



Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Annual Accountability Report
for the Fiscal Year 2024-25





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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2025 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's 2024-25 Business Plan.

David Ritcey
Minister of Communities, Culture,
Tourism and Heritage

Grant Machum
Chair, Board of Directors

Sarah Moore Fillmore
Chief Executive Officer

Message from the CEO

2024-25 was an exciting year at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS). This year our team looked to the future, as we worked collaboratively and carefully to develop our new strategic plan, *Framing the Future*. This important consultative work helped create a path forward with a focused vision. Over the next five years this plan will help direct the Gallery to become an inclusive, sustainable, and ambitious leader in the visual arts.

When the AGNS reopened in June after required infrastructure work, visitors were treated to two incredible exhibitions: *Mitchell Wiebe: VampSites*, developed by Confederation Centre for the Arts, and *Denyse Thomasos: just beyond*, organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Remai Modern.

In the fall, we welcomed contemporary artists Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins for the opening of their exhibition *Three Dimensions*, in collaboration with Contemporary Calgary. This exhibition played an important role in engaging visitors as the AGNS experienced another temporary maintenance closure, this time of the North building.

A particular highlight of the past year was the launch of the new emerging artist platform; a program aimed at giving space and opportunities to an artist at the formative stage of their practice. This initiative launched with the opening of *OH BABY* which featured new works by local, award-winning artist Séamus Gallagher.



We continued to connect with Nova Scotians through our art education workshops and artist-led programs, reaching nearly 4,000 youth, making an important impact in communities around the province.

I want to thank our wonderful Board of Directors, the incredible staff, and dedicated volunteers for making this year a success. I look forward to our work together in 2025-26 and working towards framing the future for the visual arts in Nova Scotia.



Sarah Moore Fillmore
Chief Executive Officer, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia



Measuring Performance

Strategic Initiative 1: Present Art and Preserve the Collection

The 2024-25 exhibition program was built upon a framework of collaboration, engagement, diversity, stewardship, and the continued recognition and support of artists and their ability to change how we experience and understand the world. Parallel programming supported the exhibitions. In 2024-25 the exhibition program was based on the following themes:

- Indigenous & Diverse Communities
- Regional Highlights
- Global Concerns
- Collectors and Collections

In 2024-25, the AGNS aimed to build upon the collection work accomplished in 2023-24 and further refine its acquisition strategy, aiming to fortify the work of artists within the region and beyond.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1: Present Art and Preserve the Collection (cont)

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE 2024-25 GOALS WERE:

- 1 Present an exhibition and publications program that builds partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally
 - 2 Engage with the practices of contemporary Indigenous artists
 - 3 Focus on Atlantic Canada art and artists
 - 4 Update permanent collection storage plans and acquisition strategy
-

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

AGNS presented the following exhibitions in 2024-25:

- *VampSites* by the Halifax-based artist Mitchell Wiebe organized by Confederation Centre of the Arts.
- *Mi'kma'ki Artists' Spotlight* and *(Tea)chings* space which celebrated the practices of contemporary Indigenous artists.
- *just beyond*, organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Remai Modern, the first-ever career retrospective of the late Trinidadian-Canadian artist Denyse Thomasos.
- *Three Dimensions*, organized by Contemporary Calgary, showcased the multidisciplinary art practice of Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1: Present Art and Preserve the Collection (cont)

- *OH BABY* showcased a new body of work by emerging artist Séamus Gallagher, which combined photo, video, drag, speculative fiction, sculpture, and costuming.
- *2023 Nova Scotia Art Bank Purchases* exhibition included works by 17 Nova Scotian artists whose artworks through the Art Bank Purchase Program
- *Reshaping Function* included works from the Permanent Collection by internationally renowned Acadian ceramic artist Léopold L. Foulem.

AGNS was not able to deliver *Oluseye Ogunlesi: Black Ark* during the winter of 2024-25 due to the closure of the building for elevator upgrades. This exhibition was rescheduled and opened in April 2025.

AGNS completed the update of the acquisition strategy which was approved by the Board. The acquisition processes update was delayed by the building project as staff resources were redirected to assess and prepare current gallery spaces to ensure the safety of the collection during building upgrades.

AGNS also deferred some of the planned work related to the Permanent Collection storage plan to ensure alignment with the new strategic plan.



Measuring Performance

Strategic Initiative 2: Engaging People: Connect People Through Art

The AGNS remains dedicated to fostering meaningful engagement between individuals and art, striving to make it an accessible and enriching experience for everyone. Through exhibitions, educational initiatives, and programs, AGNS aims to bridge the gap between diverse audiences and the transformative power of art. As a cultural institution, AGNS's aspiration is to provide a space where the exploration of artistic expression is inclusive and integral to the provincial landscape.

In 2024-25, the brand continued to guide public offerings and decisions related to Gallery programming, ensuring the AGNS fulfilled its brand promise throughout the year. Efforts to strengthen the Gallery brand continued, aiming to create a space for free thinking and dialogue with art and artistic practice at its core.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE 2024-25 GOALS WERE:

- 1 Heighten the profile of the AGNS brand through advertising and marketing initiatives.
- 2 Enhance public offerings to align the AGNS with public demand.
- 3 Continue to integrate best practices related to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2: Engaging People (cont)

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

In 2024-25, the AGNS delivered on its goal to heighten the profile of the AGNS brand by delivering the following:

- AGNS ran several campaigns throughout the year for the exhibitions on view, a summer tourism campaign, a holiday campaign to drive Gallery Shop sales, partner campaigns with tourism operators and destination marketing organizations, and social media initiatives to drive ticket sales and program participation. The AGNS had a total marketing campaign reach of over 14,880,000 for the year.
- The Gallery Shop sales play an important role in revenue generation for the AGNS. To bolster this, the AGNS ran a campaign to highlight local makers and Permanent Collection merchandise available for sale in the Gallery Shop. This campaign started in November and ran until late-December. This campaign received over 3.4 million impressions and saw over 33,000 clicks to the Gallery Shop website.
- The AGNS was fully closed for maintenance from February 1, 2024 – June 7, 2024 and the North building was closed from December 2, 2024 – April 5, 2025. These closures had a negative impact on visitation, dropping to 45,383 visitors, a 21.5% decrease over the previous year.





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2: Engaging People (cont)

In 2024-25, AGNS delivered a range of programs inviting people of diverse backgrounds, ages, and abilities to engage with art. This year, the AGNS hosted hands-on activities, lecture style and panel artist talks, pop-up artmaking, and collaborative partner programs to bring art to people around the province. During the year, 4,051 people participated in AGNS programs. In-gallery and school outreach programs reached 3,848 students.

The ArtReach and ArtsSmarts programs provided engaging opportunities for artists to work with teachers and students, promoting and celebrating access to art across the province. These programs develop artmaking skills, support professional development for teachers, foster collaboration and inclusion among students and communities, and build understanding and appreciation of the arts. In 2024-25, AGNS hosted 196 sessions and engaged more than 2,259 students in formative experiences with artists.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2: Engaging People (cont)

Programs Offered:

- Art Camps
- Art Events
- Artful Afternoon
- Artists Talks
- ArtReach
- ArtsSmarts
- Autism Arts
- BMO Free Access
- Creative Minds
- Ask Me Program
- Curators' Tour
- French Tours
- In-Gallery School Visits
- Key Frames
- Make Day
- Memory Café
- Patron Programs
- Pride Art Jam
- Workshops



Measuring Performance

Strategic Initiative 3: Ensure a Sustainable Operating Model

In our commitment to the artistic and cultural enrichment of Nova Scotia, the AGNS understands the importance of fostering sustainability in our operating model. In 2023-24, changes to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Act were adopted to strengthen and modernize the AGNS's governance and operations, ensuring the utilization of its resources with appropriate oversight and accountability. Embracing the responsibility to ensure the longevity of our institution, the AGNS looks to increase raised and earned revenue to provide financial stability. A sustainable revenue model is a cornerstone which will allow the AGNS to continue to deliver high-quality exhibitions and programming that contribute to the provincial economy and the wellbeing of Nova Scotians.

Success at the AGNS is also dependent on every member of our staff and dedicated volunteers. Through the 2024-25 business plan, the AGNS continued its work in creating an internal culture that is open, confident, and inviting, allowing every individual to find personal success aligned with the AGNS brand, strategic direction, and our ambitious future.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE 2024-25 GOALS WERE:

- 1 Develop a multi-year strategic plan that aligns AGNS with the community, partners, and supporters locally and nationally
- 2 Increase raised and earned revenues
- 3 Ensure current facilities have infrastructure to support operational requirements
- 4 Develop a safe and positive work culture





STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3: Enhancing the Business and Governance Model (cont)

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

AGNS's five-year strategic plan, Framing the Future, was approved by the Board of Directors in December 2024. The development of the plan was the result of a collaborative effort involving input from the community, the arts sector, volunteers, staff, leadership, and partners.

This plan is based on the shared vision for the AGNS to become a lively cultural centre that enhances the lives of Nova Scotians and visitors through the visual arts. The plan will help AGNS reimagine what it means to be a cultural institution for our local community and the global visual arts landscape. Through bold exhibitions, engaging programs, and immersive experiences we will spark conversations, ignite imaginations, and make art more accessible.

The goal of increasing raised and earned revenues was not achieved this year due mostly to the following factors:

- AGNS was closed to the public until June 7, 2024, and then had to partially close from December to March for building maintenance. The building closures resulted in fewer workshops and revenue generating programs like March Break camps and adult programming.
- Our Director of Philanthropy started in February 2024. The 2024-25 fiscal year was focused on developing new systems and approaches, introducing new team metrics and KPIs, and developing relationships with existing and prospective donors.
- Ongoing building closures also negatively impacted relationship development and continuity with both individual and corporate donors.

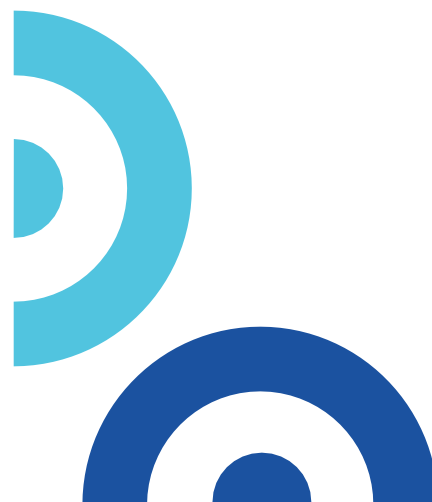


STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3: Enhancing the Business and Governance Model (cont)

In spite of the challenges from the building closures, AGNS was able to achieve the following:

- Focus on growing mid-level donors (\$1,000/year +) was successful and will drive future activity.
- Time was spent on key relationships with major donors and active corporate partners which resulted in renewed funding for BMO Free Access Thursday Nights, a significant endowment gift, continued support for arts education programs, and generating sponsorship for exhibitions.
- AGNS continued to focus on ways to engage donors through events and tours when the Gallery spaces were open to the public, as well as regular individual meetings with donors to share information and explore philanthropic alignment.

Due to the building closures and work on the strategic plan, AGNS deferred work on capital and operational planning for the current building. This was moved to the 2025-26 fiscal year to align with the accessibility plan and other building related initiatives identified in the strategic plan.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3: Enhancing the Business and Governance Model (cont)

As part of the ongoing work from the legislative changes, AGNS achieved its goal of ensuring a safe and positive work culture through the following:

- AGNS exceeded its goal to develop a methodology to measure employee engagement by launching the first AGNS specific Employee Engagement Survey. The overall engagement score was 82.5% based on a 96.9% participation rate.
- Throughout the year, focus groups met to develop an action plan based on survey results. Progress on the action plan was presented at every staff meeting.
- AGNS updated its Respectful Workplace Policy to reflect best practices including an increased focus on psychological safety and mental health.
- AGNS did not meet the target of 100% of staff complete specific annual training, 83% of staff completed all mandatory training and 100% of staff attended development sessions for the AGNS strategic plan and business plan.



Financial Results 2024-25

As at March 31	Budget \$	Actual \$	Variance \$
Revenue			
Operating	4,434,500	4,093,136	(341,364)
Programming	275,000	195,838	(79,162)
Gallery Shop	600,000	651,070	51,070
Other Revenue	163,000	465,413	302,413
	5,472,500	5,405,457	(67,043)
Expenditures			
Salaries and Benefits	3,086,000	3,217,352	131,352
Programming	990,000	855,143	(134,857)
Administration	401,500	465,661	64,161
Gallery Shop	352,000	358,985	6,985
Development and Marketing	391,000	345,939	(45,061)
Western Branch	96,000	27,022	(68,978)
Acquisitions	25,000	20,137	(4,863)
Visitor Experience	61,000	53,571	(7,429)
Building Operations	41,000	8,703	(32,297)
Total Expenditures before Amortization	5,443,500	5,352,513	(90,987)
	29,000	52,944	23,944
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets	29,000	17,080	11,920
Annual Surplus	—	35,864	35,864

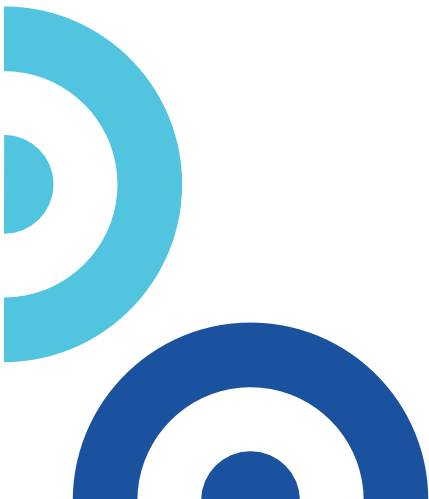


Notes to Financial Results

For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, AGNS's operations resulted in a surplus of \$35,864 despite a full closure in the first quarter and a partial closure in the fourth due to building repairs and maintenance.

AGNS's revenues were underbudget by \$67,043 or 1.2%. Operating revenue shortfalls resulted primarily from lower than budgeted admissions and reduced public programs. Lower than budgeted gifts from foundations and grants were partially offset by an unbudgeted one-time donation to the Endowment Fund, and strong wholesale performance from the Gallery Shop.

AGNS mitigated lower revenues through expense management as total expenditures before amortization were under budget by \$90,986 or 1.7%. The cost savings resulted from the deferral of exhibitions and programming because of the building closures (\$134,857), the closure of the Western Branch (\$68,978), and reductions in Marketing and Development expenses. These savings were offset by an increase in salaries and benefits due to the first full year of the Director of Philanthropy as well as higher than budgeted security costs. Administration was higher by \$64,161 due to higher professional fees as well as increased hardware and software costs for existing and new staff.





1723 Hollis Street, Halifax
Nova Scotia B3J 3C8 agns.ca