

2025 - 2028 Strategic Plan





Contents

Introduction	4
Land Acknowledgement	6
Definitions & Terminology	8
Commitment to Equity	9
Vision & Mission	12
Core Values	14
Strategic Priorities & Goals	16
Initiatives	23
Appendix A	
Planning Process	49



Gardiner Museum

Linda Frum and
Howard Sokolowski
Plaza

Introduction

The Gardiner Museum's 2025-2028 Strategic Plan represents a year-long collaboration among Gardiner staff with significant contributions from the Board, volunteers, and community partners to co-create a shared vision for the future.

The Plan includes a refined vision and mission statement, strengthened by the addition of a set of Core Values that articulates and informs our behaviours and attitudes. Covering a 4-year period, the Plan intersects at the outset with an important milestone in the Museum's chronology: the completion of the Ground Floor Transformation Project, our largest capital project in two decades.

The Plan seeks to strike a balance between the aspirational and practical. It respects the limits of staff capacity and recognizes the immense amount of time and creative focus necessary to deliver the \$15.5-million capital project and campaign by November 2025, in addition to our day-to-day work. This renovation, first identified in the Museum's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, includes the construction of a fully

equipped Makerspace, a new Community Learning Centre (CLC), and the Museum's first ever gallery of Indigenous ceramics. Driven by three main pillars—Access, Connectivity, and Indigeneity—the Ground Floor Transformation Project is a tangible vehicle to deliver on the Museum's vision and mission.

By Year 2, the Plan deliverables shift to activating these important new spaces and elements of the permanent collection through experiential learning, storytelling, partnership development, Indigenous programming, and the evolution of the International Ceramic Art Fair.

The Plan was also constituted to recognize and adjust for the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It reflects our need to recalibrate and rebuild systems to support our long-term sustainability, undertake long-range infrastructure planning, and refine internal systems and processes related to governance, human resources, and development.

At the heart of the Plan and embedded throughout each Initiative is our commitment to equity. It is represented as a standalone Initiative in recognition of the work needed to examine and dismantle certain systems and processes, ensuring accountability and consistency in our foundational work and applying an integrated lens to each Strategic Priority and Goal. Our commitment to equity requires engagement by every department, staff member, volunteer, and Board member, as well as the public.

The document shared here is a summary of the Gardiner's comprehensive 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.

I am so grateful for the collaborative spirit and thoughtful contributions made by the entire Gardiner team in undertaking this process.



Gabrielle Peacock
Executive Director & CEO



Shary Boyle: *Outside the Palace of Me, Public Celebration*, March 2022. Photo: Henry Chan

Land Acknowledgement

The Gardiner Museum is situated on the ancestral and traditional territories of many nations, including the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. It is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. As a museum that celebrates the material of the Earth, the Gardiner is committed to honouring Indigenous peoples' cultural and spiritual connections to the land. Indigenous self-determination is central to our work, and we strive to celebrate Indigenous knowledge and creativity through our collections, exhibitions, and programming.



Talking Earth, 2022. Photo credit: Photographer Vladimir Kanic, Artist: Santee Smith/Kaha:wi Dance Theatre

Definitions & Terminology

Strategic Priority

Strategic Priorities represent the key, high-level aspirations of the Museum. They were identified through an extensive consultation process involving staff, Board, and community partners. They include an overarching vision, philosophy, and practices that drive our institutional priorities and decision making. Strategic Priorities are aspirational while also addressing challenges identified during the consultation phase.

Goal

Our Goals represent specific, defined ways we can realize our Strategic Priorities. Goals can be short, medium, or long-term, spanning from 1 - 4 years and beyond. They establish pathways that ensure we maintain focus on our Strategic Priorities, while guiding our decision making and resource allocation.

Initiative

There are 14 Initiatives contained in this Plan. Each Initiative outlines clear objectives and outcomes in alignment with one or more Strategic Priorities and Goals. The Initiatives serve as roadmaps for staff, describing and guiding sequenced actions and deliverables to operationalize and measure our work over the next 4 years.

Initiatives either build on current programming or shape new areas of activity. They are specific in nature, identify resources and expertise necessary for success, and are designed to encourage collaboration between departments and teams.

Initiatives are advanced on timelines that are achievable and measurable by staff and allow for a sustainable pace of work. Each year, Initiatives will be reviewed by staff to capture progress and new work, and update deliverables.

Equity

While working with equity consultants Evenings & Weekends, there was discussion and reflection as to the language and acronyms the Gardiner should adopt to communicate our values and commitment to diversity and inclusion. Together, we decided “equity” described a broad set of principles that could meaningfully encapsulate anti-racism and anti-oppression and framed the intent in a generative and proactive way. The Gardiner defines equity as the practice of inclusive, fair, and just treatment for everyone. This requires treating people according to their diverse needs to ensure everyone has the support necessary to access the same opportunities. We hold equity as one of our Core Values and strive for it in all aspects of our work.

Commitment to Equity

The Gardiner is committed to dismantling systems of inequity within our Museum. We will realize this work by eliminating barriers to access and opportunity and by creating a space of inclusion where everyone feels welcome and valued. We see equity as fundamental to the Gardiner's mission and believe it is the responsibility of everyone within the organization, including leadership, staff, volunteers, and the Board. The steps we will take toward achieving our equity goals are outlined publicly in our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan and Equity Action Plan.

Equity encapsulates anti-racism, anti-oppression, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion, with the goal of achieving a more generative and proactive path towards justice. Becoming a more equitable institution is a continuous process that requires ongoing direction of financial resources and the implementation of systems of learning, evaluation, accountability, and action. We recognize our approach must be holistic and integrated across all areas of the Museum, internally and externally.

We acknowledge that museums are rooted in systems of power and empire, and we are dedicated to shaping a future for the Gardiner that centres equity and community.



Teen Wheel Camp, August 2023. Photo: Lisa Sakulensky



Karine Giboulo (Canadian, b. 1980), *Jars*, 2021. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

Vision, Mission, & Core Values



Vision

We inspire wonder, community, and connection, exploring our shared humanity through clay.

Mission

The Gardiner Museum welcomes and inspires audiences of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and experiences through the rich history and storytelling power of clay. We steward and animate an internationally significant collection of ceramics while centering hands-on learning and making. We engage in important cultural conversations taking place in our city and beyond through gallery programming and collaborative partnerships. We work to advance Indigenous self-determination and build human connections, creating space for reflection and dialogue.

Core Values

Equity

- We create a space where all voices are heard and everyone belongs
- We are accountable to building an anti-racist and anti-oppressive future
- We commit to supporting self-determination with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples as a fundamental aspect of our work
- We foster a sense of inclusion, hospitality, and welcoming

Creativity

- We are curious about our world, past and present
- We embrace the possibilities that come from diverse perspectives and practices
- We are resourceful, inventive, and invite play into our work
- We support and celebrate artistic achievement and diverse approaches to making with clay

Intentionality

- We cultivate a deeper understanding of our collection through academic and novel approaches to research, exhibitions, publications, and programming
- We seek out projects and partnerships that expand our work and introduce new points of view
- We make decisions thoughtfully and transparently, reflecting on how our actions help us achieve our mission
- We prioritize the sustainability of the organization and the world in which we live

Collaboration

- We nurture partnerships that enrich communities throughout our city and beyond
- We listen and respond to community partners and co-create meaningful spaces of gathering and learning
- We seek out ways to support the work of living artists, locally and globally
- We believe the diversity of staff perspectives and experiences enhances all aspects of our work



Strategic Priorities & Goals

Strategic Priority

1

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work

Goal I:

Lower access barriers to admission and programs participation

Initiatives A, B, C, D, F, G, J, K, L, M

Goal II:

Adopt a model of inclusive leadership and governance

Initiatives A, C, D, E, I

Goal III:

Ensure a transparent and equitable work culture in hiring, training, compensation, and recognition practices

Initiatives A, C, E, I

Goal IV:

Create a platform for new and underrepresented voices in all aspects of our work

Initiatives A, B, C, D, E, F, G, K, I, J, L, N

Goal V:

Deepen collaborative work with programming and community partners, including Indigenous communities

Initiatives A, B, C, D, F, G, K, L, N

Strategic Priority

2

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations

Goal I:

Embrace our transformed ground floor to develop innovative programming and engage new audiences

Initiative A, B, C, D, F, G, K, L, M, N

Goal II:

Generate productive dialogue around museum practices and histories

Initiative A, B, C, D, F, L, N

Goal III:

Practice transparency to deepen accountability and trust

Initiative A, C, D, E, F, I, L, N

Strategic Priority

3

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics

Goal I:

Build collaborative relationships with peer institutions at home and internationally

Initiative A, C, D, F, G, K

Goal II:

Centre materials-based inquiry and learning to deepen understanding of our shared humanity

Initiative B, C, F, G, K, N

Goal III:

Through exhibitions and collections, generate new understanding of diverse cultural experiences and practices

Initiative A, B, C, D, F, G, K, N

Strategic Priority

4

Build operational and organizational sustainability

Goal I:

Use momentum from the completion of the Ground Floor Transformation Project to energize new membership programs and the donor base

Initiative F, G, J, K, M

Goal II:

Communicate a proactive and integrated risk management approach

Initiative D, E, F, H, I, J, M

Goal III:

Actively cultivate and invest in an organizational culture that mirrors our Core Values

Initiative A, E, H, I, L

Goal IV:

Analyze our business and revenue streams to amplify our strengths

Initiative F, J, K, M

Goal V:

Prioritize sustainability strategies to green exhibition design materials, marketing collateral, and studio practices

Initiative B, F, H, K, M

Strategic Priority

5

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel

Goal I:

Enhance the Gardiner's role as a civic partner and gathering space

Initiative A, C, F, G, H, I, J, K, M

Goal II:

Position the Museum as a catalyst for creativity, learning, and accessing the arts in our city

Initiative A, B, C, F, G, J, K, L, M, N

Goal III:

Facilitate opportunities for cultural belongings to visit with communities and community members who have ancestral relationships to the collections

Initiative A, C, D, F, G, L



About the Artist

Dame Magdalene Anyinigo-Temawale Odundo was born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1950. Raised in Mombasa, on the coast of Kenya, and in Nairobi, she also spent several years in India as a youth. She trained as a graphic designer in Kenya before moving to the United Kingdom in 1971 for further study at the Cambridge School of Art, where she began working with clay. She soon enrolled at the University for Creative Arts, Farnham (formerly the Great Surrey College of Art & Design), where she received a degree in ceramics, printmaking, and photography. Odundo earned her graduate degree in ceramics from the Royal College of Art, London in 1982.

A person's life

Dame Magdalene Anyinigo-Temawale Odundo was born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1950. She is a graphic designer and a ceramicist. She has exhibited internationally over the past forty years. She is one of the most prominent African artists working in ceramics. Her work has been exhibited in the British Museum (London), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum of Art, the University of Toronto, and the Gardner Museum. She is an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire and was appointed chair of the Arts and in 2020 she was awarded the Order of the British Empire and was inducted into the Canadian Hall of Fame.

Voices of the Diaspora: An Intergenerational Conversation, March 2024, Photo: Henry Chan



Initiatives

Initiatives

Initiative A

Equity Action Plan

Initiative B

Incorporating Experiential Education

Initiative C

Commitments to Indigenous Self-Determination

Initiative D

Ancestral Americas Provenance and Future Action

Initiative E

Board of Trustees Engagement and Governance Development

Initiative F

Delivery of the Ground Floor Transformation Project

Initiative G

Activate the Community Learning Centre (CLC)

Initiative H

Safety and Infrastructure Sustainability

Initiative I

Organizational Culture

Initiative J

Membership and Donor Renewal and Growth

Initiative K

International Ceramic Art Fair (ICAF) Evolution

Initiative L

Equity-Focused Data & Communications Plan

Initiative M

Optimize Sources of Operating Revenues

Initiative N

Access and Storytelling in the Collections Galleries

Initiative A

Equity Action Plan

OBJECTIVES

The Gardiner Museum is committed to being an organization where all voices are heard and everyone belongs. We believe that equity and the fair and just treatment of all members of our community must be at the core of our work and who we are as an institution. While the Museum has made significant strides towards increasing equity throughout the organization, we know more action is necessary to counteract pervasive systems and biases that may hinder meaningful change.

The Equity Action Plan is a set of time-bound actions the Museum is committed to undertake to embed and operationalize equity at the Gardiner.

OUTCOMES

- New equity-driven practices are transformational and lasting, versus transactional
- Equity practices are embedded and operationalized in a transparent and accountable manner
- Systemic barriers are identified and dismantled through intersectional approaches and collaborative decision making
- Staff wellbeing is prioritized as an equity outcome

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work
 Goal I, II, III, IV, V

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations
 Goal I, II, Goal III

Reflect the diversity of human experience through ceramics
 Goal I, II, III

Build operational and organizational sustainability
 Goal I, III, IV

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel
 Goal I, II III

METRICS

- Progress on Accountability Framework
- Defined and consistent use of equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-oppression language that is shared by all staff and volunteers
- Progress on priority areas where applying an equity lens yields the greatest advancement of our vision and mission
- Benchmarks are both qualitative

and quantitative and include staff wellbeing as an equity outcome

- Allocation of financial resources in the budget for staffing, capacity building, and internal and external DEAI expertise
- Provision of staff time for equity work, including individual and collective reflection and relationship building

Initiative B

Incorporating Experiential Education

OBJECTIVE

The Ground Floor Transformation Project is an opportunity to reimagine what teaching and learning can look like at the Gardiner. Building on our successful hands-on learning approach and in alignment with best practices in the field of museum education, we will emphasize experiential education in all spaces and for all audiences.

Experiential learning relies on active participation from learners, allowing them to leverage their own life experiences, knowledge, and skills to make meaning. It is an opportunity to

collectively create joyful and accessible learning spaces that draw from each learner's own context and ideas. Our approaches will include multisensory engagement, reflection, and collaboration.

OUTCOMES

- A sense of belonging in visitors from all backgrounds
- Educational spaces for visitors with diverse learning preferences
- Culturally responsive pedagogy
- Diverse voices and perspectives highlighted when teaching about the collections
- Engagement with the ground-floor collections that speaks to people's daily lives
- An expanded group of engaged and passionate volunteers teaching in the galleries



Test Kitchen Tour & Object Handling, February 2025. Photo: Brittany Carmichael

- A professional development program that offers pathways for careers in the museum sector

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work
[Goal I, IV, V](#)

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations
[Goal I](#)

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics
[Goal III](#)

Build operational and organizational sustainability
[Goal IV](#)

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel
[Goal I, II](#)

METRICS

- Number of family guides and visitor guides used
- Class sales and number of bookings
- Feedback from visiting groups
- Number of visitors engaging with gallery volunteers
- Internship outcomes

Initiative C

Commitments to Indigenous Self-Determination

OBJECTIVE

The ground-floor galleries, including the new gallery of Indigenous ceramics, challenge the notion of an institution simply installing cultural production by Indigenous communities as representation. Instead, the gallery of Indigenous ceramics integrates dialogical relational models that recognize ongoing consent in our operations.

With the key phrase “nothing about us, without us,” and by acknowledging the multiplicity of Indigenous voices and perspectives within various communities, the Gardiner’s work supports and respects Indigenous self-determination.

Commitments to Indigenous self-determination in this Initiative occur in tandem with the internal institutional work of various Initiatives throughout the Strategic Plan, but place greater focus on the ability to enact changes that are asked of the Museum. The goal is to build frameworks and cultural capacity for the Gardiner to engage with Indigenous makers, community members, and organizations in a way that is Indigenous-led and shifts away from consultative models. These processes are in step with the calls to action in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Gardiner's commitment to collaboration.

OUTCOMES

- Recurring reciprocal programs that are organized in partnership with Indigenous-led organizations
- Communities, artists, and their families are aware of and have

access to cultural belongings within the Gardiner's collection

- Agreements and commitments made are honoured and maintained at an institutional level
- The Gardiner's acquisition strategy and model is sustainable and supplants colonial museological practices
- The Gardiner is an active contributor and site for Indigenous knowledge production

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work
[Goal I, II, III, IV, V](#)

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations
[Goal I, II, Goal III](#)

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics
[Goal I, II, III](#)

Build operational and organizational sustainability
[Goal III](#)

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel
[Goal I, Goal II, Goal III](#)

METRICS

- Project evaluation that includes feedback from external partners
- Tracking partnerships, requests, or projects that are initiated externally
- Tracking web engagement with Indigenous related programming, works within the collection, and educational materials
- Sharing metrics between Programs and Education regarding Indigenous engagement



Left: Seated Figure with Hands on Knees, Jama Coaque Culture, Manabí, Ecuador, 200 BCE - 300 CE, Gift of George and Helen Gardiner;
Right: Seated Figure with Hands on Knees Andrés López, Manabí, Ecuador, 2022. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

Initiative D

Ancestral Americas Provenance and Future Action

OBJECTIVE

The Ancestral Americas Collection, formerly Ancient Americas, has been on view since the Museum opened in 1984 but was only formally accessioned in 1995. At the time of accessioning, an extensive process was undertaken to identify and authenticate the works, while Gardiner representatives also reached out to officials in the countries of origin to open discussions on cultural patrimony.

These discussions were truncated, with the Museum continuing to hold and present the work primarily as an archaeological collection organized by cultural group.

This Initiative seeks to revisit the status and interpretation of the Ancestral Americas Collection to bring it in line with today's museological and ethical standards.

OUTCOMES

- New interpretive models for the collection that foreground thematic connections and relationships to present-day experiences
- Closer relationships with descendent communities of origin in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada, ensuring greater access to the collection
- Effective partnerships with cultural officials from countries of origin

- Greater transparency in the galleries as to the origin and status of the collection

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work

Goal I, IV, V

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations

Goal I, II, III

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics

Goal I, II, III

Build operational and organizational sustainability

Goal II, III

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel

Goal I, III

METRICS

- Progress on agreements in place or under negotiation with cultural authorities in countries of origin, delineating retention, sharing, or restitution of objects in the collection
- Enriched programming partnerships with local diasporic communities
- Ongoing relationships with descendent communities in Canada
- Ongoing public discussion on the collections review process

Initiative E

Board of Trustees Engagement and Governance Development

OBJECTIVE

The Gardiner Museum Board of Trustees strives for continued excellence in its oversight of strategy and major policy decisions; support of equity principles and actions; management of risks and internal controls; and effective Board engagement and governance.

The adoption of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan is a reflection of the Board’s overall vision for the strategic

direction of the Museum. The Board and its Committees are focused on the continued improvement of the Museum’s governance policies, principles, and practices.

OUTCOMES

- New onboarding and self-assessment processes enhance Board engagement and participation
- Strategic Plan tracking and reporting to the Board provides insight for oversight, risk management, and ongoing dialogue
- Emphasis on equity-focused governance and recruitment advances institutional goals

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work [Goal II, III, IV](#)

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations

Goal III

Build operational and organizational sustainability

Goal I, II, III

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel

Goal I, II, III

METRICS

- Board Engagement Survey (2026)
- Board participation and attendance
- Percentage of policies reviewed from an equity lens
- Diversity of the Board as a reflection of the GTA and the communities the Museum serves

Initiative F

Delivery of the Ground Floor Transformation Project

OBJECTIVE

A reimagining of the ground floor was first identified as a strategic priority in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. The goal was to undertake a renovation to transform the visitor experience and implement a gallery development plan for the reinterpretation of the permanent collections. Guided by the principles of Access, Connectivity, and Indigeneity, the new ground floor will engage diverse audiences, fulfill curatorial objectives that emphasize cultural connections, and take meaningful actions to address the

Museum's commitment to support Indigenous self-determination.

OUTCOMES

- Collections reinterpreted to enhance conversations across cultures and time periods
- Enhanced sense of belonging through “community-first” approach to design, programming, and access
- The act of making is foregrounded to provoke curiosity and engagement in a flexible-use environment
- Increased awareness of Indigenous ceramics through the display of historical cultural belongings and contemporary artworks
- Transparency around institutional practices through open storage, contextualization of didactics, and new curatorial narratives and connections



Makerspace rendering. Courtesy of Montgomery Sisam Architects

- Increased opportunities for enriched learning and self-guided exploration
- Ground floor is a welcoming environment with improved retail, reception, and public spaces

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work

Goal I, II, IV, V

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations

Goal I, II, III, IV

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics

Goal I, II, III

Build operational and organizational sustainability

Goal I, II, IV, V

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel

Goal I, II, III

METRICS

- Project completed on budget
- Project completed on deadline
- Rebound in attendance numbers post reopening
- Rebound in hospitality bookings, including lobby and Community Learning Centre (CLC), post reopening
- Number of participants and programs in the Makerspace
- % of capital campaign goal reached
- Results of visitor experience surveys

Initiative G

Activate the Community Learning Centre (CLC)

OBJECTIVE

The new Community Learning Centre (CLC) will be a dynamic space for connection and access, creating opportunities for diverse audiences to engage in a welcoming and inclusive environment. It will support initiatives from across Museum operations, including external bookings, by providing adaptable space for learning, creativity, and dialogue.

The CLC will strengthen the Museum’s role as an accessible and responsive cultural resource, expanding

opportunities for meaningful programming related to our exhibitions, collections, and community projects.

OUTCOMES

- An accessible and inclusive space for diverse audiences to engage with the Museum’s exhibitions, collections, and community programming
- A consistent rhythm of programming that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve, offering regular opportunities for learning and participation
- New ideas and experimental approaches to programming
- A space for peer institutions and community groups, including Indigenous communities, to hold their own gatherings, or collaborate with the Museum
- A venue for visitors and members of

the public, including school groups, to engage in relaxed, casual interactions

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work
[Goal I, II, IV, V](#)

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations
[Goal I, III](#)

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics
[Goal I, II, III](#)

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel
[Goal I, II, III](#)

METRICS

- Number of programs and bookings by Education and Hospitality

- Number of participants in programs, workshops, and events
- Visitor frequency and attendance trends over time
- Number of community partnerships, community-led contributions, and joint projects

Initiative H

Safety and Infrastructure Sustainability

OBJECTIVE

The Gardiner Museum is a prominent and architecturally important facility that hosts approximately 75,000 visitors each year. As a designated Category “A” facility, it serves as a safeguard for the Museum’s important collection.

To strategically manage its aging infrastructure, the Gardiner requires a holistic facility maintenance and betterment plan to track the life cycle of the Museum’s capital assets.

A comprehensive plan is critical for long-range financial modelling, to

avoid business interruptions, and ensure the safety of staff, visitors, and the objects we steward.

Adjacent to this is the prioritization of an aligned Health and Safety Plan to manage and reduce workplace risks, protect employees, and ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

OUTCOMES

- Facility Infrastructure Condition Report that provides current condition and state of repair for core building components
- Facility Maintenance Betterment Plan that ensures strategic investment in facility infrastructure, including preventative maintenance, scheduled inspections, and capital improvements
- Strengthened Health and Safety Plan that informs the organization’s policymaking, communication, and training protocols

- Proactive culture of care and awareness that minimizes the risk of injury and incidents
- Ongoing process for identification of issues and improvements to assist with future health and safety initiatives
- Museum moves beyond waste management and recycling practices to adopt circular solutions to exhibition design

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work
[Goal II, III](#)

Build operational and organizational sustainability
[Goal II, III, IV, V](#)

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel
[Goal I, II, III](#)

METRICS

- 5-year budget plan for capital renewal matched by internally restricted investment fund performance and allocation
- Gardiner in full compliance or exceeding requirements of OHSA and its regulations

Initiative I

Organizational Culture

OBJECTIVE

The Gardiner strives to be an employer of choice that prioritizes an empowering and rewarding workplace culture. When asked, staff feedback has consistently referenced clear communication, opportunities for learning and socializing together, and more time to be creative and innovate as important to organizational culture.

The Museum is committed to an ongoing practice of responsiveness and supportiveness. We recognize our success as an institution depends on articulating a common set of shared values, behaviours, and beliefs, unified behind a collective purpose supported by all. We strive to create

a healthy, supportive, and flexible environment for all staff and volunteers through equitable, fair, and transparent practices and policies.

OUTCOMES

- Environment of continuous responsiveness and improvement to staff and volunteer wellbeing, development, and satisfaction
- Employee and volunteer engagement and retention enhanced by efforts to increase connection and communication, and modulate capacity issues
- Strategic Plan provides a foundation for shared vision and priorities, and opportunities for celebrating our collective impact
- Initiatives encourage cross-departmental collaboration, bringing diverse perspectives to issues and problems, and strengthening relationships

between team members who may not otherwise have an opportunity to interact on a day-to-day basis

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work

Goal II, III, IV

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations

Goal II, III

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics

Goal II, III

Build operational and organizational sustainability

Goal II, III, IV

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel

Goal I, II

METRICS

- Anonymous job satisfaction scores and surveys testing alignment of employees' day-to-day work to the Strategic Plan
- Employee turnover and retention rate
- Frequency and success of new ideas
- Internal promotion rate
- Training and development completion rates
- Performance review feedback

Initiative J

Membership and Donor Renewal and Growth

OBJECTIVE

Since 2020, private sector fundraising has been challenged by shifts in donor behaviours and operational interruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ground Floor Transformation Project. These factors, both sectoral and unique to the Gardiner, have impeded the growth of our membership community and the institution's goals to innovate and expand programming.

The momentum surrounding the completion of the Ground Floor Transformation Project in fall 2025

presents an opportunity to reinvigorate our membership community and build the sustainability of private sector revenue through new donors, multi-year commitments, and opportunities for legacy giving.

OUTCOMES

- Growth of the membership community resulting from the introduction of more accessible entry points and increased public interest in programs
- A membership community that mirrors our broader goals of audience diversification, representing an engaged prospect group with the potential for conversion to greater levels of giving
- An increase in private sector, non-membership gifts that make possible the growth of existing programs and development of new initiatives

- A shift toward multi-year funding opportunities to facilitate longer-term planning around programming

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work

Goal I, II

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations

Goal I, III

Build operational and organizational sustainability

Goal I, II, IV

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel

Goal I, Goal II

METRICS

- Health of membership community, including rate of retention, conversion between membership tiers, and percentage of new members year-over-year
- Growth of the non-membership portfolio of private sector donations, including the number of donors making these gifts and the total revenue resulting from their gifts
- Acquisition of multi-year gifts from non-government sources
- A formalized Planned Giving program with increased participation

2024 INTERNATIONAL CERAMIC ART FAIR

Contemporary ceramics is a vibrant and intensely varied field of artistic practice. This explosion of activity is taking place globally, in areas of recent industrial ceramic production, like Japan and England, as well as in the many communities that are active as centres of global contemporary art. Ceramics participates equally in mainstream and specialist artistic discourses, bringing specific material properties and symbolic meanings to bear. The International Ceramic Art Fair (ICAF) presents some of the most compelling recent work by emerging and established artists, many of whom are exhibiting in Toronto for the first time.

ICAF 2024 focuses on the theme of gathering to explore ways in which artworks, and clay as a medium, can bring us together to create common ground. Amid political, religious, ethnic, class, and cultural divides, gathering enables us to focus on how we are united in

our humanity, highlighting shared experiences and needs. Gathering encourages listening, as we share space through the action of coming together. To gather is also to collect our resources, both internal and external, for healing and survival. We gather with emotional and spiritual awareness, honoring our full capacities as beings to face the challenges and opportunities before us. ICAF 2024 highlights Canadian and international artists who impact clay as a medium for coming together to reassert our shared bonds with each other and the Earth.

The works on view here are also for sale, advancing our mission of supporting living artists while promoting discourse in the field of ceramics. As you experience these artworks, we invite you to consider how they act as agents of gathering, engaging you into conversations that generate the society we create together.

Gallery
Ferrin
Contemporary
Cummington,
Massachusetts

For more than 60 years, I have been a leading voice in the ceramic art world. I have been a pioneer in promoting ceramic art as a fine art medium and in promoting the work of ceramic artists.

It is a pleasure to be exhibiting my work at the International Ceramic Art Fair. I am excited to share my work with you and to hear your thoughts on my work.



Initiative K

International Ceramic Art Fair (ICAF) Evolution

OBJECTIVE

Since its reintroduction in a 10-day format in 2022, the International Ceramic Art Fair (ICAF) has been successfully established as a property of the Gardiner Museum, but has yet to realize its full potential as a driver of audiences, partnerships, and fundraising.

This Initiative focuses on the evolution of ICAF's structure, framework, and delivery mechanisms to ensure the model's sustainability, the strength of its partnerships, and its impact on public engagement goals.

OUTCOMES

- Shift to a biennial schedule with an extended presentation period produces a more sustainable delivery model, integrated within the Museum's curatorial calendar
- Extended length with strategically dispersed programming retains the energy of the Fair's former iterations, while providing for greater audience engagement and management of Museum resources
- Opportunities for partnership and funding expand in line with ICAF's scope and duration
- Transition to a "festival" model that emphasizes audience and civic engagement and partnerships over the commercial connotations of an art fair

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work
[Goal I, IV, V](#)

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations
[Goal II, III](#)

Reflect the diversity of human experiences through ceramics
[Goal I, II, III](#)

Build operational and organizational sustainability
[Goal I, IV, V](#)

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel
[Goal I, II, III](#)

METRICS

- Number of visitors during ICAF
- Number of participants in ICAF programs, including the symposium

- Number of artists and galleries engaged
- Expansion of international representation (evaluated by demographics of participating artists and galleries)
- Sustainability and profitability of funding model
- Revenue from fundraising events taking place during ICAF

Initiative L

Equity-Focused Data & Communications Plan

OBJECTIVE

We will develop and implement an Equity-Focused Data & Communications Plan to gather demographic information from our audiences and partners and invite feedback about their experiences at the Gardiner. This will allow us to identify gaps and opportunities to engage more intentionally with new and underrepresented voices through programming, partnerships, gallery interpretation, and marketing.

We will also share stories internally and with the public that bring visibility to the Museum's community

driven projects and partnerships, demonstrating our commitment to our Core Values of equity and collaboration.

OUTCOMES

- Cross-departmental decision making that seeks to engage new and underrepresented voices and shape the visitor experience based on data and feedback from our audiences
- Processes for gathering and applying feedback from our partners throughout and after a project
- Regular sharing of information internally about the Museum's community projects and partnerships, ensuring staff and volunteers feel included and invested in the work
- Increased public awareness about the Museum's equity-based initiatives and commitment to

Community
Arts Space
2023

Mark Making: Narrating Our Histories

Community Arts Space Presentation led by
Sharon Norwood in partnership with VIBE Arts

Lead Sponsor



Project Partner



anti-racism, anti-oppression, and inclusion, fostering a sense of belonging among our audiences

- Opportunities for artists and community partners from equity-seeking groups to benefit from the Gardiner's platform, with the Museum sharing power and authority

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work.
Goal I, IV, V

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations.
Goal I, II, III

Build operational and organizational sustainability.
Goal III

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel.
Goal II, III

METRICS

- Amount and quality of survey data compiled
- Trends in visitor demographics
- Museum and programs attendance
- Feedback from visitors
- Feedback from staff
- Feedback from community partners
- Social media engagement
- E-newsletter analytics
- Donor awareness and support for equity-driven projects

Initiative M

Optimize Sources of Operating Revenues

OBJECTIVE

With a focus on sustainability and optimizing our strengths, we will develop and refine an integrated financial and operational planning approach that connects exhibitions, programming, marketing, outreach, and visitor welcome. This initiative will support our business decisions while enhancing our audience's experience and relationship with the Gardiner.

OUTCOMES

- More in-depth understanding of current audience behaviors
- Better informed operations investment decisions, including around exhibitions, staff resources, and outside services
- New opportunities realized by identifying efficiencies and leveraging areas of success tied to revenue streams
- A clear understanding of the interdependence of Museum operations that informs planning effectiveness, efficiency, and growth opportunities
- 360-degree view of our revenue streams, ensuring analytics and measures for targeted revenue growth can be defined and tracked effectively
- Growth in audience visits, engagement, membership, Shop sales, and classes

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work

Goal I

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations

Goal I

Build operational and organizational sustainability

Goal I, II, III, IV, V

Envision the Museum as a community-building vessel

Goal I, II

METRICS

- Data warehouse completed
- Staff will have access to the data warehouse for reporting and added analytical capabilities
- The 2026 budget process will be informed by the Strategic Plan and our expanded analytical capabilities

Initiative N

Access and Storytelling in the Collections Galleries

OBJECTIVE

Focusing on access, visitor engagement, and storytelling across the permanent collection galleries, this Initiative brings together interrelated undertakings that will benefit from an intentional and holistic approach.

The Ground Floor Transformation Project prompts a deep reflection on how we interpret our permanent collections and engage visitors by expanding and diversifying narratives, including through digital storytelling and oral histories, while also working towards the goal of incorporating

making and ceramic processes in our displays.

The renovated ground floor will further promote access to the collection through high-density or open storage displays. We will also diversify language offerings in the galleries to increase accessibility, lower barriers to engagement, and make visitors feel welcome.

OUTCOMES

- Center visitor experience and engagement in the ground-floor galleries through diverse forms of storytelling, and carry this reflection throughout the Museum
- Displays that establish connections to making by highlighting process
- Intentional use of technology in the galleries that meets visitor needs and is informed by past projects
- Development and implementation of kiosks in the ground-floor

galleries that unite analogue and digital experiences, and highlight connections between collection areas

- Development and implementation of oral history project in the gallery of Indigenous Ceramics, forging partnerships with Indigenous artists and communities
- Increased access to the collection through open storage displays in the Community Learning Centre (CLC) and Makerspace
- New approaches to engagement in the Rosalie Wise Sharp Gallery
- Increased accessibility, including through multi-lingual content, inclusive of Indigenous language(s)
- Display spaces that have a wider range of interpretive models
- Publications disseminating our work and museological approaches

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

Foreground equity as a core principle in all aspects of our work
[Goal I, IV, V](#)

Engage with socially relevant issues and cultural conversations
[Goal I](#)

Reflect the diversity of human experience through ceramics
[Goal II, III](#)

Leverage the Museum as a community-building vessel
[Goal II](#)

METRICS

- Data on visitor engagement through visitor analytics
- Museum attendance and anecdotal visitor feedback
- Feedback from staff as they engage with the public
- Data on collection objects on view



Collecting Memories: 40 Years of Ceramics and Community, January 2025. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

Appendix A

The Planning Process

From the outset, there was a desire to ensure the planning process prioritized an Equity Action Plan as a stand-alone component and with aspects fully embedded throughout all aspects of the Strategic Objectives, Goals, and Initiatives.

Museum leadership collaborated with consultants Origin Studios and Evenings & Weekends to help facilitate a transparent process of gathering information, engagement, and feedback.

Strategic Plan

Origin Studios Scope of Work

Origin Studios, museum strategists and interpretative planners, were retained in the fall of 2023 to lead the gallery reinstallation and interpretive planning for the Ground Floor Transformation Project. In early 2024, the scope of their work was enlarged to include the strategic planning process.

The scope of their work included:

1. Materials Review

A thorough review of organizational documents, including copies of previous Strategic Plans, 2023-2028 Business Plan, Curatorial Vision Statement 2019, 2023 Ontario Arts Council application, summary of previous AOAR work the date, Ground Floor Transformation Project information, relevant policies, and an organizational chart.

2. Indigenous Advisory Circle Conversation January 30, 2024

Facilitated by Jeff Thomas with the support of Origin Studio, the discussion with the Indigenous Advisory Circle covered a range of topics including the special exhibition *Test Kitchen: A Museum Project*, and the objectives of the Ground Floor Transformation Project as they relate to the Strategic Plan.

3. Board Executive Workshop April 2, 2024

Origin Studios led the six members of the Board Executive through a mission and vision review exercise. Members were asked to provide perspective on the Gardiner's role(s) in the community, to share what is working well, what the Gardiner is uniquely positioned to do, how the Ground Floor Transformation Project builds on previous goals, and their hopes for the future of the Museum.

4. Senior Management Workshop May 1, 2024

Origin Studios met with the members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to reflect on the previous Strategic Plan Objectives and their relevance going forward. SMT was asked to consider language for our Mission, Vision, and Core Values, and test previous Strategic Objectives with a mind toward the future of the Museum.

5. Community Outreach Workshop May 7, 2024

Origin Studios led a workshop with representatives of community partners Sheridan College, Workman Arts, The 519, Arts Starts, and Sundance Harvest to identify the Gardiner's unique role in support their organization, ascertain their ongoing needs and challenges, and gain insight into areas for improvement.

6. Board and Leadership Workshop May 13, 2024

Origin Studios led a visioning workshop with 19 Board members and senior leadership to gather perspectives on

current versus future aspirations for the Museum. Topics included Vision, Mission, and Core Values testing, Strategic Objective review, and the Board's role in the success of the Plan. Evening & Weekends audited this session to support their work on the Equity Plan.

7. All Staff Workshop July 17, 2024

Origin Studios led an offsite workshop with 20 full and part-time staff to review background research, community feedback, and findings to date; discuss proposed Core Values; and further refine the Strategic Objectives and statements.

8. Senior Management Workshops, December 2024 - February 2025

Following Origin Studios' submission of an Outcomes Report, SMT met regularly over the course of three months to review the extensive findings and feedback, honing and refining priorities, language, and workflow sequencing that inform the framework of the Plan.

9. All Staff Workshop February 10, 2025

A draft version of the Plan's language and Initiatives was socialized in small group settings to test for improvements, identify gaps, and invite further collaboration with cross-departmental perspectives.

Equity Action Plan

Evenings & Weekends Scope of Work

Equity consultants Evenings & Weekends were retained in March of 2024 to support the Museum in building a new Equity Action Plan to intersect with the Strategic Plan.

The scope of their work included:

1. Material Review

A thorough review of organizational documents, including a summary of previous AOAR work, relevant policies, Employee Handbook, 2023-2028 Business Plan, template

job description, Financial Statements (2022), previous Strategic Plans, onboarding materials for staff and Board, and an organizational chart. Their final report included findings from workshops (see below) and surveys, recommendations, an action plan, and a policy review with an AOAR lens.

2. All Staff Workshop March 20, 2024

Staff participated in an internally-led dialogue to prioritize issues of concern and greatest urgency in preparation for work on the Equity Action Plan. There was consensus on the brief shared with Evenings & Weekends: a clear and actionable plan that reflects the realities of the Museum's resources and capacity. It needed to strike a balance between written policy with room for creativity, adaptability, and organic interactions around the following priority themes: Training & Consistency; Internal Communications & Workflow; Collections & Visitor Experience; and Staff & Board.

3. Board Workshop May 13, 2024

Evening & Weekends conducted a Board workshop to understand policy and strategy development relative to AOAR best practices and to identify the ways racism and oppression may show up in the organization and its work. Origin Studios audited this workshop to support their work on the Strategic Plan.

4. Staff Survey June 13, 2024

Evenings & Weekends conducted an anonymous staff survey to gather feedback on previous AOAR initiatives, assess the current state of AOAR in the workplace, and understand the staff experience.

5. Small Group "House Meetings" (multiple) June 19, 2024

Evenings & Weekends led several small "House Meetings" without SMT. The purpose was to understand the ways racism and oppression show up in the organization and our work, and identify opportunities to address it through tangible and meaningful change.

6. Board Demographic Survey June 26, 2024

Evenings & Weekends conducted an anonymous survey to gather feedback on Board demographics and skills.

7. Governance and Risk Committee & Board Feedback November - December 2024

Following a 6-month process, Evenings & Weekends submitted reports for internal analysis detailing their findings, survey results, feedback, and recommendations, which have served to inform and guide the Equity Action Plan:

1. Gardiner Museum Board Demographics Survey
2. Policy Analysis with AOAR Lens
3. Board Meeting: What We Heard
4. Anti-Oppression Anti-Racism Recommendations (results from small group Listening Sessions with staff, staff survey, and All Staff Workshop).

Findings were reviewed and recommendations taken from the Governance & Risk Committee and Board to incorporate their commitment and actions under the Plan.

8. Senior Management Workshops

January - February 2025

Following Evening & Weekend's delivery of their reports and findings, SMT met regularly over the course of three months to review the extensive findings and feedback, honing and refining priorities, language, and workflow sequencing that inform the framework of the Plan.

9. All Staff Workshop

February 10, 2025

A draft version of the Plan's language and Initiatives specific to equity was socialized in small group settings to test for improvement, identify gaps, and invite further collaboration with cross-departmental perspectives.

Images

COVER: Rendering of the ground-floor galleries. Courtesy of Montgomery Sisam Architects. PAGE 2: Sergei Isupov (Russian, b. 1963), *Lady Cat* (detail), 2012, The Diana Reitberger Collection, G23.10.1 PAGE 3: Photo by Tom Arban. PAGE 4: Bottle Vase with Scarab Beetle in the Japonesque Style (detail), Designed by Christopher Dresser (1834 - 1904), Minton, England, c.1870, Museum Purchase, G14.13.1. PAGE 13: 'Bianhu' (flask) with bajixiang or the eight Buddhist emblem, Jingdezhen, China, c.1736-95, The Robert Murray Bell and Ann Walker Bell Collection of Blue and White Chinese Porcelain, G98.9.1. PAGE 23: One of a Pair of Pug Dogs from the Royal Palace at Warsaw (detail), Meissen, Germany, 1741-1745, Gift of George and Helen Gardiner, G83.1.668.1-2
BACK COVER: Rendering of the Hilary and Galen Weston Foundation Hall. Courtesy of Montgomery Sisam Architects

Amphries Collections Gallery

