



AGM

ART GALLERY OF MISSISSAUGA

3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

(2023 – 2026)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every three years, the Board and Staff hold in-depth discussions to identify priorities and formulate strategic planning. We are particularly grateful to the Staff for investing their time and providing their candid feedback and input into this strategic plan. We would also like to thank Gina Vergilio of Vergilio Non-profit Consulting, for wrangling the Board and guiding us through the process.

INTRODUCTION

The Art Gallery of Mississauga (AGM)

Established in 1987, the Art Gallery of Mississauga celebrated its 35th Anniversary in 2022. The gallery is open 6 days/week and admission is free. The Art Gallery of Mississauga opened concurrently with the Mississauga Civic Centre complex in 1987. To date, the AGM has mounted over 500 exhibitions and delivered over 6,000 education and outreach programmes.

The Permanent Collection began in 1994 when the AGM was designated as a category "A" institution by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board in 1995. As a Collecting institution, the Gallery holds a collection of over 534 works of art. Due to restricted support space, the institution was required to place a moratorium on collection in 2008. The AGM resumed collections in 2014 with a renewed Collections Policy and streamlined focus. Several works by prominent artists, including Annie Pootoogook, Jeff Thomas and Sanaz Mazinani were added to the Gallery's collection during 2014-18. Following the pandemic, in 2023 it re-established its acquisitions committee and addressed a backlog of collection proposals. Going forward, the AGM is collecting carefully and strategically and is currently reevaluating its collection mandate and the potential for optimizing storage capacity.

The Gallery acquires works by emerging and established artists of note and seeks to augment the collection with significant pieces by national and international artists. The Collection aims to reflect the cultural diversity of the community, with a particular interest in work by Canadian artists that examines the inter-relationship between one's own heritage and the ongoing definition of one's culture from a contemporary or historical perspective. An additional interest is work by artists that examines and interprets the urban environment. As of 2014, the Gallery seeks to build a collection that participates in a significant national or international dialogue on photography and its conceptual and material possibilities.

The AGM staff enthusiastically endorse and activate the Gallery's vision, programmes and exhibitions connecting with diversity and interculturalist city landscape. The Art Gallery of Mississauga remains a leader in cultural contribution to the experience of Mississauga. The reinvigorated mission, vision, and values statements endorsed at the AGM reflect the inventive, vital and important cultural presence of Mississauga in Peel, GTA and Provincial Regions with national recognition of its inventive programmes and exhibitions.

MISSION

The Art Gallery of Mississauga (AGM) is a vibrant and dynamic gallery that showcases the work of local, national and international contemporary artists. It is our mission to bring art to the community and the community to art through compelling exhibitions, interactive workshops and thought-provoking events. Located in the heart of downtown Mississauga, we offer a free and accessible space where all are welcome

VISION

Enriching our communities through art.

VALUES

The board, staff and volunteers of the AGM share a core set of values that guide our behaviours and define our organizational culture:

- We conduct ourselves with the highest professional and ethical standards.
- We respect others and treat them with honesty, dignity and compassion. We will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind.
- We value diversity at our board table, in our workplaces and in our exhibitions and activities.
- We maintain a healthy, productive working environment that promotes work-life balance, employee engagement and innovation.
- We ensure our spaces and activities are accessible to all.
- We build trust through responsible actions and honest relationships. We believe in the power of collaboration, and we seek and sustain meaningful partnerships.
- We are fair and transparent in our practices, and we are accountable for our words, our actions and our results.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Known within the arts community as “Mississauga’s hidden gem,” there are opportunities to better promote the AGM to the local community as well as to tourists. The gallery is literally tucked into a back corner of City Hall, and while it is accessible, it is difficult to find. Off-site exhibits, programs, workshops, and partnerships are beneficial to help build awareness. The permanent collection is bursting at the seams, and the gallery should explore opportunities to re-locate to a larger space, particularly one that is more visible to local traffic, to draw in impulse patrons. As evidenced by the completed 2014 report conducted by the Lord Cultural Resources, the AGM has outgrown its current facility. Future growth is consequently a challenge for the AGM, which includes its lack of visibility at street level and Celebration Square as well as within City Hall.

Having weathered the storm of pandemic lockdowns and restrictions for almost three years, the AGM has developed its digital capabilities, but is still not quite to the calibre of other prominent galleries. There is a significant opportunity for the AGM to further develop its own digital capabilities and increase its presence in the digital world. This can be facilitated through programs, partnerships, equipment, technology, and staff development.

Longstanding issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) were uncovered in the AGM’s undertaking of a DEI Audit in 2021, conducted by an independent organization (Regional Diversity Roundtable – RDR). There are significant and urgent needs to improve the AGM’s efforts around DEI. 2022 and 2023 are focused on developing and implementing clear action plans to address the 76 recommendations from the RDR report. The AGM will need to work very hard to improve the working environment, policies and procedures, and its relationship with the arts community. This work is ongoing.

Due to the poor perception of the AGM in terms of its DEI and lack of transparency of processes and policies, the AGM has experienced high staff turnover, high board turnover, and has a sullied reputation among the arts community. It will take concerted and continuous efforts to turn this reputation around. With a restructuring of the Executive Committee in 2022 and the DEI action plan, work has begun, but there is still a tremendous amount to do.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Clarify our goals, rebuild our brand
2. Build our capacity to grow
3. Advance diversity, equity and inclusion at the AGM
4. Improve our financial viability and sustainability
5. Develop strategic and mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships
6. Increase our engagement with diverse communities

I. CLARIFY OUR GOALS, REBUILD OUR BRAND

Clarify our future, rebuild our brand and increase awareness about our mission, plans and activities.

- Clarify the mission, vision, values, and intended outcomes and impacts.
- Begin a 10-year transformation process. Develop and implement a strategic plan for the first four years.
- Rebrand the AGM to inspire “a new beginning” and build trust.
- Develop a 3-year communications plan that promotes the new brand and keeps stakeholders regularly informed about the AGM and its exhibitions, programs and events. Ensure communication activities target equity-seeking groups.
- Modernize/update the website and strengthen the AGM’s online presence (digital collections, online exhibitions, programs and events).
- Promote the AGM as a tourist destination.

Success Indicators:

- Clear strategy for the future. Alignment of operational activities and decisions with this strategy.
- Improved brand recognition across Mississauga, particularly by members of equity-seeking groups.
- Increased awareness in Mississauga of the AGM’s upcoming exhibitions, programs and events, particularly by members of equity-seeking groups.
- Improved transparency regarding the AGM’s plans and achievements.
- Improved website traffic and participation in online exhibitions, programs and events.
- Increased number of visitors from out-of-province/country.

II. BUILD OUR CAPACITY TO GROW

Build the governance and operational capacity to realize our plans.

- Modernize office technologies to improve efficiency and professionalism.
- Address office space issues so staff can work effectively and new additions (staff, interns, volunteers) can be accommodated
- Address issues related to visitors/participants locating/accessing the gallery and programs (directions, signage, hours of operation).
- Establish organizational data collection and reporting mechanisms to inform key indicators and measure improvements.
- Improve the frequency and quality of internal communications (staff/staff and board/ staff). Provide regular opportunities for the staff and board to interact and build relationships.
- Establish appropriate governance structures (board committees, task forces, advisory groups), each with detailed terms of reference.
- Develop best-practice governance policies and processes to guide the work of the board and the actions of board members. Train existing board members on them. Ensure that all new board members receive training on them within two months of the start of their first term in office.
- Train existing board members on modern governance practices. Ensure that all new board members receive governance training within two months of the start of their first term in office.

- Establish an annual process to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the board vs. the executive director and staff.
- Establish an annual board evaluation process.
- Review existing HR policies for compliance with legislation, regulations and standards – fill policy gaps as required.
- Provide training to staff and non-board volunteers on HR policies and how to apply them consistently. Put management and oversight processes in place to monitor policy compliance.
- Provide ongoing mechanisms for board members, staff, interns, and non-board volunteers to provide anonymous feedback on workplace issues. Establish a transparent process for responding to reported issues and protecting complainants from reprisals.
- Develop and implement a consistent, compassionate and equitable approach to addressing staff requests for workplace accommodations.
- Review the employer value proposition for competitiveness in the current labour market and plan for improvements as required to attract and retain high-quality staff.
- Develop and implement a volunteer program that supports the recruitment, engagement and retention of diverse volunteers.

Success Indicators:

- Improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Improved employee satisfaction and productivity.
- Improved access by visitors and program participants to existing location (signage, instructions, hours of operation).
- Increased number of visitors per month.
- Improved visitor experience.
- Lower program “no-show” rates.
- Access to good quality organizational data to clarify, assess and inform decision-making.
- Improved internal communications and a stronger board-staff rapport (working together as one team).
- Effective governance structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Comprehensive governance policies and processes that are consistently applied (as perceived by board members).
- Behaviours of board members are consistent with governance policies and processes.
- A more effective, engaged and unified board.
- Clear understanding of the elements of good governance by all board members.
- Roles and responsibilities between governance and operations are clearly defined and understood.
- Improved human resource planning and management.
- Comprehensive HR policies and practices are consistently applied (as perceived by staff and non-board volunteers).
- Behaviours of staff, interns and non-board volunteers are consistent with HR policies and processes.
- Workplace issues are addressed promptly and without reprisal.
- Requests for workplace accommodation are dealt with consistently, equitably and compassionately (from the perspective of the person requesting the accommodation).
- Improved staff engagement, morale and wellness.
- Improved ability to recruit and retain high-quality staff.
- Core group of diverse, engaged and well-managed volunteers.

III. ADVANCE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT THE AGM

Diversify our board, staff, interns, and non-board volunteers. Embed DEI in our plans and practices.

- Develop and execute a comprehensive framework/strategy to address organization-wide diversity, equity and inclusion issues
- Implement a new staff recruitment process using clearly defined criteria, guidelines, and outreach methods targeted specifically to candidates from equity-seeking groups to increase staff diversity.
- Implement a new board member recruitment process using clearly defined criteria, guidelines, and outreach methods targeted specifically to candidates from equity-seeking groups to increase board diversity.
- Provide regular updates on the AGM's DEI improvement efforts to internal and external stakeholders.
- Review competitive submission processes to ensure equity, fairness and transparency.

Success Indicators:

- Improved understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion by all.
- A more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization.
- Increased representation by equity-seeking groups on the board, board committees, task forces and advisory committees, staff, interns, and non-board volunteers.
- Increased awareness by AGM visitors of the contributions to and engagement in the arts and culture sector by equity-seeking groups.
- Differently abled artists experience fewer barriers to participating in AGM exhibitions and events.
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- Stakeholders perceive that the AGM is effectively actioning its DEI issues.
- Competitive submission processes are seen by all participants as inclusive, equitable, fair, and transparent.

IV. IMPROVE OUR FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Pursue opportunities to increase revenue generation and diversification.

- Create and implement a fund development plan to increase and diversify funding types and sources.
- Develop robust membership, donor and patron programs with clear and compelling value propositions.
- Launch a capital campaign to build/purchase a new location in the future. Raise one-third of the total fund goal by 2026.
- Explore additional opportunities to self-generate revenues.
- Actively pursue local corporate sponsorships that align with the AGM's strategy and values. Negotiate two new sponsorships by 2026.

- Designate a net asset contingency fund for emergencies. Establish fund targets during the annual budgeting process.

Success Indicators:

- Increased variety in AGM funding types and sources. Less dependence on a single funder.
- Re-imagined membership, donor and patron programs that generate revenue and increase supporter engagement.
- Active capital campaign with clear objectives. One-third of the total capital fund goal has been raised.
- Increased earned income as a percentage of total revenues.
- New sponsor relationships that align with the AGM strategy and values.
- Modest contingency fund with annual target setting based on a transparent calculation.

V. DEVELOP STRATEGIC AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

Develop/renew relationships with community stakeholders and decision-makers to fulfill mutual goals.

- Engage with civic leaders from diverse communities in Mississauga to build long-term relationships and leverage shared opportunities.
- Renegotiate relationship with the City of Mississauga to address issues and explore opportunities.
- Leverage existing stakeholder relationships in new ways (deeper, more strategic collaborations, partnerships, joint programs).
- Seek out and build new stakeholder relationships that are strategic and mutually beneficial.
- Create ongoing opportunities to engage artists/art communities in dialogue about the AGM's plans and activities.
- Explore opportunities to feature/support local and emerging artists.
- Play an active and ongoing role in advancing art education and appreciation in Mississauga.

Success Indicators:

- Increased an active and ongoing role in advancing art education and appreciation in Mississauga.
- Renegotiated partnership between the AGM and the City of Mississauga that benefits both parties and provides mechanisms for continued cooperation and collaboration. AGM staff have clear and functional relationships with city staff.
- Meaningful, collaborative relationships with local arts organizations to advance the understanding and appreciation of art in Mississauga.
- Deeper engagement with artists and artist communities as partners.
- Increased profile of local artists resulting in them being "lifted up" financially.
- Increased profile of emerging artists. Emerging artists feel empowered to succeed.
- Improved understanding of and appreciation for art by local students at all age/grade levels.
- Stronger relationships and strategic collaborations with other art galleries in Ontario.

VI. INCREASE OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Broaden outreach and engagement to diverse communities across Mississauga.

- Develop and implement a 3-year outreach and engagement plan that focuses on equity-seeking groups and their contributions to and engagement in the arts and culture sector.
- Ensure that exhibitions, programs and events are inclusive and reflective of intercultural arts practices (involve artists and/or communities from a range of national, ethnic or cultural groups).
- Celebrate artists from equity-seeking groups and engage them in dialogue about how the AGM can leverage art to contribute to diversity.
- Host art installations and programming in diverse communities (pop-ups, microsites).

Success Indicators:

- Deeper, more meaningful engagement with diverse communities across Mississauga.
- Exhibitions, programs and events are perceived by members of equity-seeking groups as inclusive and reflective of intercultural arts practices.
- Artists from equity-seeking groups feel represented and celebrated by the AGM.
- Members of equity-seeking groups have greater access to art within their own communities.

AGM STAFF

Anna Gulbinski – Executive Director
Shannon Anderson – Curator
Helen Harris – Gallery Operations Manager
Jennifer Polo – Community Activator | Education Programs
Christina Moss – Communications Coordinator
Zarah Khan – Coop | Intern Coordinator
Coleen Mariano – Volunteer | Events Coordinator

AGM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lisa Browne, President
Sandy Pitts, Vice President
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