

# ROM

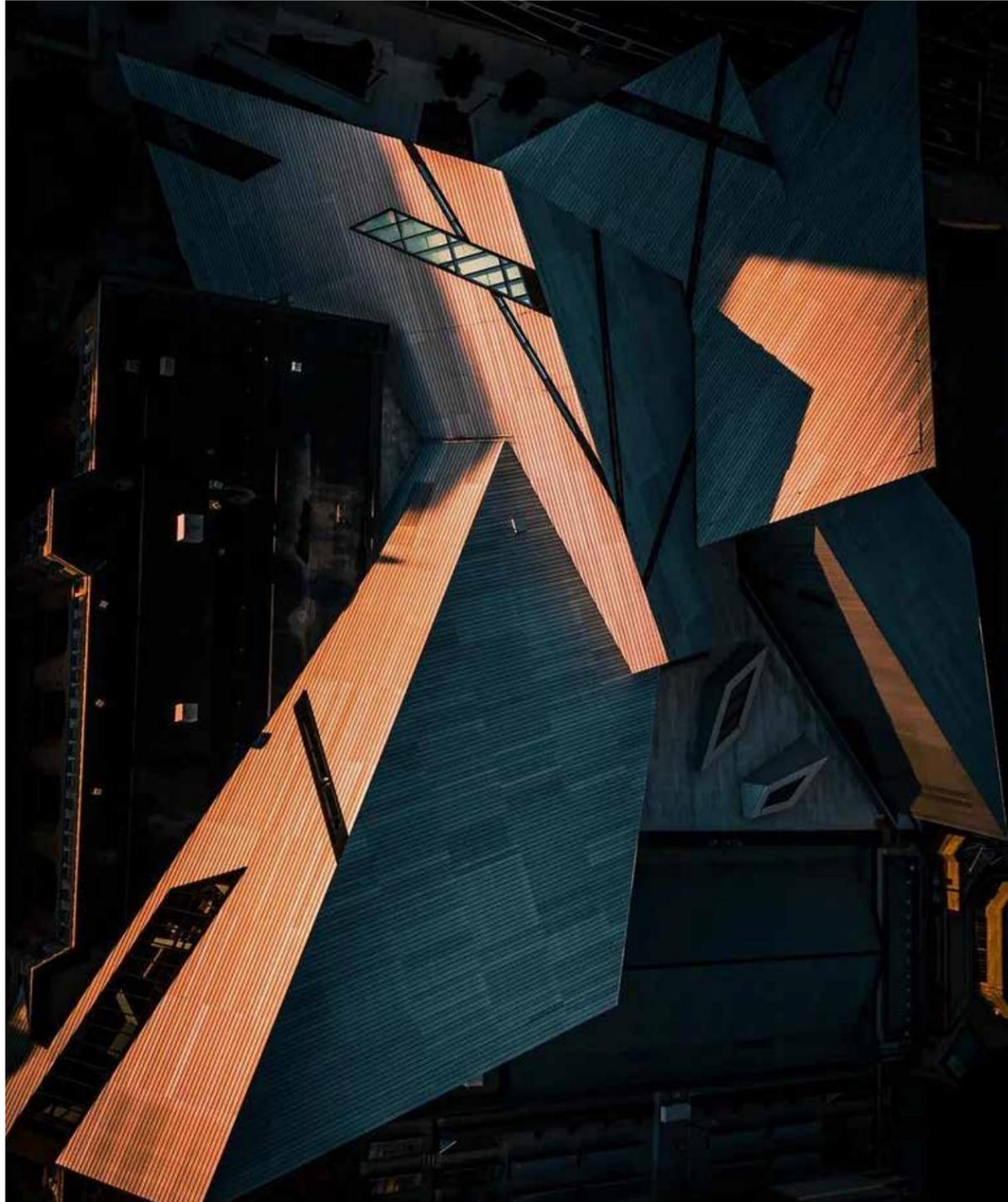
Year in Review

2020-2021



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# WELCOME LETTER

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AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SWEEPED THE GLOBE, ROM shut its doors to help stop the spread. For any Museum, it would have been a devastating blow. But for ROM, an institution that is dedicated to engaging the public, it felt especially so.

Yet, even in this moment of crisis, ROM remained focused on its strategic direction, reimagining itself as an ever more relevant, more inclusive Museum in the process.

When schools closed and children went online, parents and teachers turned to ROM at Home, a live and on-demand platform for online content. Hosting the Instagram Live ROMKids show, Camp Director Kiron Mukherjee kept kids busy with educational art projects and lessons on bats and rising sea levels. More impressive still, 69,518 students and teachers across the province participated in ROM virtual school programs, including field trips and webinars led by Indigenous educators.

Adults had plenty of ways to stay engaged, too. Through Experts and Objects, ROM experts discussed the art and objects they love, from rare meteorites to Christian Dior evening gowns. Through eMuseum, our booming digital collection of artworks, cultural objects, and natural history specimens, anyone with an internet connection could traverse millennia and continents with a few flicks on their phone—all from the safety and comfort of home.

With this ambitious online expansion, ROM is poised to thrive like never before, returning us to our pre-pandemic trajectory as the most visited Museum in Canada. And while even the most immersive digital innovations cannot replicate the in-Museum experience, they can connect us to new audiences, making the Museum even more accessible and global.

Amid this surge of digital innovation, ROM also continued the great work for which it is renowned, carefully preparing exhibitions and galleries for the Museum's reopening. That includes the upcoming *Willner Madge Gallery, Dawn of Life*, a 10,000 square-foot groundbreaking new gallery spanning more than four billion years of evolution.

Important new works of art and natural history were acquired too, including more than 200 face masks from around the world, a collection that would eventually become *Unmasking the Pandemic: From Personal Protection to Personal Expression*, which chronicles history as it unfolds. Plus, ROM continued its leading-edge research, such as the groundbreaking discovery of an aggressive bone cancer in a 77-million-year-old dinosaur.

Today, as we begin the slow return to normalcy, ROM has emerged as a place of restoration and transformation, where we can seek refuge from the daily tumult while addressing the pressing issues of our time through art, culture, and nature. Looking ahead, we will continue to embrace that role, as we help the province rebuild and fulfill our commitment to becoming one of the world's leading 21st century museums.



**JOSH BASSECHES**  
DIRECTOR  
& CEO, ROM



**STEPHEN BOWMAN**  
CHAIR, BOARD  
OF TRUSTEES  
ROM



# PHILANTHROPY IN REVIEW

Looking back at the last unprecedented year, we will always remember the challenges we faced together. The COVID-19 global health crisis tested our resilience, perseverance, and strength as a community, but, for many of us, it also brought our most important priorities into sharp focus. We could not be more grateful and inspired by our wonderful supporters who continue to count ROM among their cultural and philanthropic priorities.

Despite global uncertainty and a challenging economy, our donors came through this year with \$13.3 million in new gifts and pledged commitments—and \$2.5 million in new legacy gift intentions from members of our Currelly Legacy Society. Realized estate gifts also surpassed our expectations for the second year in a row at \$2.4 million, including a generous gift of more than \$1 million from the estate of former ROM Department of Volunteers President Patricia Haug. These gifts are among the most meaningful commitments donors can make to help shape the future of the Museum and are especially significant in this present era.

When our doors were closed to the public, the ROM responded by adapting our programming to bolster and inspire the cultural and civic life of our community. Likewise, many donors demonstrated remarkable flexibility by redirecting their generous commitments from our traditional onsite school visits program to virtual field trips, ensuring that the Museum would continue to ignite discovery and wonder for students across the province. We are also grateful to TD for redirecting its leadership support of Third Tuesday Nights Free to ROM at Home, which connected audiences—both local and global—in engaging ways to our exhibitions, experts, programs, and collections from a distance.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to our Royal Exhibitions Circle donors, whose generous support enabled a compelling slate of exhibitions that broadened and enriched our understanding of the world. We're thankful to A.H. Wilkens Auctions & Appraisals, Daniel & Susan Argiros, Nancy Chafee, Jack L. Cockwell, Gail & Bob Farquharson, Linda Hasenfratz & Ed Newton, Hatch, Chris Jamroz, The McLean Foundation, Robert E. Pierce & Family, Robert H. Pitfield, Stephen Smith & Diane Blake, Andrew M. Stewart, James & Louise Temerty, Richard Wernham & Julia West, Jeff Willner & Family, and an anonymous donor. We also offer our deepest gratitude to our Patrons and Corporate members, who generously donated \$2.5 million in support of our world-class exhibitions, collections, programming, and research.

Finally, with grateful admiration we acknowledge our board members and senior volunteers for their fortitude, dedicated leadership, and counsel through this challenging year.

Thank you again for your generous contributions towards keeping ROM among the most vital and vibrant hubs of art, culture, and nature in the world. As you look back on the accomplishments highlighted in this report, we hope you feel inspired by what you have made possible. We are so proud of our collective dedication and efforts towards the ROM's present vibrancy, and our shared vision of the Museum in the future.



**SUSAN HORVATH**  
PRESIDENT & CEO, ROM BOARD OF GOVERNORS



**JEFF WILLNER**  
CHAIR, ROM BOARD OF GOVERNORS

# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

Even while closed to the public for most of the year, ROM remained a major cultural force, making big breakthroughs in research and vastly expanding its digital reach.

79

Papers published by the staff of the Department of Natural History

6,500



Collection objects were added to the online database

69,518



Students and teachers participated in ROM virtual school programs

6,000,000

Page views of the Museum's collection

78,274

ROM Members

291,000



Engagements on social media

# PART

# 1

[ROM at Home](#)

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[The Year in Exhibitions](#)

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[International Collaborations](#)

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[Acquisition Highlights](#)

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# WHEN ROM WENT DARK, ROM AT HOME LIT UP

For a museum, there are few worse things than shutting your doors to the public. That's especially true for ROM, which receives tens of thousands of visitors a month, and was shuttered most of last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But when the museum doors slammed shut, its virtual doors swung open.

ROM at Home, a live and on-demand platform for online content, flourished during the pandemic, netting a total of 208,000 visits last year alone. What's more, the breadth of content was—and remains—astounding, weaving in new discoveries, groundbreaking research, and timely themes from climate change and residential schools to racial justice and migration. At a time of upheaval and uncertainty, ROM became a hub of education and conversation—for everyone.

For overworked parents juggling under-stimulated kids, there was the ROM-Kids show. Hosted by ROMKids Camp Director Kiron Mukherjee, the weekly

live show (now archived on YouTube) burrowed deep into big topics—from bats, vaccines, and COVID-19 to rising sea levels—and offered plenty of fun, do-it-yourself craft ideas. For grade-school kids too cool for crafts, there were virtual field trips, which were free of charge to public schools across Ontario. A whopping total of 68,518 students and teachers across the province participated in ROM virtual school programs.

One of the most popular was the Indigenous Voices webinar series. Hosted on Zoom, each of the age-targeted webinars was built around themes like two-spirit identities and National Indigenous Peoples Day. The result? Accessible, Indigenous-led education for teachers and students across Canada, now available to watch anytime.

And yet, for all the special programming produced for ROM at Home, the site is also home to plenty of ROM classics and newly digitized content. Missed the *Win-*

*nie the Pooh Exhibition*? See some of the original illustrations online. Hungering for beauty? Explore three beautiful pieces from *The Cloth that Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons*—on your phone. Need a jolt of intellect? Watch ROM's Justin Jennings discuss “how the idea of fairness has shaped society over the last 20,000 years.”

While even the best virtual content can't match the in-person experience, it can expand ROM's reach. It can ensure that almost anyone, anywhere can see paintings and pottery and dinosaurs, all with just a few taps on their phone.



**CURATORS IN CONVERSATION**  
Lessons from the Past on Climate Change and Our Future



**INDIGENOUS VOICES**  
Pow Wows



**ROMKids Show**  
The One About Light, Colour & Rainbows

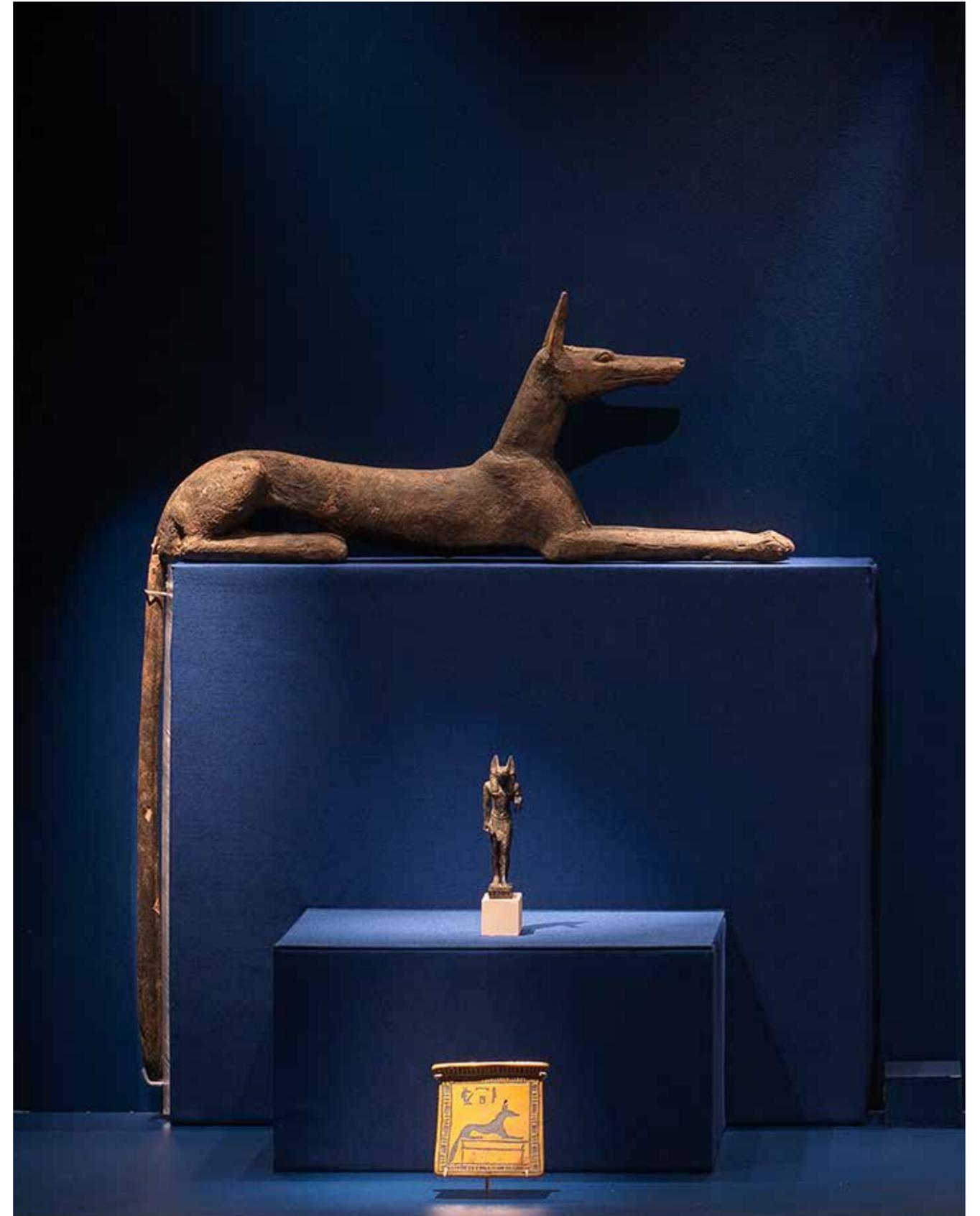
# THE YEAR IN EXHIBITIONS

During a year in which the ROM was forced to adapt to an ever-changing pandemic, its slate of original and travelling exhibitions had to adapt, too. Extended closures and tighter safety restrictions meant fewer exhibitions and turned scheduling into an ongoing juggling act. And yet, despite all that, ROM offered a handful of new exhibitions—both original and loaned—that delighted and educated.

The biggest among them was *Egyptian Mummies: Ancient Lives. New Discoveries*, a dazzling, narrative-driven exhibition that drew from The British Museum's renowned collections. *Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic*, on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum, shared the origin story of the beloved bear. And *Wildlife Photographer of the Year*, from the Natural History Museum in London, returned for its eighth consecutive year with an array of stunning new photographs.

Adding to this program were three ROM-original exhibitions. *The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons* highlighted the Museum's renowned collection of Indian chintz, while *Florals: Desire and Design* featured botanical publications and Indian cotton textiles embellished with vibrant hand-painted flowers. ROM also opened a new gallery, *Austin Clarke: Recognizing a Literary Great*, honouring the legacy of the renowned Black Canadian author and civil rights activist.

As ROM inspired visitors in Toronto, its *Christian Dior* exhibition wowed visitors in Montreal's McCord Museum—the final stop on a successful tour. Between that, and its diverse exhibitions at home, ROM maintained its position as a leading cultural force, which is no small feat during a global pandemic.





**Florals: Desire and Design**  
February 15–March 13, 2020; July 9–November 22, 2020



**Winnie-the-Pooh**  
March 7–13, 2020; September 1–November 22, 2020



**The Cloth That Changed the World**  
September 12–November 22, 2020

# 1

## Florals: Desire and Design

Influential botanical publications, exquisite illustrations from the 1700s, and a stunning assortment of Indian cotton fashion and wall hangings covered with colourful hand-painted flowers invited visitors to discover an explosive period of botanical fascination during which culture and nature were inextricably linked. Select objects from the ROM's collection revealed how Indian artisans customized cotton textiles to indulge European fascination.

European Special Exhibitions Gallery, Samuel European Galleries, Level 3, Hilary and Galen Weston Wing  
February 15–March 13, 2020; July 9–November 22, 2020; scheduled to close on January 3, 2022

**ROM Curator:**  
Deborah Metsger, Assistant Curator, Botany

**ROM Advising Curators:**  
A. H. Wilkens Auctions & Appraisals, Daniel & Susan Argiros, Nancy Chafee, Jack L. Cockwell, Gail & Bob Farquharson, Linda Hasenfratz & Ed Newton, Hatch, Chris Jamroz, Robert E. Pierce & Family, Robert H. Pitfield, Stephen Smith & Diane Blake, James & Louise Temerty, Richard Wernham & Julia West, Jeff Willner & Family, Anonymous

**Royal Exhibitions Circle:**  
A. H. Wilkens Auctions & Appraisals, Daniel & Susan Argiros, Nancy Chafee, Jack L. Cockwell, Gail & Bob Farquharson, Linda Hasenfratz & Ed Newton, Hatch, Chris Jamroz, Robert E. Pierce & Family, Robert H. Pitfield, Stephen Smith & Diane Blake, James & Louise Temerty, Richard Wernham & Julia West, Jeff Willner & Family, Anonymous

# 2

## Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic

Organized by the Victoria and Albert Museum, this delightful exhibition celebrated the magical world of Winnie-the-Pooh, one of the most adored literary characters of all time. In telling the origin story, the exhibition honoured the men behind the bear: author A.A. Milne (1882–1956) and illustrator E.H. Shepard (1879–1976). Plus, it brought to the fore an internationally significant piece of Canadian history, revealing why Canada was key to the Winnie-the-Pooh's worldwide ascent.

Roloff Beny Gallery, Level 4, Michael Lee-Chin Crystal

March 7–13, 2020; September 1–November 22, 2020 (originally scheduled to close January 17, 2021)

**ROM Curator:**  
Dr. Justin Jennings, Senior Curator, Latin American Archaeology

**Royal Exhibitions Circle:**  
A. H. Wilkens Auctions & Appraisals, Daniel & Susan Argiros, Nancy Chafee, Jack L. Cockwell, Gail & Bob Farquharson, Linda Hasenfratz & Ed Newton, Hatch, Chris Jamroz, Robert E. Pierce & Family, Robert H. Pitfield, Stephen Smith & Diane Blake, James & Louise Temerty, Richard Wernham & Julia West, Jeff Willner & Family, Anonymous

# 3

## The Cloth That Changed the World: India's Painted and Printed Cottons

For the first time in 50 years, this breathtaking exhibition displayed the Museum's world-renowned collection of Indian chintz. While celebrating the technical mastery, creativity, and far-reaching influence of India's vivid textiles, it also explored the consequences of the global consumer appetite for chintz, from its role in intensifying Europe's Industrial Revolution (and the trans-Atlantic slave trade that accompanied it) to present-day environmental concerns.

Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume, Level 4, Michael Lee-Chin Crystal

September 12–November 22, 2020; scheduled to close on September 6, 2021

**ROM Curator:**  
Dr. Sarah Fee, Senior Curator, Global Fashion & Textiles

**ROM Advising Curators:**  
Dr. Alexandra Palmer, Nora E. Vaughan Senior Curator, Global Fashion & Textiles, Deborah Metsger, Assistant Curator, Botany, Dr. Deepali Dewan, Dan Mishra Curator of South Asian Art & Culture

**Exhibition Patron:**  
ROM Friends of Textiles and Costume & Burnham Brett Endowment Fund

**Royal Exhibitions Circle:**  
A. H. Wilkens Auctions & Appraisals, Daniel & Susan Argiros, Nancy Chafee, Jack L. Cockwell, Gail & Bob Farquharson, Linda Hasenfratz & Ed Newton, Hatch, Chris Jamroz, Robert E. Pierce & Family, Robert H. Pitfield, Stephen Smith & Diane Blake, James & Louise Temerty, Richard Wernham & Julia West, Jeff Willner & Family, Anonymous



**Egyptian Mummies**  
September 19–November 22, 2020



**Wildlife Photographer of the Year**  
November 21–22, 2020



**Austin Clarke**  
January 23, 2021–January 23, 2022

# 4

## **Egyptian Mummies: Ancient Lives. New Discoveries**

In this collaboration between ROM and the British Museum, mummies came alive like never before. Combining CT scans, digital visualizations, and the latest research, Egyptian Mummies offered a glimpse into Ancient Egypt by exploring how six mummified people—from a priest's daughter to a temple singer—lived, and what happened to them after they died.

Garfield Weston Exhibition Hall,  
Level B2, Michael Lee-Chin Crystal  
September 19–November 22, 2020;  
originally scheduled to close March 21, 2021

**ROM Curator:**  
Dr. Krzysztof Grzyski, Senior Curator, Egypt & Nubia

**Exhibition Partner:**  
The British Museum

**Official Airline:**  
Air Canada

**Media Partners:**  
CTV, Toronto Star

**Royal Exhibitions Circle:**  
A. H. Wilkens Auctions & Appraisals, Daniel & Susan Argiros, Nancy Chafee, Jack L. Cockwell, Gail & Bob Farquharson, Linda Hasenfratz & Ed Newton, Hatch, Chris Jamroz, Robert E. Pierce & Family, Robert H. Pitfield, Stephen Smith & Diane Blake, James & Louise Temerty, Richard Wernham & Julia West, Jeff Willner & Family, Anonymous

# 5

## **Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2019**

A vast swath of cracked earth. A fox gnawing on a mangled goose. A giant tiger hugging a tree like a long-lost friend.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year, the longest-running and most prestigious nature photography competition in the world, returned to ROM for its eighth consecutive year with one hundred all-new photographs. Developed and produced by the Natural History Museum in London, the exhibition revealed striking wildlife, breathtaking landscapes, and the remarkable beauty of our natural world.

Third Floor Centre Block  
November 21–22, 2020;  
scheduled to close on May 30, 2021

**ROM Curator:**  
Dr. Burton Lim, Assistant Curator, Mammalogy

**Royal Exhibitions Circle:**  
A. H. Wilkens Auctions & Appraisals, Daniel & Susan Argiros, Nancy Chafee, Jack L. Cockwell, Gail & Bob Farquharson, Linda Hasenfratz & Ed Newton, Hatch, Chris Jamroz, Robert E. Pierce & Family, Robert H. Pitfield, Stephen Smith & Diane Blake, James & Louise Temerty, Richard Wernham & Julia West, Jeff Willner & Family, Anonymous

# 6

## **Austin Clarke: Recognizing a Literary Great**

In the world of Canadian literature, Austin Ardinel Chesterfield Clarke (1934-2016) was a giant.

Clarke, who immigrated to Canada from Barbados in 1955, is best known for his literary works, many of which examine the residual effects of colonialism and slavery on contemporary race relations. This past year, ROM honoured the legacy of the great author with a newly commissioned portrait, which was generously supported by the JWL Forster National Portrait Gallery Fund.

Wilson Canadian Heritage Exhibition Room,  
Sigmund Samuel Gallery of Canada,  
Level 1, Weston Family Wing

January 23, 2021–January 23, 2022

**ROM Curator:**  
Dr. Arlene Gehmacher, Curator (Canadian Paintings, Prints & Drawings), Canadiana Curatorship

**Guest Curators:**  
Pamela Edmonds, Senior Curator, McMaster Museum of Art, and Dr. Rinaldo Walcott, Professor, University of Toronto

# ROM TRAVELS THE WORLD



## Christian Dior

Following its tremendous success at ROM, Christian Dior—the exhibition that celebrated the “dramatic creations that revived the entire Paris haute couture industry after the devastation of the Second World War”—travelled the globe. After stops at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary and the China National Silk Museum in Hangzhou, Dior ended at the McCord Museum in Montreal, the final stop in an elegant tour.

# SUPERCONNECTED: ROM GETS COLLABORATIVE

**No museum is an island.** And there are few more international museums than ROM, which works with institutions across the globe sharing ideas, research, and objects.

As a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors, a gathering of the twelve largest museums with natural history collections, and the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization, ROM had the opportunity to work collaboratively across the sector to help weather the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In September, with its partners at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy and the Universidad Iberoamericana, ROM and

Queen's University co-hosted “Cultural Diplomacy as Critical Practice,” a virtual research summit. Uniting academics and practitioners in cultural diplomacy, the event sparked new insights into the field, challenging the dominance of Eurocentrism.

Plus, ROM continued to share pieces with museums and galleries around the world. While requests for loans from the Art and Culture collections were modest (mostly due to pandemic-related impacts), ROM loaned 44 specimens from its natural history collections to support scientific research.

# THE YEAR IN TWEETS

Visitors didn't just fall in love with ROM—they tweeted about it. Here are a few of our favourites from the last year.



Pretty happy every time we get to have a visit at the @ROMtoronto but even more so in Covid times. Felt safe & great to visit. & of course now a million dino, ancient civ Qs...



Fantastic exhibition showcasing Egyptian mummies at the @ROMtoronto! As a kid, I went to summer camp at the ROM & learning about Ancient Egypt remains one of my favourite memories. (The gorgeous jewellery, the hieroglyphics, the cats!) #ROMmummies



Fun fact: Did you know that @romtoronto has the third-largest collection of fashions & textiles in the world? #ROMchintz #ShowLoveTO



I wandered through @ROMtoronto's Winnie-the-Pooh exhibition, and for an hour or so the world was a brighter, happier place. [https://nowtoronto.com/culture/art-and-design/winnie-the-pooh-exploring-a-classic-rom/...](https://nowtoronto.com/culture/art-and-design/winnie-the-pooh-exploring-a-classic-rom/) #ROMWinnie



Happy to be at @ROMtoronto today for #ROMWinnie preview. Whatchya doing Pooh bear?

# ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHTS

Although the pandemic reduced donations and purchases, ROM managed to acquire 84 objects for its art and culture collections and 9,718 for its natural history collections. Among these were several major acquisitions, some of which you can see below.



### Six 18th-Century Chinese Paintings

Dr. Wen-chien Cheng, Louise Hawley Stone Chair of East Asian Art, acquired six 18th-century Chinese paintings devoted to the concept of beautiful women. With these, the Museum will be even better positioned to study the role and representation of women in historical Chinese culture.

This acquisition was made possible by the R.H. Ellsworth Fund.

### Anishinaabe Bond Pipe

Thanks to Ethnology curator Arni Brownstone, ROM acquired a bond pipe and other items from the Anishinaabe of Manitoulin Island, which were originally collected by Sir Francis Bond Head, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada in the summer of 1836.

### +250 Masks for New Exhibition

As the COVID-19 pandemic forced much of the world to grind to a halt, ROM curators Drs. Alexandra Palmer, Sarah Fee, and Fahmida Suleman got to work, collecting masks from designers and artisans around the world. The result? More than 250 masks from over 20 countries, culminating in a new, free-to-the-public exhibition: Unmasking the Pandemic. While varied in style and origin, the masks are united by a spirit of innovation and resilience, creating a truly global snapshot of the response to the pandemic.

### Mexican Folkloric Toys

Teeming with ingenuity and imagination, Mexican folkloric toys are perhaps one of the most overlooked of Mexico's rich popular art traditions. Once sold in local markets, these toys have since been eclipsed by mass-produced plastic toys. But ROM now has a piece of this folkloric history: 77 toys collected from various parts of Mexico in the late 1970's. This collection comes from the Creative Spirit Art Centre in Toronto, which donated the toys after closing its doors in 2019. But the original owner was Hanni Sager, a Swiss-born woman who split much of her adult life between Toronto and Mexico, where she ran toy-making workshops in orphanages.

This acquisition was made possible by the Movable Cultural Property grant accorded by the Department of Canadian Heritage under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act.

**PART**

**2**

# LEADING-EDGE RESEARCH

With tight purse strings and even tighter travel restrictions, ROM fieldwork slowed significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, ROM curators continued to publish new work and engaged with the public online, where they led more than 150 virtual events, from webinars and workshops to guided tours and talks. These are just some of the highlights.

## Global Scholars Explore the History of Islamic Craft

Led by ROM's Dr. Fahmida Suleman, *Crafting Conversations: Discourses on the Craft Heritage of the Islamic World—Past, Present and Future*, an eight-part monthly series on Zoom, hosted scholars from three continents. Spanning past and present from Egypt to the Netherlands, each session tackled a unique topic. One of the most timely was "Embroidery in the Age of Corona," in which photographer and embroiderer Fatima Abbadi explained how "every stitch... can reveal women's hidden stories."

## ROM Curator to Study Martian Rocks

NASA's rover Perseverance is on a mission to Mars, collecting samples to one day return to earth. When they're here, Dr. Kim Tait—ROM's Curator of Minerology, and part of the Mars Sample Return mission—will be waiting. "We have to protect the samples from us as much as we have to protect us from the samples," Dr. Tait told CBC News. "How do we do that safely and how do we handle them so that we could actually get the science answers that we want?"

## ROM Finds Malignant Cancer in Dinosaur—A World First

Cancer, the leading cause of death in Canada, affected dinosaurs too—and ROM found the proof. Last year, Dr. David Evans, with the help of a team of multidisciplinary specialists, identified an aggressive bone cancer (initially thought to be a healing fracture) in a horned dinosaur that lived about 77 million years ago. Hailed by the *New York Times* as a major turning point, Dr. Evans' discovery is the "first confirmed diagnosis of malignant cancer in a dinosaur."

Dr. Evans is the James and Louise Temerty Endowed Chair of Vertebrate Palaeontology

## How a Collection of Frozen Bat Tissues Might Prevent the Next Pandemic

Most scientists agree that it's not if another pandemic will strike, but when. So, they're preparing for the inevitable. ROM's role? To leverage its massive bank of frozen bat tissues, so scientists can make vaccines before the next pandemic hits. That's the job of Dr. Burton Lim, an Assistant Curator of Mammalogy, who has collected bats around the world, often crawling through caves on his hands and knees to get them.



# SCHOLARSHIP IN PRINT

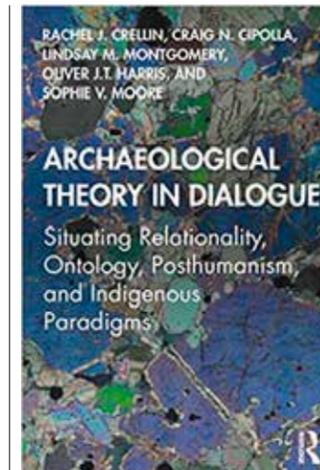
From exhibition and collection catalogues to anthologies and field guides, ROM produces award-winning publications that set the standard for scholarly excellence. Despite lockdowns and restrictions, ROM continued to publish great work that spurs conversation and illuminates the world around us.

ROM's publishing program is generously supported by the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust.



## ROM magazine

ROM magazine offers an engaging, in-depth look into the Museum's exhibitions, research, and collections. Highlighting world-leading scholarship, new initiatives, and recent acquisitions, ROM magazine brings to life some of the Museum's most exciting and fascinating stories.



### Archaeological Theory in Dialogue: Situating Relationality, Ontology, Posthumanism, and Indigenous Paradigms

By Rachel J. Crellin, Craig N. Cipolla (Isabel and Gino Vettoretto Curator of North American Archaeology), Lindsay M. Montgomery, Oliver J.T. Harris, and Sophie V. Moore.

Archaeological Theory in Dialogue is an innovative conversation between five scholars on a range of central issues facing archaeology today. Combining detailed investigations of critical theory with dialogues between the authors, the book interrogates the importance of four themes at the heart of much contemporary theoretical debate: relations, ontology, posthumanism, and Indigenous paradigms. The authors explore how these themes shape the ways in which archaeologists conduct fieldwork, conceptualize the past, and engage with 21st-century ethical and political problems in the field.

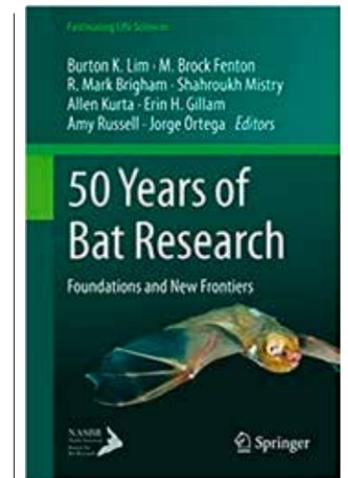
Craig N. Cipolla is the Isabel and Gino Vettoretto Curator of North American Archaeology



### Finding Fairness: From Pleistocene Foragers to Contemporary Capitalists

By Justin Jennings

In this ambitious work, Justin Jennings explores the origins, endurance, and elasticity of ideas about fairness, and how they have shaped the development of societies over the last 20,000 years. Humans, he argues, have an innate expectation of fairness, a disposition that evolved during the Pleistocene era as a means of adapting to an unpredictable, often cruel climate. This need for fairness influenced how humans transitioned into smaller territories, settled into villages, formed cities, expanded empires, and navigated capitalism. Paradoxically, the predilection to find fair solutions often led to entrenched inequities over time as cooperative groups grew in size, duration, and complexity.



### 50 Years of Bat Research: Foundations and New Frontiers

By Burton K. Lim and M. Brock Fenton

With more than 1,400 species, bats are an incredibly diverse and successful group of mammals with many unique evolutionary adaptations. Flight allows them to master the sky, while echolocation allows them to navigate the dark. Being small, secretive, nocturnal creatures has made bats a challenge to study, but over the past 50 years, innovative research has made it possible to dispel some of the mysteries and myths around bats to give us a better sense of the role they play in the ecosystem.

# PART

# 3

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Programming That Inspires

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Indigenous Engagement and Education

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Learning at the ROM

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Community Engagement

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Members and Volunteers

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Digital Readiness

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# PROGRAMMING THAT INSPIRES

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the museum to close, ROM pivoted, offering a suite of incredible online programs, from free expert-led lectures to a behind-the-scenes look at the real Winnie-the-Pooh.



### ROM Around You

Students were invited to explore art, culture, and nature with ROM Teacher Julie Tomé every Monday in an educational how-to video that connected a weekly theme to a ROM-inspired hands-on activity. Students could then take on the curiosity challenge to discover more about the objects in their home, yard, and neighbourhood.



### ROM Connects

Through ROM Connects, people around the world were able to join the museum for captivating documentaries and thought-providing lectures—all for free.

ROM Connects is generously supported by The Schmidt Family.

### ROM Storytime

Each Tuesday at 11:00 AM, we invited audiences to join ROM educator Sarah Elliott on YouTube Live for a read-along of children's books based on the Museum's collections and exhibitions. Each reading was followed by a live Q&A on how the stories connect to ROM objects and a story-inspired creative activity.

### Curator Conversations

Hosted live on Zoom, these fascinating conversations touched on everything from the Museum's world-class collection of chintz to the way the characters of Winnie the Pooh help children and adults cope with stressful situations. Plus, each conversation was free and included a live audience Q&A.



### Experts and Objects

From hot tips for snagging leeches to up-close looks at rare meteorites and a Christian Dior evening gown, this program gave ROM experts the chance to riff on the art and objects they love. Of course, the real beneficiaries were ROM patrons, who could watch and learn from the comfort and safety of home.



INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Amid a national reckoning over residential schools, Indigenous-led education and programming is needed now more than ever.

## Indigenous Advisory Circle

Comprising eight members from distinct Indigenous cultures, the Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) includes educators, artists, allies, and knowledge carriers with interests in the arts, sciences, and technology. Each season, IAC meets to advise on the Museum's educational programs and in-progress initiatives like exhibitions and galleries. For that, and all they do for ROM, we cannot thank them enough.

## Indigenous Voices

Hosted on Zoom twice a month, the Indigenous Voices program is a live webinar designed for kindergarten to grade 12 students and teachers across the province. Each episode features Indigenous educators, artists, and speakers as they highlight ancestral objects, share stories, and offer arts-based activities that celebrate living Indigenous cultures.

Indigenous Voices is generously supported by the Slaight Family Foundation and the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts. Technical support and content development is provided by the Kiowa Wind Memorial Indigenous Youth Support Staff and Indigenous Digital Learning Support Staff—two full-time, paid placements generously supported by Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training.



LEARNING



# SCHOOL 2.0

Between school closures and COVID-19 restrictions, traditional field trips and in-Museum lessons were impossible. So, ROM reimaged its approach, going all-in on digital programs, from interactive virtual lessons to game-based learning in Minecraft.

## Virtual School Programs

In response to teachers' ongoing demand for virtual content, ROM School Programs focused on developing and delivering distance learning programs and online educational content. 69,518 students and teachers from Ontario participated in ROM virtual school programs, which were launched in December 2020. In live and interactive lessons, the Virtual Field Trip program brought the ROM to students from kindergarten to grade 12, engaging them in everything from science to Indigenous perspectives. Plus, thanks to the support of generous ROM patrons, it was all provided free of charge. The ROM's virtual school programs are generously supported by the late Ada Slaight and The Slaight Family Foundation, Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts, Barrick Gold Corporation, William R. and Shirley Beatty Foundation, Canada Life, The Home Depot Canada Foundation, KPMG, Linamar, Nancy E.A. Main, Philip and Berthe Morton Foundation, and Weinberg Family Foundation.

## ROM Minecraft

A pixelated 3D sandbox with near-infinite impossibilities, "Minecraft: Education Edition" is a game-based learning platform that promotes creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. Within this immersive digital universe, students can learn about a wide variety of themes, from science and resources to community and cultural respect. With the introduction of ROM's new Minecraft program, "Museum Math: Rocks and Minerals," students travelled to three different research sites to help ROM scientists with their studies of igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks, encountering allies and challenges along the way.

ROM Minecraft is generously supported by Barrick Gold Corporation.

# COMMUNITY TIES

When the Museum was off-limits, its programming went online. That way ROM continued serving its many communities without missing a beat.

## ROM Writes

In summer 2020, ROM worked with InkWell workshops to deliver ROM Writes, a series of online creative writing workshops that incorporate objects and stories from ROM collections to inspire connection and creativity. Led by Leanne Toshiko Simpson, a professional writer and mental health advocate, ROM Writes was designed to support better mental health.

## Choose Health Program

In fall 2020, ROM worked with South Riverdale Community Health Centre to develop online storytelling modules for their Choose Health program, a peer-led group that helps adults self-manage chronic health conditions. Working with ROM staff, peer facilitators developed themes for discussion inspired by objects and stories from ROM collections.

## DiscoverU

In winter 2021, ROM and community organization Youth Rising Above delivered a virtual version of DiscoverU, a weekly skills development program for at-risk youth combining modules on leadership, communication, and self-care with a behind-the-scenes look at various Museum careers. February's four-week session provided youth insight into leadership through an Indigenous lens, showing how diversity and inclusion is woven into the visitor experience and how an exhibition is planned during a pandemic.

## ROM Trailblazers

During lockdown, ROM Trailblazers—a partnership with the St. Alban's BGC (formerly Boys and Girls Club)—offered bi-weekly online programming to an audience of over 2,000 young participants. To create deeper connections with children's lived experiences, ROM Trailblazers content now incorporates more anti-racist and engaged citizenship elements in its Museum-connected programming.



MEMBERSHIP & VOLUNTEERS

# MUSEUM SUPPORTERS

In good times and in bad, ROM's members and volunteers form the bedrock of our culture—and this year was no different.

### Membership

Even amid closures and restrictions, ROM maintained a strong and loyal membership base, ending the year with 27,025 member households and more than 78,274 individual members. Members participated in over two dozen virtual programs with ROM curators and special guests, engaging in conversations about fashion, wildlife conservation, ancient Egypt, palaeontology, and more.

Like the Museum's collections, ROM members come from around the world, including Russia, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Luxembourg. ROM Membership includes over 830 households who have been members for 30 years or more and 130 households who have been members for over 40 years. To them, and all our members: Thank you for your support during this extraordinary time.

### Volunteers

From greeting visitors to guiding tours, the Department of Museum Volunteers (DMV) offer a range of services supporting ROM. But because of the COVID-19 pandemic, much of their in-person work was placed on hold last year. Still, they found ways to adapt and work online. For instance, ROMForYou, normally an in-person outreach program, provided 18 virtual experiences for Francophone communities and seniors' residences in Ontario.

The DMV also celebrated two landmark anniversaries in 2020-21:

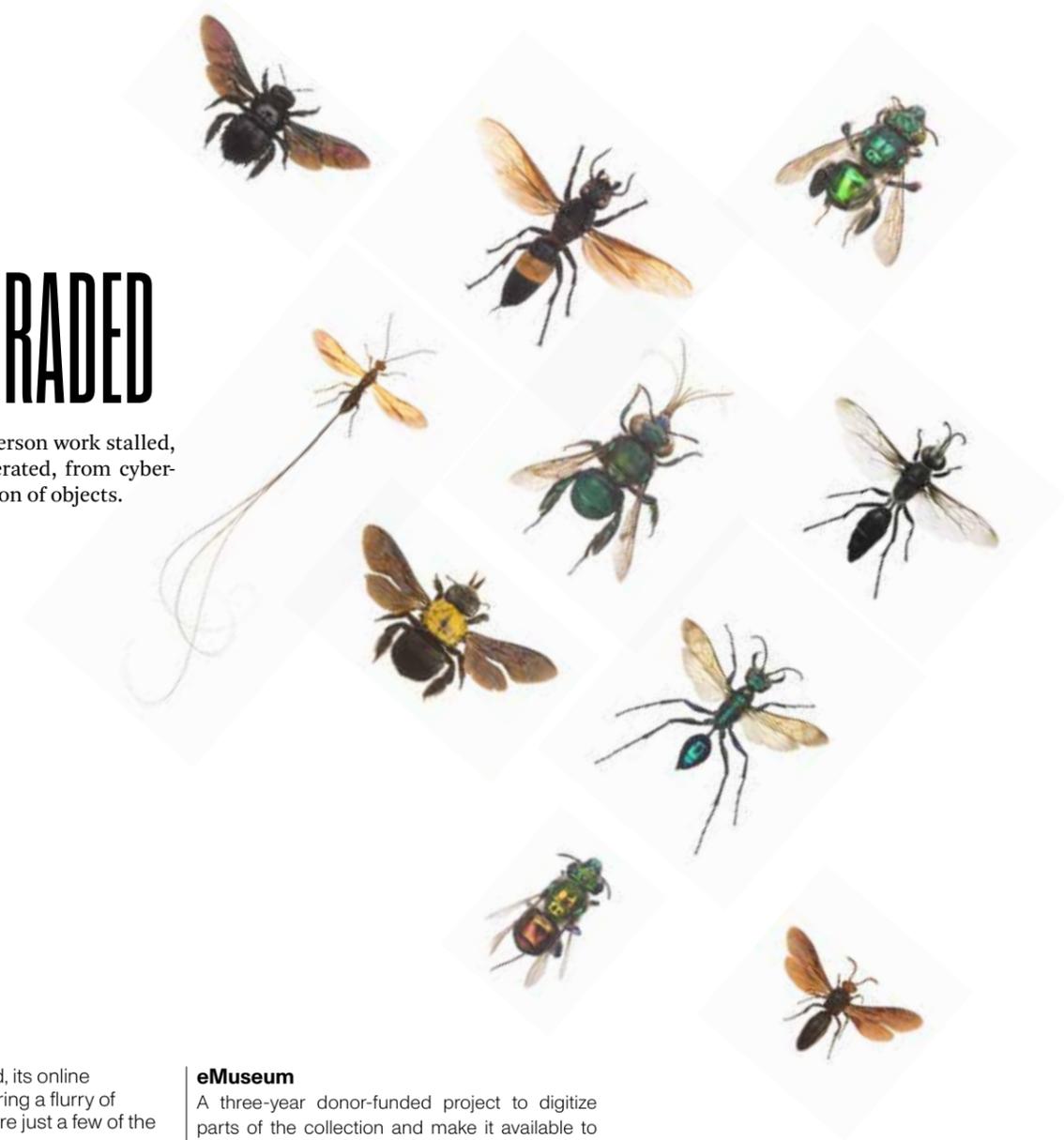
- The Bishop White Committee commemorated 60 years of support for the East Asia collections
- ROM Walks celebrated 40 seasons of providing walking tours through Toronto neighbourhoods to ROM Members and the public.



DIGITAL READINESS

# ROM UPGRADED

While much of our in-person work stalled, all things digital accelerated, from cyber-security to the digitization of objects.



When the Museum closed, its online presence flourished, spurring a flurry of digital innovation. These are just a few of the highlights:

- Major upgrades to ROM's ticketing platform
- Shifting certain legacy platforms (such as the visitor experience call centre) into new cloud-based solutions
- Enhanced emphasis on cyber-security
- New in-museum, mobile-friendly content like web-accessible audio tours for exhibitions
- Content from in-gallery digital kiosks accessible via QR codes

The ROM's Digital Transformation Project is generously supported by Hatch.

### eMuseum

A three-year donor-funded project to digitize parts of the collection and make it available to global audiences on the ROM's online platform eMuseum officially ended on April 30, 2021. The digitization team photographed 11,864 objects across art and culture and natural history collections, producing a total of 32,772 images. To date, more than 54,000 ROM objects are available on eMuseum.

Digitization of the ROM's collection is generously supported by Nancy and Jon Love.

# PART

# 4

[Philanthropy](#)

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[ROM Leadership](#)

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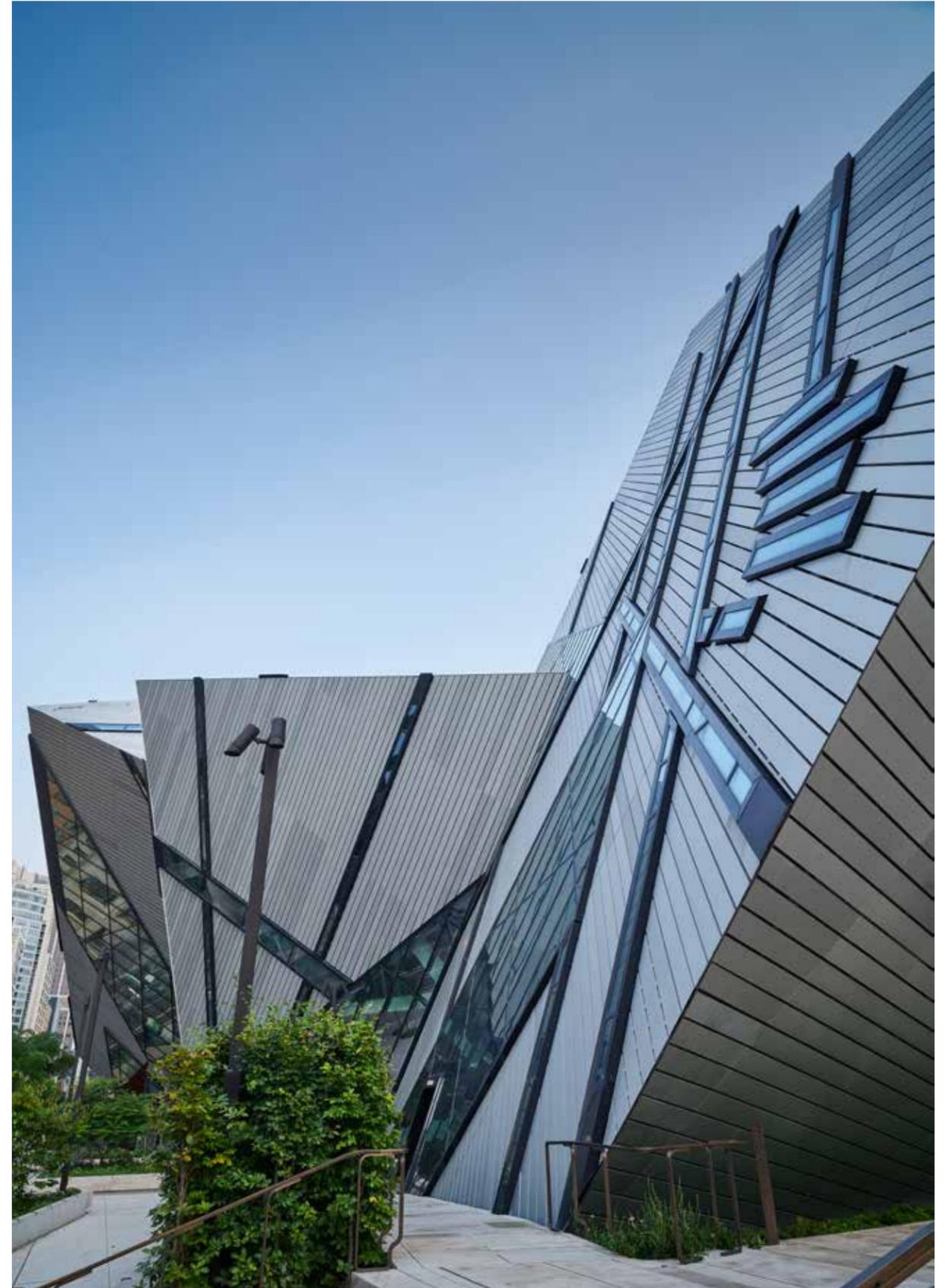
[Our Supporters](#)

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# ROM GOVERNORS

Established in 1992 as the ROM Foundation, the office of the ROM Governors is responsible for all philanthropic activities in support of the Museum's highest priorities. Its work enables the ROM to better serve its diverse and ever-changing community, with a wide range of philanthropic activities supporting ROM programs, research, collections, galleries, exhibitions, and outreach programs.

Despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 2,300 generous donors contributed \$13.3M to the Museum.



# ROM LEADERSHIP

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Edison Chai  
Andrew Ellis  
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Tom Klosek  
Andrea McLoughlin  
Anshul Panday  
Jennifer Pritchard  
Nacera Saadane Lawrence  
Sarah Salomon  
Curtis Yim  
Layth Ashoo

**ROM Classic Golf Committee**

Mark Baxter  
Sunny Dhillon  
Balu Patel  
Sunil Patel  
Nita Reed  
John Van Schepen  
Dan Wright

## ROM CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

# AN UN-FORE-GETTABLE DAY

On September 9, 2020, we were the ROM was finally able to welcome patrons in-person following months of virtual events at our theFifth Annual ROM Classic Golf Tournament. The tournament format was re-envisioned to accommodate physical distancing and to keep the player's safety in mind, but the dedication of our supporters was as strong as ever and for that we were profoundly grateful. The tournament hosted 65 golfers who enjoyed the beautiful Beacon Hall Golf course in Aurora. Their day was punctuated by some unique Museum content, and they enjoyed an end-of-summer opportunity to be golfing with friends for a great cause.

Together, participants helped to raise more than \$150,000 in support of the Royal Ontario Museum's top priorities. During these extraordinary times, this type of generosity supporter's generosity is more important than ever, and ensuring that we can continue to connect diverse communities with enriching experiences of art, culture and nature.

### ROM Classic Golf Committee

Mark Baxter  
Sunny Dhillon  
Balu Patel  
Suni Patel  
Nita Reed  
John Van Schepen  
Dan Wright

Special Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors



# OUR SUPPORTERS

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Renamed in 2014 after the Honorary Patron of the Royal Ontario Museum, the Lieutenant Governor's Distinguished Service Award is the highest honour the Museum can bestow on a volunteer. This award is reserved for those deserving individuals who have generously provided extraordinary and meritorious service to the ROM.

The 2020 recipients of the Distinguished Service Award were Martha Durdin and Richard Wernham. While the pandemic prevented the Museum from hosting the annual ROM Celebration Dinner where these award are usually presented, a special ceremony was held at the Lieutenant Governor's office later in 2021 to celebrate the recipients and their many incredible contributions to the Museum.

### 2020 RECIPIENTS

Martha Durdin  
Richard Wernham

### PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

2019 Danuta Buczynski  
2019 Robert E. Pierce  
2018 Jean M. Read  
2017 Dixie Anne Montgomery  
2017 Joey and Toby Tanenbaum  
2016 W. Robert Farquharson  
2016 Martha J. Hogarth  
2015 Salvatore (Sal) M. Badali  
2015 Jennifer Ivey Bannock  
2015 Harriet Walker  
2013 Kenneth W. Harrigan  
2013 Flavia C. Redelmeier  
2012 Jack Cockwell  
2012 Frank Potter  
2010 James and Louise Temerty  
2009 James and Brenda McCutcheon  
2008 Jack McOuat  
2006 Patricia Harris  
2005 Joan Fitzpatrick  
2005 Joan Randall  
2005 Joan Thompson  
2002 ROM Department of Museum Volunteers  
2002 Elizabeth Samuel  
2001 Mona Campbell  
2001 Hon. Edwin A. Goodman

## DISTINGUISHED CORPORATION AWARD

The Distinguished Corporation Award was established in 2017 to recognize and honour corporations that have demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment to the Royal Ontario Museum.

### 2020 RECIPIENT

Hatch

### PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

2019 Canada Life  
2019 Teck Resources Limited  
2018 Raymond James Ltd.  
2018 TD Bank Group

## PHILANTHROPIC GIFTS

The ROM thanks and acknowledges the generous supporters who have graciously committed \$25,000 or more to the Museum's highest priorities.

### Principal Gifts

(\$5,000,000 - \$9,999,999)

Hatch

### Leadership Gifts

(\$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999)

Estate of Brenda Louise Evans  
Estate of Dr. Marian Fowler  
Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust  
Richard Wernham and Julia West

### Milestone Gifts

(\$500,000 to \$999,999)

Estate of Blanche Margaret Mitchell  
The Dorothy Strelsin Foundation

### Major Gifts

(\$100,000 to \$499,999)

Barrick Gold Corporation  
Estate of Ruth Bolt  
Estate of Dr. Lynn From  
The Gillam Group  
Suzanne Labarge  
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Nita and Don Reed  
Estate of Christina Senkiw  
Andrew M. Stewart  
Virtual Museums of Canada  
Ambrose Wah Hing Lo\* and Neil Cochrane

### Special Gifts

(\$25,000 to \$99,999)

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Estate of Ernest Howard  
Jackman Foundation  
The MacMillan Family Foundation  
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Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism  
Jean M. Read and the late Morris Appleby  
Anonymous

The ROM acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

The ROM is grateful to the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada for their generous support of the Museum's priorities.

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S CIRCLE

In honour of the Royal Ontario Museum's long tradition of philanthropic support, the Museum is proud to acknowledge the following donors whose generous cumulative lifetime commitments have had a significant impact on the Museum's continued growth and success. (Includes financial contributions and gifts-to-the-collections received since the establishment of the ROM Governors in 1992)

### PLATINUM LEVEL

(\$5,000,000 and above)

Shreyas and Mina Ajmera  
Estate of Mona Campbell  
Jack Cockwell and Lynda Hamilton  
Thor and Nicole Eaton  
Estate of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth  
Dr. David Gregory  
Hatch  
Jay and Barbara Hennick  
Michael Lee-Chin & Family  
Estate of Herman Herzog Levy  
Dan Mishra  
Ernest and Elizabeth Samuel and the Samuel Family Foundation  
Schad Family  
The Schmidt Family  
Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust  
Joey and Toby Tanenbaum  
Teck Resources Limited  
James and Louise Temerty  
The Weston Family Foundation  
The Hon. Hilary M. Weston  
and Mr. W. Galen Weston  
Jeff Willner & Family

### GOLD LEVEL

(\$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999)

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