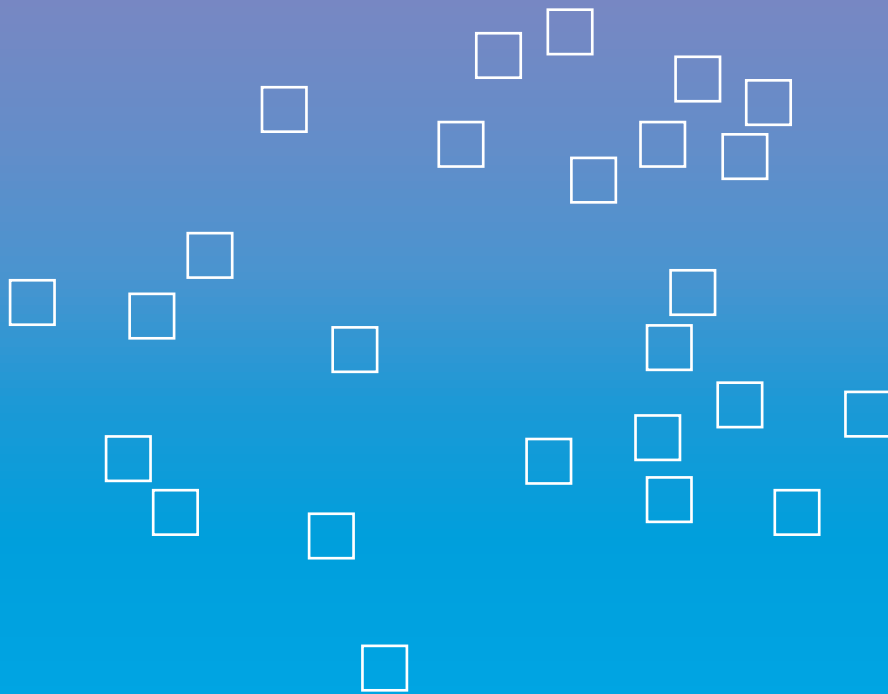




STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-24



VISION STATEMENT

Located on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional land of Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy), the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery is an accessible space that fosters visibility to the arts through diverse community engagement, supported by sustainable infrastructure, and founded on relationships, consultation, and education.

The University of Lethbridge Art Gallery wants to be the most accessible art gallery in Canada. We want to make a difference in people's lives by providing access for a diversity of people to the art that we house in our collection and that we display. We embrace the Blackfoot teaching that those with knowledge have a responsibility to care for and to share that knowledge.

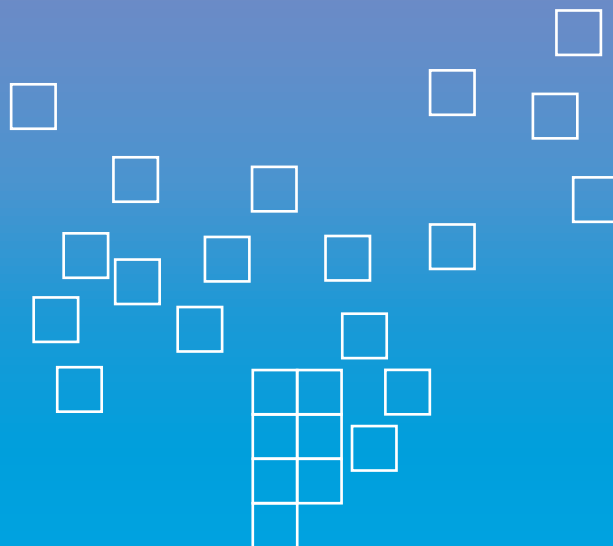
ARTISTIC STATEMENT

The artistic vision driving the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery's exhibitions and programs is to generate deeply meaningful engagement with art in order to spark contemplation, learning, and dialogue amongst a diverse group of people.

The three pillars guiding this vision are: **ART IS RELEVANT** - art sparks curiosity, invites learning, and crosses barriers; **RESEARCH** - the Art Gallery partners with scholars to study what is involved with effective public engagement and works with artists as long-term research partners; and **FOUNDATION** - we can only achieve our goal with a strong foundation of staff, resources, infrastructure, and a well-managed art collection.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our public programs, events, and exhibitions connect diverse communities, contemporary artists, and art collections. Let us give you a place to talk, think, create, and learn. For a meaningful experience, come through our door.



CORE VALUES & PRINCIPLES

LEARNING

We are here to mentor, share, and exchange ideas.

HONOURING

We honour the territory, the people, the cultures, and personal experience of all who come through our door.

SUSTAINABILITY

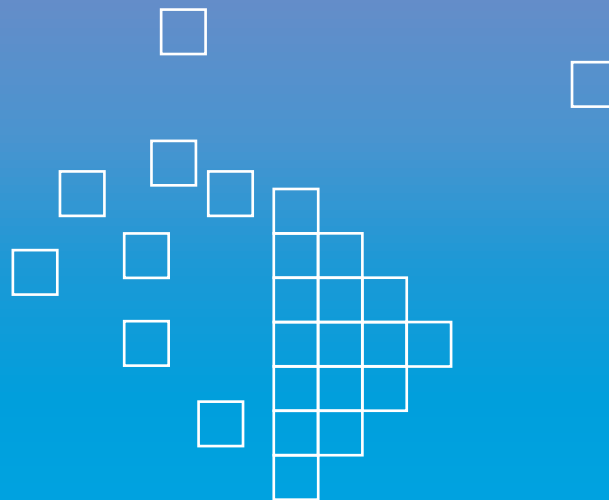
We work toward an environmentally conscious practice and space.

ACCEPTANCE

We will use discretion and empathy to interpret context.

SAFETY

Students, staff, guests, artist, funds, and the art collection will be safe.



GOALS

SECURE INDEPENDENT FUNDING SOURCES

In collaboration with the Art Gallery Advisory Committee and in consultation with uLethbridge Advancement, create a fundraising campaign for immediate programming support for the Art Gallery identifying current and future donors, and set goals with respect to securing major donors.

IMPROVE PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

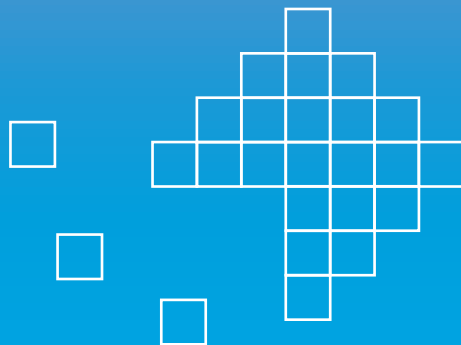
To enhance visitor experiences, increase traffic to the Gallery and broaden the scope of programming, accessibility must be improved. Expanding resources to include an on-site exhibition interpreter will be evaluated. Potential collaborative projects with on-campus departments and units (i.e. Ikaisskini and the Theatre Box Office) will be determined with respect to programming potential in the University Hall Atrium. Finally, increased on-campus signage and better parking models need to be evaluated, with achievable plans to provide better access by visitors.

SUSTAINABLE WORKLOADS

To better meet the strategic priorities of the Gallery and the University, prioritizing staff resources is essential. A working plan for internships, including potential for special one-time projects will be evaluated.

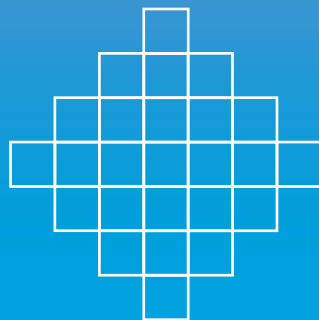
ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The Art Gallery will incorporate environmentally sustainable practices in all aspects of operations including exhibitions, public programming, research, infrastructure, art practices and advocacy. This includes eliminating single use materials for Gallery events, working with contemporary artists to reduce the ecological footprint of art installations, and completing installation of LED lighting in all Gallery spaces. Procurement practices will consider lower impact alternatives at every stage.



CONTEXT

The University of Lethbridge has a liberal education mandate focused on expanding knowledge and viewpoints, integrating knowledge across disciplines, generating critical and creative thinking, and fostering community citizenship. All four of these pillars are core to the Art Gallery's approach to engaging audiences and to the goals of our exhibitions, public programs, publications, website, and permanent collection of art. The Art Gallery functions within the University of Lethbridge's mandate to support the exploration of complex ideas through the diversity of artists we work with and the art works we present, and our connection to emerging artists who will benefit directly from the diversity of programming and community connections offered here. The University of Lethbridge Art Gallery supports the University's strategic direction to "build internal community and enhance relationships with external communities" and plays a key role in the public face of the University.



BRIEF HISTORY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Lethbridge is a small but dynamic city in Southern Alberta on the traditional territory of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy). Two Blackfoot reserves neighbour the city, Piikani and Kainai, the largest reserve in Canada, with Lethbridge serving as an urban hub for the nearby reserves and surrounding rural communities. Lethbridge recently reached the population milestone of 100,000 residents, fueled by growth which has included a wave of new immigration that has greatly expanded the city's demographics. The University of Lethbridge Art Gallery is a critical part of the city's renowned art community and houses one of the most significant art collections in Canada, with over 15,000 objects.

The University of Lethbridge was founded in 1967. In view of its decision to adopt a liberal education philosophy, Arthur Erickson was hired to design the original campus, which opened in 1972. The Art Gallery was created in 1981 with the construction of a Centre for the Arts which included a purpose-built exhibition space. In the 1990s, the UofL Art Gallery went through a crisis in management and collecting practices. Recovery began in 1999 with the construction of an art vault to house the majority of the collection. The space adjacent to the main gallery was renovated in 2000 to hold small works and create a study area.

Over the past 18 years, the UofL Art Gallery has transformed into a leader in innovative exhibition practices, collections management, and audience engagement in Canada. In 2001, Josephine Mills was hired as the Director/Curator, and a satellite space, the Helen Christou Gallery, opened as part of the main pedestrian route for visitors to campus. In 2008, the Art Gallery was added to multi-year funding with the Canada Council for the Arts, which greatly enhanced the ability for long-term planning. In 2009, the administrative structure was moved from the Faculty of Fine Arts; now, the Director/Curator reports to the Vice-President Academic/Provost, thereby ensuring that the Art Gallery is part of high level planning at the University and connected to the entire campus. Following this administrative improvement, an Advisory Committee was constituted and new governing policies were approved. Also in 2009, the main exhibition space was renovated with new lights, flooring, ceiling tiles and electrical upgrades. In 2012, the entrance to the gallery was renovated to create *Project Wall*, an interactive digital platform to promote Art Gallery programs. In 2013, Jim Coutts selected the UofL Art Gallery to receive his art collection, and in 2017 the Art Gallery was chosen to receive the majority of the art collection of the late Dr. Margaret "Marmie" Perkins Hess.

In 2017, Mills formed *Level 2: Lichen Lab*, a research team linked to the Art Gallery's programs that is studying what is involved with providing effective public engagement for contemporary art. In 2019, the research team launched *Concepts That Bite Through Time*, a project which connects people with Blackfoot knowledge through live events and digital images of historical Blackfoot objects held in British museum collections.

In 2019, the UofL Art Gallery created its first stand-alone strategic plan to thoughtfully move into a future that considers the current political and financial landscape, as well as the realities of climate change. As part of our commitment to learning from and creating deep connections with Indigenous peoples and perspectives, we hired Don McIntyre, an Ojibway artist and Management Professor at the University of Lethbridge to lead our planning process and help us create a truly specific set of strategies for advancement.

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