

April 30, 2021

Christopher Tyrell, Clerk of the Committee
Standing Committee on Public Accounts
99 Wellesley Street West
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Dear Mr. Tyrell,

Further to your correspondence of March 2, 2021, in which you requested the Art Gallery of Ontario's response to the Value-for-Money Audit of Museums and Galleries: Art Gallery of Ontario, Royal Ontario Museum and McMichael Canadian Art Collection of the Auditor General's 2020 Annual Report, I am attaching the following record to you in electronic format:

- Status Table form in response to the Auditor General Report

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,



Robert J. Harding C.M.
President, AGO Board of Trustees

Summary Status Table in Response to the Report of the Auditor General of Ontario

*Value -for -Money Audit Museums and Galleries: Art Gallery of Ontario, Royal Ontario Museum,
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Chapter 2, 2020 Annual Report of the Auditor General
Art Gallery of Ontario*

Auditor's Recommendation	Completed undertaking	Outstanding undertaking (including timeline)
RECOMMENDATION 1 So that it acquires artworks that best meet its collection priorities and needs, and that it operates in a manner that is consistent with its transfer payment agreement with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, to obtain value for money and to use public funds wisely, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO): a) establish a collection development plan, identifying its specific collection priorities for each of its five collection departments; b) restrict, except in extenuating circumstances, the acquisition of artworks that do not meet the plan's specific priority areas; c) promptly display a greater proportion of artworks acquired that have been certified as significant by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board; and; d) prohibit the provision of preferential treatment and benefits to AGO Board members who have donated artwork that are not ordinarily available to other donors to the AGO.		1a) In process – the museum is in the process of creating a written plan to clearly articulate its collecting priorities. (2 years) 1b) In process – the museum is in the process of creating a written plan to clearly articulate its collecting priorities and will continue to collect within its designated collecting areas of art. (2 years) 1c) In process – the museum is in the process of creating a written plan to clearly articulate its collecting priorities. The AGO will also endeavour to display a greater proportion of new acquisitions. (2 years) 1d) In process – the AGO will strengthen policy that specifically state that no special privileges or benefits are extended to Board members. (1 year)

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RECOMMENDATION 2 We recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario implement processes so that the steps required by its policies to establish the provenance and authenticity of the artworks it acquires are consistently completed, documented and reviewed. RECOMMENDATION 3 So that the artworks in the Art Gallery of Ontario's (AGO) collection are secured, we recommend that management: a) segregate the responsibilities for deleting records, approving the deletion of records, and accessing the AGO's vaults; and; b) periodically review a list of deleted artwork records, and ensure that artworks have been deleted only for authorized purposes.	3a) This has been implemented in TMS; reports have been generated and a policy has been written outlining the process. 3b) This has been implemented in TMS; reports have been generated and a policy has been written outlining the process.	2) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. AGO staff will consistently follow the existing AGO Acquisition Policy, requiring that all acquisition considerations include a fully documented description of provenance whenever possible, based on available historical evidence and records. It is important to note that in some cases a full provenance history cannot be established; in these cases, AGO staff will document their conclusions as to why provenance history cannot be established and provide such information to the Board's Collection's Committee for consideration. Staff will confirm that this process has been completed and documented in order for a work to enter the AGO's collection. (1 year)

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RECOMMENDATION 4 So that the Art Gallery of Ontario knows the financial value of its collection and can assess whether its insurance coverage is sufficient, we recommend that it: a) review artworks that do not have a value assigned to determine which artworks should be valued; b) put in place a process to update the valuation of its collection to reflect the value of these artworks; and; c) assess the risks of potential loss of its collection and obtain the level of insurance deemed necessary based on the updated valuation of the collection.		4a) In process – the AGO is considering approaches to systemize curatorial review of object values (1 year) 4b) In process – the AGO is considering a number of highest valued works, likely 30 pieces of works. (1 year) 4c) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (1 year) Currently, the AGO determines the desired insurance coverage level for its collection based on the assessment of potential loss scenarios, including with respect to flood, fire, explosion, theft, vandalism or other situations. The top-valued works of art in the AGO collection are specifically named in the insurance policy. Any recovery from a loss would be based on the current value of the work at the time of the loss. Building on our existing approach, we will also review the artworks in our collection and obtain a valuation or updated valuation for those that have a large financial value. We will use these valuations when assessing the adequacy of our insurance coverage.

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RECOMMENDATION 5 To safeguard the items in its collection, and improve the utilization of its storage facilities, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) establish a policy for carrying out inventory checks that includes the frequency and methodology of such checks; b) perform inventory checks in accordance with this policy; and; c) review the contents of its vault containing items of furniture that are not accessioned items in the collection, and develop a plan to dispose of the items it does not intend to use in the future. RECOMMENDATION 6 To verify the physical integrity of artworks in crates, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario develop a schedule to identify works that have not been examined over a long period of time (for example, 10 years) and conduct a visual examination of these works, or a representative sample of the works.		5a) In process – the AGO will formalize an inventory policy that details the method and frequency of quarterly inventory checks, first inventory check was April 1, 2021 (1 year) 5b) In process - report will be created as an event in TMS database to document the random inventory check (1 year) 5c) In process - as done previously, Grange furniture is being offered to Ontario based history house (the AGO is reaching out to the City of Toronto); the museum will also offer the remainder to a local auction house. (1 year) 6) In process – the AGO is writing a summary of this process and began checks starting April 1, 2021. The AGO applies “empty” and “full” stickers to each crate in its collection vaults. AGO collection staff will conduct and schedule a regular examination of a sample of “full” crates on a consistently scheduled basis. (1 year)

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RECOMMENDATION 7 So that it maintains donor relations, its decisions to deaccession items from its collection are fully supported, and its collections database is up to date, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO): a) consult with donors of deaccessioned items, and document how it addressed donor concerns in all cases; b) put in place a process to ensure that the reason for deaccessioning is documented, including how the AGO's criteria for deaccessioning have been met; c) ensure all deaccessioned items are independently appraised and that this information is provided to the Collections Committee before they approve deaccessioning; and; d) put in place processes to ensure its collections database is updated on a timely basis to reflect items that have been disposed of.		7a) In process - the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (1 year) 7b) In process - Registration will work closely with Curatorial to confirm that documentation is complete and included in accession files. Registrar will implement timely data entry updates in TMS for all deaccessioned works. (1 year) 7c) In process - the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (1 year) 7d) In process - Registrar will implement timely data entry updates in TMS for all deaccessioned works. (1 year)

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RECOMMENDATION 8 To refine and improve the quality of its collections, and improve Ontarians' access to Canadian artwork in particular, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) analyze its collection to identify additional items that could be deaccessioned; b) extend the length of time it provides other galleries in Ontario to express their interest in acquiring items it plans to deaccession; and; c) consider providing items it plans to deaccession as gifts to other galleries in Ontario, particularly in cases where it may be difficult to sell the items on a timely basis. RECOMMENDATION 9 So that it meets the needs of Ontarians for access to its collections, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) review and assess the sufficiency and timeliness of the access it provides to its collections; and; b) take corrective action to improve access where it is determined to be necessary.	AGO's mission is to provide access to its audiences, whether it be art students accessing the library and archives for research, or visitors coming through the Prints & Drawings Centre on Wednesday nights. The AGO was proud to loan one of its most iconic and popular works, Tom Thomson's <i>The West Wind</i>, to the Tom Thomson Art Gallery in Owen Sound for Canada150 commemorations. We will take steps to formally assess the access we provide to our collections and, where necessary, examine ways to further improve access to our Collection.	8a) In process – Identification of works for potential deaccessioning to Ontario museums, and to assist with the timely transfer to local museums, as the museum did with the Varley Art Gallery (2 years) 8b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (2 years) 8c) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (2 years) 9a) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. One of the key pillars of the (2 years) 9b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (2 years)

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RECOMMENDATION 10 To improve access to its collection for Ontarians—particularly to Canadian artwork—we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) identify and take advantage of opportunities to lend items that it is not likely to display to other Ontario institutions; and; b) review the fees it charges other Ontario institutions to borrow items from its collection, and identify opportunities to reduce those fees to increase the number of items loaned to such institutions.	With respect to the costs the AGO charges other Ontario institutions to borrow items from its collection, the AGO already looks for ways to reduce costs, such as by reusing shipping crates, and will continue with this practice and look for more opportunities to reduce costs in order to make the AGO's collection more accessible to Ontarians.	10a) In process – the AGO is identifying existing pathways to loan availability for provincial borrowers. As part of our mandate, the AGO takes seriously its commitment to maintaining the integrity and condition of the artworks in its collection. Bearing in mind this consideration, the AGO will work with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries to explore potential opportunities that would allow more of the AGO's collection to be shared and put safely on view at other Ontario museums and galleries. (2 years) 10b) In process – the AGO is identifying minimum thresholds for loan availability and identifying small turn-key AGO exhibitions to be made available at no charge to provincial museums. (1 year)

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RECOMMENDATION 11 To strengthen the Board of Trustees' governance and oversight of the Art Gallery of Ontario, we recommend that the President of the Board of Trustees: a) clarify its policies on conflict of interest, including how to mitigate conflicts of interest, and reinforce to members of the Board of Trustees the requirement to disclose and/or avoid all potential conflicts of interest; b) review the term lengths of members of the Board of Trustees, and establish reasonable maximum term lengths; and; exclude c) emeritus Board trustees from participating in decisions of the Board and its committees; and; d) along with its CEO, review the governance issues identified in this report with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (Ministry) and commit to improvements in future funding agreements with the Ministry.		11a) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and procedures refinement as it evolves. (1 year) 11b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and procedures refinement as it evolves. (2 years) 11c) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and procedures refinement as it evolves. (2 years) 11d) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will work with the ministry to implement refinements as it evolves. (1 year)

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RECOMMENDATION 12 So that it designs and selects exhibitions that best meet its goals and attract visitors to the gallery, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) use its established selection criteria to assess and select the exhibitions it will display; and; b) assess and consider audience interest in the exhibitions it selects to display.		12a) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The AGO will consistently use, and document the use of, its existing criteria to determine the exhibition schedule and formulate a research and data gathering plan that will inform decision-making. (1 year) 12b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. As part of its mission, the AGO balances presenting exhibitions from well-known, global artists, with introducing new, emerging and under-represented artists. Bearing in mind these competing priorities, the AGO will nevertheless assess and consider audience interest in the exhibitions it selects to display. (1 year)

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RECOMMENDATION 13 To improve the cost-effectiveness of its exhibitions, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) establish the intended audience for each of the exhibitions it selects to display, and set attendance targets in accordance with its intended audience; b) where attendance targets are not met, analyze actual attendance to identify the reasons, and apply lessons learned to targets set in future exhibitions; c) establish targets for the profit or (loss) it expects each exhibition to achieve; and; d) where targeted profits or (losses) on exhibitions are not met, analyze the results to identify the reasons, and apply lessons learned to targets set in future exhibitions.		13a, 13b, 13c, 13d) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The AGO will improve its current process for establishing target audiences, attendance goals and budgets. The AGO will also regularly assess and analyze results relative to these targets for continuous learning and improvement. (2 years)

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RECOMMENDATION 14 To enhance the effectiveness of its exhibitions in increasing the public's understanding of a given subject and improving visitor experience, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) establish a policy that specifies the criteria for when an exhibition should be evaluated; b) evaluate exhibitions, including their design and the early stages of their implementation, in accordance with its policy; and; c) put in place processes to review lessons learned from evaluations of past exhibitions, and apply them to plans to select and design exhibitions in the future.		14a) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The AGO will expand its exhibition evaluation process to include a larger proportion of its exhibitions, including smaller exhibitions. (1 year) 14b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. While the AGO currently has a process in place to evaluate the effectiveness of its exhibition design on a regular basis, consideration will be given to how to document tactical decisions and learnings to bring them forward for future planning. (2 years) 14c) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. While the AGO currently has a process in place to evaluate the effectiveness of its exhibition design on a regular basis, consideration will be given to how to document tactical decisions and learnings to bring them forward for future planning. (2 years)

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RECOMMENDATION 15 So that its education programs meet their goals and the learning expectations of those who participate in them, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario: a) put in place a policy that defines when programs should be evaluated and the method by which they should be evaluated; b) ensure its evaluation sampling methodology produces results that are representative of participants' experience in its education programs; and; c) produce evaluation reports on its education programs that can be used to identify and address areas that require improvement.		15a) In process – Evaluations of education programs have been largely informal through participation rates, positive community engagement, testimonials and constructive feedback. The AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (1 years) 15b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. (2 years) 15c) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The AGO commits to developing a robust written policy to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs to report on and identify and address areas that require improvement. (2 years)

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RECOMMENDATION 16 To help improve the Board of Trustees' oversight of the Art Gallery of Ontario's (AGO) education and public programs, and to drive improvement and growth in this area, we recommend that the AGO: a) develop a strategy for its education and public programs that outlines the AGO's goals and the actions needed to meet those goals; b) put in place a process to capture attendance data for all of its education and public programs; and; c) review and improve the information provided to its Board of Trustees relating to education and public programs.		16a) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The AGO's Education & Programming Committee has recently been re-established as a Board Standing Committee with a new mandate and regular reporting structure. The AGO's Director and CEO and the Chief of Education & Programming will work together to develop a written strategy that can be publicly shared, with clear goals and the actions that will be taken to meet those goals. (1 years) 16b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The AGO will also put in place processes to track attendance data for all programs. (2 years) 16c) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The museum will provide regular updates to the Board and committee on the AGO's education programs, including on attendance for all programs, as well as their effectiveness. (1 years)

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RECOMMENDATION 17 To help meet its revenue targets, and increase sales of annual passes and memberships, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO): a) review the impact of the annual passes on the AGO's revenues, and determine whether they are sustainable; b) collect and use data from its members on their demographics to refine its initiatives for membership sales; and; c) review and identify the reasons that visits by members and the number of memberships declined, and take steps to address these reasons.		17a) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. To help fulfill its mission of providing great art to all, the AGO introduced the Annual Pass to provide expanded access to the gallery for free or a significantly lower cost than memberships, and to expand and diversify the audience base to better reflect the people of Ontario. The annual passes form part of a long-term strategy; over the coming years, we will review their impact on revenues and revisit their sustainability if they do not produce the desired results. (2 years) 17b, 17c) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. Leveraging our integrated customer strategy, we will take steps to learn more about our members, annual pass holders and single-ticket purchasers. We will also continue to refine our customer strategy in order to better communicate with our audiences and learn more about their interests in exhibitions and programming, and to review and address the reasons for changes to the number of members and member visits. (2 years)

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RECOMMENDATION 18 So that it can monitor and improve the effectiveness of its staff and to help meet its organizational goals, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario prepare and implement a performance review system for all its staff. RECOMMENDATION 19 To maximize the effectiveness of its leadership team, we recommend that the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO): a) review its current institutional target that must be achieved for its leadership team to be eligible for performance pay, and assess whether additional institutional targets should be set that measure the overall effectiveness of the AGO in meeting its legislated objectives; and; b) factor in the achievement of these additional AGO institutional targets when determining the performance pay of the members of its leadership team.		18) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. The AGO will supplement its informal performance reviews with a formal performance evaluation process for all its staff that is in line with current best practices. (2 years) 19a) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy refinement as it evolves. The performance of the AGO's leadership team is measured against a range of individual objectives such as showing great art, providing access and facilitating learning, as well as fundraising and audience engagement, and reviewed twice yearly by the People Committee of the Board. (1 years) 19b) In process – the AGO is reviewing the recommendation and will implement policy and program refinement as it evolves. In addition to reaching a balanced financial position, the AGO will review and identify whether additional institutional targets can be set that can help better demonstrate whether the AGO is effectively meeting its objectives, and use these when determining the performance pay of its senior leadership team. (1 years)