



# 2021 TRANSFORM TOGETHER

A Guide to the National Gallery of Canada's  
2021-2026 Strategic Plan




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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1. Introduction

Our Journey

JEDI & A: Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility

## 2. Our Purpose, Vision and Mission

## 3. Our Values

## 4. 2021-2026 Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillars

2021/2022 Outcomes

## 5. Summary

# OUR JOURNEY

**Great art institutions evolve.** They move through time and space, and make lasting impressions on the hearts, minds and cultures they touch.

As public stewards, we must ensure that the National Gallery of Canada's treasures not only grow, but can be meaningfully delivered in the present, and well maintained for the future.

In 2020, we organically mobilized in unprecedented ways to meet the challenges of a global pandemic and respond to a long-overdue need to prioritize justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

In 2021, as familiar cultural, economic and operational patterns give way to emerging needs, we need an even more strategic approach to our future.

This is the National Gallery of Canada's first-ever strategic plan.

It is the work of many voices across the Gallery and beyond. Far from being a singular vision, it is a reflection of deep collaboration.

The gift of a strategic plan is the unrivalled power that comes through aligned action around a shared purpose, vision and mission.

Although this document can help us navigate the unknown landscape of the future, we will still be asked to see with new eyes, to let go of old habits, and to work together in new ways as we embrace the unexpected.

At the same time, our past plays a critical role. The path ahead will demand of us our well-honed expertise, passion and knowledge of art and audience. Fortunately, we are at the top of our game.

Every chapter in an institution's story is marked by a call. Ours is to create a beacon of connection for the communities we exist to serve. **This is our journey.**

# JEDI & A: JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

There have long been calls for greater equity and inclusion within the cultural sector, from Indigenous, Black and racialized employees, artists and communities.

To ensure real and sustainable change, a lens of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility must be applied to all aspects of the Gallery's work.

**Going beyond acknowledgment of injustices, we are bringing an anti-racist and anti-oppression lens to our work.**

Furthermore, we have introduced the concept of two-eyed seeing to members of the Gallery team – allowing us to hold Indigenous ways of knowing and being alongside Western norms.

These lenses support the embracing of multiple perspectives, and are crucial to our ability to move beyond a single narrative towards equity. These inclusive and equitable practices will help to establish a sense of belonging and trust among all Gallery employees, volunteers and partners, as well as those joining us now and in the future – regardless of race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation or gender expression.

Although our work here has just begun, our shared commitment is expressed not only in intentional language, but also across our strategic pillars and outcomes. We will work to create an environment in which our employees, volunteers and partners feel empowered and safe to speak up when they witness barriers to equity and inclusion.

Lastly, for the Gallery to be a beacon of hope and healing, we must continue to educate ourselves, understand and work to remove systemic barriers and, day by day, cultivate a culture and practice grounded in justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

In addition to the Strategic Plan, our work will be guided by a Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Action Plan, which will help outline and prioritize our examination of all policies, procedures, structures, and informal and formal practices, to ensure that we address systemic racism, discrimination and other barriers to inclusion.

PURPOSE

RAISON D'ÊTRE

VISION

MISSION

We nurture interconnection across time and place.

Nous favorisons les interrelations dans le temps et l'espace.

We envision a future in which art has the power to build bridges, deepen relationships, and advance a more equitable society.

Nous envisageons un avenir dans lequel l'art a le pouvoir de construire des ponts, d'approfondir les relations et de favoriser l'avènement d'une société plus équitable.

Through the visual arts, we create dynamic experiences that open hearts and minds and allow for new ways of seeing ourselves, each other, and our diverse histories.

À travers les arts visuels, nous concevons des expériences dynamiques qui ouvrent le cœur et l'esprit et changent le regard que nous portons sur nous-mêmes, sur les autres et sur nos histoires respectives.

# PURPOSE

Why we choose to exist.

Everything is  
connected.



**We nurture interconnection across time and place.**



We encourage  
growth and  
development.

We anchor our present and future in the past  
and the knowledge of Indigenous Elders and ancestors.  
We honour the land upon which we are located.



We help people  
traverse and  
understand  
histories.



The many places,  
virtual and real,  
in which we serve.

# VISION

The impact we make - in the world and our communities - when we achieve our purpose.

- To understand one another and our lived experiences and identities better, and with more compassion.

A broad, confident ambition with space for new sources of meaning and growth.

We envision a future in which **art has the power to build bridges, deepen relationships,** and advance **a more equitable society.**

- Our ability to bring people together, towards a better understanding of one another's experiences and identities, with greater empathy.

As a public institution with a civic responsibility - the impact we seek in the world at large.



# MISSION

An ambitious yet achievable position that creates value for our audiences and communities.

Through the visual arts, we create **dynamic experiences** that **open hearts and minds** and allow for **new ways of seeing** ourselves, each other, and our **diverse histories**.

We do not shy away from discomfort; we embrace the full spectrum of response that the visual arts can uniquely bring.

We go beyond presentation, setting the bar high for discovery, engagement and learning.

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In service of a society that is more connected, diversely inclusive, and empathetic.

The impact we seek - to expand perspectives and understanding.

FOSTER BELONGING  
EMBRACE LEARN  
CHANGE AND EVOLVE  
LEAD TOGETHER  
BOLDLY

## FOSTER BELONGING

We work at the speed of **trust** – fostering relationships built upon mutual respect and compassion, which honour individual hopes and histories, while also seeking to understand the needs of the diverse communities and artists we serve.

We work **openly** and **inclusively** to create a welcoming experience for all.

## EMBRACE CHANGE

We continually review and assess our path, and have the **courage** to shift directions.

We are **adaptive**, open to what emerges, and **responsive** to what matters.

Through ongoing community consultation and collaboration, we are initiators of change.

## LEARN & EVOLVE TOGETHER

We are **honest** about what we know and do not know, and seek opportunities to learn.

It is our collective responsibility to **continuously improve** and to work together as we further the organization's mission.

We hold ourselves **accountable** to results, with a clear view of how our work affects the diverse communities we serve.

## LEAD BOLDLY

We generously share our national platform to **amplify** and **engage** a diversity of voices.

Passion and curiosity fuel our continual drive to **experiment** and **question** the status quo.

We inspire inclusive action through an understanding of the past, bold and forward-looking initiatives, and infectious **enthusiasm**.

# STRATEGIC PILLARS: OUR 5-YEAR AMBITION

- ONE Strengthen community connections through transformative **art experiences**
- TWO Build a collection and program that inspire human **connection**
- THREE Empower, support and build diverse and collaborative **team**
- FOUR Centre **Indigenous ways** of knowing and being
- FIVE Invest in operational resilience and **sustainability**

# STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE ART EXPERIENCES

Over the next 5 years, the Gallery will become recognized for the work it does towards building a flourishing community.

We will become a beacon of art-led transformation, and a meeting place for communities inside the National Capital Region and beyond.

Through inclusive and accessible art experiences, we will share stories, explore differences, and build meaningful relationships.

We will welcome, unite, and empower partners, artists and creators across the globe.

ONE Strengthen Community Connections  
Through Transformative Art Experiences

## 2021/2022 OUTCOMES

- 1 We actively transform our **online and in-person experiences** to make them more accessible and relevant for all. We actively seek out and welcome previously underserved communities at the NGC.
- 2 We intentionally define and resource our **collaborative community and artist network**. We bring together people, resources and ideas in new and lasting ways, amplifying their impact.
- 3 We create a clear vision to expand our **community programming**, and have a plan in place to create the internal capabilities and resources to fulfill this vision. Team members are aligned with the plan and understand the part they play.
- 4 We invest the time and resources to create a category-defining **new brand** that captures our ambition and the value we bring to the lives of our teams, visitors, and communities.

# BUILD A COLLECTION AND PROGRAM THAT INSPIRE HUMAN CONNECTION

Over the coming 5 years, the Gallery's collection and programs will become known for provoking new thought and forging new connections.

Through our bold and experimental program – in-person and online, across the country and around the world – we will take people on journeys of the heart, mind and soul.

We will collect and share with intention, representing the diverse and intersectional communities we serve – aware of the many histories and narratives that shape our visitors' experiences.

We seek – and do not shy away from – serving as a conduit for brave conversations that expand perspective and deepen empathy.

TWO Build a Collection and Program  
that Inspire Human Connection

## 2021/2022 OUTCOMES

- 1 We establish strong foundations for **digital programming and content** across the gallery, and streamline digital integration for all teams.
- 2 We **share the Gallery's collection with our communities in bold new ways**. We align our acquisitions strategy with our new purpose and vision, underpinned by our commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- 3 We pilot **bold, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable programming**. We use a clear process to identify and resource new programming and educational opportunities, based on our collection.



# EMPOWER, SUPPORT AND BUILD A DIVERSE AND COLLABORATIVE TEAM

Within 5 years, we will have nurtured a culture of inclusive and collaborative teams, in which people feel both agency and support.

We will have created a culture that values learning, accountability and passionate leadership. Teams will be trying new ways of working, and will work collaboratively to co-create experiences for our visitors.

We will remain committed to anti-racist, anti-oppression practices, and will continue working to identify and remove barriers to full participation and inclusion.

New hires will reflect the diversity of our visitors. We will integrate practices that restore and nurture our relationships with one another.

THREE Empower, Support and Build a  
Diverse and Collaborative Team

## 2021/2022 OUTCOMES

- 1 We **pilot processes related to strategic planning and culture change**. We use a rhythm of data-informed continuous learning and improvement internally. Teams share and exchange knowledge and practices with our local and global peer networks.
- 2 We **implement and refine a shared JEDI & A strategy** with strong assessment tools to support it. We actively address systemic barriers to equitable engagement and genuine inclusion for our visitors, community, and team members.
- 3 Fully-equipped teams actively engage in meaningful work, based on a shared strategic plan. Teamwork is collaborative, adaptive, and human-centred. **We continuously improve communication channels and develop leadership opportunities.**

# CENTRE INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING AND BEING

In 5 years, we will have embedded Indigenous ways of knowing throughout the Gallery experience, while deepening our relationships with Indigenous communities

With an emphasis on healing, we will anchor our present and future in the past, and in the knowledge of Indigenous Elders and ancestors.

Through partnerships with Indigenous leaders, we will create the space and time required to redesign our path as a colonial institution.

We will honour the land upon which we are located, and work towards building a more sustainable relationship with the environment.

We will build bridges, and actively invite others to join us on this enduring and collective journey.

FOUR Centre Indigenous Ways  
of Knowing and Being

## 2021/2022 OUTCOMES

- 1 We **re-examine our collection and programming through an Indigenous lens**, and are making Gallery experiences welcoming to Indigenous communities.
- 2 Based on an equitable agreement, we **routinely consult with the Gallery's formal Indigenous Advisory Committee.**
- 3 In collaboration with Indigenous leaders from our host nation, the **Gallery creates plans and pilots programs** to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being across the organization, both internally and externally.

# INVEST IN OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Despite uncertainty, in 5 years we will have not only made up lost ground, but will have also equipped the institution to be a leader for decades to come.

With the goal of fostering human connection, we will leverage new technologies to expand our reach, increase our impact, and deliver our best work.

Our physical space will be environmentally sustainable and built to last, and reflects our organizational values.

To establish a resilient future for the Gallery, we will expand existing funding streams and experiment with new forms of revenue generation.

FIVE Invest in Operational  
Resilience and Sustainability

- 1 **We roll out updated technology and digital** infrastructure across the Gallery, facilitating seamless online work for our teams, and engaging digital experiences for our audiences.
- 2 Our home in Ottawa reflects our human-centred vision – it is more accessible, welcoming and environmentally sustainable. **We invest in infrastructure** to support our scale, and carry environmental sustainability across all operational practices.

## 2021/2022 OUTCOMES

- 3 To become more flexible, inclusive, and visitor-centric, **we upskill team members and re-calibrate structures, processes, and procedures** to align with our shared strategy.
- 4 **We explore new revenue streams** (both earned and donation-based) and actively grow our contingency fund, allowing us to pursue new and experimental opportunities across the institution.

## PURPOSE

We nurture interconnection across time and place.

## VISION

We envision a future in which art has the power to build bridges, deepen relationships, and advance a more equitable society.

## MISSION

Through the visual arts, we create dynamic experiences that open hearts and minds and allow for new ways of seeing ourselves, each other, and our diverse histories.

## VALUES

1. Foster Belonging
2. Embrace Change
3. Learn & Evolve Together
4. Lead Boldly

## STRATEGIC PILLARS

1. Strengthen community connections through transformative art experiences
2. Build a collection and program that inspire human connection
3. Empower, support and build a diverse and collaborative team
4. Center Indigenous ways of knowing and being
5. Invest in operational resilience and sustainability