



Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
**2021-22 Annual Report**

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*Alberta* 

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## Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA), I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2021-22. First, I would like to thank my fellow board members and the staff for their commitment to the arts sector especially in the face of the on-going pandemic challenge. The successive waves of rising infection rates and corresponding public health measures negatively impacted artists, arts workers, and arts organizations each time a return to in-person experience was attempted. Their tenacity is admirable as they continue to find new ways to deliver the essential service of the arts to Albertans.

To ensure we struck the right balance when planning and allocating our spending plan, we wanted to hear directly from clients and stakeholders about their challenges, needs, and expectations. In April 2021, we conducted targeted stakeholder engagement sessions to help inform our spending plan. I am pleased we were able to talk with nearly 100 representatives from the arts community over seven virtual engagement sessions. While the pandemic was the main topic of discussion in our conversations, a variety of other challenges, issues, and concerns were raised during these sessions. This feedback not only informed our spending plan and various initiatives throughout the year but will continue to inform our longer-term strategy development for the foundation.

To support the sector, the AFA had three main areas of focus. First, stable funding for Alberta's arts organizations was maintained and opportunities for individual artists were provided. Secondly, curation of the art collection continued as new works of art were acquired and the treasures of the collection were shared with Albertans. Thirdly, audience trends and other relevant data was distributed through the AFA partnership with other funders in the Stone-Olafson research.

The AFA also undertook some new initiatives that were both immediately beneficial and responsive to the arts sector. In terms of granting, we offered experimental Organization Activation Projects funding opportunity to help organizations prepare for relaunch and recovery. We also improved the GATE Front Office online application system.

The legacy of the AFA was celebrated as 2021 was the 30th anniversary of the Foundation. Looking to what we hope will become a new legacy, we announced the AFA's Pluralism Policy that will be rolled out thoughtfully in years to come. A first step was the development of a land acknowledgement video filled with striking images and authentic voice captured by our board members Tom Jackson and Andrea True Joy Fox.

Through all these various efforts that are detailed in this report, we aimed to fulfil the AFA's mandate to support, develop, and promote our province's arts sector. The AFA salutes Alberta artists who have struggled through two tough years, and thanks you for the beauty, meaning and well-being you share with the citizens of this province.

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, 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 2021-24 Business Plan](#).

**Outcome One:** Creative and cultural industries and civil society are supported through Alberta's recovery plan and red tape reduction.

Specifically, the AFA worked on Key Strategy 1.3:

"1.3 Grow Alberta's creative and cultural industries by 25 per cent (\$1.5 billion) by 2029."

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

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:

- 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 2021-22, the AFA board welcomed two new members. Their terms began on February 23, 2022.

The new members are:

- Melody McKnight
- Richard Wong

On January 26, 2022 the terms of board members Maryann Chichak and Peter Kiss ended. The AFA thanks Ms. Chichak and Mr. Kiss for their service to the board and acknowledges the significant contributions they made.

### Board Compensation Disclosure

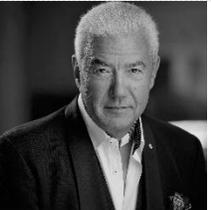
The AFA publishes the [names and compensation of Board members online](#) as required per the [Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act](#).

## Membership



**Mary Rozsa de Coquet**

*Chair, Calgary*

 <p><b>Paul R. Baay</b></p> <p><i>Vice Chair, Calgary</i></p>	 <p><b>Aleem Bharwani</b></p> <p><i>Calgary</i></p>	 <p><b>Yasmin Jivraj</b></p> <p><i>Edmonton</i></p>	 <p><b>Tom Jackson</b></p> <p><i>Calgary</i></p>
 <p><b>Nabil Malik</b></p> <p><i>Fort McMurray</i></p>	 <p><b>Melody McKnight</b></p> <p><i>Red Deer</i></p>	 <p><b>Andrea True Joy Fox</b></p> <p><i>Lethbridge/Blood Tribe (Blackfoot)</i></p>	 <p><b>Richard Wong</b></p> <p><i>Edmonton</i></p>
	<p><b>Peter Kiss</b></p> <p><i>(no photo available)</i></p> <p><i>Edmonton (term expired January 26, 2022)</i></p>	 <p><b>Maryann Chichak</b></p> <p><i>Whitecourt (term expired January 26, 2022)</i></p>	

# Results Analysis

## Performance Measure Results

Results for performance measure 1.a from [the Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women 2021-24 Business Plan](#) are gathered through the annual Survey of Albertans on Culture.

In 2021-22:

- 44.8 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 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, 2021-22**

\$25,962,000

#### **AFA expenditure breakdown<sup>1</sup> (\$ in Millions)**

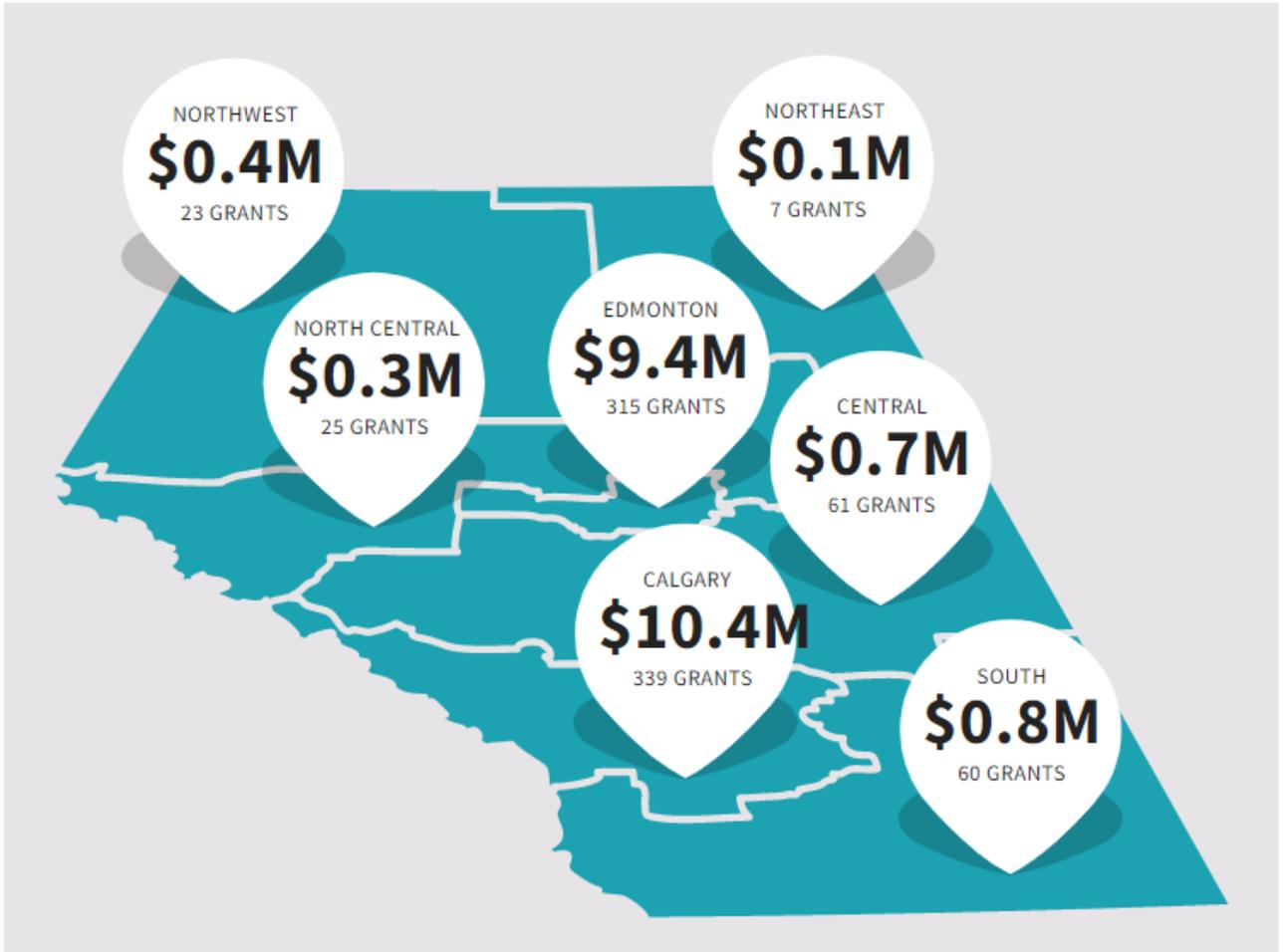


<sup>1</sup> Expenditures for each category include program support expenses.

Funding awarded by recipient type<sup>2</sup> (\$ in Millions)



Funding approved by region

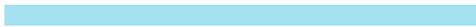


Interested in exploring our data? More details are available on our [Impact of Funding](#) page and on [open.alberta.ca](https://open.alberta.ca).

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

### Funding awarded to organizations

\$ amount (grants awarded / eligible applications)

Professional Performing Arts		<b>\$8,652,933.00</b>	51/51
Community Support		<b>\$2,500,000.00</b>	139/139
Major Arts Presenters		<b>\$1,725,000.00</b>	12/12
Community Performing Arts		<b>\$1,689,602.82</b>	160/161
Public Art Galleries		<b>\$1,655,000.00</b>	17/17
Provincial Arts Service		<b>\$1,180,000.00</b>	8/8
Arts Presenting		<b>\$738,981.65</b>	82/82
Organization Activation Projects		<b>\$500,000.00</b>	32/43
Artists and Education		<b>\$474,958.18</b>	61/102
Summer Schools		<b>\$157,882.66</b>	4/8
Projects Development		<b>\$50,000.00</b>	1/1

### Funding awarded to individuals

\$ amount (grants awarded / eligible applications)

Music		<b>\$797,821.00</b>	93/299
Film and Video		<b>\$529,716.99</b>	43/181
Visual Arts and New Media		<b>\$500,020.65</b>	49/194
Literary Arts		<b>\$381,406.84</b>	31/143
Theatre		<b>\$195,684.64</b>	15/59
Dance		<b>\$180,839.50</b>	18/66
Indigenous Arts		<b>\$177,799.53</b>	13/58
Arts Awards		<b>\$10,000.00</b>	2/3

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

The AFA's funding priorities in 2021-22 were to maintain predictable and stable support for Alberta's arts organizations and provide opportunities for individual artists. The AFA's approach was to continue responding to the pandemic primarily through existing programs and services, with adjustments as required to address impacts.

In 2020, when many organizations faced reduced programming and/or fund generation because of COVID-19, the AFA committed to developing an approach to address the calculation of future funding for eligible grant requests. Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic and the breadth of organizations that we serve, the AFA evaluated each funding opportunity separately. Adjustments were made to assessment metrics to account for the impact of the 2020 “COVID year”. For example, grant recommendations for the Community Support Organizations operating funding program were developed using a scaled approach to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and ensure funds to support upcoming relaunch efforts were accessible. The AFA maintained existing commitments and/or funding levels for most operating clients.

In continued recognition of organizations that were pivoting online in response to the pandemic, the AFA maintained expanded eligibility for activities supported by the Arts Presenting Project Funding opportunity. Artist fees for live-streamed online events presented during the intake period continued to be eligible for reimbursement.

The AFA maintained funding levels for opportunities for individual artists in 2021-22 and took the opportunity to support additional projects near the end of the fiscal year with reassigned funds. Every year, the AFA board approves the reallocation of any unused funds. In 2021-22 there were an unusually high amount of cancelled grants and/or grant refunds due to the pandemic. Nearly half of all reassigned funding (45 per cent) was applied to highly recommended but unfunded individual artist project grant applications, increasing the total amount disbursed to artists by \$293,672.56.

The following funding opportunities remained suspended during the 2021-22 fiscal year:

- Travel Grant for Individuals and Ensembles
- Cultural Relations – Organizations
- Cultural Relations – Individuals
- Public Art Commissions

To assist with recovery and support COVID-19 relaunch in the arts sector, the AFA approved changes to the Organizations: Arts Projects grant stream, modifying its criteria to address persistent pandemic conditions. The program was relaunched as the Organization Activation Projects funding opportunity for the 2021-22 fiscal year. This program assisted not-for-profit organizations by providing a grant to support COVID-19 relaunch and recovery through capacity building, strategic planning and one-time projects and partnerships that fall outside of regular or ongoing administrative practices or programming.

The Organization Activation Projects funding opportunity provided \$500,000 in funding to support 32 arts organizations with a broad range of initiatives, including:

- Audience development, retention, and accessibility; may include diversity and inclusion practices.

- Communications strategies; may include marketing.
- Redefining sponsor, donor, and fundraising relationships.
- Revamping online presence; may include restructure or new capabilities, excluding capital purchases.
- Adapting technical capacity, excluding capital purchases.
- Staff and board training on new competencies or post COVID-19 competencies.
- Organizational restructuring.

Successful grant recipients will report on their project outcomes during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

### Support for organizations

In 2021-22, the AFA delivered 387 operating grants and 180 project grants to diverse organizations across the province. These funding programs providing support for organizations included the Major Arts Presenters Operating Funding program.

First introduced in 2016-17, this program provides three-year funding for professional art organizations that produce large presentations. In 2021-22, the AFA provided \$1,725,000 to 12 organizations to support expenses such as:

- administration,
- programming,
- salaries and fees,
- maintenance of equipment and fixed assets,
- promotion, and
- other expenses as required to fulfill an organization’s mandate.

One of these organizations is the Sled Island Arts Fellowship, which produces and presents the annual Sled Island Music & Arts Festival in Calgary. In response to the ongoing pandemic, the Fellowship introduced “Postcards from Sled Island,” which included in-person and online events throughout the summer. Among these was the three-day festival in August, Camp Sled Island, featuring special pre-recorded performances, film screenings, video appearances, and live music.

They also hosted several online “Tête-à-Tête” sessions to share insights and perspectives for

*“It’s been difficult, knowing that live performances are the core of what we usually do so we’re trying to think outside the box and so obviously Camp Sled Island is the direct result of that. One of the goals with the recordings was to give unrepresented artists a voice by offering them a platform to showcase their music with high production value.”*

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Maud Salvi, Executive Director, Sled Island Arts Fellowship



**Figure 1. Camp Sled Island**  
Image credit: Elyse Bouvier

music fans on diverse subjects, such as disabilities, accessible music technology, and gender inequality for women. Sled Island has proudly offered gender-balanced programming for nearly 10 years.

Their annual “Rock Lotto” event traditionally included a random selection of local musicians sorted into groups to create new bands and collaborations that would write, record, and perform original songs on stage. In 2021, Sled Island adapted the program by curating 45 musicians from across Canada. These musicians created nine original tracks by recording songs remotely, passing it to the next collaborator without meeting. A digital album featuring the tracks was released in August.

To adapt to the challenges of the pandemic, Sled Island successfully transitioned from an in-person format to a hybrid one and continued to offer audiences a wide array of programming.

### Support for individuals

In 2021-22, the AFA provided 264 grants to artists working in a variety of artistic disciplines.

One of those artists was Edmonton-based singer-songwriter Maria Dunn. She received funding through the AFA’s Music Individual Project Funding grant to support the production and marketing of her album, *Joyful Banner Blazing*. This grant provides up to \$15,000 to support the development



**Figure 2. Maria Dunn**  
Image credit: David Williamson

*“Even if I did not receive a nomination for an award, it is worthwhile to have the people on the various juries listen to my music. Winning a Juno award in 2022 is not my motivation for creating the music, but is definitely a huge affirmation that I have done great work with my team!”*

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Maria Dunn

of individual Alberta artists, arts administrators, or an ensemble of artists by providing funding for a specific music project.

Dunn says that her grant for art production helped her record her songs in the best way possible. “As an artist, I put out an album of original songs every four to five years, and I want to give it my best effort. It feels good to be able to hire the best producer, musicians, professional studio, recording/mixing engineer, and artwork to enhance my songs—and it’s important to pay all these talented people proper fees for their beautiful work.” *Joyful Banner Blazing* went on to win Traditional Roots Album of the Year at the 2022 Juno Awards.

Dunn received a subsequent music grant for marketing that helped support various activities before and after the album’s release, including advertising campaigns in radio, magazines and on social media to different target audiences. It helped increase her reach and expand her network, as well as promote her practice and her album.

This funding also helped fund award submission fees.

### **GATE Front Office online application system**

In August 2021, the AFA applied a significant version upgrade to its online grant application system, GATE Front Office. The upgrade included an updated design and look for the Front Office portal, and new features allowed grant applicants to start and submit an application and track their progress more easily. These features included:

- a “Recent Submission” bar on the home page that tracks whether an application is still “In Progress” or if it is “Complete” and submitted for consideration,
- easier access to applicants’ Final Report template, and
- a new “Funding Opportunities” menu item that lists all current grant programs available through Front Office (including grants from both the AFA and the Government of Alberta’s Alberta Media Fund).

A new User Guide was published on the [AFA website](#) to support grant applicants with the updated system.

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

#### **Acquisition value of AFA Art Collection as of March 31, 2022**

\$17,708,034.00

#### **Number of artworks**

9,334

#### **Acquisitions**

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

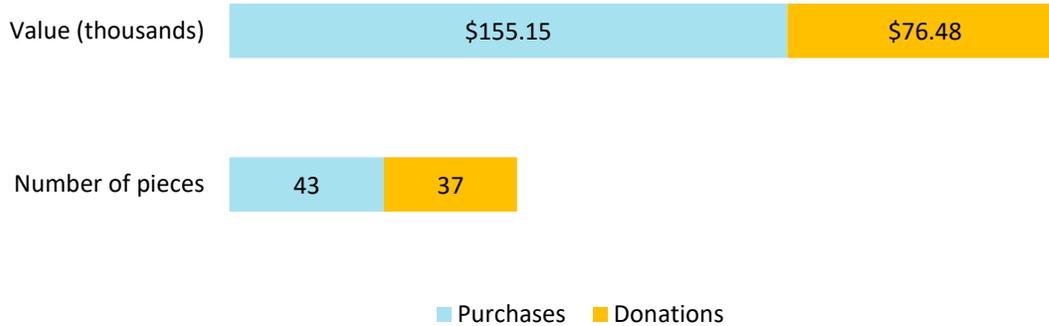
#### **Value of new acquisitions, 2021-22**

\$231,630

#### **Number of new acquisitions**

80

## New acquisitions, 2021-22



### Art Acquisitions by Application

The Art Acquisitions by Application program is an annual competitive purchase program dedicated to acquiring artworks by individual Albertan artists that have been created within the previous five years. In 2021-22, the AFA purchased 36 artworks by 24 artists through this program, including 15 artists not previously represented in the AFA Art Collection.

One acquisition is *Lay Your Weight on Me, I Will Make You Free* by Jocelyn Reid.

Jocelyn Reid is a ceramic and mixed media artist based in Calgary. Reid received her bachelor's degree from the Alberta College of Art and Design in 2013 and received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Scholarship for Visual Arts in 2015. This award allowed her to travel to Europe, where she was an Artist-in-Residence at the International Ceramic Research Centre in Skælskør, Denmark. She has since participated in residencies throughout Alberta, including a year-long artist residency at Medalta in Medicine Hat, and the Clay Revival Thematic Residency at the Banff Centre.

Through her work, Reid explores our innate desires to own and collect material items by reframing everyday objects (in this case, a child's tire swing) and casting them in porcelain and clay. She is especially interested in childhood possessions, which although considered precious at the time are temporary, and eventually outgrown and discarded.



**Figure 3. Jocelyn Reid, *Lay Your Weight on Me, I Will Make You Free*, 2018**  
porcelain, glaze, rope



**Figure 4. Sharon Rose (Kootenay) Cherweniuk, *Restoring the Sacred*, 2022, glass beads, thread, deer hide, ribbon, metal charms (front and back view)**

### Curatorial Purchase

Annually, the AFA dedicates funding to purchase works of art that address specific gaps in the AFA Art Collection not addressed through other acquisition programs. In 2021-22, the AFA purchased seven artworks by four Indigenous artists:

- MJ Belcourt Moses
- Tanya Harnett
- Faye HeavyShield
- Sharon Rose (Kootenay) Cherweniuk.

The artists were identified as a priority for acquisition in 2019 by curator Becca Taylor, recipient of the AFA's Dr. Joane Cardinal-Schubert Fellowship for Indigenous Curators.

Sharon Rose (Kootenay) Cherweniuk proposed and created a beaded ceremonial pipe-bag, *Restoring the Sacred*, for curatorial acquisition by the AFA.

A life-long maker of textile arts, Métis artist Sharon Rose (Kootenay) Cherweniuk finds her inspiration in forests and prairie landscapes. Through honouring tradition and expressing a deep connection to the land, Cherweniuk's colour-filled pieces tell a story of cultural identity and pride. Utilizing beads, hide, needle and thread, she creates exquisite fine craft that illustrates regional history, significant family events, and personal perspectives.

*"As a Métis artist, it is my greatest honour to create beadwork in the spirit of my family's ancestors. The beadwork I create reflects both my Métis matrilineal roots, and my husband's Cree and Stoney heritage. Designed for exhibition, my beadwork often illustrates and explores a narrative I find compelling. With motifs encoded with cultural knowledge, and infused with the beauty of our peoples, I try to create work that resonates with both our history and the modern society."*

Sharon Rose (Kootenay) Cherweniuk

## Donations

The AFA encourages artists, individual collectors, organizations, and corporations to donate works of art. In 2021-22, the AFA received a generous donation from Karen Brownlee of nine watercolour paintings from her *Rural Prairie Communities* series.

Brownlee worked on this series from 1993 to 2004 to celebrate Alberta's centennial in 2005. The paintings depict everyday scenes of life on the prairies and focus on developing a sense of community. They have been exhibited widely across Alberta and were included in the book *Alberta Remembers: Recalling our Rural Roots*.



Figure 5. Karen Brownlee, *Milk River #4*, 1998, watercolour on paper

The nine paintings complement the existing holdings of Brownlee's work in the AFA Art Collection.

## 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.

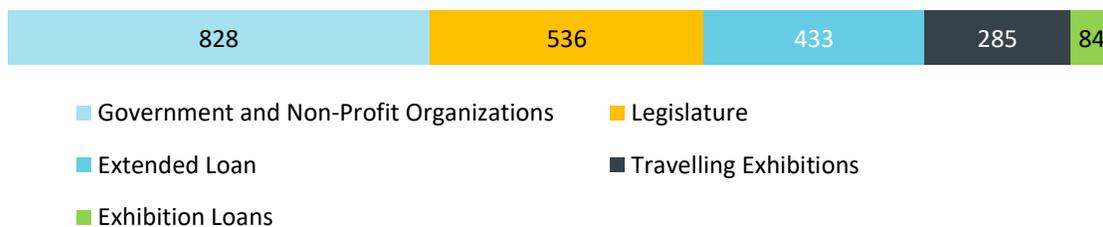
### Number of artworks on display, 2021-22

2,166

### Percentage of collection on display

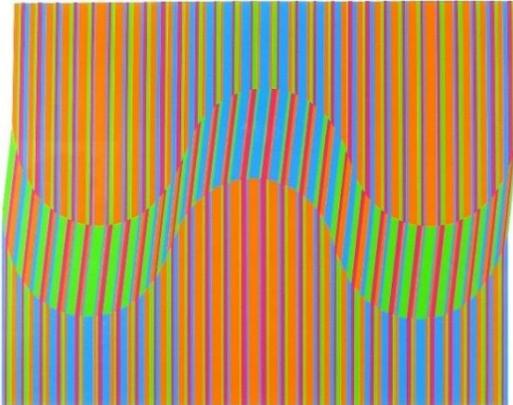
23.2%

### AFA artworks on display by program 2021-22



## Art Placement

The AFA's Art Placement program facilitates the display of artworks from its art collection to foster public enjoyment of Alberta art. Eligible recipients for the Art Placement program include government and non-profit organizations, and the Alberta Legislature.



**Figure 6. Katie Ohe, *Third Movement*, 1969, silkscreen on paper**

*Third Movement* by Katie Ohe was installed inside the Alberta Legislature building through the Art Placement program. The artwork was included in the transfer of more than 100 artworks to the AFA Art Collection in 1997 resulting from the 1995 closure of Alberta House located in London, England.

Ohe is a renowned artist and educator, best known for her abstract and kinetic sculptures. She has spent over six decades experimenting with innovative approaches to material, form, and movement, influencing a generation of Canadian artists. Exhibited internationally, she has numerous commissioned works installed throughout Alberta.

A well-respected teacher and mentor, Ohe taught at Alberta College of Art and Design from 1970 to 2016. In 2019, as an elected member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, Ohe received the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artist Award and was also awarded the Alberta Order of Excellence, the highest honour to be bestowed upon a citizen in the province.

## Travelling Exhibition Program

### Venues visited by travelling exhibitions, 2021-22

155

### Number of visitors

272,297

The AFA's Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) includes exhibitions in schools, libraries, health care centres, and smaller rural institutions and galleries throughout the province. Each of the four TREX regional partners curate exhibitions from a variety of sources, including the AFA's collection.

In 2021-22, Ashley Slemming, Alberta Society of Artists (ASA) Region 3 Manager/Curator, curated the TREX exhibition *Fields of Vision, Lines of Sight*. The exhibition featured 17 artworks from the AFA Art Collection by 12 Alberta artists. It highlighted the vast prairie landscape in two-dimensional

format. Each artist applied a different style and technique to portray Alberta's rural landscapes of rolling hills, flat prairie, and endless back roads and highways.

*Fields of Vision, Lines of Sight* takes an educational approach to developing linear perspective, traced back to the Renaissance. The lithograph, *Evening*, by renowned artist and master lithographer John Snow, features an excellent example of an artist's rendering of the sweeping prairie landscape and vanishing point perspective to enhance visual depth and vista.



Figure 7. John Snow, *Evening*, 1983, lithograph on paper

Snow, along with artist, friend and mentor, Maxwell Bates, is known for having introduced lithography as a fine art medium to the province of Alberta. The *Fields of Vision, Lines of Sight* exhibition was scheduled to travel throughout the province with the TREX program until August 2024.

### Exhibition Loans

The AFA frequently lends artwork to cultural institutions for public exhibition. One such piece, *Fuse 3*, by Siksika (Blackfoot) artist Adrian Stimson, was loaned to the touring exhibition *Exposure: Native Art and Political Economy*. This exhibition was organized by the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA): Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Figure 8. Adrian Stimson, *Fuse 3*, 2010, oil and graphite on canvas

The exhibition documented the responses of international Indigenous artists to the impacts of nuclear testing, nuclear accidents, and uranium mining on Indigenous people and the environment. Indigenous artists from territories in Australia, Canada, Greenland, Japan, Pacific Islands, and the United States were represented. Four artists that reside in Canada were included, with Stimson being the only artist that resides in Alberta.

Stimson often employs bison as a symbol akin to Indigenous peoples, specifically the Plains, as the bison is a mainstay of Plains historical and contemporary Indigenous cultures. *Fuse 3* presents a bison prominently in the foreground of the painting while an atomic explosion is minimized in the background. Stimson's work addresses the past annihilation of the bison with present nuclear threats. However, his prominent emphasis on the bison is also a symbol for survival and cultural regeneration.

The exhibition is scheduled to tour throughout the United States until December 2023.

### Extended Loan

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

In 1995, the sculpture *Squashed Freemason* by renowned Edmonton artist Peter Hide was acquired through a generous donation and certified as Cultural Property by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board. The following year, *Squashed Freemason* was loaned to Edmonton's Misericordia Hospital for long term public display on its outdoor grounds. In April 2021, the sculpture was temporarily removed due to Edmonton's LRT West Expansion Project, which interfered with the installation. In 2023-24, the sculpture is scheduled to be reinstalled in an architecturally-designed greenspace located outside the Misericordia's new emergency entrance.

A robust care and monitoring program is necessary to ensure the loaned sculpture is maintained and reflects the artist's intent and aesthetic for the duration of the loan. *Squashed Freemason* is scheduled to be resurfaced by the artist prior to reinstallation.

Over the past 35 years, the Misericordia hospital has participated in the AFA's Extended Loan, Art Placement and TREX programs.

## 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.



Figure 9. Peter Hide, *Squashed Freemason*, 1983-1986, welded steel

### AFA website sessions<sup>3</sup>, 2021-22

113,409

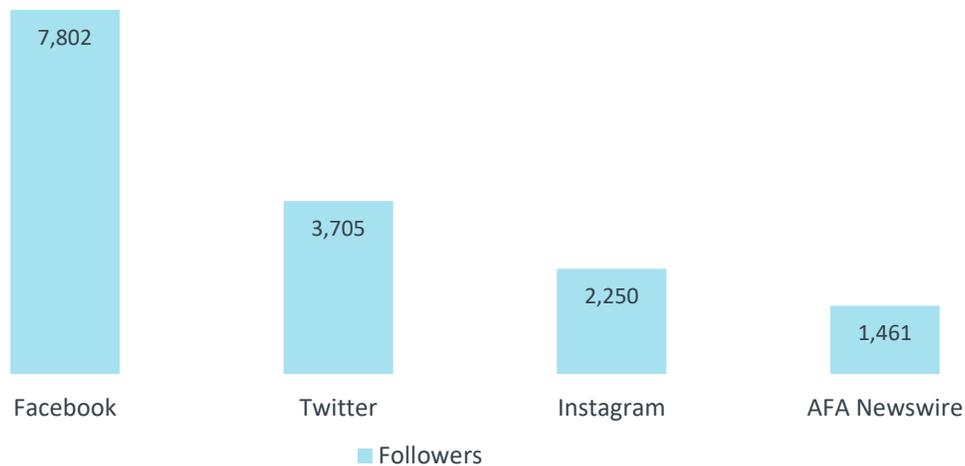
### Users<sup>4</sup>

76,064

### Community submissions for website newsfeed

509

### Online engagement 2021-22



### COVID-19 information sharing

The AFA continued to share information about the COVID-19 pandemic and public health measures, which evolved throughout 2021-22. The AFA maintained a COVID-19 information page and alert banner on its website, providing 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.

### AFA 30th anniversary

To recognize its 30th anniversary in September 2021, the AFA conducted an online, social media-focused campaign to acknowledge the milestone, communicate the value of the arts, and

<sup>3</sup> Website sessions refers to the number of times a site was visited by individual users.

<sup>4</sup> Users are the individuals participating in website sessions.

encourage Albertans to return to in-person arts and culture events and activities. The campaign theme was “Take Part in Art,” intended to both encourage people to participate in arts activities and events and raise awareness of the AFA as a champion of the arts community.

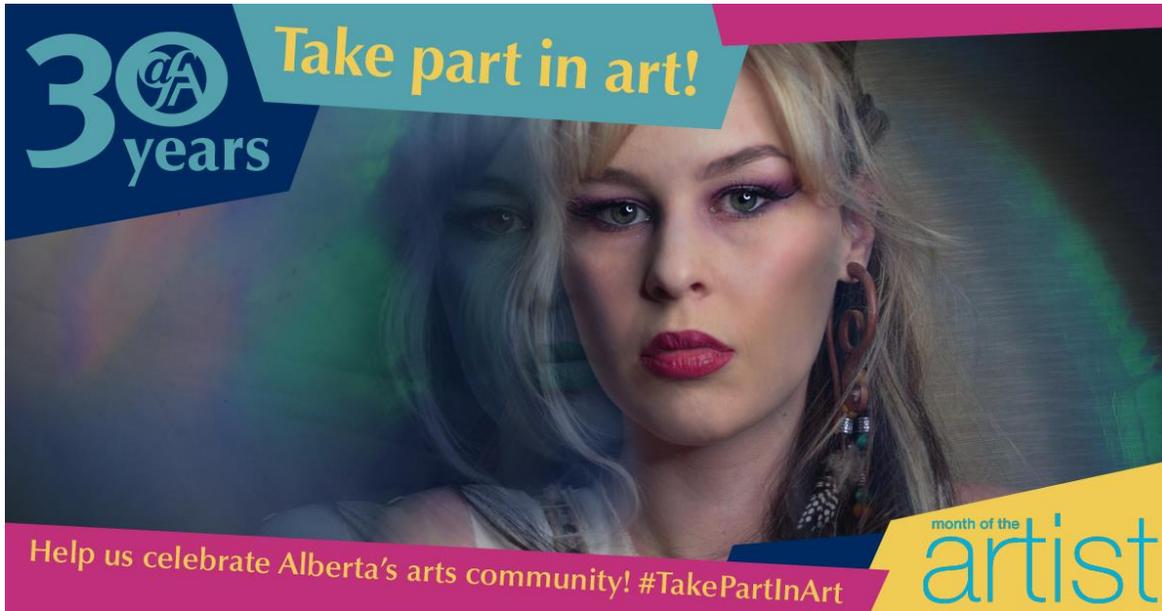


Figure 10. AFA’s 30<sup>th</sup> ‘frame,’ for an artist profile of singer/songwriter Robin Cisek

The campaign included both original social media content developed by staff and amplifying content published by other arts organizations. AFA content included artist profiles, arts research, AFA history, and a message from the Chair. The AFA commissioned a 30th anniversary “frame”, overlaid on featured images to help raise awareness of the event.

### Pluralism

In May 2021, the AFA approved a Pluralism arts policy. In this policy, pluralism is considered as an overarching philosophy that encompasses issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. The Global Centre for Pluralism defines pluralism as recognizing, respecting, and valuing difference. The AFA developed its Pluralism arts policy based on this definition.

The AFA’s policy articulates the key role of pluralism as a driver of dialogue, sense of belonging, trust, and innovation in Alberta.

The policy is intended to be a cornerstone for all decision-making for the AFA and includes broad descriptions on how to apply a pluralism lens to ongoing management and development of the main AFA business areas: grants/funding programs, the AFA Art Collection, and research and engagement activities.

In June 2021, the AFA sought expressions of interest for a consultancy contract to analyze, research, report on and make recommendations for the implementation of its Pluralism arts policy. In August Parodos Social Marketing was announced as the successful bidder.



**Figure 11. Parodos Social Marketing consultants. From left to right: Marliss Weber, Randy Brososky, Jacquelyn Cardinal, Hunter Cardinal, Kate Gunn, and Lucenia Ortiz.**

For this project, Parodos Social Marketing assembled a team of specialists that included:

- consultants with expertise in the public service with a focus on developing and implementing intercultural and equity-based policies,
- the Indigenous Relations firm Naheyawin to provide expertise and knowledge of Indigenous spaces and best practices, and
- strong representation and experience in the arts, with four of the six consultants being professional artists.

The consultants' contract included a number of deliverables, including targeted stakeholder engagement. Based on the engagement interviews conducted in 2021, the consultants provided recommendations leading to a revised and expanded AFA 'Pluralism+' policy, designed to incorporate a strong anti-oppression lens on all pluralism work.

Other deliverables included training for board and staff, as well as recommendations for policy and program reviews and reporting. The consultants will submit a final report to the AFA in 2022-23.

## Engagement

The AFA engages in outreach with different facets of the broader arts community. Throughout the year, the AFA hosts granting information sessions to share tips and advice for preparing grant applications.

### **Number of funding information sessions held, 2021-22**

**33**

### **Attendees**

**681**

In April 2021, the AFA hosted targeted stakeholder engagement sessions to gather input and feedback that could be used to inform the 2021-22 spending plan and potential arts sector relaunch communications following the pandemic. The AFA sought input from arts organizations, individual artists, and Indigenous artists and arts workers.

The AFA heard from 91 clients and stakeholders from across Alberta during seven virtual meetings held via Zoom. By seeking stakeholder input on the arts community's challenges, needs, and expectations, the AFA sought to make funding decisions that both fulfilled our mandate and were as responsive to the current environment as possible.

An engagement summary is available on the [AFA's website](#).

## Research

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

In 2021-22, the AFA continued to support *The New Experience Economy*, 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 AFA was a funding partner in the study along with other provincial arts organizations and funders such as Calgary Arts Development, the Calgary Foundation, the Edmonton Arts Council, and the Rozsa Foundation.

This six-part research project concluded in 2021-22 with the release of the findings from parts five and six. The study aided Alberta arts organizations in navigating and adapting to the evolving pandemic situation as restrictions eased, and audiences' perceptions and comfort levels shifted.

## 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 and Status of Women 2021-22 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](#).