



# Alberta Foundation for the Arts

## 2020-21 Annual Report

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*Alberta* 

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## Message from the Chair

To the Alberta arts community:

To say my first year as the Chair of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) was a challenging one may be an understatement. I assumed the Chair on April 15, 2020, less than a month after the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Alberta.

Throughout 2020-21, the AFA board met frequently, trying to understand and respond to the rapidly changing pandemic information. We realized that the associated public health measures taken by government would have severe impacts on the arts sector in Alberta. During this most difficult year, I remained in regular contact with our Minister to discuss and clarify the role of the AFA in the government's overall strategy to support Albertans through this crisis and, more critically, how best to help our province's artists and arts organizations.

In 2020-21, with a government allocation of \$26.9 million, the AFA prioritized support for arts organizations through its existing programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognized the vital role arts organizations play in providing stability and sustainability for the arts sector, through employment, contracts, commissions, and other purchasing opportunities. We also ensured funding support for individual artist project grants was maintained, but other programs were suspended. These decisions were not made lightly but were necessary based on the viability of these programs during the pandemic. We made sure to communicate updates, community supports, and other resources on the AFA website, including collected sector research we used to inform our decisions throughout the year.

I know my fellow Board members would like to join me in thanking the AFA staff for their professional acumen and hard work. We were all honoured to have served Alberta's art sector during its time of need. It has been a privilege to work to fulfill the AFA's mandate to support, develop, and promote our province's arts community.

On behalf of the AFA board, I am pleased to present the 2020-21 annual report.

Sincerely,



Mary Rozsa de Coquet, Chair

Alberta Foundation for the Arts Board of Directors

## Overview

### Mandate

The AFA encourages and supports the arts as a significant contributor to quality of life in Alberta.

The AFA was established in 1991 as a public agency and a provincial corporation with a mandate to support and contribute to the development of the arts in Alberta. We provide funding to artists and art organizations and manage an extensive provincial art collection featuring work from artists all over the province. We promote the arts in order to increase social cohesion, health and creativity.

Reporting to Alberta's Minister of Culture and Status of Women, the AFA follows the objectives found in the [Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act](#).

### Linkages to the Ministry's Business Plan

AFA programs are linked to the following outcome articulated in the [Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women 2020-23 Business Plan](#):

**Outcome Two:** Albertans have vibrant, active communities and access to cultural opportunities and services that enrich their lives.

Specifically, the AFA worked on Key Strategy 2.1:

“Provide support for artists and organizations to promote a healthy, vibrant and inclusive arts ecosystem that contributes to increased opportunities for participation in the arts and greater appreciation for and awareness of the value of art and artists in Alberta.”

The work of the AFA also contributed to the results of performance measure 2.d:

Performance measure 2.d: Percentage of adult Albertans who attended arts activities or events, and who participated in arts activities or events.

## Board Governance

The AFA Board of Directors encourages and supports Alberta's arts community by:

- Allocating the annual budget;
- Approving AFA funding and scholarships;
- Approving and monitoring the acquisition, exhibition, and preservation of works in the AFA collection; and
- Developing and implementing the AFA's strategic plan.

The board operates under a code of conduct that reflects a commitment to the AFA's values and provides a framework to guide ethical conduct in a way that upholds the integrity and reputation of the agency.

Board members are appointed through Order in Council. In 2020-21, the AFA board welcomed two new members. Their terms began on November 3, 2020.

The new members are:

- Yasmin Jivraj
- Andrea True Joy Fox

On April 14, 2020, the term of Acting Chair Luca Petryshyn ended as well as that of board member Candace Hook. The AFA thanks Mr. Petryshyn and Ms. Hook for their service to the board and acknowledges the significant contributions they made.

### Board Compensation Disclosure

The AFA publishes the [names and compensation of Board members online](#) as required per the [Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act](#).

## Membership



**Mary Rozsa de Coquet**

*Chair, Calgary*



**Paul R. Baay**

*Vice Chair, Calgary*



**Aleem Bharwani**

*Calgary*



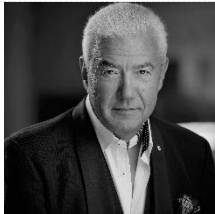
**Maryann Chichak**

*Whitecourt*



**Yasmin Jivraj**

*Edmonton*



**Tom Jackson**

*Calgary*

**Peter Kiss**

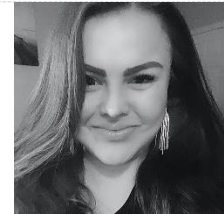
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*Calgary*



**Nabil Malik**

*Fort McMurray*



**Andrea True Joy Fox**

*Lethbridge/Blood Tribe  
(Blackfoot)*



**Candace Hook**

*Grande Prairie (term  
expired April 14, 2020)*



**Luca Petryshyn**

*Edmonton (term  
expired April 14, 2020)*

# Results Analysis

## Performance Measure Results

Results for the performance measure from the [Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women 2020-23 Business Plan](#) are gathered through the annual Survey of Albertans on Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

In 2020-21:

- 31.2 per cent of adult Albertans attended arts activities or events.
- 54.5 per cent of adult Albertans participated in arts activities or events.

## Core Businesses and Goals

AFA develops activities are developed through adherence to goals set out in the [AFA 2019-22 Strategic Plan](#), as described below.

Finalized and approved in 2019, the Strategic Plan lays out how the AFA plans to encourage a healthy arts sector, build meaningful and reciprocal relationships with the arts community, and harness the capacity of the arts to connect communities and be a catalyst for positive change. The plan affirms the AFA's commitment to promoting equitable access in the arts and to building relationships with Alberta's equity-seeking communities, particularly with Indigenous artists, culturally diverse and francophone artists, as well as Deaf artists and those with other disabilities.

### ***Core Business One: Funding***

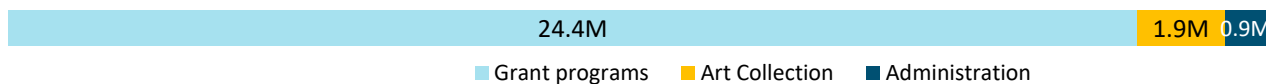
AFA's support for the arts is primarily driven by our granting programs. Operational grants provide ongoing support to organizations that provide access to art experiences and create job opportunities for artists and cultural workers. Project funding is awarded to organizations and individual artists primarily through an expert panel adjudication process.

### **Impact of Funding**

#### **AFA expenditures, 2020-21**

\$27,173,000

#### **AFA expenditure breakdown<sup>1</sup>**

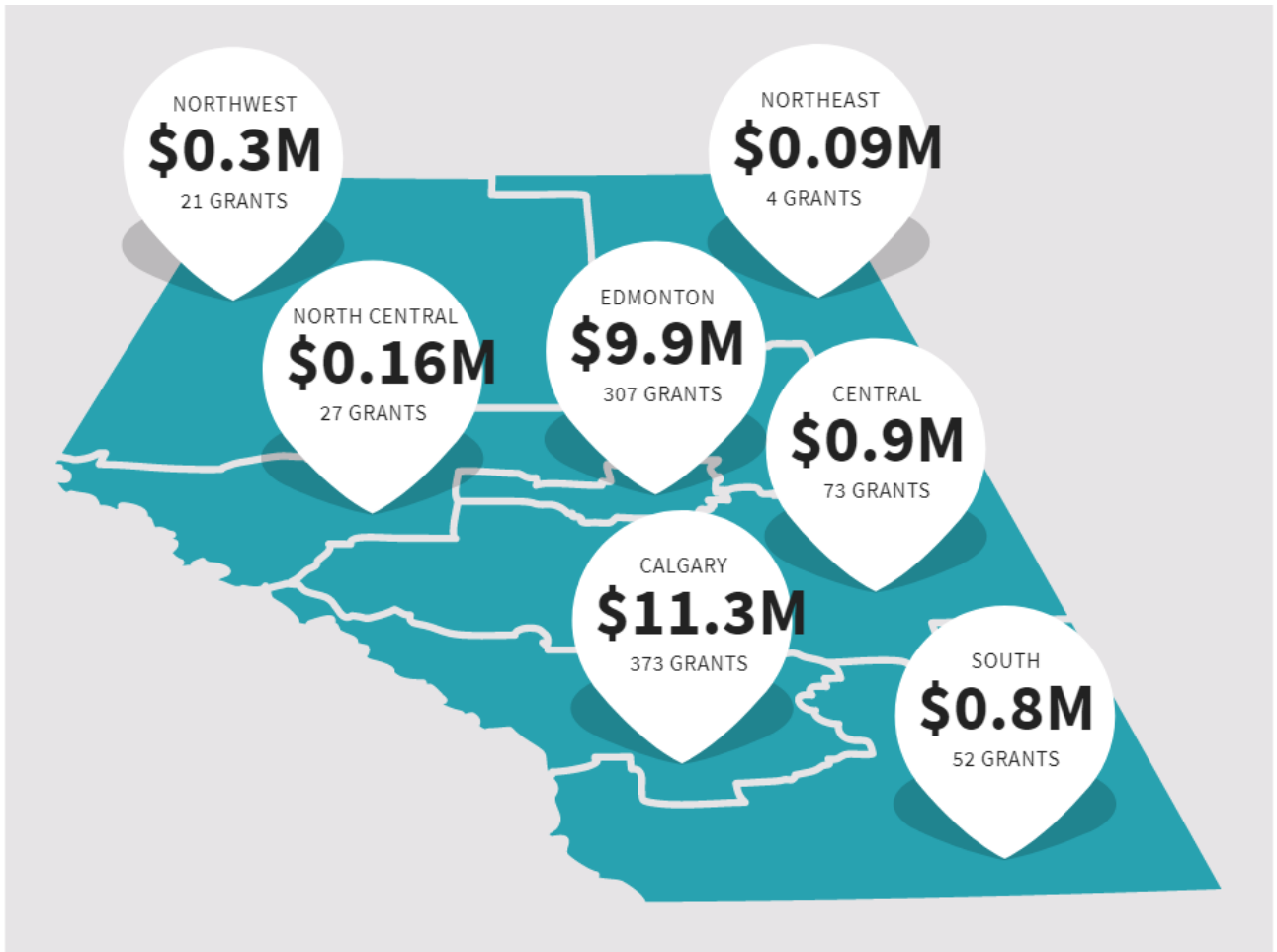


<sup>1</sup> Expenditures for each category include program support expenses

### Funding awarded by recipient type<sup>2</sup>



### Funding approved by region













Interested in exploring our data? More details are available on our [Impact of Funding](#) page and on [open.alberta.ca](https://open.alberta.ca).

### Funding awarded to organizations

\$ amount (grants awarded / eligible applications)









<sup>2</sup> Funding awarded does not include program support expenses.



Professional Performing Arts		\$9,522,558.00	51/51
Community Support		\$2,593,728.18	146/147
Public Art Galleries		\$2,022,349.00	17/17
Major Arts Presenters		\$1,902,971.00	12/12
Community Performing Arts		\$1,741,000.00	178/178
Provincial Arts Service		\$1,180,000.00	8/8
Arts Presenting		\$872,843.57	107/107
Artists and Education		\$309,670.33	52/128
Summer Schools		\$54,942.00	3/7
Projects Development		\$50,000.00	1/1

#### Funding awarded to individuals

\$ amount (grants awarded / eligible applications)

Literary Arts		\$777,658.02	64/100
Music		\$761,496.82	77/177
Film and Video		\$732,766.17	60/88
Visual Arts and New Media		\$459,077.55	41/97
Dance		\$193,313.77	18/38
Theatre		\$145,061.64	12/42
Indigenous Arts		\$139,785.71	10/33
Arts Awards		\$5,000.00	1/4

#### Summary of AFA grant program changes in response to COVID-19

The AFA maintained existing commitments and/or upheld 2019-20 funding levels for most operational funding clients in 2020-21. The foundation was required to disburse these grant allocations in installments to the majority of its operating grant recipients in 2020-21.

Organizations were not required to pay back existing operating grants already received even if they made changes and/or reductions in activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address organizations affected by COVID-19, including reduced programming and/or fund generation, the AFA also committed to developing an approach to the calculation of organizations eligible grant requests for future years.

In addition, the AFA made the following adjustments to two operating grant programs:

- the Public Art Galleries Interim Reporting due date was extended to May 1, 2020; and
- the Major Arts Presenters Interim Reporting due date was extended to May 1, 2020.

In recognition of organizations that were pivoting online in response to the pandemic, the AFA updated its guidelines to expand eligibility for activities supported by the Arts Presenting Project Funding opportunity. Artist fees for live-streamed online events presented on or after March 12, 2020 were eligible for reimbursement.

Project grant programs that primarily support travel were suspended in 2020-21 due to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. These included:

- the Travel Grant for Individuals and Ensembles;
- Cultural Relations – Organizations; and
- Cultural Relations – Individuals funding opportunities.

In addition, the following project grant programs for organizations were impacted:

- Summer Schools project grants for activities occurring in Summer 2020 were cancelled.
- Organizations: Art Projects and Indigenous Arts Projects for Organizations programs were both placed under review and suspended until further notice.

Discipline-specific individual project grant applications from the March 1, 2020 deadline were withdrawn because a significant portion of applications were determined to be unviable due to the Alberta's public health restrictions. The March 1 deadline was deferred to September 1, 2020, and funding allocated for the March 1 deadline was also moved to September. While some project applications may have been deemed viable regardless, deferring funding support for Individual Artist Project grants to the September deadline ensured that all applicants had equal access to funding. This also gave the AFA the ability to ensure that the proposed projects would have a high likelihood of successful completion. The AFA's total funding allocation in 2020-21 to support Individual Artist Project funding opportunities remained constant despite this change.

In recognition of the work invested by individual applicants in meeting the March deadline, the AFA made a one-time exception to its guidelines: applicants who applied to the March 1, 2020 deadline, and who had already commenced their project activities, were eligible to resubmit their application for the September 1, 2020 deadline. All other applicants were required to submit applications prior to the commencement of their project as per the regular guidelines.

### **Support for organizations**

In 2020-21, support for organizations provided funding to diverse organizations across the province. AFA programs delivered 412 operating grants and 163 project grants. These funding programs include the Artists and Education project grant program.

The Artists and Education project grant program supports Alberta schools by subsidizing the fees of professional Alberta artists of any artistic discipline who provide interactive arts residency projects for grades K-12. With this funding, schools can give students opportunities to observe and actively participate in the creative process, as well as encourage students to discover and express their creative potential.

In 2020-21, the AFA provided 52 schools with Artists and Education project grants, amounting to more than \$309,000. As much as possible, the AFA remained flexible with this program to support schools that pivoted to online residencies.

One of these schools included G.S. Lakie Middle School in Lethbridge. Performing Arts teacher Kristi Legge brought in Calgary choreographer Ajay Musodi for a virtual dance residency. While this was originally intended to be an in-person residency, Legge had to reschedule and move the program online due to the pandemic.

Legge wanted to provide this opportunity to as many students as possible and, as the dance program was suspended due to the move to single cohort classes in middle school, she decided to run Musodi's classes during Physical Education (PE) and allow PE students to join the dance workshops. She ensured that the two PE cohorts were separated with dividers, and she set up cameras to enhance the experience. In addition, a class cohort was put into quarantine a day before Musodi's arrival at the school and arrangements were made for quarantining students to be able to join the residency from home.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the dance residency made a big impact on the lives of the students involved. Legge says that Musodi did a fantastic job of not only engaging with the students, but also connecting with them. He helped to shape the development of their technique and give them the confidence to improvise and freestyle.

### **Support for individuals**

In 2020-21, the AFA provided 283 grants to artists working in a variety of artistic disciplines.

One of those artists was Jude Griebel, a sculptor from Bergen, Alberta. Griebel received a Visual Arts and New Media Individual Project Grant to support a residency at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn, New York. The grant provides up to \$15,000 to support development of individual Alberta artists, arts administrators, or an ensemble of artists by providing funding for a specific visual arts or new media project. Griebel notes that the residency marked a shift into new sculptural territory that builds on his previous work exploring eco-anxiety in fantastic and dystopic tableaux.

*“These sculptures explore the concept of ‘new beginnings’, influenced by speculative fiction in historical and contemporary writing, visual art and popular culture. Developing these sculptures at Pioneer Works not only allowed me access to cutting-edge new media labs and tools, but to connect with curators from major New York institutions including the Whitney, the Museum of Modern Art and the Sculpture Center, representing an invaluable period in my career as an Alberta artist.”*

.....  
Jude Griebel



**Figure 1. Jude Griebel**  
Image credit: On White Wall New York

## ***Core Business Two: Art Collection***

### **Summary of impacts to AFA Art Collection programs due to COVID-19**

The AFA was required to make changes to some artwork loans and exhibition programs due to physical distancing and other protocols put in place in response to COVID-19, as well as the required temporary closures of facilities. The safekeeping of AFA artworks were of utmost concern.

The AFA continued to support the Travelling Exhibition (TREX) program in 2020-21, and maintained communications and support with its TREX regional partners both during the closure of facilities and during the steps of the phased re-openings of Alberta’s economy. When facilities scheduled to host exhibits closed, the majority of artworks that were on tour with TREX were moved to safe storage. Appropriate precautions were put in place for any artworks that remained on site. The AFA’s artwork loans programs were also temporarily suspended in alignment with advice provided by Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer of Health. Placement activities and other loans resumed as restrictions were eased.

Throughout the pandemic, the AFA continued to promote its collection through the AFA Virtual Museum by encouraging Albertans to browse through the thousands of digital images of nearly every artwork in the collection.

**Acquisition value of AFA Art Collection as of March 31, 2021**

\$17,476,404.00<sup>3</sup>

**Number of artworks**

9,254

**Acquisitions**

The AFA acquires artwork to support steady and diverse art collection growth.

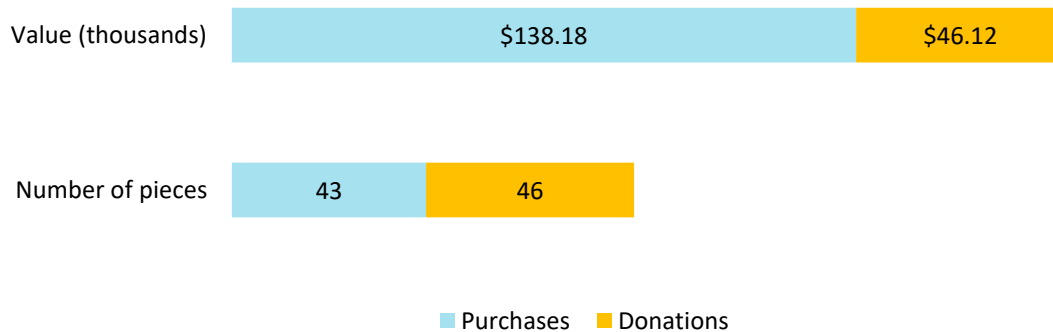
**Value of new acquisitions, 2020-21**

\$184,300

**Number of new acquisitions**

89

**New acquisitions, 2020-21**



<sup>3</sup> The AFA collection had 58 dispositions (removal of work from the collection) during 2020-21 valued at \$117,475.

## Art Acquisition by Application

The Art Acquisition by Application (AAA) program is a competitive program dedicated to the purchase of artworks created within the last five years by individual Alberta artists.



**Figure 2. Jessica Desmoulin, *Autumn Sky*, 2019, felted wool, beads, leather**



**Figure 3. Jessica Desmoulin, *Grand Entry*, 2019, felted wool, beads, leather**

In 2020-21, AAA purchased 38 artworks by 32 artists, 12 of whom were not previously represented in the AFA Art Collection. Acquisitions included two beaded sculptural artworks by Jessica Desmoulin. The purchase of the three-dimensional artworks increases the representation of Desmoulin's practice, complementing the three paintings the AFA Art Collection had already acquired.

Desmoulin was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 1978, and is of Ojibway lineage from the Pic River First Nation in Ontario. As a child, she lived in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, and now resides in Edmonton. Desmoulin has developed symbols in her work, including lines of communication, division circles and x-ray imagery, all of which emerged naturally through her practice. Even though she was unfamiliar with the work of the early Ojibway Woodland artists such as Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray and Roy Thomas, Jessica's symbols coincidentally mirror the visual language created by these artists. She feels these symbols

were always inside her, passed down from her ancestors.

Her beaded hats have been worn by Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network (APTN) television host Earl Wood on multiple occasions, and her work is featured in the Art Gallery of Alberta's AFA upcoming Travelling Exhibition, *Turtle Island*, scheduled to tour the province until December 2023.

## Donations

The AFA encourages artists, individual collectors, organizations and corporations to donate works of art to its collection. In 2020-21, the Government of Alberta Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Innovation made a generous donation to the AFA of seven artworks by seven artists.

Those artists are Robert Campbell, Neil Fiertel, Alexandra Haeseker, Don McVeigh, Jane Ash Poitras, Robert Sinclair and Helen Zenith. Historically, the artworks were purchased by the Government of Alberta in the 1980s by the former Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs (FIGA) in consultation with the Arts Branch. They were purchased for display in the FIGA satellite offices in Ottawa, Los Angeles, Houston and Tokyo as a means to promote Alberta artists and artworks nationally and internationally. Some of the artworks from the FIGA Collection were transferred to the AFA Collection throughout the 1990s and the 2000s but many remained on display in Government of Alberta offices. The seven artworks complement the existing holdings of these artists' work in the AFA Art Collection.



**Figure 4.** Jane Ash Poitras, *Indian Summer*, n.d., silkscreen on paper



**Figure 5.** Mark Mullin, *Polymorph 2*, 2019, oil, acrylic on paper

### Curatorial Purchase

Each year, the AFA dedicates funding to purchase works of art that address specific gaps in the collection that could not be addressed through other acquisition programs.

In 2020-21, one artwork, *Polymorph 2*, by Mark Mullin, was purchased through the Curatorial Purchase program, a highly recommended Art Acquisition by Application artwork submission.

Mark Mullin has taught at various academic institutions in Canada and regularly exhibited across North America and Europe. According to his Alberta University of the Arts biography, Mullin's "work investigates how abstract painting can perform as a type of playful narrative of contradiction and subversion. It is a dialogue whose visual vocabulary is comprised of borrowed bits and parts – a convergence of 'insistent debris' where the decorative and minimal negotiate with the brush

and grotesque. What results are paintings that resonate like improvised abstract theatre.” Mullin has been a member of Alberta University of the Arts faculty since 2003, holds a BFA from the University of Alberta and an MFA in Studio Arts from Concordia University.

### Public Art Commissions

There were no new Public Art Commission Projects in 2020-21, as the October 1, 2020 deadline was on hold for a program review. The review had been previously scheduled to occur five years after the program was created, and the suspension of this program was unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Deaccession

In 2020-21, the AFA deaccessioned 58 paintings by artist Sveva Caetani to the Caetani Cultural Centre Society in Vernon, British Columbia. Sveva Caetani was from Vernon and was active in the British Columbia art community. In the 1980s, Caetani arranged for the donation of the 58 paintings from her Recapitulation series to the AFA because she could not locate storage in British Columbia with the necessary standards for preserving her works of art.

The Caetani Cultural Centre Society is a not-for-profit organization and registered charity. It operates the former home of Caetani, now a 6,000 sq. ft. designated heritage house situated on 1.5 acres of land, on behalf of the City of Vernon. The AFA and the Board of Directors of the Caetani Cultural Centre Society determined that the Recapitulation paintings would greatly enhance their Caetani story, locally as well as internationally.

Upon review, the AFA identified Sveva Caetani as not meeting the Core Artist criteria as outlined in the AFA Collection Development Plan. If an artist does not meet any of the Core artist criteria, the artworks can be considered for deaccession following an appropriate curatorial review and disposition methodology as outlined in the AFA Collection Management Policy. The repatriation of Sveva Caetani’s Recapitulation series is a positive initiative in which the AFA facilitated the return of the paintings to the care and collection of the Caetani Cultural Centre Society.



**Figure 6. Sveva Caetani, *Villa Miraggio (Le Morte Stagione)*, 1981, watercolour on paper**



## Artwork Loans

The AFA shares artwork locally and abroad by working with our partners to exhibit, tour and place work in public spaces. Artworks are shared through the Art Placement, Travelling Exhibitions, and Exhibition Loans programs.

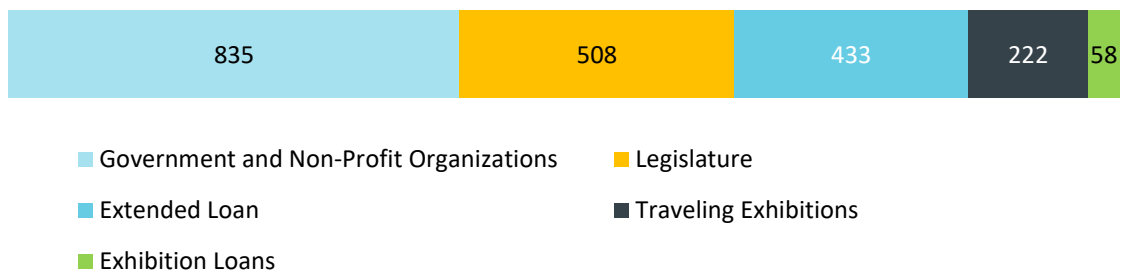
### Number of artworks on display, 2020-21

2,056

### Percentage of collection on display

22.2%

### AFA artworks on display by program 2020-21



## Art Placement

The AFA Art Placement program facilitates the display of artworks from the collection to foster public enjoyment of Alberta artwork. There are two types of eligible recipients for art placement services: government and non-profit organizations, and the Alberta Legislature.

*Magpie*, by Indigenous Dene artist Bruno Canadien, was installed in the office of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in 2021. Through his work, Canadien focuses on issues critical to First Nations peoples, including sovereignty, natural resources, environmental preservation, and the oil and gas industries' treatment of the land and its people. His collages, paintings and drawings reflect his respect for his heritage and his passion for bringing



Figure 7. Bruno Canadien, *Magpie*, 2006, acrylic, charcoal, paper, metal on canvas

important issues to the forefront. Through the language of art, Bruno communicates the need for national attention on these issues. The AFA acquired *Magpie* in 2008 through a special curatorial initiative to increase the holdings and representation of Indigenous artists in the AFA Art Collection.



Figure 8. Peter Hide, *Odalisque*, 1992-93, welded steel, paint

### Extended Loan

An extended loan is a long-term loan of artwork from the AFA collection to an external client. Extended loan projects are generally site specific, large-scale artworks that require special infrastructure or arrangements, such as an artwork especially commissioned for a building.

In 2005, the sculpture *Odalisque*, by renowned Edmonton artist Peter Hide, was acquired and loaned to MacEwan University in

downtown Edmonton for outdoor display on 104th Avenue. The loan of sculptures in public outdoor space requires a robust care and monitoring program to ensure the artwork is maintained and reflects the artist's intent and aesthetic for the duration of the loan. In September of 2020, *Odalisque* was sanded and resurfaced by Hide.

MacEwan University has participated in the AFA Extended Loan program since the 1990s and presently there are 20 AFA artworks on display throughout the campus.

### Travelling Exhibition Program

#### Venues visited by travelling exhibitions, 2020-21

122

#### Number of visitors

141,516

The AFA's Travelling Exhibition (Trex) program includes exhibitions in schools, libraries, health care centres, and smaller rural institutions and galleries throughout the province.

In 2020-21, the Art Gallery of Alberta curated the TREX exhibition, *The Rush and Roar*, which features 20 AFA artworks in a diverse variety of media. The 1920s, often described as the Roaring Twenties, inspired the exhibition. It uses the visual arts to explore some of the political, economic, technological, and social/cultural changes that occurred in Western societies during the 1920s and continue to have ramifications into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Duple Time* features a computer-enhanced photograph by Lethbridge artist Herb Hicks, who is also an accomplished musician, writer and professor emeritus with the University of Lethbridge. *The Rush and Roar* exhibition will travel throughout the province for three years.



**Figure 9. Herb Hicks, *Duple Time*, 1987, cibachrome. computer enhanced on paper**

### Exhibition Loans

The AFA frequently lends artwork to cultural institutions for public exhibition.

The exhibition, *Mary Shannon Will – People, Places and Things*, curated by Diana Sherlock for the University of Calgary Nickle Galleries, includes nine artworks from the AFA Art Collection. This major retrospective includes almost 100 abstract ceramic sculptures, process-based paintings, drawings, digital prints and mixed media artworks produced by Calgary-based artist Mary Shannon Will, highlighting a dedicated career from 1968 to 2020.

Will's artwork *Taj Mahal*, combines computer-generated imagery with hand applied paint. The artist's concern is for layering, patterning and



**Figure 10. Mary Shannon Will, *Taj Mahal*, 2005, acrylic, glass on wood**

repetition. Each detail of the surface is precise and flawlessly detailed. While the work derives from a strict set of conditions in the application of paint, the result is playful and rich with tactile surfaces.

Will has been included in numerous public and private collections and has exhibited throughout North America. The artist divides her life and work between Calgary and New Mexico.

The Mary Shannon Will exhibition opened in October 2020; however, the gallery remained closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing only virtual access to programs. The exhibition is extended to November 2021 to afford the public an opportunity to visit the exhibition in person.

## Core Business Three: Research and Communications

### Communications

The AFA uses a variety of tools to connect with stakeholders, disseminate information about programs and promote awareness of the arts community.

#### AFA website sessions<sup>4</sup>, 2020-21

114,539

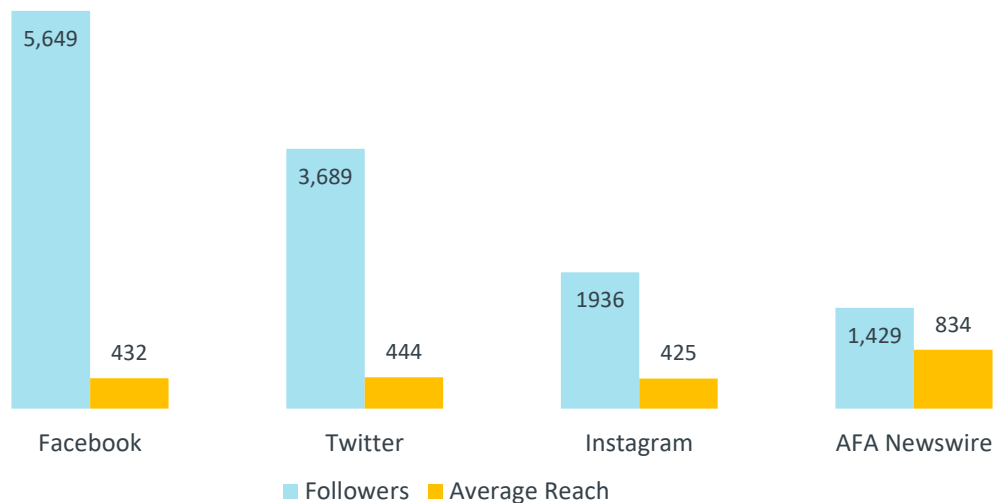
#### Users<sup>5</sup>

80,342

#### Community submissions for website newsfeed

277

#### Online engagement 2020-21<sup>6</sup>



The AFA recognized that it had an important role to play during COVID-19 in communicating about the various impacts the pandemic was having, both on the foundation and on the wider sector, as

<sup>4</sup> Website sessions refers to the number of times a site was visited by individual users.

<sup>5</sup> Users are the individuals participating in website sessions.

<sup>6</sup> Average reach refers to the average number of users who see a unit of published content (i.e. a Facebook post, tweet, Instagram post, newswire).

well as sharing information about available resources. The AFA understood its responsibility to act as a liaison between the government and Alberta's arts community.

Early during the pandemic, the AFA circulated two surveys to gather statistical information regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on Alberta's arts sector:

- One designed primarily for the foundation's operating funding clients and recent grant recipients from the Arts Presenting Project Funding opportunity (circulated via direct email); and
- One for individual artists and arts organizations that do not receive operational funding from the Foundation (published on the AFA website and promoted through the AFA Newswire and social media).

The responses collected provided the AFA with statistical information about the potential effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Alberta's arts sector. This analysis helped inform the AFA's 2020-21 spending plan and subsequent changes and updates to government programs to respond to the pandemic. It was also used to inform the government about sector impacts to be considered within its wider pandemic response.

In order to consolidate a wide array of information associated with COVID-19, the AFA published a special page on its website – [www.affta.ab.ca/covid19](http://www.affta.ab.ca/covid19) – that provided regular updates on:

- the AFA's priorities in its response to the pandemic;
- the status of public health restrictions and restrictions-easing plans, highlighting changes that would primarily impact arts organizations and artists;
- answers to frequently asked questions about AFA funding and programs; and
- links to federal, municipal, and community resources.

An "emergency" banner that included a link to this page was displayed across every page on the AFA website. During 2020-21, this webpage had the fourth highest number of page views on the site, with 7,058 unique page views (or 3.5% of the total). In addition, users spent an average of 2:20 minutes viewing this page, compared to an average of 1:38 minutes for other pages included in the rest of the website.

The AFA also published information about public health restrictions and restrictions-easing plans on its News feed.

### **Alberta's Future Leaders**

The Alberta's Future Leaders (AFL) program provides leadership development and recreational opportunities during the summer months to youth living in Indigenous communities. The Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Branch of Alberta Culture and Status of Women delivers the AFL program in partnership with the AFA. The AFA provides arts programming and support.

The AFL program was suspended for the summer of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and adapted to support communities with online program delivery. The four communities that hosted the online program delivery were Dene Tha'- Chateh, Driftpile Cree Nation, Gift Lake Metis Settlement, and Fishing Lake Metis Settlement.

The AFA contributed to online programming by funding the development, production and dissemination of arts virtual workshops created by Indigenous artists. Workshops included videos published to the AFA YouTube account, and lesson plans and materials available for download by participating communities.

Two virtual workshops were developed:

- nîminân môcikan (Dance Fun) – a Hip Hop dance workshop with Angela "Lunacee" Gladue (aka Miss Chief Rocka), a lead dancer from A Tribe Called Red.
- Vision Board workshop – a painting/collage creative process workshop with visual artist Kayla Simpson-Bellerose (aka BB Iskeww).

### Engagement

The AFA is engaged in outreach with different facets of the broader community. Our activities range from hosting granting information sessions for artists to supporting the artistic development of Indigenous youth through the AFL program. Research and engagement took on a whole new role and importance in helping assess the impacts of the pandemic on the arts sector and informing decisions on how best to help support and sustain Alberta artists and organizations.

#### Number of funding information sessions held, 2020-21

11

#### Attendees

294



nîminân môcikan -  
Introduction



BB Iskeww - Vision Board  
Intro

Figure 11. nîminân môcikan (Dance Fun) and Vision Board workshop YouTube videos

## Research

The AFA participates in efforts to evaluate the impact of arts and culture in society through specialized research projects.

In 2020-21, along with other provincial arts organizations and funders such as Calgary Arts Development, the Calgary Foundation, the Edmonton Arts Council, and the Rozsa Foundation, the AFA supported a study called *The New Experience Economy*. This was a research project on audience perceptions around returning to participation in the arts following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Developed and managed by the firm Stone-Olafson, the study investigated attitudes, expectations, intentions, behaviours and experiences over six waves of research. The study supported Alberta arts organizations in their efforts to recover and navigate the new normal with relevant, timely and actionable data. The findings generated by the first four phases of the study were released in 2020-21. By supporting the study, the AFA enabled the collection of important information used to assist the arts sector in its relaunch and recovery.

## Note on Financial Statements

In accordance with 9(4) of the [Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act](#), financial statements are available in the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women 2020-21 Annual Report.

## Social Media Contact Information

Keep up to date with Alberta Foundation for the Arts programs and initiatives by [signing up for the AFA Newswire](#), or connect through [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#). You can also browse or share community news, events or arts opportunities on the [AFA website news feed](#).