Art Acquisitions by Application

Indigenous arts
Visual arts & new media
Individual

This program supports Alberta's resident professional artists--individuals or ensembles--by purchasing their work for the permanent AFA Art Collection. Acquired artworks are showcased through AFA's outreach initiatives, including the Exhibition Loan Programs, Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX), Art Placement Programs, and the AFA *art house*.

Deadline information
April 1, 2027
Who can apply

Individual eligibility criteria

The AFA celebrates and supports diversity and is committed to creating equitable, inclusive, and accessible programs for all, free of barriers and discrimination. We recognize the unique contributions all artists make towards our community, and encourage applicants representing diverse communities including Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, women, people with disabilities, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

To be eligible for this acquisitions program, you must be a resident of Alberta. This means you:

- Are a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or Protected Person with an open work or study permit from inside Canada
- Have had your primary residence in Alberta for at least one full year before applying
- Ordinarily live in Alberta for at least six months of each year.

Applicants must be in good standing with the AFA, with no outstanding projects or reporting obligations through any of the AFA's programs (i.e., AFA grant programs).

Current applicants to AFA grant programs and recipients of past AFA grants and awards are eligible to apply.

You must meet the AFA's definition of a professional artist. This means you must have participated in at least one public showing of your artwork and demonstrate an ongoing record of your artistic practice in your materials submitted. For more information on professional artist status, please see the AFA's Collections Development Plan.

Applicants **must not** be enrolled in any formal art-training program at the time of application. At least one full calendar year must have passed since graduating/completion of any formal art-training study before applying.

Artist residencies and PhD programs are considered eligible, provided they are self-directed and do not have a formal art-training component.

Ensembles of Artists

Ensembles of artists are eligible to apply provided that each member meets all the individual eligibility requirements listed above.

The ensemble must designate one artists as the primary contact and every member of the ensemble is required to complete and submit a Designation for Submission by a Commercial Gallery, Organization or Artist Agent form, designating the primary contact to act on their behalf.

Galleries/Agents

Applications from a gallery/agent are eligible if the featured artist meets all individual eligibility requirements and has signed a Designation for Submission by a Commercial Gallery, Organization or Artist Agent form.

Sole proprietorships must apply as a gallery/agent classification and the sole owner must complete the above Designation form.

Applicants may be required to provide additional information to confirm eligibility. This may include proof of residency and/or documentation of graduation from a formal art training program to determine eligibility. Other supporting materials may also be requested if needed to meet program requirements.

If you have questions about your or your gallery's eligibility, please reach out to us directly.

What does this funding support?

Artworks purchased through the Art Acquisition by Application program are included as part of the AFA Art Collection and made available for programming and public access through the AFA's Travelling Exhibition Program, the online AFA Virtual Museum and AFA *art house*. The AFA Art Collection also functions as a key lending resource, providing artworks to public galleries, institutions, Government of Alberta offices, agencies, organizations, and not-for-profits through its Exhibition Loan Program, and Art Placement Program.

Eligible artworks must be:

- Original artworks created by a living artist.
- Produced within the last five years (calculated from the program deadline).
- Suitable for any required travel for public display (including freight elevator access) and manageable by handling by 1-2 people.
- In good physical condition.
- Display-ready, with appropriate hanging mechanism or hardware if needed.
- Priced at fair market value, based on the artist's past sales history and comparable works by peers. The AFA may request documentation to support the listed price.

Ineligible artworks:

- The AFA no longer acquires film, video, moving image, digital media, or other time-based media through this program.
- Artworks that require immediate maintenance and are not display ready upon submission may be deemed ineligible. Please check your works to ensure they are free from the following conditions to maintain eligibility:
    - flaking or chipped paint, glaze, or other materials
    - curling, faded, ripped or otherwise damaged artworks
    - artworks with surface scratches or abrasions
    - artworks containing unstable materials that are not archival quality or are known to deteriorate over time
    - artworks that are soiled and require surface cleaning
    - artworks with warped or unstable stretchers

The following applications are also ineligible:

- Student work or any artwork created while enrolled in a formal art-training program.
- Photographs or prints mounted directly onto aluminum, foamcore, or similar substrates.
- Applied arts (e.g., gaming, architecture, interior design, commercial photography).
- Graphic design, fashion design.
- Published books containing artwork or photographs.
- Reproductions or copies of original artworks (e.g., giclée prints).
- Artworks using Indigenous imagery, themes, or stories without evidence of respectful engagement, appropriate permissions, or community protocols. Such works are considered appropriation and do not meet CARFAC's Indigenous Protocols for the Visual Arts.

If you are unsure whether your artwork is eligible, you are encouraged to contact the AFA directly.

How to apply

We only accept applications through the Grant Administration Tracking and Evaluation (GATE) Front Office online application system. We must receive your online application through GATE Front Office no later than 11:59 pm Alberta Time on the deadline date, unless the deadline falls on a statutory holiday or a weekend when it will be extended until the next working day.

Please give the system time to process your application so that the AFA receives notification of your submission before the deadline date.

GATE username registration

First-time applicants will require a GATE Front Office username and password. Email us at registrationafa@gov.ab.ca to get your login information **at least five business days** prior to the application deadline.

Please include:

1. Your full legal name (if you are applying as an individual).

2. The common name of your business/organization and the legal entity name (if you are applying as a gallery or agent)
3. Your email address.

The username and password will be sent to the person at the email address provided.

If you already have a GATE profile for another AFA funding program, you can use this profile to apply to the Art Acquisition by Application Program.

For detailed step-by-step instructions on how to make a GATE application, please download an Art Acquisition by Application-specific GATE Front Office user guide.

- watch a short video that shows how to apply for this program.

Making an Application

A strong application describes the specific artworks submitted and gives context to the artworks and the artists' practice through the supporting documents.

- You may submit up to five artworks in a single application. All artworks must be included in the same application.
- Only one application per artist is allowed per annual intake.
  If two applications are submitted for the same artist (for example, one from the artist and one from a gallery), only the **first** application received will be reviewed. The second will be considered **ineligible** for that intake.
- You may submit multiple pieces that collectively form a single artwork—such as a diptych, triptych, or series—as one artwork, as long as:
  - The components are not sold separately.
  - The price listed is one total price for the entire set.
- Your application should include all the relevant information needed for adjudicators to assess the submission as a standalone item as the adjudicators may not be aware of your artistic practice outside of the materials submitted.

The following formlets are required in GATE:

- Accurate details about each piece (up to five artworks) **submitted** within the GATE Artwork Submission List**.**

This includes the artist’s name, title, date of work completion, if the work is framed, the edition number (if applicable), price, dimensions, category, medium, support and information on varnish/protective finish.

For photographs or print-based works, please ensure edition numbers and relevant details are included in the application.

You are not required to frame an artwork for the second stage viewing, however if the artwork is already framed and the materials are archival (acid free mats and frames), please submit the frame with the artwork and include the cost of the frame in the artwork price.

- An artistic statement about the piece in the Artwork Submission List.

The artist statement should be **specific to the artworks submitted** in the application and should place artworks in the context of your wider practice.

You should include any relevant information needed to help the review panel of adjudicators consider the works. If there are installation instructions or other relevant details that do not come across in the images and will help the adjudicator understand the work, please enter it into the “Artistic Statement about this piece” text box alongside your artistic statement.

- The exhibition history of the artworks submitted.

This information highlights where the artwork has been publicly displayed and helps adjudicators assess its potential role in AFA outreach programming.

If the artwork has **not** been exhibited before, please indicate by noting “has not been exhibited before.”

Attachments

The following attachments must be submitted within GATE:

NEW!

- A 300–500 word artist biography. An artist biography is now required and should be included as an attachment on the attachments page in GATE (attached as Image #28).

The artist biography is used to help understand an artist's practice and background. If the artwork submitted is purchased by the AFA, the biography will be posted to the AFA website with the artist's permission.

- A professional artistic resume (or CV/Curriculum Vitae).

The AFA understands that the term "professional" is subjective and may look different depending on cultural backgrounds and traditions.

For the purposes of the Art Acquisition by Application Program, artists are asked to demonstrate their professional status through their artistic resume/CV and by meeting at least one of the mandatory professional artist criteria outlined in the AFA's Collections Development Plan:

1. **Specialized training:**
   This can include formal education, apprenticeships, or self-taught expertise (in a manner appropriate to their art tradition).
2. **Peer recognition:**
   They are acknowledged by other artists within their field as skilled and professional.
3. **Public presentation:**
   They have a history of exhibiting their work in public, professional contexts, such as galleries, exhibitions, or other public spaces.
4. **Professional practice:**
   They engage in artistic activities with the intent of creating and selling their work, often as their primary or a significant source of income.
5. **Commitment to their craft:**
   They dedicate significant time and effort to their artistic practice, treating it as a serious profession rather than a hobby.

An artistic resume/CV can include:

- Any formal or informal art education and training completed (art courses, workshops, or other instruction and any qualifications earned such as certificates, degrees, etc.).
- Your exhibition history (list the dates and locations of any public displays of your artwork, including exhibitions featuring artworks beyond those submitted in this application.

- Any formal or informal recognition from the visual art community you have received (list grants, awards, distinctions and any related art activities such as teaching, curating, critical writing, membership in art organizations).
- A list of any public, corporate or other collecting bodies that have acquired artwork from you for their collections.
- If your practice is less traditional or you have been active in other ways, a written explanation of your practice, experience and commitment to your art should be included as part of the artistic resume/CV.
- A signed Designation for Submission by a Commercial Gallery, Organization or Artist Agent form (if applying as a gallery, agent or ensemble of artists).
- Up to 20 Digital photographs of the artworks (4 MB maximum file size, jpgs, pdfs accepted).

Digital images help the adjudication panel evaluate the physical qualities of submitted artworks and determine which pieces will advance to the second stage, in-person art viewing at the AFA offices in Edmonton.

Digital photographs need to include clear, high-quality images of the artworks that convey the materials, and the techniques used in the artworks. Poor or unclear images can impede a proper assessment of your work.

Images should include all parts of the artwork (front and back and installation views) to accurately portray the artwork.

If you are submitting installation images where there are other artists' artworks or artworks that are not being offered to the AFA being included in the image, please indicate this in your artistic statement about the piece to avoid the panel including these in their assessment.

Applicants may be asked for additional information about artworks as needed.

How will my application be assessed?

Expert Panel Evaluation

All artworks submitted to the Art Acquisition by Application Program are reviewed, adjudicated and selected by an external three-person, peer jury (expert panel). Expert panelists are chosen based on their artistic expertise to provide the AFA with

independent, informed perspectives and encourage excellence within the Alberta arts community.

The Art Acquisition by Application Program utilizes a two-stage adjudication.

- Stage 1 is the initial review and assessment of all applications submitted to the program deadline. A shortlist of artworks to be considered in-person is developed at this stage.
- Stage 2 is an in-person viewing of shortlisted artworks at the AFA offices in Edmonton. Please note that while there is no public access to the AFA offices, staff of the AFA may see submissions on site during the stage 2 adjudication process.

Artwork Evaluation Criteria

The *Criteria Governing Acquisitions* from the AFA's Collections Development Plan is used to evaluate all Art Acquisition by Application submissions, ensuring a rigorous and consistent evaluation of artworks once an artist's eligibility has been established.

Each artwork will be individually assessed for inclusion in the AFA Art Collection based on the following four areas of criteria/considerations from the Collections Development Plan:

Public Access:

- Is the artwork in a size and a medium that can be easily shown and shared with the public in the AFA's TREX Program or Art Placement Program (ex: Can the artwork be handled and set up by 1-2 people)?
- Is the artwork able to withstand extended travel and display in non-traditional spaces?
- Is the artwork likely to be selected for use in the TREX Program, Art Placement Program or AFA's Exhibition programs?

Care and Conservation:

- Is the artwork fragile or will it require ongoing conservation?
- Will the artwork require specialized storage and significant long-term maintenance and care?

- Will there be additional costs to transport, frame, or maintain the artwork?

Curatorial Considerations:

- Is the artwork relevant to Alberta's history and the visual arts in Alberta?
- Does the artwork show original ideas, artistic excellence or material skill?
- Has the artwork been exhibited or made available to the public?
- Has the artwork received any formal awards or other public recognition?

Development of the AFA Art Collection:

- Is the artist new to the AFA Art Collection?
- If the artist is already included in the AFA Art Collection, does this artwork address a chronological, curatorial, or gap in medium within the Collection?

Shortlisted Artworks

Edmonton and Calgary Drop Off Depots

- Artists and/or their galleries are responsible for bringing any artworks selected for in-person viewing to a depot location in Edmonton or Calgary at their own expense. Depot dates and locations are finalized after Stage 1 is complete.
- If your artwork is selected for Stage 2 and you are not able to meet the depot requirements in either of these locations, you can arrange to send the artwork/transport the artwork directly to the AFA at your own expense.
- Submissions may need to be withdrawn if the artworks are on loan and cannot be removed from exhibition and/or are otherwise unavailable for in-person viewing.
- If the artworks are not accepted for purchase by the AFA and you shipped the artworks directly to the AFA, the AFA will pay to return the artworks to the same location they were shipped from.

Conservation Review

Artworks shortlisted for in-person review are assessed for conservation and any condition issues before being presented to the expert panel adjudicators.

All artworks must be clean and in good overall condition. Any artwork found to be in poor physical condition or not meeting the eligibility criteria will be removed from

further consideration and the artist notified.

Poor physical condition can include, but is not limited to, artworks with the following concerns:

- flaking or chipped paint, glaze, or other materials
- curling, faded, ripped or otherwise damaged artworks
- artworks with surface scratches or abrasions
- artworks containing unstable materials that are not archival quality or are known to deteriorate over time
- artworks that are soiled and require surface cleaning
- artworks with warped or unstable stretchers

When will I hear?

It is our aim that artists will be notified **within three months of the application deadline** of the outcome of the first-stage adjudication (shortlisted for stage 2 adjudication or unsuccessful for stage 2 adjudication).

Regardless, all applicants will be notified in writing of the result of their applications (whether successful or unsuccessful) **within six to eight months** of the application deadline.

Conditions

Exhibition requirements for shortlisted artworks

If artworks shortlisted for the second stage adjudication are booked for an upcoming exhibition, please contact us and let us know as soon as possible.

An exhibition loan, according to the AFA's loan request deadlines, will need to be arranged if the work is purchased by the AFA.

Reporting

Art Acquisition by Application does not require a final report.

Before an artwork is purchased, the artist/copyright owner of the artwork(s) must complete, sign and upload/send the AFA the following items:

- A signed copy of the AFA's "Reproduction/Exhibition Agreement" for each of the artworks to be acquired.
- A digitally signed PDF "Acquisition Data Sheet" for each of the artworks.
- An artist biography (500 words or less) to be posted on the AFA Art Collection's website.
- A detailed invoice including the following information:
    - payees' legal names or business name matching the one in GATE,
    - itemized description of the purchase, and
    - price of artwork(s) and correct mailing address and contact information for payment.
    - Please also include the AFA's information as the purchaser and do not add GST (as the AFA is GST-exempt).
- the AFA will accept electronic signatures (e.g., Adobe e-signature) on the Acquisition Data Sheet.

Forms and templates for these documents will be provided to artists that have artworks being considered for purchase by the AFA.

Should you wish to receive payment through direct deposit, please use the Direct Deposit form:

- direct deposit form

Helpful resources

The holdings of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection can be viewed online at the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Virtual Museum.

We gather general comments about the applications and share them on the Adjudication page. The expert panel does not record specific comments about individual applications.

Resources for using the GATE Front Office system:

- download the user guide
- watch a short video

The AFA recognizes many artists encounter barriers to application and reporting procedures.

- learn about the AFA's Accessibility Program

Apply

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