online with the AGO  
Below: A Twitter post with images from a Virtual School Programs session.

Thank you Mahlikah [@RedSlam](#) & [@agotoronto](#) [#AGOschools](#) from the Gr 2 Ss [@JackmanPS1](#) for the amazing presentation on the art of [#AnniePootoogook](#) [#DaphneOdjig](#) and teaching us abt [#kamiks](#)





## SPOTLIGHT: CONSERVATION IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

### Supported by the Michael and Sonja Koerner Conservation Initiatives Fund

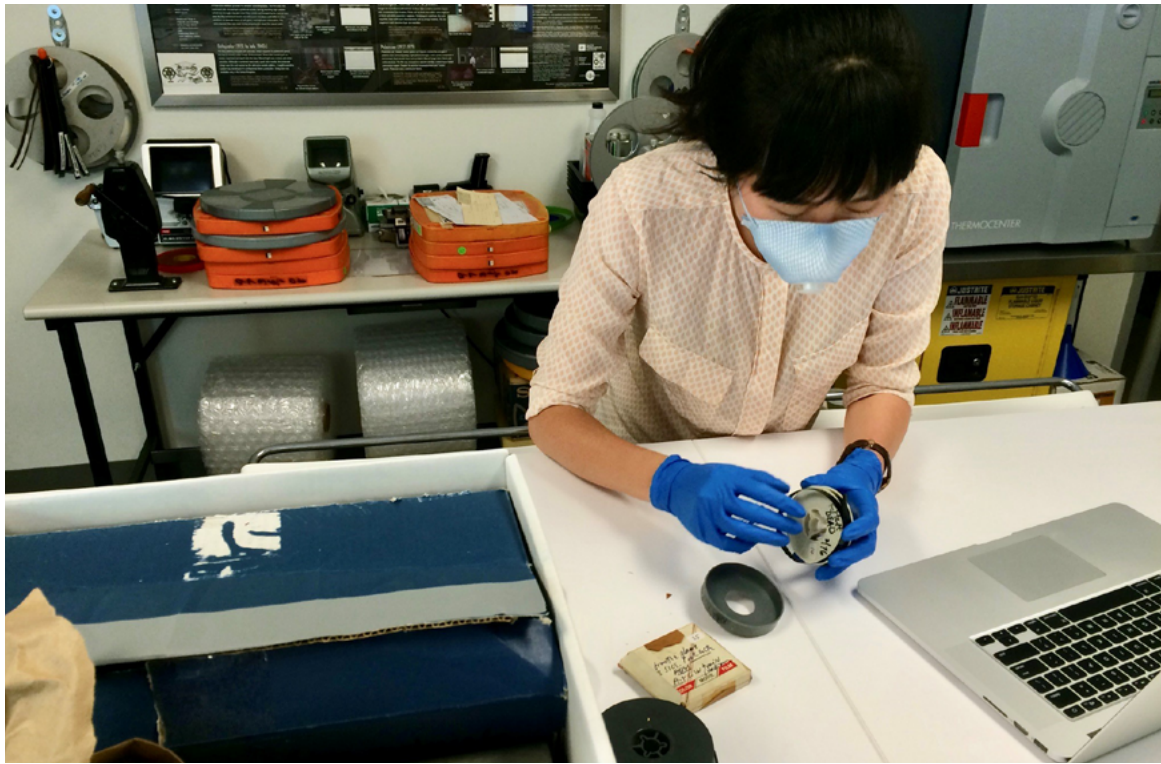
How does a museum care for its collections when access to the building is restricted? That was the question facing AGO Head of Conservation Maria Sullivan and her team in March 2020. Through collaboration, flexibility and innovation, the staff at the Michael and Sonja Koerner Centre for Conservation found the answers.

One of the first and most important steps conservators took was ensuring that pest animals—many of which would have been attracted to the sudden darkness and quiet of the AGO building—did not enter and damage vulnerable art.

The AGO is also home to “living” artworks such as *Today We Reboot the Planet* by Adrián Villar Rojas, an installation featuring several plants. Working in shifts, Maria and two of her colleagues collaborated with AGO Plant Operations to regularly water the plants. They were also able to monitor temperature, humidity, light exposure and various other climate data—information that is essential for conserving works of art—throughout the museum.

Adrián Villar Rojas, *Today We Reboot the Planet*, 2013. Glass and steel shelves containing sculptures of mixed media. Purchase, with funds from the Modern and Contemporary Curatorial Committee, the Michael and Diane Hasley Fund, the Janet and Michael Scott Fund, the David Yulle and Mary Elizabeth Hodgson Fund, the Ivey Foundation Contemporary Art Fund, the Contemporary Circle Fund, the Jay Smith and Laura Rapp Fund, and the Elcy Wallace Fund, 2016. © Adrián Villar Rojas.





## SPOTLIGHT: CONSERVATION IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

### Supported by the Michael and Sonja Koerner Conservation Initiatives Fund

The AGO's Conservation team also continued to move forward with innovative projects in 2020, such as the museum's growing time-based media program.

Time-based media art includes video, film, audio and other forms in which time is a key dimension of the artwork. These works present unique challenges to conservators, as new technologies are constantly emerging and making older ones obsolete.

Partnering with Small Data Industries, which specializes in the preservation and storage of digital collections, the AGO is working towards becoming a global leader in

the conservation of technology-driven art. The museum has even created a temporary term position in this area, welcoming Shu-Wen Lin as Assistant Conservator, Time-Based Media. This is the first dedicated time-based media conservation position in Canada, and one of very few such posts in North America.

Throughout 2020, AGO conservators found ways to care for collections, acquisitions, exhibitions and loans in a time of limited access and activity—and continue to break new ground in their field. Thanks to their efforts, our audiences will be able to enjoy extraordinary art at the AGO.

Assistant Conservator Shu-Wen Lin at the Michael and Sonja Koerner Centre for Conservation



## THANK YOU

The philanthropic leadership of AGOF donors has played an integral role in the achievements highlighted over the preceding pages. We hope this snapshot of what the AGO accomplished in 2020 leaves you with a sense of pride and excitement for the future of the museum.

Thank you for supporting the mission and vision of the AGO through The AGOF. Your generosity is helping the AGO emerge with resilience from a challenging year—and continue to bring people together through art and learning.



## The AGO Foundation Board of Trustees 2020

The AGOF is grateful for the leadership of our Trustees and Members. Their long term vision provides essential guidance to The AGOF as it continues to build an exciting and sustainable future for the AGO.

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ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

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