



AT THE ROOMS

The Rooms
Corporation

Strategic Plan

2021-23



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A Message From the Chair of the Board of Directors

I am very pleased to present The Rooms Strategic Plan 2020-23.

June, 29, 2020, marked The Rooms fifteenth year in operation. This plan builds on the successes that the Corporation and its Regional Museums have achieved during that time and will set the strategic priorities for the coming three years.

To capitalize on the milestone of its fifteenth year in operation, and respond to this unprecedented time in history, The Rooms will reflect, review, revise and reframe its role within the community.

The COVID-19 global pandemic, along with recent social justice movements present an opportunity for The Rooms and its Regional Museums to deepen their roles within their respective communities; reaffirm existing partnerships and engage in partnerships with new audiences; and, expand The Rooms and its Regional Museums' digital presence, supporting an increased Province-wide reach.

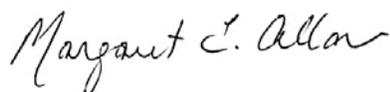
As The Rooms has now been in operation for more than fifteen years, and the Regional Museums much longer than that, the risk associated with physical plant upkeep must be addressed.

The Rooms has created a plan that incorporates the principles of sustainability: economic (profit/revenue), societal (people/programs), and environmental (climate change/physical assets) including its collections. This plan will position The Rooms and its Regional Museums to better serve their communities and the people of this province by becoming a more sustainable organization.

The Rooms Corporation is a category one Crown Corporation under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and, as such, it is required to submit strategic plans to government through the Honourable Bernard Davis, Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, every three years.

The Priorities and Goals as identified in this plan are achievable within the envelope of existing financial and human resources; are in alignment with The Rooms Mandate and the strategic directions of government; and, identify annual objective performance measures specific to each strategic area.

The Board and CEO are accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained therein. We are committed to full accountability for the public funds with which we have been entrusted and are honoured to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Board, CEO, management and staff are committed to achieving the Priorities and Goals set in this plan – sealing our commitment to delivering great value to the people of this province, and advancing The Rooms place in the cultural community of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Margaret E. Allan
Chair, Board of Directors,
The Rooms Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador





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Overview of the Corporation

The Rooms Corporation unites the Provincial Archives, Art Gallery and Museum, as well as three Regional Museums, under the aegis of a Provincial Crown Corporation. As a provincial cultural institution focused on the public interest, the main strategic priorities for The Rooms Corporation are education, public outreach and the presentation of permanent and temporary exhibits based on the provincial archival, contemporary and historic art, and museum collections entrusted to it by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Regional Museums include: the Mary March Provincial Museum (note this name is under review), located in Grand Falls-Windsor; the Provincial Seamen's Museum located in Grand Bank; and, the Labrador Interpretation Centre, located in North West River, Labrador.

The Rooms Corporation was established to collect, preserve, present and make available for research the historic artifacts, natural history specimens and archival records that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and natural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. It collects, preserves, and presents provincial, national and international contemporary and historic art and promotes the works of contemporary visual artists of the province. The Rooms strives to develop and conduct programs and events that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and heritage of the province. The Rooms supports the development of cultural industries in the province and endeavours to strengthen the culture of the province, consistent with the strategic directions of government.

Built at a cost of approximately \$50 million, The Rooms encompasses 185,000 square feet. The collections of The Rooms Provincial Archives, Art Gallery and Museum are stored in climate controlled vaults under a rigorous security protocol. The Rooms employs 42 full-time, permanent staff in its five divisions – Archives, Art Gallery, Museum, Marketing and Communications, and Finance – and employs seven permanent seasonal staff to operate The Rooms Regional Museums. The Rooms employs a number of hourly staff on an annual basis to support visitor services, the archives reference room and regional operations. Its annual operating budget of approximately \$6.28 million is provided as an annual appropriation from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Rooms averages approximately 120,000 visits per year, with approximately 7,000 visits annually from school children participating in curriculum-linked education programs. It has established itself as one of Canada's leading cultural institutions with 20 provincial, national and international awards.





Installation shot of the exhibition **Future Possible: Art of Newfoundland and Labrador from 1949 to Present**, 2019, The Rooms.

Mandate

The Rooms Mandate is outlined in **The Rooms Act** under section 4, objects of the corporation as follows:

- (A) collect, preserve, present and make available for research the historic artifacts, natural history specimens and archival records that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and natural heritage of the province;
- (B) conduct research with respect to the history, natural history, culture and heritage of the province for the purposes of paragraph (a);
- (C) collect and present provincial, national and international contemporary and historic art;
- (D) advance and promote the works of contemporary visual artists of the province;
- (E) support the development of cultural industries in the province;
- (F) strengthen the culture of the province; and
- (G) provide and enhance client services and partnerships to promote the cultural collections of the province and to show other national and international collections.

See Appendix 1 – **Powers of The Corporation**





Billy Gauthier. **Northern Voices (Owl/Human Transformation)**, 2008, Serpentine, anhydrite, grouse feathers, ptarmigan feathers. Collection of Chris Brett and Jamie Cameron.

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Vision

The Rooms Corporation is an innovative, culturally relevant institution that represents and showcases Newfoundland and Labrador to itself and to the world, and brings the wider world to its doorstep.

Vision





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Lines of Business

The Rooms is comprised of five divisions and two units: The Rooms Provincial Archives, Art Gallery, Museum, Finance, and Marketing and Communications Divisions, the Education and Public Programming Unit, and Technical Services Unit.

The Archives, Art Gallery and Museum collect, preserve, present and make available for research the collections within their disciplines while the Education and Public Programming Unit and Marketing and Communications Division, support their work through developing, delivering and promoting education and public programs to a wide variety of audiences.

The Technical Services Unit assists with maintenance and presentation of exhibitions developed in-house and travelling from peer institutions. The Rooms also undertakes the development of interdisciplinary exhibitions which draw their content from all of the programming divisions. With a view towards providing an exceptional visitor experience, The Rooms also operates a café and gift shop.

1. The Rooms acquires, preserves, presents and makes available for research the historic artifacts, natural history specimens and archival records that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and natural heritage of the province.
2. The Rooms collects and presents provincial, national and international contemporary and historic art; is the province's steward of archival records and a co-facilitator of Information Management initiatives; and, serves to inform, present and interpret the province's history.
3. The Rooms is an important education and outreach vehicle, aiming to provide access to its collections through education programs, travelling exhibits, Regional Museums, virtual access, workshops, and artist residency programs.
4. The Rooms is responsible for collections security, research, maintenance and preservation to safeguard the provincial memory, history and culture.
5. The Rooms provides support to professional constituencies in the archival, visual arts and museum fields.





Chevron Open Minds at The Rooms class sketching the view.

Primary Clients

The Rooms Corporation works closely with clients both external and internal.

These include:

- Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation
- Department of Education
- Non-resident visitors
- School-aged children
- Youth and lifelong learners
- Diverse populations
- Donors to collections
- Individual donors
- Corporate sponsors





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Values

Enabling Discovery

sharing the stories and surprises that are contained within our collections

Stimulating Curiosity

constantly exploring how we can be accessible to, connect with and mean more to people

Building Team Culture

forging relationships, working closely together and with external groups to achieve shared goals

Striving to be The Best

commitment to applying the highest standards in all that we do

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-racism

commitment to a respectful, diverse, tolerant and welcoming environment where we are stronger together





Installation shot of **What Carries Us: Newfoundland and Labrador in the Black Atlantic**, featuring Camille Turner's **Afronautic Research Lab: Newfoundland** (2019). Video installation.

Issue 1: Reflect, Review, Revise and Reframe its Role

On the eve of its fifteenth year, the Corporation found itself amidst a global pandemic, forcing the temporary closure of cultural institutions around the world. This intersection of a milestone year and iconic world event provided ideal conditions for The Rooms to reflect on the institution it has been over the past 15 years and review its programs and services. There is an opportunity to revise what the institution will be moving forward, and to reframe how it wishes to be viewed locally, provincially and globally.

Over the next three years, The Rooms and its Regional Museums will evaluate its audiences – identify repeat, new and diverse audience segments to attract moving forward – and develop a plan to reframe the Corporation as a visitor-focused, emotionally, physically and intellectually accessible institution that engages with diverse populations, in particular, the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The positive impacts of reframing The Rooms and its Regional Museums as a visitor-focused, emotionally, physically and intellectually accessible institution that engages with diverse populations, in particular, the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador, supports the Government's strategic directions for a better economy, healthier people and a brighter future.

Three Year Goal (2020-23)

By March 31, 2023, The Rooms and its Regional Museums will have reframed the corporation as a visitor-focused, accessible institution that engages with diverse populations, in particular, the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Goal Indicators:

- The Rooms will have revisited and revised its mission statement
- Recommendations from the accessibility audit will have continued to be implemented
- A research plan to identify and better understand our current and potential audience will have been developed and implemented
- A plan to incorporate a mental health lens/focus for visitor experiences will have been developed and implemented
- An action plan to reach and engage diverse populations in-person and virtually will have been developed and implemented



- The Rooms will have grown its relationship with the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador
- An effective marketing strategy that promotes an emotional connection for the visitor will have been developed

First Year Objective (2020-21):

By March 31, 2021, The Rooms and its Regional Museums will have evaluated its audiences and identified new, repeat and diverse audience segments.

The indicators for first year objective are:

- The Rooms will have identified and gained a better understanding of its current and potential audience
- An action plan to reach and engage new, repeat and diverse populations will have been developed
- A plan to incorporate a mental health lens/focus for visitor experiences will have been developed

Second Year Objective (2021-22):

By March 31, 2022, The Rooms and its Regional Museums will have developed a plan to reframe the Corporation as a visitor-focused, accessible institution that engages with diverse populations, specifically the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Third Year Objective (2022-2023):

By March 31, 2023, The Rooms and its Regional Museums will have implemented a plan to reframe the Corporation as a visitor-focused, accessible institution that engages with diverse populations, specifically the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Issue 2: Deepening Our Connections With the Community

Unprecedented times can be ripe with opportunity. Our community finds itself navigating a new landscape. The Rooms and its Regional Museums can use this time to confirm its place as a leader within their communities.

By incorporating Priority 1, to reflect, review, revise and reframe, The Rooms can apply this learning to deepen its connection with the people it serves, creating partnerships with organizations and expanding its audiences. Present circumstances have moved technology to the forefront of all communication – providing optimal conditions for engaging our audience through digital platforms, resulting in an expanded audience and reach.

Over the next three years, The Rooms will work to promote a more integrated role for its Regional Museums within their communities; will continue to build its relationships with the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador to work towards decolonizing The Rooms; will continue to seek new partnerships reaching out to diverse populations and finding new ways to engage these populations; and, will expand its online offering and digital engagement.

Deepening connection between The Rooms and its Regional Museums within their respective communities will support the Government's strategic directions for a better economy, healthier people, better living and a brighter future.

Three Year Goal (2020-23)

By March 31, 2023, The Rooms and its Regional Museums will have deepened its connection with the community they serve.

Goal Indicators:

- An action plan to demonstrate The Rooms place as a leader within the community will have been established
- Truth and Reconciliation Committee's (TRC's) national framework for reconciliation within heritage and cultural organizations will have been reviewed
- Ways to focus on personal connections with visitors will have been identified



- A policy for working with Indigenous Materials within the Archives, Art Gallery and Museum using Truth and Reconciliation Committee's (TRC's) national framework for reconciliation within heritage and cultural organizations as a guide will have been created
- Existing partnerships will have continued to be leveraged and opportunities for new partnerships within the community will have been identified
- An Action Plan incorporating TRC's Calls to Action for Indigenous Heritage will have been established
- A digital engagement plan for The Rooms and its Regional Museums will have been developed

First Year Objective (2020-21):

By March 31, 2021, The Rooms will have deepened the connection between its Regional Museums and their communities.

The Indicators for First Year Objective are:

- A plan for The Rooms Regional Museums to have a more integrated role within their communities will have been developed
- Existing partnerships between the Regional Museums and their respective communities will continue to have been leveraged and opportunities for new partnerships within these communities will have been identified
- The Rooms will have developed a digital engagement plan for the Regional Museums
- The Rooms will have consulted with the Indigenous Communities and community stakeholders on changing the name of the Mary March Provincial Museum

Second Year Objective (2021-22):

By March 31, 2022, The Rooms will have moved towards decolonizing the institution, deepening its relationship with the Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Third Year Objective (2022-23):

By March 31, 2023, The Rooms will have expanded its online offering and digital engagement.

Issue 3: Securing the Future

The Rooms is faced with several external challenges affecting its ability to continue to provide the high quality experience it is known for delivering. The Rooms and its Regional Museums must address economic, social and environmental challenges that threaten to deplete resources thereby reducing the quality of experience they have to offer.

The Rooms must create a plan that incorporates the principles of sustainability: economic (profit/revenue), societal (people/programs), and environmental (climate change/physical assets) including its collections. The organization will build upon a collaborative workplace culture across all Divisions.

To support the sustainability of The Rooms and its regional operations, public and occupational safety will be a priority for the organization.

Over the next three years, The Rooms and its Regional Museums will work towards securing their futures by replacing diminishing revenue sources; re-establishing pre-COVID-19 visitation and programming attendance levels; and, by maintaining and promoting their internal and external usable spaces.

Implementing a plan for sustainability for The Rooms and its Regional Museums will support the Government's strategic directions for a better economy, healthier people, better living, a bright future and a more efficient public sector.

Three Year Goal (2020-23)

By March 31, 2023, The Rooms will have worked to secure its future and that of the Regional Museums by implementing a plan for sustainability.

Goal Indicators:

- A development plan will have been implemented
- Physical plant reserve studies for the Regional Museums will have been completed and recommendations from the physical plant study that has been completed for The Rooms St. John's physical plant will have continued to have been implemented
- An organizational review will have been completed



- A plan to maintain internal and external usable spaces will have been implemented
- An audit of The Rooms internal business processes will have been completed
- Actions to continue to make the organization's physical structures more energy efficient will have been identified
- A collection policy to encompass sustainability will have been updated
- An incident tracking system for The Rooms and its Regional Museums will have been implemented
- A respectful workplace policy for employees, as well as visitors, will have been developed
- The Rooms relationship with stakeholders will have been grown

First Year Objective (2020-21):

By March 31, 2021, The Rooms will have established a plan to identify new revenue sources.

The indicators for first year objective are:

- Options for fund development through grants, sponsorship and donor opportunities will have been researched
- Fund development training program will have been completed by senior staff and a fund raising plan will have been developed
- A digital membership program will have been established

Second Year Objective (2021-22):

By March 31, 2022, The Rooms will have reviewed the sustainability of its collections policy.

Third Year Objective (2022-23):

By March 31, 2023, The Rooms will have implemented a plan to maintain their internal and external usable spaces and complete physical plant reserve studies for the Regional Museums.

Appendix 1 Powers of The Corporation

6. (1) In carrying out its objects under this Act, the corporation may
- (a) acquire by purchase or lease real, personal, movable and immovable property, including securities and hold, manage or dispose of them as the corporation may determine;
 - (b) acquire by gift, bequest or devise real, personal, movable and immovable property, including securities and expend, administer or dispose of that property, subject to terms, if any, on which that property was given, bequeathed or devised to the corporation;
 - (c) enter into partnership, sponsorship and other contractual agreements that further the objects of the corporation;
 - (d) lease its property;
 - (e) operate restaurants, special events, parking facilities, shops and other facilities for the use of the public and lease or otherwise make available, on terms and conditions that the corporation considers appropriate, those facilities or space;
 - (f) expend money appropriated by the Legislature of the province for the purposes of the corporation;
 - (g) expend money received by the corporation from its operations including money received by it from leasing or otherwise making available facilities or space referred to in paragraph (e);
 - (h) establish classes of membership for the support of the corporation and its divisions and for that purpose may establish fee, donation and support amounts applicable to those classes;
 - (i) charge fees for the purposes of the operation of the divisions and facilities of the corporation; and
 - (j) generally, do and authorize those things that the corporation considers necessary for the attainment of its objects and the exercise of the powers of the corporation.

