



Alberta Foundation for the Arts
2023-24 Annual Report

Alberta 

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Message from the Chair | 3 |
| Overview | 4 |
| Mandate..... | 4 |
| Linkages to the Ministry’s Business Plan | 4 |
| Board Governance | 5 |
| Board Compensation Disclosure | 5 |
| Membership..... | 6 |
| Results Analysis | 7 |
| Performance Measure Results..... | 7 |
| Core Businesses and Goals..... | 7 |
| Note on Financial Statements | 23 |
| Social Media Contact Information | 23 |

Message from the Chair

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) is a champion of Alberta's arts community. It is the main instrument our province employs to develop and support art of all disciplines including with a special emphasis on local artists.

In 2023-24, the AFA focused on growth, recovery and artistic excellence in Alberta. In the summer of 2023, the Honourable Tanya Fir was appointed Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women. Under Minister Fir's leadership, the AFA responded to new and different challenges faced by Alberta's arts community compared to previous years. While attendance and arts participation rates had increased, the cost of producing their art has risen dramatically.

The AFA's 2023-24 budget focused on honouring existing commitments, while ensuring essential support continued to flow to arts organizations and artists to support the ongoing recovery of the sector. The AFA board adjusted its program allocations to target areas of highest need, based on increased application rates during the previous year. Within a sustained budget, the AFA focused on being as responsive as possible through its existing programs.

I am pleased to note that 2023-24 was the last year the AFA's resources will remain static. **In Budget 2024, Alberta's Government increased funding to the AFA by 18 per cent. They committed to further increases until 2026-27 with the annual allocation reaching a record-level \$39.1 million.** This additional funding will allow us to provide enhanced support to artists and arts organizations across the province. I am thrilled to lead the Foundation during this time of growth.

2023-24 was a year filled with many successes. The AFA continued to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the AFA Art Collection throughout 2023, including through the release of five documentary videos about the history of the collection. We remained committed to continuing engagement with the arts community and policy implementation and project funding to support accessibility to the arts for all Albertans. Examples of how our programs and services contributed and supported the development of the arts in Alberta are peppered throughout this report.

I would like to thank outgoing AFA Chair Paul R. Baay for his leadership and service to the AFA. I look forward to continuing his legacy. On behalf of the AFA board, I am pleased to present the 2023-24 Annual Report.

Sincerely,



Cynthia P. Moore, Chair
Alberta Foundation for the Arts Board of Directors

Overview

The AFA was established in 1991 as a public agency and a provincial corporation of the Government of Alberta. The AFA provides funding to artists and arts organizations, researches and promotes the arts and manages an extensive provincial art collection.

Mandate

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

- To support and contribute to the development of and to promote the arts in Alberta,
- To provide persons and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts in Alberta,
- To foster and promote the enjoyment of works of art by Alberta artists,
- To collect, preserve and display works of art by Alberta artists, and
- To encourage artists resident in Alberta in their work.

On July 17, 2023, Premier Danielle Smith sent a mandate letter to the Honourable Tanya Fir, Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, that directed her to ensure the AFA prioritizes Alberta artists, art and cultural materials.

Linkages to the Ministry's Business Plan

AFA programs are linked to the following outcome articulated in the [2023-26 Business Plan](#):

Outcome Two: All Albertans have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from vibrant, inclusive, and active communities through cultural and recreational opportunities and services that enrich their lives.

Specifically, the AFA worked on Key Strategy 2.4:

“Ensure the Alberta Foundation for the Arts places priority on Alberta artists, art, and cultural materials.”

The work of the AFA also contributed to the results of performance measure 1.a:

Percentage of Albertans attending and participating in events and organized activities.

Board Governance

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

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

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.

On April 10, 2024, the appointment of Chair Paul R. Baay was rescinded, and Cynthia P. Moore was appointed and designated Chair. The AFA thanks Mr. Baay for his service to the board and acknowledges his significant contributions.

Board Compensation Disclosure

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

Membership



Paul R. Baay



Cynthia P. Moore

Outgoing Chair, Calgary Incoming Chair, Calgary



Le Bo

Vice Chair, Calgary



Robert Fernandez

Edmonton



Andrea True Joy Fox

*Lethbridge/Blood Tribe
(Blackfoot)*



Yasmin Jivraj

Edmonton



Nabil Malik

Fort McMurray



Melody McKnight

Red Deer



Sylvester Ndumbi

Calgary



Shana Yang

Calgary

Results Analysis

Performance Measure Results

Results for performance measure 1.a from the [2023-26 Business Plan](#) are gathered through the annual Survey of Albertans.

In 2023-24, 81.9 per cent of adult Albertans attended arts activities or events.

Core Businesses and Goals

AFA activities are developed through adherence to goals set out in the AFA [Strategic Plan](#), as described below. The current plan remains in effect until the next strategic plan is completed and approved by the Minister, as described in the AFA's [Mandate and Roles Document](#).

The Strategic Plan outlines how the AFA fosters a vibrant arts sector, cultivates meaningful and reciprocal relationships with the arts community and leverages the power of the arts to connect communities and drive positive change. The plan reaffirms the AFA's commitment to promoting equitable access to 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

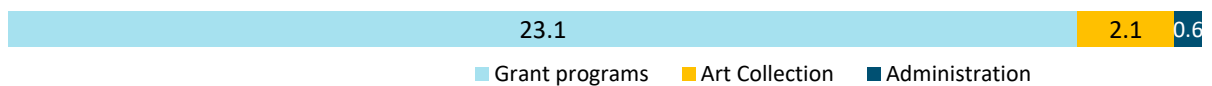
AFA's support for the arts is primarily delivered through its granting programs. Operational grants provide ongoing support to organizations that create and provide access to art experiences and generate job opportunities for artists and cultural workers. Project funding is awarded to organizations and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

Impact of Funding

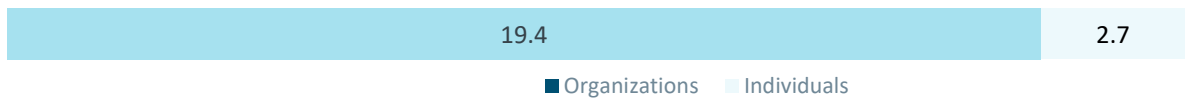
AFA expenditures 2023-24

\$25,869,000

AFA expenditure breakdown¹ (\$ in Millions)



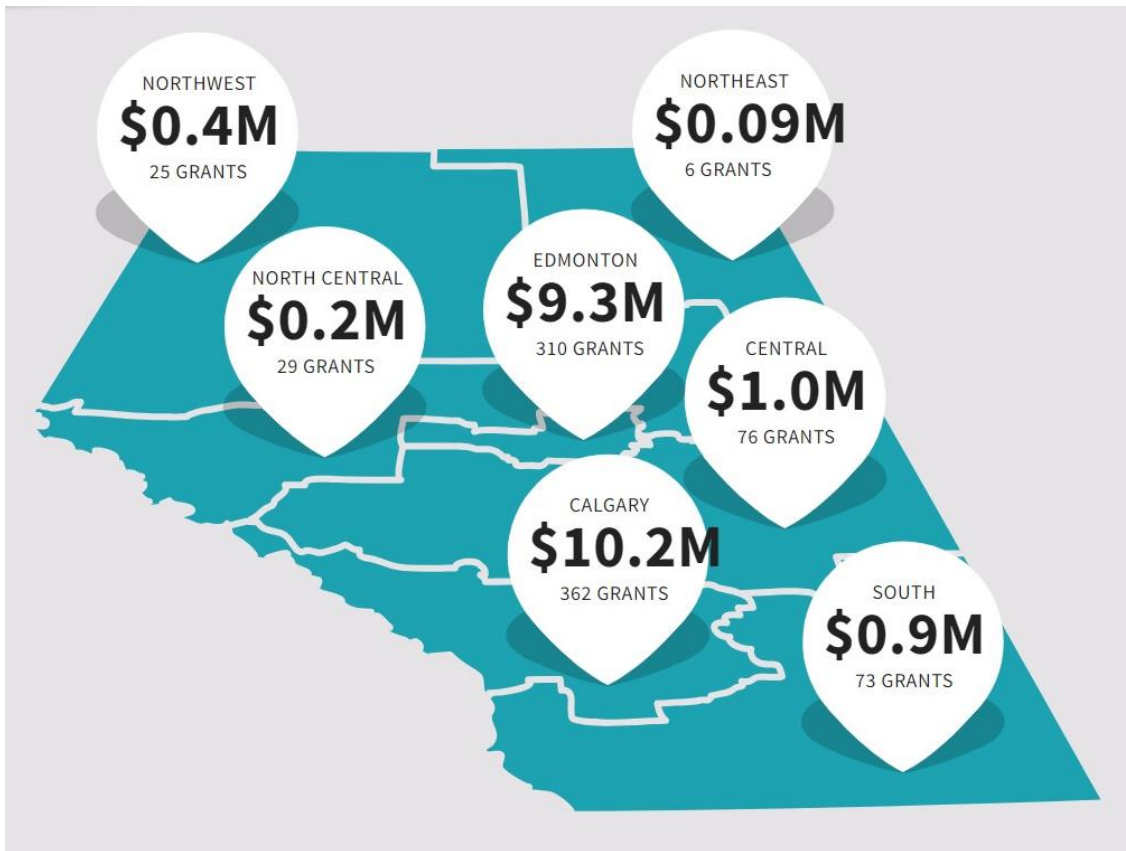
Funding awarded by recipient type² (\$ in Millions)



¹ Expenditures for each category include program support expenses.

² Funding awarded does not include program support expenses.












Funding approved by region



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









Funding awarded to organizations

\$ amount (grants awarded / eligible applications)

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---------|
| Professional Performing Arts |  | \$8,070,000.00 | 47/47 |
| Community Support |  | \$2,522,078.00 | 142/143 |
| Community Performing Arts |  | \$1,725,000.00 | 172/172 |
| Public Art Galleries |  | \$1,655,000.00 | 17/17 |
| Major Arts Presenters |  | \$1,630,000.00 | 12/12 |
| Arts Presenting |  | \$1,500,000.00 | 153/153 |
| Provincial Arts Service |  | \$1,180,000.00 | 8/8 |
| Artists and Education |  | \$496,843.10 | 58/123 |
| Summer Schools |  | \$336,481.66 | 6/6 |
| Organization Activation Projects |  | \$196,961.00 | 9/37 |
| Projects Development |  | \$50,000.00 | 1/1 |

Funding awarded to individuals

\$ amount (grants awarded / eligible applications)

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------|--------|
| Music |  | \$720,766.00 | 88/389 |
| Film and Video |  | \$580,699.15 | 43/275 |
| Visual Arts and New Media |  | \$465,493.74 | 44/250 |
| Literary Arts |  | \$414,901.40 | 38/229 |
| Dance |  | \$187,634.56 | 17/106 |
| Theatre |  | \$171,935.69 | 13/95 |
| Indigenous Arts |  | \$160,865.00 | 12/66 |
| Arts Awards |  | \$14,000.00 | 2/8 |

Support for Organizations

In 2023-24, the AFA delivered 398 operating grants and 227 project grants to diverse organizations across the province. These funding programs included the Community Support Organizations Operating Funding program.

This program provides annual funding to eligible not-for-profit community organizations that provide arts programs and services to communities, including those with limited arts opportunities. In 2023-24, the AFA provided \$2,522,078 to 142 organizations to support expenses such as:

- administration,
- programming,
- salaries and fees,
- maintenance of equipment and fixed assets,
- promotion, and
- other expenses as required to fulfil organizations' mandates.



Figure 1. Quickdraw Animation Society members Vinson Chan and Simon Chan

Image Credit: Quickdraw Animation Society

“To have an educational resource for independent animators outside of a studio model, outside of an educational model... we’ll teach you how to animate in the way you want to animate.”

Val Duncan, Executive Director, Quickdraw Animation Society



Figure 2. Quickdraw Animation Society 40th anniversary reunion workshop

Image Credit: Quickdraw Animation Society

Annual operational funding can provide financial stability that not only supports day-to-day activities, but also ensures long-term sustainability of an organization. The Quickdraw Animation Society (Quickdraw), a member-driven non-profit organization based in Calgary, receives annual funding through the Community Support Organizations Operating Funding program. Quickdraw fosters a vibrant creative community by providing essential resources and opportunities that advance animation arts and culture in Alberta.

In 2023-24, Quickdraw debuted its Animator Cube Studio featuring the Ditogear Animator Cube camera. This cutting-edge equipment, designed to capture images from every direction, is the only one of its kind available outside a professional studio environment in Western Canada.

AFA funding played a crucial role in facilitating access to this state-of-the-art studio and associated training and workshops so that the community could use it effectively. Val Duncan, Executive Director of Quickdraw, emphasized how AFA funding helped ensure that her staff and members have a stable and supportive

environment in which to operate, allowing the organization to plan strategically while fulfilling its mission. “Operational funding in particular is essential to maintaining the health of organizations. It’s a lot easier for an organization to innovate, to start dreaming about what they could do, when they know that they have a base level of funding.”

Quickdraw has a rich history, celebrating 40 years of supporting Calgary’s independent animators and connecting with nearly 3,000 community members and students every year. By providing access to advanced equipment and comprehensive training, while also maintaining a commitment to honouring the traditions of animation, Quickdraw continues to inspire and develop the next generation of animators in Alberta.

Quickdraw Animation Society is one example of the transformative impacts of AFA support to community arts organizations through annual operational funding. This support helps ensure that Quickdraw remains a vital institution for animation arts in Alberta, empowering artists to explore their creativity and share their unique stories with the world.

“Quickdraw is an extremely unique organization. There are very, very few other societies doing what we do anywhere in Canada for sure and anywhere in the world really.”

Val Duncan, Executive Director, Quickdraw Animation Society

Support for Individuals



Figure 3. *El Funeral*
Image Credit: Mat Simpson Photography

In 2023-24, the AFA provided 257 individual project grants through seven different artistic disciplines. Individual project grants support activities in art production (creation), marketing, research or training/professional development. The AFA accepts applications for these grants twice per year, on March 1 and September 1.

Elisa Marina Mair Sanchez, an Albertan playwright and theatre producer, received funding through the AFA’s Theatre Individual Project Funding. This grant

provides up to \$15,000 to support the development of individual Alberta artists, arts administrators or an ensemble of artists by providing funding for a specific theatre and/or performance art project. Her grant funded the debut production of her original play, *El Funeral*.

Mair Sanchez, who immigrated to Canada in 2009, has long aspired to bring her unique artistic vision to life. Despite previous unsuccessful grant applications, she continued to work with AFA

staff for guidance and resources to help improve her application. She ultimately secured project funding from AFA, which proved crucial in transforming her script into a celebrated production.

El Funeral was staged at the 2023 Found Festival in Edmonton, which is produced annually by Common Ground Arts Society with the goal of presenting multidisciplinary arts in unexpected places. True to this vision, the play was performed in a funeral home: an innovative choice that required adapting to the space, managing audience seating for no more than 30 people per performance and working around the funeral home's hours with frequent setup and takedown.

When Mair Sanchez started writing the play, she was writing “just for herself.” She dubbed it “an unproduceable show” because it was unapologetically bilingual and a story told from an immigrant’s point of view. However, the AFA’s support enabled her to expand on her play, producing her first full-length bilingual work. She takes pride in the fact that her production provided at least ten Latinx team members the opportunity to work on a show where Spanish was the primary language.



Figure 4. *El Funeral*
Image Credit: Mat Simpson Photography

The overwhelming public support and positive feedback were highlights of the production’s impact. Audience members expressed how much the play resonated with them, with one stating, “those of us who live far away from family do have to just accept that we will miss out, and guilt won’t change that. I haven’t seen this articulated a lot in diaspora/immigrant art, so this was very powerful.”

AFA funding for this project also facilitated the creation of archival materials, providing a valuable resource for future projects. Mair Sanchez is now planning to extend the show to a 10-day run and explore additional themes with new music, made possible by further funding.

Mair Sanchez emphasizes the importance of AFA’s support in empowering artists to tell their stories authentically and boldly. She says, “The fact I was able to employ 15 people and pay them more than minimum wage is something I’m incredibly proud of. AFA allowed me to tell my story how I wanted to tell it.”

Core Business Two: Art Collection

Acquisition value of AFA Art Collection as of March 31, 2024

\$18,171,108

Number of artworks

9,494

Acquisitions

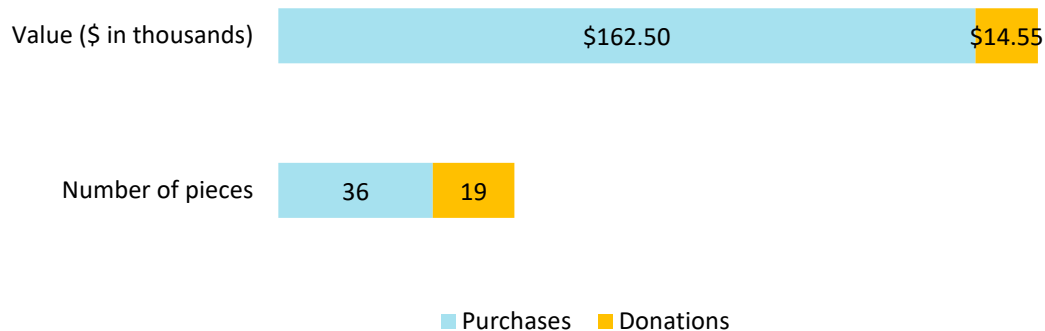
The AFA actively collects artworks that document the province's visual artistic achievements over time through competitive purchase, curatorial purchase and donation programs. Each new acquisition is a valued cultural resource for Albertans, today and for future generations.

Value of new acquisitions, 2023-24

\$177,045

Number of new acquisitions

55



Art Acquisitions by Application

The Art Acquisitions by Application program is an annual competitive purchase program that sees the AFA acquire artworks created within the last five years by individual Albertan artists. In 2023-24, the AFA purchased 30 artworks by 24 artists through this program, including work by 11 artists that were not previously represented in the AFA Art Collection.

Acquired in 2023, *Double Greetings* is the first piece by James Boychuk-Hunter to be included in the collection. *Double Greetings* has been featured in multiple exhibitions across Canada and the United States, including Boychuk-Hunter's solo exhibition *HorizonLine/BaseLine* at Martha Street Studio in Winnipeg and at the Society of Northern Alberta Print Artists Gallery in Edmonton.

The imagery in *Double Greetings* stems from Boychuk-Hunter's interest in geometry, landscape, architecture and typography. By abstracting and manipulating images that are neither letters nor landmarks and placing them on the straight line of the "horizon," Boychuk-Hunter plays with the conventions of modern writing systems and brings attention to their inception.

Boychuk-Hunter has a Masters of Fine Arts in printmaking from the University of Tennessee, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in printmaking and drawing from the University of Alberta and a diploma from the MacEwan College Fine Arts Department. He is currently a sessional instructor and technical coordinator at the Alberta University of the Arts.

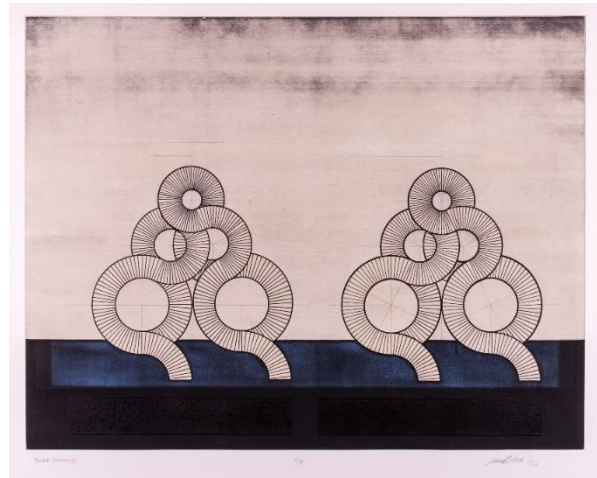


Figure 5. James Boychuk-Hunter, *Double Greetings*, 2019, etching, relief, lithography, chine collé on paper

Curatorial Purchase

Annually, the AFA dedicates funding to purchase works of art that address specific gaps in its art collection not addressed through other acquisition programs. In 2023-24, the AFA purchased six artworks by five Indigenous artists: Jason Carter, Nancy Desjarlais, Jessica Desmoulin, Kiona Callihoo Ligtoet and Maureen Ligtoet.

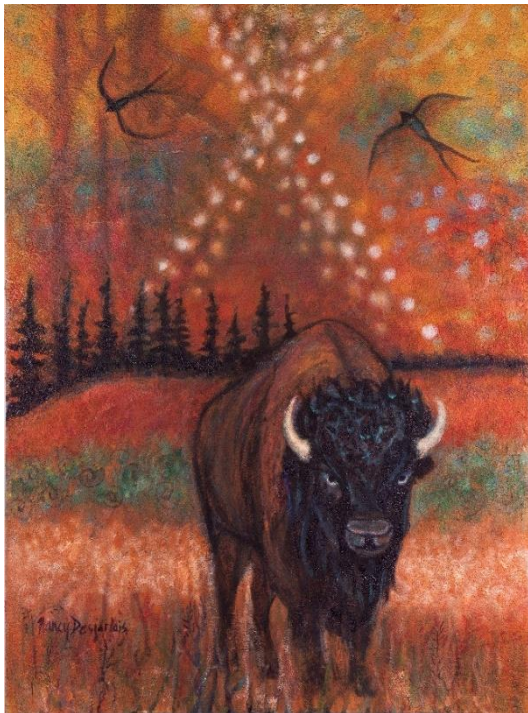


Figure 6. Nancy Desjarlais, *My Land*, 2023, acrylic and sand on canvas

Nancy Desjarlais is of Cree and Metis descent and is a member of the Fort McMurray First Nations #468 Band from Anzac in northeast Alberta. Having obtained her BFA from the University of Alberta in 1994 in painting and printmaking, she lived in British Columbia for many years before returning to Alberta to be closer to her family.

Through artistic experimentation with mixed media and natural materials, Desjarlais has developed her signature textural painting style using moulded sand and paint. Cultural and spiritual imagery features heavily in her work, as she uses artmaking as a meditative and spiritual process to re-connect with her culture. In explaining her work in a 2016 feature article in *Alberta Native News*, she notes: "My subject matter includes petroglyphic imagery, mandalas and meditative figures, tricksters and mythical beings (and) because I lived on the coast for many years, some of my work incorporates

images of the sea, the forests and the islands that lay somewhat mysterious and silent against a backdrop of waves and wind and seagulls in the sky.”³

Donations

The AFA considers offers of donations of artworks from artists, individual collectors, organizations and corporations as another mode of acquisition.

In 2023-24, the AFA received a generous donation from a private donor: eight artworks by Jean Richards, three prints by Ella Richards, one print by Margaret Chapelle and one print by Ella May Walker. The donation of artworks complements the existing holdings of Richards’ work in the AFA Art Collection.



Figure 7. Jean Richards, *Jasper*, 1964, oil on canvas

Jean Richards was born and raised in Edmonton. Her art career spanned six decades and her work has been exhibited widely in Canada, Europe and Japan. She was a member of the Edmonton Art Club and a lifetime member of the Alberta Society of Artists. In 2006, Richards received the Alberta Centennial Arts Medal in recognition of her lifelong commitment to the arts in Alberta and she also received a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2013.

Artwork Loans

The AFA shares artwork locally and abroad by working with partners to exhibit, tour and place work in public spaces. Artworks are shared through the Art Placement, Travelling Exhibitions and Exhibition Loans programs. These programs have allowed the AFA to ensure its art collection is accessible to more Albertans by increasing its public circulation and recognition, ultimately expanding its reach across the province. 2023-24 saw modest increases in AFA artwork displayed throughout Alberta, a trend the AFA hopes to continue growing in future years.

Number of artworks on display, 2023-24 (vs. previous fiscal)

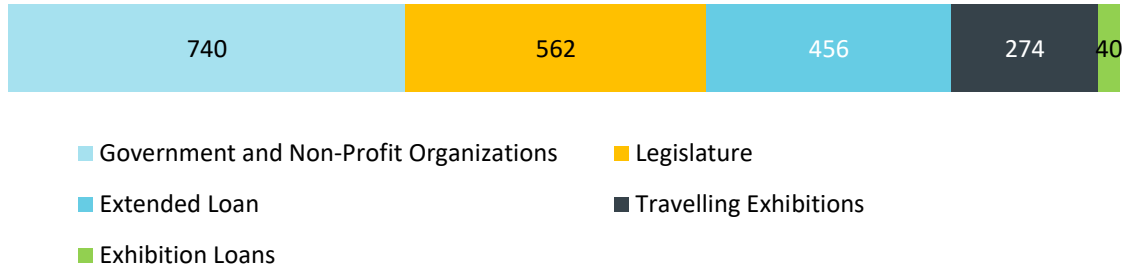
2,072 (+29)

Percentage of collection on display

21.8% (+0.2%)

³ Copley, John. “Feature Artist for August 2016: Nancy Desjarlais.” *Alberta Native News*, 25 Aug. 2016, www.albertanativenews.com/feature-artist-for-august-2016-nancy-desjarlais/.

AFA artworks on display by program 2023-24



While the number of artworks placed in government and non-profit organizations was reduced from 2022-23, the AFA saw increases in all other display categories:

- artworks placed in the Legislature (+15)
- circulated through extended loans (+17)
- circulated through exhibition loans (+9)
- circulated through Travelling Exhibitions (+6)

Art Placement

The Art Placement program fulfils the commitment to ensure the AFA Art Collection is accessible by facilitating the display of artworks from the collection to foster public enjoyment. Eligible recipients for the Art Placement program include government and non-profit organizations, and the Alberta Legislature.

Northern Beaver Woman Speaking With Raven, by Blackfoot artist Henry [Niitsitaipoiyi] Standing Alone, was installed inside the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate through the Art Placement program. The painting reflects Standing Alone's signature realistic style, depicting Indigenous people in the landscape involved in cultural pastimes.



Figure 8: Henry Standing Alone, *Northern Beaver Woman Speaking With Raven*, 1996, acrylic on canvas

Standing Alone was a Blackfoot artist from the Kainai Nation (Blood Tribe) in southern Alberta. Throughout his imagery, Standing Alone used bright colour and natural description of the landscape, with figures engaged in subsistence activities like hunting or even just interacting with nature, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all beings.

Travelling Exhibition Program

Venues visited by travelling exhibitions, 2023-24

197

Number of visitors

484,806

The AFA's Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) aims to ensure that all Albertans have the opportunity to experience fully developed exhibitions in schools, libraries, health care centres and smaller rural institutions and galleries throughout the province. The program also provides educational support materials for teachers, encouraging the integration of visual arts exhibitions into school curriculums.

TREX has a province-wide reach, dividing Alberta into four regions. Each region is served by a TREX regional partner who co-ordinates and curates exhibitions from various sources, including the AFA Art Collection.

In 2023-24, the Art Gallery of Grande Prairie (TREX Region 1 NW), under Manager/Curator Jamie-Lee Cormier, curated the exhibition *At First Glance*. This was a group exhibition featuring a selection of 18 AFA artworks by 16 Albertan artists. The exhibition showcased a variety of expressionist artworks that prompted the question: "What catches your eye initially?"

The drawing, *Harlequin One*, by Tom Hamilton, serves as a prime example to showcase the curatorial theme. Initially, the piece may seem like an abstract composition featuring a vivid color palette and repetitive checkerboard designs. However, upon closer inspection, viewers can discern the figurative elements embellished in "harlequin" attire.

The exhibition, *At First Glance*, will be travelling throughout the province until August 2026.

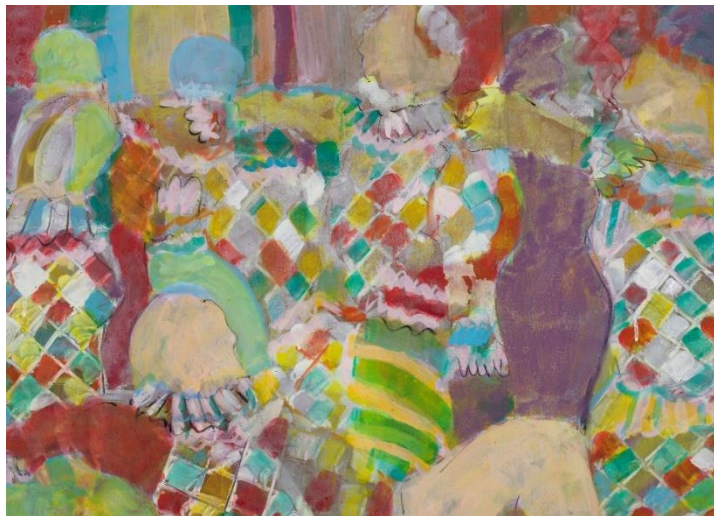


Figure 9. Tom Hamilton (1951-2010) *Harlequin One*, n.d, oil on paper



Figure 10. Faye Heavyshield, *red dress*, 2008, nylon, cotton, metal and paper tags, glass beads

Exhibition Loans

The AFA regularly lends artwork to cultural institutions including museums, art galleries, interpretive centres, archives and other collecting or exhibiting organizations for public display.

The touring exhibition, *The Art of Faye Heavyshield*, was organized by the Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina and travelled to four venues across Canada from 2022 to 2024. It was the first retrospective exhibition of Faye Heavyshield's work and highlighted forty years of her career.

The AFA loaned two artworks for the tour, including *red dress*, a textile that Heavyshield created as a response to seeing Indigenous artworks in storage at galleries and museums. The artwork comments on the difference between beaded objects in collections tagged with bare information and the beadwork the artist has witnessed.

Heavyshield is a member of the Kainai Nation (Blood Tribe). In 2021, she received the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artist Award. In 2022, she was honoured with the \$75,000 Gershon Iskowitz Prize at the Art Gallery of Ontario, recognizing her exceptional contributions to Canadian visual arts.

Extended Loan

An extended loan is a long-term loan lending of artwork from the AFA Art Collection to an external organization. These projects are generally site-specific and feature large-scale artworks that require special infrastructure or arrangements, such as a piece commissioned for a building or tailored to a specific curatorial theme.

In February 2024, Alberta's government announced the opening of a new provincial office in Constitution Square, downtown Ottawa. The AFA loaned nine artworks for long-term display in the reception area, boardroom and executive offices, showcasing works by four prominent Alberta artists: RFM McInnis, MJ Belcourt, Illingworth Kerr and W.H. Webb. The selected pieces highlighted the diversity and uniqueness of the Alberta landscape.

The selection of artworks included five paintings by RFM McInnis from the series *A is for Alberta*, which features 26 artworks of place names in the province. Eighteen paintings from this series were acquired in 2015 as part of a donation of 67 artworks from the artist's private collection. These paintings were initially exhibited at the Art Gallery of Alberta, later developed into a TREX exhibition and travelled throughout the province.



Figure 11. RFM McInnis, *O is for Onefour*, 2001, oil on linen



Figure 12. RFM McInnis, *Z is for Mount Zengel, Victoria Cross Range, Near Jasper*, 2002, oil on linen

Core Business Three: Research and Engagement

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 sessions⁴, 2023-24

129,389

Users⁵

80,368

Community submissions for website newsfeed

538

During this period, the AFA increased its activity on social media platforms. The AFA continued to see steady growth on Facebook and Instagram, as well as an increase in subscriptions to the AFA Newswire monthly e-newsletter. The AFA maintained its standard level of engagement on X (formerly Twitter) despite a slight follower decrease.

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

⁵ Users are the individuals participating in website sessions.

- On Facebook, the AFA attracted 209 more followers from the previous year (2022-23), totalling 8,374 overall followers and 7,945 page visits.
- On X (formerly Twitter), the AFA saw a decrease of 44 followers compared to the previous year, totalling 3,597 followers.
- On Instagram, the AFA added 537 followers, totalling 3,248 followers and 3,506 profile visits.
- The AFA saw an increase of 87 subscribers to the AFA Newswire, bringing the total audience subscription number to 1,666.

The AFA also became more active on YouTube over the past year, incorporating more active video content into its social media strategy.

- The AFA YouTube channel saw an increase in both subscribers and viewership, reaching 76 subscribers and 4,785 views (up from 44 subscribers and 1,968 views in 2022-23).

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The AFA continues to address Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) through implementation of its Pluralism policy. The AFA integrates the principles into its governance and strategic planning, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented at all levels. The AFA is also embedding these guiding principles into its business operations, programs and service delivery.

The 2023 cycle of the AFA's Organization Activation Projects grant program focused on fostering and promoting EDIA through arts-related programming by Indigenous, visible minorities or D/deaf and disability artists, with the aim of engaging audiences in and through the arts. The deadline to apply was December 1, 2023, and in March 2024, the AFA approved nearly \$197,000 to support EDIA arts projects across Alberta.

This year, the Board approved updates to the program guidelines for all Individual Project Funding Opportunities, AFA Scholarships and the Art Acquisitions by Application guidelines to include a statement promoting inclusivity:

The AFA celebrates and supports diversity and is committed to creating equitable, inclusive, and accessible programs for all, free of barriers and discrimination. We recognize the unique contributions all artists make towards our community, and encourage applicants representing diverse communities, including Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, women, people with disabilities, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

In 2023-24, the AFA focused exclusively on acquiring artworks from Indigenous artists through its curatorial purchase program, resulting in the acquisition of six artworks by five Indigenous artists, with three of these artists being new to the collection. Additionally, two artworks by Indigenous artists were acquired through the Art Acquisitions by Application program in 2023-24.

Engagement

The AFA actively engages with various segments of the broader arts community. Throughout the year, the AFA hosts grant information sessions to provide tips and guidance on preparing successful grant applications.

Number of funding information sessions held, 2023-24

54

Attendees

1,038

The AFA continued to engage with the Canada Council for the Arts on how to increase support for Alberta artists and arts organizations to ensure Alberta is receiving equitable federal arts funding. In March 2024, the AFA hosted two engagement sessions with members of Alberta's arts community and Michelle Chawla, Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Canada Council for the Arts. The sessions aimed to gather insights and perspectives from arts organizations on the current environment they are navigating. They also provided an opportunity to discuss existing opportunities and challenges within the sector and explore how both the AFA and the Canada Council for the Arts can continue collaborating to support Alberta's arts community. The sessions were held at the Northern and Southern Jubilee Auditoria in Edmonton and Calgary and were attended by representatives from various disciplines within Alberta's arts organizations.

Research

The AFA is actively involved in evaluating the impact of arts and culture in Alberta and beyond through specialized research projects.

In 2023-24, the AFA partnered with Calgary Arts Development, Calgary Foundation, Edmonton Arts Council, Edmonton Community Foundation and the Rozsa Foundation to support the *Spotlight on Arts Audiences* research project. Developed by the firm Stone-Olafson specifically for the arts sector, this project aims to provide specific, relevant and reliable data to support arts sector leaders understand their audiences and increase attendance.

The research project surveyed arts-inclined audiences in Calgary, Edmonton and across the province delivering useful and timely data to arts leaders and organizations three times per year over two years. The first wave of results was released in January 2024. By supporting the study, the AFA facilitated the collection of crucial information to assist the arts sector.

Note on Financial Statements

In accordance with 9(4) of the *Sustainable Fiscal Planning and Reporting Act*, financial statements are available in the [Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women 2023-24 Annual Report](#).⁶

Social Media Contact Information

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

⁶ The AFA's 2023-24 Budget includes \$1,000,000 in unencumbered donations as a placeholder for any funds received through the Arts Sector Donation Program. In 2023-24, the AFA received no donations through the program.