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As I write this review of the last year, we remain immersed in the intersecting COVID-19 and racial injustice crises that ignited globally in March 2020. Looking back and beyond that moment we see 2019-20 was an exceptional year. We built upon the programming groundwork that frames the Art Museum’s response to these ongoing crises, and we ended the year fully engaged in the challenges before us all.

We realized ten exhibitions and twenty-two public programs; presented the art of fifty artists and toured exhibitions to three national venues; and welcomed 184,669 visitors—including 117,912 digital engagements—across these activities.

In 2019-20, our focus was on questions of historical trauma and contemporary social conflict through race, climate change, disability, gender, and sexual orientation—recurring themes in the works of Carrie Mae Weems, Abdi Osman, Isuma, Deanna Bowen, and Lorenza Böttner. We embedded these projects within the rich, interdisciplinary context of the University of Toronto and built connections between scholars, artists, students, community leaders, and broader publics to support a deepening engagement with visual culture.

With the onset of the pandemic, we closed to the public on March 13, when Requiem for the Norm: Lorenza Böttner and Listening to Snow were both one week short of their official closures. We transitioned smoothly to remote work, and very quickly collaborated with partnership colleagues on the coordination of the Master of Visual Studies Studio and Curatorial student exhibitions, as well the Shelley Peterson Student Art Exhibition, all scheduled to open in April. The curatorial team quickly resolved that the MVS exhibitions would be postponed, pending academic planning decisions, and a dynamic digital brochure was determined as the best option for the Shelley Peterson Student Art Exhibition.

Our Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival co-production—Miao Ying: A Field Guide to Ideology, scheduled to open in May—was postponed until September and ultimately, tentatively rescheduled for May 2021, pending the reopening of cultural institutions. Staff then worked collaboratively to consider how to thoughtfully contribute to an expanding digital world. We launched the Virtual Art Museum with the new Virtual Spotlight platform in May.

In March, we were also in the last phase of strategic planning, which incorporated a very positive external review of our activities and operations, commissioned by the Vice-Provost, Students. Given the global events of March, this final stage was necessarily suspended to assess how our strategic initiatives were grounded in our antiracist equity values and practices, and how digital programming and accessibility were fully integrated into our programming.

The following report offers in more detail our engagement with audiences, our partnerships with institutions, and our collaborations with artists, curators, faculty, and students. Behind these activities are the outstanding and dedicated Art Museum staff. Marianne Rellin joined us in the fall—in the newly developed role of Communications Assistant—just in time for the major exhibitions and events in January 2020, and significantly for the exciting evolution of the Virtual Art Museum. We were thrilled to be able to welcome her into the inspired team of colleagues, working together to imagine how to connect more deeply and widely with artists, communities and audiences.

In turn, the team is supported by a dynamic and committed voluntary Advisory Board, our founding stakeholders, University College and Hart House, and our university leadership: the Vice-Provost, Students, Sandy Welsh. Critical to our public programming is the funding we receive from the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as support from the Canadian Heritage Young Canada Works program. We also gratefully acknowledge our philanthropic supporters, including endowment benefactors, foundations, and individual donors, all of whom enable us to enrich and sustain our outreach and engagement.

Barbara Fischer
Executive Director/Chief Curator
From the outset of this exceptional programming year, we were thrilled to work with the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival to co-produce *Carrie Mae Weems: Heave*. Throughout her artistic trajectory, noted American artist Carrie Mae Weems has undertaken sustained investigations of social conflict. The multi-part installation sited at distinct locations across Toronto represented the artist’s first solo exhibition in Canada. Combining photography, video, news media sampling, and ephemera, her complex installation at the Art Museum explored the spectacle of violence in our contemporary lives, relocating this present within sustained histories of conflict and uprising.

Alongside this exhibition we presented *Variations in Black, Queer, and Otherwise: Works by Abdi Osman*, which included photographic works from 2007 alongside his more recent video work produced in 2018. Osman’s practice is documentary in nature, with a focus on portraiture that considers questions of African-ness and Black-ness in the diaspora.

Collaborating with the Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies (SDS), two works of Osman’s series *Labeeb* were acquired for the University College Collection, to be displayed in SDS. The series centres on an image of activist Sumaya Dalmar, who was an important voice for Toronto’s racialized trans community. Funded by SDS, the acquisition supports other works that are exhibited at the Centre—particularly the collection of Robert Giard’s portraits of LGBTQ+ writers and activists—transforming the nature of the portrait holdings in the collections, veering away from official portraits of records and asserting a subject whose very visibility has been otherwise suppressed in the field of representation.

In the fall we were proud to participate in the inaugural Toronto Biennial of Art with the exhibition, *Qaggiq: Gathering Place*. It brought together a selection of video works by the internationally renowned artists’ collective Isuma and focused on the collective’s expansive media activist project on the occasion—and as extension of—their participation at the 58th International Art Biennale in Venice. Officially founded in 1990 by Zacharias Kunuk, Paul Apak Angiilik, and Norman Cohn in Igloolik, Nunavut, this first-ever Inuit production company produces video from an Inuit point of view, engaging with language, storytelling, and ways of thinking.

Also, as part of Hart House’s Centennial activities, in the fall we produced Deanna Bowen’s exhibition *God of Gods: A Canadian Play*. Bowen’s revisiting of *God of Gods*—a loose adaptation of Romeo and Juliet that used “native” motifs and cast White actors in red-face, staged at Hart House in 1922—examined the foundations of racialized cultural identity in Canada, and the social and political networks that, in the early twentieth century, shaped long-lasting and deeply entrenched ideas of Canadian culture.

In addition to the selection of archival materials on view, Bowen staged a conversation between herself and Indigenous artists and curators John G. Hampton, Peter Morin, Lisa Myers, Archer Pechawis, with cheyanne turions. Filmed on the same stage in the Hart House Theatre where *God of Gods* was performed a century ago, the discussion presented an alternate reading of Canadian cultural history and questioned the nation’s understanding of itself.

Our winter season featured two major exhibitions. *Lorenza Böttner: Requiem for the Norm* was the first North American presentation of the work of Chilean/German artist Lorenza Böttner. Although her career spanned just sixteen years, Lorenza Böttner created over 200 individual works, painting with her feet and mouth and using dance, photography, street performance, drawing, and installation to celebrate the complexity of embodiment and gender expression. In *Listening to Snow*, curator Liora Belford created a listening space—a music box, composed and tuned—focusing on ideas and thoughts arising from a selection of artist Michael Snow’s sounds. Together these exhibitions launched our 2020 programming that wonderfully evolved over the next year to become a new hybrid model of virtual and in-person engagement.
Recent Acquisition: Jalani Morgan, The Sum of All Parts
June 5–July 27, 2019

Variations in Black, Queer, and Otherwise
Works by Abdi Osman
June 5–July 27, 2019

God of Gods: A Canadian Play
September 4–November 30, 2019

“Bowen’s project is a bold commission by curator Barbara Fischer. In a moment characterized by resurgent nationalisms, it is reassuring that the University of Toronto has chosen enlightened self-scrutiny over naïve celebration to memorialize this loaded anniversary.”

— Adam Lauder, esse magazine
Weather Amnesia
September 18, 2019 – June 26, 2020

Qaggiq: Gathering Place
September 18 – November 30, 2019
Presented in partnership with the Toronto Biennial of Art
“The sheer scope of 91-year-old Snow’s practice allows galleries to experiment with the presentation of his work like this exhibition, which focuses on the artist’s use of sound. Sound installations, two recordings, and a film will create a sonic experience within the space of the gallery.”

—Rosemary Heather, NOW Magazine
The exhaustive thought
October 28–November 21, 2020

Overt: Militarization as Ideology
October 28–November 21, 2020

If A Turtle Could Talk
October 28–November 21, 2020

University of Toronto Shelley Peterson Student Art Exhibition
Touring Exhibitions

- **Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience**
  - Winnipeg Art Gallery
  - September 27, 2019 – February 9, 2020
  - Attendance: 23,531

- **Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience**
  - Museum London
  - June 1 – August 25, 2019
  - Attendance: 26,549

- **Sovereign Acts**
  - Kelowna Art Gallery
  - November 29, 2019 – March 1, 2020
  - Attendance: 6,587

- **Sovereign Acts**
  - Galerie d’art Louise-et-Reuben-Cohen, Université de Moncton
  - May 22 – July 21, 2019
  - Attendance: 1,399
In May 2019, we collaborated with the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design and the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival to present Carrie Mae Weems’s exceptional Spotlight Lecture. The artist presented her investigation of family relationships, gender roles, racism, classism, and politics, underlining her overarching commitment to helping us better understand the present moment by examining our collective past.

The fall was kicked off with the eighth annual free public Corn Roast with London, Ontario-based artist Ron Benner. The hugely popular celebration of the fall harvest gathered together 500 very happy students and campus visitors to enjoy a barley salad and fresh corn, roasted and prepared by the artist himself.

In imagining how we can shape welcoming architectural spaces, we offered audiences another type of gathering place during our fall exhibition with Isuma, reconfiguring our front gallery to offer a furnished social space with books, tablets, and free tea for audiences. It became an active drop-in area for students: drinking tea, working together, and reading quietly in a community space.

Our public programming for the exhibition included a panel discussion led by exhibition curators asinnajaq and Barbara Fischer, featuring Isuma members who generously shared insights and their collaborative strategies with the audience.

The Art Museum also collaborated intensively with artists and organizations to produce programming for the large-scale event Night of Ideas held on January 25, 2020. Taking the pioneering trans-crip activist/artist Lorenza Böttner as starting point and working in conversation with local disability and trans-identified artists and organizations, the program resulted in a dynamic evening fueled by 1,500 attendees participating in timely discussions, screenings, and performances.

Further to the initial concept of the Listening to Snow exhibition, curator Liora Belford and artist Michael Snow developed public programming including a curator-led listening tour, screenings of Snow’s films (Rameau’s Nephew and Wavelengths), and Laurie Kwasnik’s documentary Snow in Vienna. Unfortunately, the planned screening of La Région Centrale and Snow’s solo piano performance were postponed as a result of the COVID-19 closures.
### By the Numbers

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<td>Visitors attending Art Museum exhibitions</td>
<td>13,449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visitors engaged in Art Museum’s programming</td>
<td>2,013</td>
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<td>Students participating in tours and class visits</td>
<td>1,111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artists (local, national, and international) exhibited</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website visits</td>
<td>105,037</td>
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<td>Social media followers</td>
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**Touring Exhibitions**

- 51,479 Visitors to nationally touring exhibitions
- 4 Galleries hosting our nationally touring exhibitions

**Digital Engagement**

- 460 Public tours
- A Conversation with Isuma
  - September 17, 2019
  - Members of Isuma discuss their collaborative strategies at a panel discussion led by curators asinnajaq and Barbara Fischer.
  - Disability studies postdoctoral fellow Dr. Loree Erickson (left) in conversation with author Emma Becker (right) about sex work and activism.
Student Engagement

Our exceptionally strong record of student engagement thrives as we work with students at all levels of their university careers. We work with students directly at the curricular level, in embedded experiential learning initiatives across all of our activities, such as our Work-Study program and in volunteer-based opportunities like the Hart House Art Committee. We also offer multiple classroom and experiential learning opportunities: including guided tours, hands-on learning with the collection, and faculty-generated class engagement in exhibitions, workshops, conferences, lectures, and other discursive programs.

Work-Study
Kaylee Baxter, Liora Belford, Olivia Chlebicki, Muskoka Dittmar-McCallum, Liron Efrat, Mateo Giron, Aliya Karmali-Esmail, Emily Jin, Veronika Korchagina, Melody Lu, Marian Nicholson, Chiara Perry, Alison Starkey, Gig Tam, Narisa Ueda, Leah Vujovic, Yuluo Wei, Kate Whiteway, Charlene Wichaidit, Arielle Zhivko

Young Canada Works Summer Program*
Aliya Karmali-Esmail, Public Programming and Outreach Assistant
Narisa Ueda, Collections Assistant

Internships
Young Canada Works at Building Careers in Heritage*
Jordana Green
Carina Yannacacos

Jackman Humanities Institute Curatorial Internship
Yuluo Wei

Department of Art History
Margaryta Golovchenko
Veronika Korchagina

Victoria University, Program in Material Culture
Gig Tam

Fleming College, Museum Management and Curatorship Program
Teija Smith
Carina Yannacacos

University of Toronto Master of Museum Studies
Muskoka Dittmar-McCallum

Hart House Art Committee
Emily Jin, Charlotte Koch, Lidiaia Tulenkova, Arielle Zhivko, Skylar Cheung, Evelyn Austin, Arina Mnatsakanyan, Riya Razdan, Justine Tenzer, Tahasun Tarannum, Yixin Ma, Shannon Garden-Smith (Community Chair)

Student Docents
Olivia Chlebicki, Muskoka Dittmar-Mccallum, Liron Efrat, Mateo Giron, Aliya Karmali, Chiara Perry, Teija Smith, Carina Yannacacos

Art Museum Curatorial Residency Award Winner
Maya Wilson-Sanchez

Reesa Greenberg Curatorial Studies Award Winner
Yuluo Wei

*Supported by Young Canada Works, Funded by the Government of Canada.
Each year, our primary engagement activities are woven through our collections programming. The collections serve as a base for in-house exhibitions, loans to museums and galleries nationally and internationally, together with significant onsite research and teaching. However, 2019-20 was an outstanding year for collection highlights. We celebrated the realization of the major Hart House Centennial Commission with the unveiling of Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero’s sculpture, *waabidiziyan doopwinining (to see yourself at the table)*, which has transformed the Great Hall of Hart House, a landmark public space at the University of Toronto. Through a mirror in the shape of a life-size dining table, the stunning sculpture invites self-reflection that tends to the nature of representation in the Great Hall itself, but also in a broader, political, symbolic, and artistic sense. The work asks questions that are as relevant to a consideration of the past as they are to the present and for the future.

These considerations are also addressed in the rehang of the Hart House Collection, curated by Sarah Robayo Sheridan and installed throughout the publicly accessible spaces of the historic building. Also considered a part of the Hart House Centennial, the featured works in the rehang include artists who both engage with, but also counter, prevailing canons and mythologies of identity and history in Canadian art; including Toronto- and Scarborough-based artists Wendy Coburn, Erika DeFreitas, Jalani Morgan, Jon Sasaki, and Laurel Woodcock, as well as artists from across the country, including Stan Douglas, Ken Lum, Divya Mehra, Adrian Stimson, and many others.

This year, the Hart House Art Committee acquired the first work by Oliver Husain. Mentored by Art Museum staff, the committee of student volunteers—working from across diverse disciplines and backgrounds—have a rare opportunity to become directly involved in the building and sharing of cultural value through art collections. The acquisition of Husain’s video installation *French Exit* contributes to the collection’s representation of Toronto art history, adding cultural and sexual diversity and reflecting on the complex ways in which Toronto’s history is globally intertwined. This work—along with donations of the works of David Buchan, James Carl, Christine Davis, Joseph Fafard, Lawren Harris, General Idea, Brian Jungen, Kelly Mark, and Ho Tam—builds on the value of the collections, across all levels of our engagement.

Engagement was expanded this year in an exhibition co-organized with the Art Gallery of Alberta, featuring icons from the Malcove Collection. *In Golden Light: Orthodox Icons from Annunciation to Ascension* was attended by 6,500 visitors in Edmonton and was realized with contributions from Heather Darling Pigat, the Art Museum Collections Manager and Sasha Gorjeltchan, Collections Assistant. This project was realized in addition to our ongoing academic collaborations: delivering course modules for collections care and research and making the collections available as primary resources.
Donations and Acquisitions

Oliver Husain
*French Exit*, 2018
video installation with sound, and vertical blinds,
16 minutes
Purchase by the Hart House Art Committee, 2019

General Idea
*Night School*, 1989
chromogenic print (Ekta-color)
95.3 × 76.2 cm
Gift of Fern Bayer, 2019

James Carl
*thing’s end* (bronze), 2012
bronze
Edition 13/15
10.5 x 17.5 x 12 in
Gift of the Artist, 2018

Joseph Fafard
*Nurture/Nature*, maquette
Ink, acetate film, adhesive tape
11 x 10 x 4 in
Gift by bequest of Judith Schwartz, 2020

David Buchan
*Canadian Youth*, 1988
colour photograph
Edition 8/10
25 x 30 in
Gift of Glen Cumming, 2019

Christine Davis
*Cleave*, 1998
Cibachrome print
Edition of 4
43 x 29 in
Gift of Professor Evonne Levy, 2019

Lawren Harris
*(Canadian 1885-1970)*
*F. 24*
oil on Masonite, signed, dated 57 and titled verso
105.7 x 78.7 cm

Kelly Mark
*Nothing is so important that it needs to be made in six foot neon*, 2009
neon and transformers
182.9 × 182.9 × 5.1 cm
Gift of the artist, 2019

Ho Tam
*Dog Meat and I Ching, from Yellow Pages*, 1993
black and white Xerox prints on paper
Each 10.75 x 16.875 in
Gift of Mr. F. Hawryliw, 2019

Brian Jungen
*Gallery of Native Art*, 2007
Silkscreen print on sandwich board
Artist’s Proof
45 x 23 in
Gift of Kathleen Scott, 2019


Gardiner Museum, exhibition catalogue,
The King’s Peas: Delectable Recipes and Their Stories from the Age of Enlightenment: William Grundy, pair of wine jugs, 1771, University of Toronto Collection, 1998-0068.


Canada Post, Group of Seven 100th Anniversary commemorative stamp: A. Y. Jackson, *Labrador Coast*, 1930, Hart House Collection HH1941.001.

Reproduction Requests
Permanent Collections Reproduction Requests from May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020


Art Canada Institute, online publications: Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, *Summer*, 1931, Hart House Collection HH1933.003; and *Charles Comfort, Prairie Road*, 1925, Hart House Collection HH1931.001.


Canada Post, Group of Seven 100th Anniversary commemorative stamp: A. Y. Jackson, *Labrador Coast*, 1930, Hart House Collection HH1941.001.


Reproduction Requests (Cont'd)


University College Alumni Magazine, Robert Giard portraits: Five Members of “Other Countries”, 1987, UC815; Allen Ginsberg with his own portrait of Burroughs, 1986, UC805; Beth Brant, 1990, UC765; Minnie Bruce Pratt and Leslie Feinberg, 1993, UC840; Sylvia Rae Rivera, undated, UC836; Alison Bechdel, 1988, UC823; all University College Collection.

Dr. David Yela, online educational video, How to Cope with Religious Conflicts: Insights from History, University of Bern, Switzerland: Visitation at Mamre, (4th Century), [Two-sided mold, Byzantine, limestone], Malcove Collection M82.271.

Loans

Works from all four collections were loaned to the following exhibitions


Birds of a Feather, The Jackman Humanities Institute, University of Toronto, October 28, 2020–June 25, 2021. (All works in the show are from the permanent collections).


In Golden Light: Orthodox Icons from Annunciation to Ascension, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, May 30–November 30, 2020. (All works in the show were icons from the Malcove Collection).


Staff

Executive Director / Chief Curator
Barbara Fischer

Curator
Sarah Robayo Sheridan

Curator, Indigenous Contemporary Art
Mikinaak Migwans

Adjunct Curator
John G. Hampton
Seika Boye

Program Coordinator
Rebecca Gimni

Business Coordinator
Maureen Smith

Collections Manager
Heather Darling Pigat

Exhibitions Coordinator
Esther Simmonds-MacAdam

Communications Assistant
Marianne Rellin

*Public Programming and Outreach Assistants
Jordan Green, Melody Lu, Yuluo Wei, Carina Yannacacos

*Collections Assistant
Olivia Chlebicki

*Funded through the Young Canada Works program by the Government of Canada.

Advisory Board

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Libby Barnicke
Jessica Bradley
Sandra Brewster
Rina Greer
Kajri Jain
Yixin Ma
Jacqueline Martinez
Liza Murrell
Asad Raza
Robert Wright
Rhiannon Vogl
Anna Zalewski

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Principal, University College, University of Toronto

John F. Monahan
Warden, Hart House, University of Toronto

Sandy Welsh
Vice- Provost Students & First -Entry Divisions, University of Toronto
Donors

Endowments
Ella May Davison Mercer Endowment Fund
Janet E. Hutchison Endowment Fund
Joan Walwyn Randall Endowment Fund
Lillian Malcove Endowment Fund
Valerie Jean Griffiths Student Exhibitions Fund in Memory of William, Elva, and Elizabeth

Individual Donors
Robin T. Anthony
Cindy and Shon Barnett
Lily Chin
Barbara Fischer
Penglai Guo
Alison Colvin and Tim Hadwen
John M. and Elizabeth A. Kerr
Harry and Ann Malcolmson
Alice Kuipers and Yann Martel
Jane and Terry Lidster
Dante Armando Sanchez
Lisa Mauer and Andrew Sheiner
Cindy R. Sinclair
Greg Smith
Georgiana Uhlyarik
Ken Whiteway and Sheila Ann Whiteway

Foundations
The Joan and Clifford Hatch Foundation
The Ontario Arts Foundation and the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation,
Elizabeth L. Gordon Art Program
The Stonefields Foundation

Supporters and Partners

Institutional Funders

Program Partners

University of Toronto
Affinity Program Partners

Media Partners

10 (Top): Jalani Morgan, The Sum of All Parts: 4. Frontline protesters at the BLMTO action that closed down the Allen Road in response to the murders of Jermaine Carby and Andrew Loku, 2017. Four black and white photographic prints, 33” x 50”. Purchased by the Hart House Acquisitions Committee, in part through the support from the Elizabeth L. Gordon Art Program, a program of the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation and administered by the Ontario Arts Foundation, 2018.


17 (Bottom): Screenshot: 2020 University of Toronto Shelley Peterson Student Art Exhibition, Online on artmuseum.utoronto.ca, September 15, 2020.


20 and 22: Photos by Toni Hafkenscheid.

24 (Top): Photo by Cai Chen.

24 (Bottom): Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

26: Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero, waabidiziiyan doopwining (to see yourself at the table), 2019. Mirror-polished aluminum, 439.4 x 208.3 x 81.3 cm. Hart House Commission, 2019. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.